

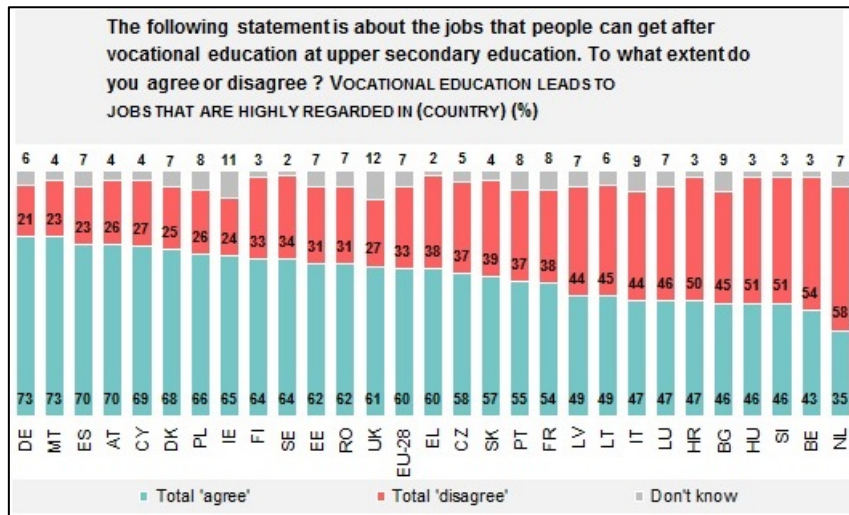


PRESS RELEASE

VET in the Netherlands: a strong reputation abroad but a poor image at home

Despite enjoying an excellent reputation abroad, vocational education and training (VET) in the Netherlands has a poor image at home. This was the striking finding of an opinion survey carried out by Cedefop to gain insights into the views EU citizens have about VET at upper secondary level.

Some 41% of survey respondents in the Netherlands say that VET has a negative image, well above the EU average of 23%. More than two-thirds of respondents say that general education has a better image than VET. The survey's overall VET 'attractiveness indicator' combines answers to questions about VET's image and relevance for the labour market. On this measure VET in the Netherlands comes next to last, just ahead of France and a long way behind countries such as Germany and Austria, which, like the Netherlands, have strong international reputations for high-quality upper secondary VET.



Source: Cedefop opinion survey on vocational education and training in Europe: Netherlands.

The question is why the Dutch VET system, one of the best in the world according to international organisations such as the OECD, has such a poor image at home. It is certainly not because of a lack of awareness. The vast majority (89%) of respondents in the Netherlands know what VET is. The Dutch VET system is also highly inclusive, comprising high-quality expert and specialist courses as well as support for marginalised social groups. Its inclusive nature and positive labour market outcomes (79% of VET graduates find a job within a month of completing their studies) may be why upper secondary VET in the Netherlands is widely admired internationally.

However, VET's image in the Netherlands does not seem to be influenced by international recognition or the better labour market opportunities upper secondary VET offers compared to the same level of general education. In the Netherlands, upper secondary general education is not expected to offer excellent job opportunities, but to provide access to higher education and the better job opportunities that it can bring.

Consequently, a possible interpretation of the survey findings is that, while many Dutch people value VET and believe it to be relevant and important to those who depend on it for a job and an income, it is just not the preferred choice for those seeking to continue to a university education.

However, the survey is far from conclusive. Certainly given VET's perceived success in the Netherlands, Dutch attitudes about it merit more research and analysis to inform future developments.

## Notes

- More in [Cedefop opinion survey on vocational education and training in Europe: Netherlands](#) (in English only)
- [Cedefop's opinion survey](#), published in 2017, provides new insights in what Europeans think of vocational education and training (VET), its ability to give people the right skills and to help VET graduates to find a job. The survey aims to inform policies to make VET a more attractive and effective learning option. It was conducted in June 2016 and examined EU citizens' awareness and opinions on VET's attractiveness and effectiveness, and personal experiences of VET at upper secondary level (typically age 16-18). The survey comprised more than 35 000 interviews of a representative sample of Europeans across all EU Member States.

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