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PRESS RELEASE

Commissioner Thyssen: Cedefop an invaluable source of expertise for the European Commission to rely on

In her first visit to Cedefop on 22 April, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen praised the agency's work, which 'impacts on people's lives'.

She said that Cedefop is an invaluable source of expertise for the European Commission to rely on, adding that 'wherever I go, in discussions on vocational education and training (VET), Cedefop's work is on the lips of my interlocutors.'



The Commissioner was greeted by the Chair of Cedefop's Governing Board Micheline Scheys, Director James Calleja and Deputy Director Mara Brugia.

Ms Scheys pointed out the importance of the Commissioner's visit in getting to know Cedefop first hand.

Mr Calleja welcomed the Commissioner to 'the European house of vocational education and training'. He said that Cedefop is where ideas on skills, qualifications, youth employment and European tools are generated for stakeholders. 'The next big challenge is the upcoming *Skills agenda* to which we have contributed and we look forward to helping implementing it so that no citizen is left behind,' he added.

Addressing the Cedefop staff, Ms Thyssen said that the Commission wants to get Europe working again by creating job opportunities. She added that 'youth employment is a priority and thanks to Cedefop's help we can make it happen.'

Ms Thyssen explained that the Commission's *Skills agenda* aims to achieve a new boost for jobs, growth and investment and stressed that 'we need your help to transform the agenda from ideas to results.'

The Commissioner said: 'You are in a unique position to monitor and analyse VET trends. You can give direct support to policy implementation in Member States.' She welcomed Cedefop's 'ambition to produce more country-specific reports.'



The Commissioner met with students from a local VET school who offered her handmade sweets and bread

'I am more motivated than ever to work with you to make social changes European citizens deserve and to make VET a first choice, not a second option,' she concluded.

Cedefop experts presented to Ms Thyssen various aspects of the agency's work focusing on employability for citizens, particularly on skills anticipation and forecasting and the Skills Panorama website, apprenticeships and work-based learning, with special focus on SMEs.

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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

