



PRESS RELEASE

Skill shortages in Europe

Which occupations are in demand – and why

Skill shortages are of particular concern, especially when unemployment is high. People may lack the skills employers need and changes to education and training may also be necessary.

Cedefop has developed a way to identify occupations for which a critical shortage has important implications for national economies and their education and training systems. It also provides insights into why skill shortages arise.

According to Cedefop Director James Calleja, 'Our findings are a snapshot of skill shortage occupations in Europe and our method is a vital piece of the skills anticipation jigsaw. We need to know not only where skill shortages arise, but why. The right remedies to tackle skill mismatch require the right prognosis and diagnosis.'

A varied picture

Across the EU, the top five skill shortage occupations are ICT professionals; medical doctors; science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals; nurses and midwives and teachers. But the picture varies across countries. While all Member States except Finland lack ICT professionals, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal and the UK have no shortage of teachers. Other occupations are also of concern to various countries. Estonia and France face shortages of legal professionals. Ireland, Luxembourg, Hungary and the UK need finance professionals. In Italy demand for architects with green skills is growing.

Mixed reasons

Demand for ICT professionals is rising because almost every economic sector needs their skills. Similarly, STEM professionals are needed in many fields, including emerging ones such as electric-vehicle production. However, the supply of ICT and STEM graduates from upper-secondary and higher education is insufficient to meet demand. Too few young people are studying STEM subjects. Entry requirements and dropout rates are high and participation by women is low. Some countries also suffer from 'brain drain' as STEM professionals emigrate for better jobs elsewhere.

Europe's ageing population is causing skill shortages for healthcare professionals and teachers, but in different ways. Many teachers are expected to retire in the coming decade and shortages arise from the need to replace them. For

healthcare occupations an ageing society is increasing demand for social care and medical services.

But skill shortages arise for other reasons not related to skills. Unattractive and stressful working environments and falling wages can discourage people from entering certain occupations.

In some countries teaching has a negative image and salaries are low. Healthcare occupations often require shift and weekend work and have high staff turnover. An increasing number of healthcare professionals work in sectors with better working conditions, such as the biotech industry and pharmaceuticals. Similarly, many STEM graduates take non-STEM jobs.

To reduce skill shortages Member States are trying to increase supply of the skills in demand. Changes are being made to education and training, efforts are being made to use existing reserves of labour and skills better and employees are being upskilled. More people, especially women, are being encouraged to study ICT and STEM subjects. Efforts are being made to bring jobseekers together with companies that have skill shortages and will provide training. Fast-track training opportunities for employed and unemployed people to qualify in shortage occupations are also being developed.

For more detailed findings on critical skill shortages for each Member State, go to [Skills Panorama](#), a website operated by Cedefop for the European Commission.

Note to editors

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

- [Cedefop briefing note: Skill shortage and surplus occupations in Europe](#) (2016)
- [Skills Panorama](#)
- [Skills, qualifications and jobs in the EU: the making of a perfect match?](#) (2015)
- [Skill supply and demand forecasts up to 2025](#) (2015)

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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

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