



## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Engaging SMEs in apprenticeships – Cedefop conference

Following on from the success of the first European apprenticeship conference in 2014, Cedefop's second such event, on 9 and 10 November in Thessaloniki, will be a learning experience addressed to a wide range of stakeholders with a role in helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) increase their apprenticeship offer.

Participants will learn from:

- success stories – how SMEs take the lead and set apprenticeship programmes;
- national practices put in place by industry, social partners, public authorities, and other bodies that have a role in supporting SMEs;
- messages brought forward by the employers' representatives at European and national levels.



The keynote speaker will be British entrepreneur Jason Holt, CEO, Holts Group of companies, who has won awards and honours for his contribution to promoting apprenticeship. He is a leading SME employer that set up the UK's sole provider of government-accredited training to the wider jewellery sector. Mr Holt is also Chairman of the Apprenticeship Stakeholder Board at the UK's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The conference is an opportunity for participants to identify ideas that may be turned into cross-country partnerships, find partners, and understand how they may finance their ideas and turn them into reality.

The following funding opportunities will be presented:

- [an Erasmus+ call for proposals](#), which aims at supporting SMEs engaging in apprenticeships;
- European Social Fund;
- European Investment Bank.

Cedefop expert Ramona David, who organises the conference, said: 'Small and medium-sized enterprises employ two thirds of the European workforce, but data show that they are more reluctant to engage in training apprentices than larger companies. The challenges they face are known, but ways to overcome them may be less so. The conference is an excellent occasion to discover opportunities and create partnerships to support SMEs in this endeavour.'

#### Notes to editors

- You can find the conference agenda [here](#).
- The conference will be hosted at The MET Hotel, 26th Oktovriou St 48, 546 27 Thessaloniki.
- There will be interview opportunities with Cedefop experts and participants. Please liaise with the Cedefop press office to arrange media coverage and interviews.
- More on the 2014 conference, [here](#).

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#### Contact

Press Officer: Rosy Voudouri

Tel: +30 2310 490012, e-mail: [rosy.voudouri@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:rosy.voudouri@cedefop.europa.eu)

Head of Department for Communication: Gerd Oskar Bausewein

Tel: +30 2310 490288, e-mail: [gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu)

#### 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)

