



PRESS RELEASE

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Education needs to match industry's speed to remain relevant

At a high-level dinner, organised by weekly newspaper *European Voice* in Brussels this week, Cedefop Director James Calleja said that 'educational reform must have relatively the same speed as developments in the labour market' to make it easier for young people to move from education to employment.

Mr Calleja was invited to a restricted group of top-level EU policy-makers, business executives and representatives of the education and youth sectors to exchange practical examples of success stories in helping young people move from education into employment.

Participants argued that today's labour market poses huge challenges to education, businesses and learners. It is not always possible for education and training to tailor skills to labour market needs. Hence, training teachers is paramount to ensure that education remains relevant to employment.

Apprenticeship programmes and work-based learning are tools that can accelerate transition from education to employment as they attract learners to a learning environment which integrates the workplace itself. Although forecasting the skills businesses need is important, this is not easy to achieve in an unpredictable and constantly changing labour market context.

The need for new mindsets, particularly on the value of vocational training, was stressed by various speakers. Mr Calleja remarked that the first challenge is to recover the 'casualties' of education systems, particularly people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and early school leavers: 'This is where education and businesses can join forces and promote quality apprenticeships and work-based learning.'

The second challenge, said the Cedefop Director, is for education authorities to invest heavily in early education making sure that all young people possess key competences and the right attitude for employment at the end of the schooling period.

Trends are clearly showing that, beyond compulsory schooling, sectoral standards and quality assurance govern certification, and public education may well lose its current hold on further and higher education.

Mr Calleja reiterated the importance for EU Member States and social partners to put European policies and tools in practice, as these ease transition from education to employment for European citizens.

Notes to editors

- The event, which discussed how to get young people into employment, was chaired by Simon Taylor, Assistant Editor of European Voice, and Sang Woo Kim, President, Corporate Affairs Europe, Samsung Electronics.
- Invitees hailed from McKinsey & Company, the European Commission, JA-VE Europe, Global Apprenticeship Network, OECD, Digitaleurope, Telefonica Europe, Business Europe, Think Young and the European Youth Forum.

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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 vocational education and training. www.cedefop.europa.eu

