



PRESS RELEASE

Commissioner Thyssen opens #CedefopPhotoAward exhibition in Strasbourg

European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen opened the [#CedefopPhotoAward exhibition at the European Youth Event 2016 \(EYE2016\)](#) in Strasbourg on 20 May. Ms Thyssen presented the 10 best photos of the competition's first phase.

The #CedefopPhotoAward is still open until September 2016. The two winners of the second phase will be invited to Greece to visit Cedefop and join the opening of the 57th Thessaloniki International Film Festival in November. For more information and the photo gallery, go to: www.cedefop.europa.eu/CedefopPhotoAward.

Over 7 000 young Europeans from all 28 EU Member States attended EYE2016 and discussed topics currently affecting Europe.

The Commissioner welcomed the two winners and congratulated Cedefop for its initiative which gives more visibility to vocational education and training (VET) and shows that it can be 'a first choice, not a second option.'

Ms Thyssen stressed the importance of the agency's work focusing on employability for citizens, e.g. skills anticipation and forecasting, apprenticeships and work-based learning. The Commissioner praised Cedefop's work on education and training systems for the youth across Europe saying that it is 'crucial for the upcoming *Skills agenda*'.

One of the #CedefopPhotoAward winners, 24-year-old Vasiliki Kalopita, chose to send a photo that was taken during a youth exchange programme in Spain, focusing on the employability skills of young people through non-formal and intercultural learning methods. The other winning entry, by 18-year-old Antía Varela Torres, focused on women's access to vocational education and training to illustrate that they can choose any profession regardless of stereotypes.

In her closing remarks, Commissioner Thyssen encouraged Europe's youth involved in education and training to contribute to the ongoing competition.

She informed event participants that the #CedefopPhotoAward is still open until September 2016 and that two winners of the second phase will be invited to Greece to visit Cedefop and join the opening of the 57th Thessaloniki International Film Festival in November.

Commissioner Thyssen also spoke at the session ‘Skills gap: Bridge over troubled water’ about how to address young people’s skills gap. ‘One thing is clear: our education and training systems need to be more in tune with the real needs of employers. And we should be much more aware that there is no one-size-fits-all in Europe in terms of the skills demand,’ she said.

Ms Thyssen added that ‘education should not only give a solid foundation for life and active citizenship, it should also open doors to quality job opportunities,’ and concluded that ‘apprenticeships are one good way of bringing the worlds of education and work closer together. We want to improve their quality and image, and to get more companies to create such opportunities.’

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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

