



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

European policies: catalysts for innovation and youth employment

In vocational training, but also for general economic growth needed for employment, European policies are catalysts for innovation, according to Cedefop Director James Calleja.

Mr Calleja was a key panellist during the 3rd international conference on industrial technologies research and innovation, held in Athens from 9 to 11 April. The conference attracted over 1 000 delegates from 50 countries as well as 150 speakers in plenary and workshop sessions.

He stressed: 'Research, innovation and technology are an attraction to unemployed youth whose culture and quality of life is largely influenced by and dependent upon technological developments. With youth unemployment across Europe at 22.9%, vocational colleges can use research, innovation and industrial technologies to attract learners to qualifications, new skills and job experience. European policies and tools can help vocational colleges reinvent education together with industry.'

Mr Calleja referred to European initiatives to promote youth employment such as the youth guarantee and the effective use of structural funds and Erasmus+ during the current funding period (2014-20). With over 22 million SMEs in Europe generating over 66% of employment, industrial technologies can be an effective channel to set up apprenticeship and traineeship programmes.

The Cedefop Director pledged more concrete support to the European alliance for apprenticeships as a platform for building learning environments in workplaces. He reiterated that 'vocational training offers an excellent opportunity to award qualifications at all levels of a qualifications framework and is therefore inclusive, providing balance between theory and practice, study and work periods. Long-term cooperation for innovating capacity is necessary to make Europe competitive by using technology to win back jobs which would otherwise be carried out where labour is much cheaper.'

Earlier this week, Mr Calleja chaired one of the four panel discussions in a high-level European Commission conference on youth guarantee held in Brussels. The conference was chaired by Commissioner László Andor and addressed by President José Manuel Barroso, who stressed that youth are at the core of

European priorities, and that concerns in Member States should now be transformed into commitments to allow economies to grow, generate cash flow and create employment.

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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

