



PRESS RELEASE

Towards a new route: learning for work is changing

The labour market is changing; so too is training and learning for work. Europe's ageing labour force – by 2025, the number of people aged over 55 in the working population will rise substantially – has to cope with technological advance.

Scope for automating jobs has increased significantly. Some studies suggest that around 47% of jobs in the European Union (EU) could be replaced by technology. But despite fears of job losses, employment in the EU is expected to pass its 2008 pre-crisis peak in 2020 and continue to rise. Many in work are busier than ever as new technology makes people more accessible and challenges traditional work patterns.

These changes require new skills and, in response, European and national vocational education and training (VET) policies are moving. Efforts are being made to increase access to training for all age groups. Emphasis is being placed on developing core competences such as organisation and communications to help people adapt to change. Work-based learning and apprenticeships for adults and young people are being extended to match training more closely to labour market needs. Quality of VET is also being improved, including better training for VET teachers and trainers.

The European Commission, Member States and social partners are leading the work at European level, but technical support through research, analyses and other expertise is provided by Cedefop.



Presenting Cedefop's work to the European Parliament on 23 February, Director James Calleja, said: 'Initiatives to improve VET are underway across the EU. I am pleased to say that Cedefop is involved in many of them. We are monitoring the progress of VET reform across Europe and investigating the new demands that globalisation and technology are making on VET'.

Cedefop also helped develop common tools such as the European qualifications framework (EQF), which compares all types of national qualifications with each other and those from other countries. Increasingly, countries see the EQF and the national qualifications frameworks linked as a tool

to reform not only qualifications, but also education and training more widely. New [European guidelines for validating informal and non-formal learning](#), published by Cedefop and the European Commission last year aim to speed up integration into the labour market and improve career prospects.

In 2016, the European Commission will launch its skills agenda. 'Cedefop provides skill supply and demand forecasts for the EU and each Member State and is treating skill mismatch as high policy priority,' Mr Calleja added. 'Our European skills and jobs survey provided unique insights into skill mismatch and how it changes over time. The survey highlighted that Europe not only has skill shortages, but does not fully use the skills that the labour force has.'

Other initiatives Cedefop is supporting include developing a mobility scoreboard to encourage mobility for VET and reviewing apprenticeship arrangements in Member States as part of the European alliance for apprenticeships. But Cedefop not only wants to provide new insights and information, but also be a knowledge broker, stimulating action to improve VET. Working closely with Member States and social partners in implementing VET reform is Cedefop's challenge for 2016 and beyond.

The changing labour market is prompting a rethink about many aspects of VET; how are skills developed; how can they be made visible on the labour market; how labour market uses the skills that people have and how can education and employment complement each other at all stages of lifelong learning. Cedefop is providing the food for thought and action by assisting Member States to *think European but act locally*.

Note to editors

Read more about Cedefop's work in the field of adult learning:

- [Europe's uneven return to job growth: Cedefop briefing note \(2015\)](#)
- [Stronger VET for better lives \(2015\)](#)
- [European guidelines for validating informal and non-formal learning \(2015\)](#)
- [Skills, qualifications and jobs in the EU: the making of a perfect match? \(2015\)](#)
- [Skill supply and demand forecasts up to 2025 \(2015\)](#)
- [Towards new routes \(Cedefop briefing note\)](#)

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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

