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**The five EU social Agencies are helping Europe's young people become the best they can be**

The European economy and labour market is undergoing a substantial transformation, with established occupations disappearing, new ones emerging, job/task profiles within jobs changing and employment relations as well as work organisation adapting. The young generation is generally considered to be flexible, adaptable and interested in new adventures. They are looking for exciting jobs with a future – also driven by personal interests in digitalisation and greening.

However, many young people today struggle to access the labour market, and benefit from the new opportunities brought about by labour market change. Strategies and policy packages to support young people have had mixed results in Europe, with the financial crisis of 2008/2009 and the COVID-19 pandemic hitting young people especially hard. The wide-ranging economic impact of the war in Ukraine and the resulting uncertainty pose an additional challenge to this group, not only in Europe but also beyond its borders. Economic and social transformation increase labour market mismatch and inequality and are also more likely to disproportionately affect young people.

In addition, young workers are recognized as especially vulnerable for several reasons. These include their high employment in sectors and occupations associated with specific occupational safety and health (OSH) risks, for example the hotel and restaurant, construction and wholesale and retail trade sectors and occupations such as hairdressers and call-centre workers.

At the same time, the shift to a more digital and green, climate-neutral economy offers multiple opportunities to young people. Employers need people for promising green and digital jobs, which can be particularly attractive for young people. The young generation is motivated to contribute to change and often more engaged in education and training topics that equip them for 'the future of work' compared to older generations.

Many national policy measures prioritise job-ready young people rather than more disadvantaged groups. Policy makers need to have policy tools at their disposal that consider the degree of vulnerability and address NEET groups (Not in Education, Employment or Training) accordingly.

Research can assist them in designing better policies that improve the links between labour market, education and VET (Vocational Education and Training) measures, and youth and social policy more generally, in a more coherent and holistic fashion.

Bringing promising future-oriented jobs within reach of young people requires complementing skills intelligence – forecasting today which skills might be needed in the future – with personalised insight into how they can get there, what skills they have or lack, and what would be good education or training options. Skills validation plays a crucial role here, as it helps tailor training to individual needs, and avoids people having to spend time in training on things they do not need.

**More information** <https://www.ela.europa.eu/en/events/youth-first>

### **QUOTES:**

#### **Jürgen Siebel, Executive Director, Cedefop:**

Vocational education and training (VET) is particularly suited for young people in the context of our green and digital future. It helps people build the resilience and skills needed, including entrepreneurial ones, to cope with, and actively shape, those transitions. VET and VET learners enable change!

Our work on skills intelligence is becoming more user-centred and personalised and we do more to communicate it in a way that makes sense to young people. In this way they can translate their personal aspirations into education, training and career choices that match labour market needs and prepare the young, and thereby society, for future transitions.

#### **Mara Brugia, Deputy Director, Cedefop:**

VET will probably become even more important for young people as it is the form of education and training closest to the labour market. Thanks to the close cooperation with labour market actors, it is in the best position to respond to changing and new skills needs and help address skills gaps and shortages. VET offers a wide range of programmes, gives young people learning opportunities in the workplace and also provides them with the transversal skills they need to be successful in today's jobs and to build their career.

#### **William Cockburn, Interim Executive Director, EU-OSHA:**

For a successful Vision Zero approach (no more work-related deaths), a targeted focus on preventing occupational risks for young people is essential. This focus needs to be reflected in labour inspection on OSH and in the engagement of employers and trades unions, especially in the most affected sectors.

**Xavier Matheu, ad interim Director, European Training Foundation (ETF):**

Effectively preparing young people to give them the skills they need to face the challenges that lay ahead and be leaders in the transition towards greener, more digital and inclusive societies is key to supporting their personal, social and professional development. By providing policy advice and targeted interventions that ensure a successful transition from school to work, the ETF plays a key role in helping youth in countries surrounding the EU reach their full potential. The ETF and its partners are committed to working for a youth-focused future.

**Cosmin Boiangiu, Executive Director, European Labour Authority (ELA):**

Young people are our future, and without them having good jobs, not only our economies will suffer, but also our social security. ELA, and the EURES portal and network strive to make it easier for young people to look and find jobs everywhere in Europe, and enjoy the opportunities offered by the Single Market. But our work does not stop with helping the youth to find jobs matching their aspirations and skills. We also have a duty to enable fair working conditions for them, wherever they choose to work in the EU.

**Ivailo Kalfin, Executive Director, Eurofound:**

Working conditions and job quality are as important for young people as other sections of the labour market, and arguably more so. The European Working Conditions Survey shows that young people face particular challenges. They often start in insecure jobs: a third of 16 – 24 year-olds have a contract of limited duration, much higher than the EU average of 12%. 4% work without any contract whatsoever. Still, young people seem to be upbeat about their job prospects, with 60% reporting that their job offers good ones. We therefore need to ensure adequate labour market integration of young people, this will only work if we can offer them quality, stimulating and sustainable jobs. Bringing together their complementary expertise, the European Agencies aim to support EU institutions, Member States and other stakeholders in addressing policy challenges and capitalising on practices that work across Member States in times of disruption and transition.

**Seminar 8 September: Youth first! Employment, skills and social policies that work for young Europeans in times of uncertainty**

2022 is the European Year of Youth and the five EU Agencies use this important backdrop to offer key insights and expertise on the current quality of employment and working conditions of young people across the region. For the first time, the five EU Agencies came together to highlight their insights and explore the challenges and opportunities of young people in times of uncertainty at an event with the EMPL Committee in the European Parliament.

The Directors of the five Agencies discussed with MEPs and other experts the following:

- telework and hybrid work

- access to education, training, quality work experience programmes and skills for the green and digital transitions
- cross-border mobility in employment, education and training (including improved matching of skills)
- health and safety risks at work (including mental health and well-being).

## Watch the recording on

<https://www.ela.europa.eu/en/events/youth-first>

## Further information

Europa.eu: [European Youth Portal](#)

Europa.eu: [European Year of Youth](#)

European Parliament: [Resolution on 17 February 2022 on empowering European youth: post-pandemic employment and social recovery](#)

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)  
[CEDEFOP | European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training \(europa.eu\)](#)

[VET: an ally in the green transition \(Cedefop briefing note\) | CEDEFOP](#)  
[Strengthening skills systems in times of transition \(Cedefop policy brief\)](#)  
[Apprenticeships for greener economies and societies \(Cedefop/OECD report\)](#)

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

[Eurofound | \(europa.eu\)](#)

[Youth topic](#)

[Impact of COVID-19 on young people in the EU | EUROFOUND](#)

[Fifth round of the Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey: Living in a new era of uncertainty](#)

The European Labour Authority (ELA)

[Home | European Labour Authority \(europa.eu\)](#)

[Report on Labour Shortages and Surpluses 2021](#)

[EURES, finding a job in Europe. A Guide for Jobseekers](#)

[Ready to make the move? What you need to know about living and working abroad – and so much more](#)

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)

[European Agency for Safety & Health at Work - Information, statistics, legislation and risk assessment tools. \(europa.eu\)](#)

[Young people and safety and health at work](#)

[The OSHVET project: OSH in vocational education and training](#)

[The digitalisation of work: psychosocial risk factors and work-related musculoskeletal disorders](#)

[Musculoskeletal disorders among children and young people: prevalence, risk factors, preventive measures](#)

[Musculoskeletal disorders among children and young people - a life course approach to risk factors and prevention](#)

[Healthy workers, thriving companies - a practical guide to wellbeing at work](#)

The European Training Foundation (ETF)

[Home | ETF \(europa.eu\), https://www.etf.europa.eu/en](#)

[Preventing a 'lockdown generation' in Europe and Central Asia](#)

[Youth in transition in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean](#)

[Unlocking youth potential in South Eastern Europe and Turkey](#)

[Youth transition and skills mismatch in Eastern Partnership countries](#)

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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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