

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Partnerships key to preventing skills mismatch and NEETs

Partnerships between education and training and social partners are not an option but inevitable to prevent skills mismatch and having people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), argued Cedefop Director James Calleja at the Greek EU Presidency's flagship conference on vocational education and training (VET).

The conference, held on 26 March in Athens, gave participating Member States an opportunity to get acquainted with successful VET policies and practices which tackle skills mismatches, focusing on how work-based learning can meet contemporary challenges.

Greek Minister of Education Constantine Arvanitopoulos gave the keynote speech in the presence of senior officials from the European Commission, social partners' representatives and around 200 participants.



Mr Calleja noted: 'VET covers almost the whole spectrum of the qualifications framework. It triggers innovation; we need VET policy-makers and institutions that believe in its potential at all qualifications levels and implement measures to raise quality and excellence with urgency.'

He stressed that 'the worlds of education and work are not/have not been talking to each other enough,' which is why 'we need to strengthen initial vocational education and training (IVET) by coordinating efforts from governments, social partners, the labour market and education and training providers. Without a

strong IVET base, it is impossible to have quality continuing VET and VET at higher education.'

The Cedefop Director, who together with a group of the Centre's experts presented the challenges VET faces when it comes to skills mismatch and work-based learning, argued that 'before you reform education and training, you need to know what kinds of jobs there are, where and which skills they require; reform in education must go hand-in-hand with economic and social strategies and not in isolation.'

According to Mr Calleja, 'the European tools are a solid foundation to build a culture of learning by doing; adapt them to your national, regional, local contexts and they will make a difference.'

Cedefop supports the work of the European Commission and Member States based on its expertise on labour market issues, qualifications and VET policies. The envisaged Cedefop policy-learning workshops in 2015 will enable knowledge-sharing towards strategic, prioritised and citizen-centred initiatives in VET institutions.

'Countries need to identify their growth potential and skills needs, develop training schemes to suit their specific contexts and use the potential of work-based learning. This requires comprehensive strategies, which include competence development of teachers and trainers, and commitment of all actors,' concluded Mr Calleja.

The conference was followed by a meeting of Directors General for VET (27-28 March), during which Directors debated the next set of short-term deliverables for European cooperation on VET 2015-17.

#### **Note to editors**

You can download the related Cedefop briefing note 'Skill mismatch: more than meets the eye' here: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/22524.aspx>

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