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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A successful first step towards European partnerships on apprenticeship

Apprenticeships and similar work-based schemes have proven to make it easier for young people to move from education to work. But not all countries have highly-developed apprenticeship schemes, and many wish to benefit from others' experience. A Cedefop event this week helped to pave the way towards new partnerships for apprenticeship between EU countries.

Apprenticeships have become one of the pillars of youth guarantee schemes which Member States are currently establishing in order to help young people get a foothold in the labour market. Within the **European Youth Guarantee**, the European Union's programme for education, training and lifelong learning, Erasmus +, recently earmarked financial support for apprenticeship schemes. This includes the formation of partnerships involving two or more countries or social partner organisations.

As part of its support to the **European alliance for apprenticeships (EafA)**, on 7-8 May Cedefop, along with the European Commission, organised a special event aiming to help establish such partnerships. The [European Apprenticeships Conference](#) showcased examples of actions, programmes and approaches related to apprenticeship which can be adapted by Erasmus + countries.

But the event was primarily designed to help potential partners find each other. For this reason, it did not follow the usual conference format. Instead, interaction, cross-country dialogue and experience-sharing dominated the event, with the aim to allow participants **identify potential partners for apprenticeship modernisation**.

Opening the conference, Cedefop Director James Calleja said: "Today's highly complex workplace requires new workers to be even more '*work-ready*' - and that is where apprenticeships come in. Moreover, work-based learning, and apprenticeships in particular, foster a strong sense of professional identity which is important for young people's self-esteem."

In a video message, Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou said that quality apprenticeships facilitate the transitions from the world of education to the world of work and **Member States should make full use of funds provided for this purpose** through Erasmus+, the European Social Fund, and the European Investment Fund.

Speaking at the conference, Antonio Silva Mendes of the Commission's General Directorate for Education and Culture stressed the importance of action at Member State level to promote a wide array of apprenticeships based on high standards and transferable skills.

The conference addressed officials responsible for apprenticeships in initial vocational education and training and social partners (employers and employees) who are willing to cooperate with others in modernising apprenticeship schemes. Participants received information about financial support available, especially under Erasmus +, for which the deadline is 26 June.

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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.

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