



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training



European Training Foundation

1 July 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Planning the next steps for vocational education and training in Europe

The post-2020 European policy framework on vocational education and training (VET) was discussed at the high-level joint [Cedefop/ETF](#) virtual conference '[Enhancing European cooperation in VET: looking back – planning ahead](#)', on 30 June and 1 July. Over 190 experts, stakeholders, European Commission, government and social partner representatives joined forces to debate the role and future of VET at a time of unprecedented challenge due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Among the speakers were European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit, the Croatian Minister for Science and Education Blaženka Divjak, the German Federal Minister for Education and Research Anja Karliczek, and the Greek Minister for Education and Religious Affairs Niki Kerameus.



Enhancing European cooperation in VET

looking back –
planning ahead

30 June and 1 July 2020

Virtual conference



Starting with the results of the two EU agencies' [monitoring of the 2015-20 cycle of cooperation on VET](#) – the Riga process – discussions focused on how the lessons learned can be applied to meet the challenges of, and make the most of the opportunities for, VET in the next decade. The debate was supported by a [joint Cedefop/ETF discussion paper](#) prepared to inform the next steps in VET policy-making at EU level.

The conference highlighted that current economic and societal changes – digitalisation, green deal, demographic shifts, economic uncertainty – place VET in the foreground as a flexible means of preparing people for a changing world of work. Continuing VET (CVET) is critical for upskilling and reskilling EU citizens and creating a dynamic workforce, ready to respond to the economic and societal challenges ahead, and allow a smooth transition to a digital and greener economy.

Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel said: ‘While further developing initial VET should remain an essential aim, European policy needs to strengthen CVET to ensure that the new job opportunities created by the transformations of the economy will outstrip job displacement. [...] Policy efforts and cooperation should continue toward a “European VET area”, adopting a forward-looking perspective and ensuring attractive, inclusive and relevant initial VET systems for both learners and companies.’

ETF Director Cesare Onestini said: ‘Our work with countries in the neighbourhood of the EU shows that they share the same aspirations as EU Members to put human capital development at the core of their growth and prosperity agendas. As a reaction to the pandemic crisis we see some promising responses but also challenging trends, and the need to focus further on promoting training for excellence and inclusion: a key leverage towards economic development.’

In his address at the conference, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit announced the European Commission’s new proposal for a *Council recommendation on vocational education and training*, including a package of initiatives to support youth employment and skills policies. He said that this recommendation ‘will go beyond supporting young people; it is also about encouraging adults in employment for 15 or 20 years to keep learning and change careers without necessarily following long degrees.’ He also complimented Cedefop and ETF on the quality of their work, which he described as ‘a real goldmine to tap into’.

In the closing session, European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas said that the Commission’s new package of initiatives is novel, ambitious, measurable and inclusive, adding: ‘We all agree that this is a moment we can proclaim that Europe badly needs a skills revolution. Cedefop and ETF’s contribution to the initiatives will be crucial. People must be better informed of the skills that will be trending tomorrow and be geared towards targeted training. I hope the two agencies will keep helping us to put VET higher on the agenda and bring about the skills revolution.’

Notes to editors

- Read the findings of the monitoring exercise of the Riga process in the joint Cedefop/ETF publication: [Enhancing European cooperation in VET: outcomes of the Riga cycle. Progress in common priorities for 2015-20. Final report.](#)
- Read the joint Cedefop/ETF discussion paper: [The importance of being vocational. Challenges and opportunities for VET in the next decade.](#) Check out the accompanying [video](#).
- Please contact the relevant press office (see below) for interview requests with Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel and ETF Director Cesare Onestini.

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About Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications.

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About ETF

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is the EU agency supporting countries surrounding the European Union to reform their education, training and labour market systems, in line with the EU's external action policies.

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