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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Literacy skills of vocational education and training graduates differ significantly across European countries – PIAAC survey**

Literacy levels vary across countries and between vocational education and training (VET) and general education graduates at upper-secondary levels, according to first findings from the OECD survey of adult skills (PIAAC) published in October.

Cedefop is working closely with the OECD on developing indicators for the survey to measure development and use of skill. In a joint workshop on 4-6 December the two organisations examined [the findings](#).



Joint Cedefop - LSO Network Workshop on PIAAC indicator development

4 - 5 - 6 December 2013

Across all 24 countries (and sub-national regions) participating in the survey the mean literacy score for young adults aged 16-29 whose highest level is vocationally oriented upper-secondary education is 273 out of a possible 500. In some European countries such as Finland or the Netherlands literacy scores are significantly above the OECD mean for this group, while in Spain, Poland and Ireland they are below.

These differences matter. In Finland, for instance, literacy skills of young graduates from general upper secondary programmes are as good as those of university graduates in Italy.



Cedefop Director James Calleja (second from left) told the participants: 'Skills are a passport to progression. No matter how many qualifications you have, it is what you can do that interests employers. It is time to look at education from a holistic point of view – horizontally and vertically. OECD's survey of adult skills shows that education is making a difference in many countries.'

### Notes to editors

- PIAAC – Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences
- Countries included in the survey: Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), United States and two partner countries – Cyprus and Russia. Data was collected between August 2011 and March 2012.
- A second round of the survey started in 2012 involving nine additional countries: Chile, Greece, Indonesia, Israel, Lithuania, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia and Turkey. Data will be collected in 2014 and results released in 2016.

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### About Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), an agency of the European Union based in Thessaloniki, Greece, supports European policy-making in the field of vocational education and training. [www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)

