



MINUTES OF THE 100TH MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

6 AND 7 OCTOBER 2022

THESSALONIKI

Thursday 6 October 2022

1. WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Welcome

The Chairperson opened the meeting at 15.00 and welcomed the participants to the 100th meeting of Cedefop's Management Board (MB). This special meeting was also the first physical MB meeting in 2 years.

She informed members that discussions were recorded for the purpose of the minutes. According to Cedefop's rules on public access to documents (adopted by the MB on 2 September 2019), conclusions of Executive Board (EB) and MB meeting minutes would be published on Cedefop's website, after members had approved the text.

She addressed a special welcome to the new MB members and alternates.

Note: The names were displayed on screen.

The Chairperson said that according to Article 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the Management Board, the presence of the majority of members or, in their absence, their alternates shall constitute a quorum. This equalled 43 members or alternates. In this meeting 53 voting members were present (including 2 alternates), out of a total of 84 voting members. She clarified that decisions of the MB are taken by the majority of members with the right to vote (Article 9(1) of the Regulation). However, for the adoption of the Programming Document, the budget, the election of Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons, as well as the appointment, extension or removal from office of the Executive Director a two-thirds majority was required. When voting, 43 votes were needed to reach a simple majority (50% of 84 voting members +1 = 43) and 56 votes were needed to reach a two-thirds majority. In this meeting there were 18 proxies, so the total number of votes was 71.

The Chairperson said that the Executive Board had met on 5 October to prepare the groups' and Management Board meetings. The groups had held their respective meetings in the morning.

Article 14(1) of the Rules of Procedure provided that *'If there is consensus of the members present on the motion tabled, no vote is required'*. A vote of the MB would thus be required if there was no consensus of all members present at the meeting.

The Chairperson reminded members that, if needed, secret voting was possible in three cases. Article 14(2) of the Rules of Procedure provided that *'the vote shall be secret: (a) if the Chairperson thinks it necessary; or (b) if so requested by one third of the members present; or (c) if the issue addressed concerns an individual, including nominations, appointments and renewals, as well as the temporary suspension of the delegation of the appointing authority powers to the Executive Director'*.

She invited the Executive Director to present Cedefop's staff.

Mr Siebel welcomed the members to the 100th MB meeting. He introduced Cedefop's management and staff attending the meeting: Mara Brugia – Deputy Director, Gerd Oskar Bausewein – Head of DCM, Loukas Zahilas – Head of DVQ, Jasper van Loo – expert in DVS replacing Antonio Ranieri – Head of DVS who was excused, Pier Paolo Angelini – the newly elected Chair of Cedefop's Staff Committee, Adriano Graziosi – senior assistant in the Director's office and Christina Koufa – rapporteur.

The Chairperson thanked the Executive Director and all Cedefop management for steering the Agency effectively during the COVID pandemic over the past 2.5 years. The measures taken by Cedefop followed the EU, Greek and international instructions and were regularly communicated to the MB as well as the EU and Greek authorities. On 27 September, members had received information on the COVID-19 measures applicable to Cedefop. In particular, masks were recommended in meetings rooms, common areas including the cafeteria and were mandatory in lifts, restrooms and when using the service car.

Draft agenda of the MB

Note: The draft agenda of the first MB meeting of Cedefop, dated 23 and 24 October 1975, was displayed on screen.

The Chairperson congratulated the Executive Director, the Deputy Director, the Heads of Department and Cedefop staff on finalising all MB documents in time and to a high-quality standard. This was a lot of work, which should be acknowledged and praised.

She informed members that under Item 4 – *Revised draft Programming Document 2023-25, including Cedefop's portfolio review/Opinion of the European Commission*, the Commission would present information on the European Year of Skills 2023, which had been announced by President Ursula von der Leyen in her State of the Union address of 14 September.

As discussed at the Extended Executive Board (EEB) of 1 December 2021, members had received a note (Item 4b) highlighting the key changes between the SPD 2023-25 and the SPD 2024-26. As agreed at the EB meeting preceding the MB on 5 October, Item 8h – *Cedefop's pledge to carbon neutrality* would be discussed together with Item 4 – *Revised SPD 2023-25*. An in-camera meeting on legal issues would take place after this meeting and before the reception. Participation would be limited to the MB members, Stefaan Ceuppens and the following staff from Cedefop: Mr Siebel, Ms Brugia, Mr Graziosi and the rapporteur.

She invited members to comment.

Ms Roman made the following statement for the minutes:

'The ETUC Confederal Secretary, Mr Ludovic Voet, was sending his warm regards to the members of the MB. He planned to be here and the Employees' group respected the Rules of Procedure by requesting this from the Chairperson and the deputy chairpersons, but the leaders of the Governments' group, Employers' group and the Commission did not allow it. Our group discussed this issue this morning and we were not satisfied with this response. This was an unfair treatment towards the Trade Union group. It is not understandable what benefit it brings for the leaders of the Governments' and Employers' group not accepting an observer from the trade unions and to what extent they consulted their group about this. Not accepting an observer from a high-level elected member of ETUC is not a collaborative approach within the MB. It was important to remind the MB members that the Commission has a permanent active observer in all the meetings of the Executive Board and MB. If we demanded fair treatment, we would ask that none of the groups had observers, including the Commission, at the present meeting, as Mr Voet mentioned it in his response letter to the Executive Board. This statement should be included in the minutes.'

The Chairperson confirmed that this statement would be included in the minutes.

The Chairperson concluded that the agenda was adopted with the proposed amendments.

- 1 **Welcome and adoption of the agenda** (*decision*)
- 2 **Minutes of the Management Board meeting of 7 and 8 October 2021** (*adopted by written procedure on 26 November 2021*)
- 3 **Implementation of the Work Programme and budget 2022** (*information*)
- 4 (a) **Revised draft Programming Document 2023-25, including Cedefop's portfolio review/Opinion of the European Commission** (*discussion/adoption*)
 - (b) **Changes in first draft Single Programming Document 2024-26** (*information*)
- 5 **Reporting from the Executive to the Management Board** (*information*)
- 6 **Update on the implementation of the action plan following the external evaluation** (*information*)
- 7 **Elections of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons of the MB and composition of the Executive Board/Extended Executive Board** (*decision*)
- 8 **Administrative issues**
 - (a) Conferences, publications and web services (*information*)
 - (b) Reporting on Internal Control (ICC) activities – Discharge 2020, audits, evaluations and other sources of assurance (*information*)
 - (c) HR developments (*information*)

- (d) General implementing provisions (*if any – decision*)
- (e) Transfers of commitment and payment appropriations in 2022 (*information*)
- (f) Annual report of the Chair of Cedefop's Appeals Committee for the year 2021 (*information*)
- (g) Amending financing decision 2022 (*decision*)
- (h) Cedefop's pledge to climate neutrality (*information*)

9 **Any other business**

- (a) Dates of Executive Board and Management Board meetings in 2023 (*decision*)
- (b) Pending declarations of interests (*information*)
- (c) Cybersecurity (*information*)

In-camera meeting

2. MINUTES OF THE 99TH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD ON 7 AND 8 OCTOBER 2021

The Chairperson reminded members that the minutes had already been adopted by the Management Board on 26 November 2021 by written procedure.

The minutes were available in English, posted in the eGB community and on Cedefop's website.

Members took note of the information.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET 2022 (INFORMATION)

The Chairperson reminded members that as agreed at the EEB meeting of June 2020, the progress report on the Agency's work from January to June of each year was replaced by cumulative tables providing an overview of all changes that had occurred in this period. The tables also included information on how additional activities had been decided. The Agency's overall achievements were presented in the Annual Report adopted by the Management Board by written procedure.

She invited the Executive Director to present the item.

Mr Siebel said that Cedefop continued operating in crisis mode. Staff shifts were discontinued as of 3 October 2022. Physical meetings and missions had resumed. Cedefop's measures continued aligning with the guidelines of the Greek authorities and EU institutions. Safety of staff and business continuity were ensured. The Agency had also reacted swiftly to the war in Ukraine, addressing issues concerning skills and qualifications. In cooperation with ReferNet, Cedefop collected countries' best practices in granting refugees access to the labour market, providing simplified solutions for the recognition of Ukraine's qualifications and addressing language learning and child support needs. The Agency also provided evidence on skills implications in relation to the energy crisis. The inflation all over Europe, particularly Greece, had had an impact on Cedefop's budget. As provided for in the Staff Regulations and

based on Eurostat's reports, a 2.4% intermediate increase of salaries had been applied as of 1 January 2022. In combination with the downgraded coefficient for Greece, this had resulted in a 0.6% increase. Eurostat's estimation, which would be announced by the end of October, foresaw a 6.4% increase, which would result in an additional 4% as of 1 July 2022. The coefficient for Greece was not yet known. If this returned to 85.2%, salaries would increase by approximately EUR 350 000. DG BUDG had foreseen an adjustment in Cedefop's draft budget for 2023. Mr Siebel highlighted some of the activities: the publication of a headline including ReferNet's contributions *What Europe is doing for Ukrainian refugees*; Cedefop's flagship event *2030 on the horizon: digitalisation and artificial intelligence*, in which the Commissioner would participate; the *Seminar for MEPs on post-pandemic employment, skills and social policies*, led by Cedefop and Eurofound, with input from the other three sister agencies, and Cedefop's policy brief *Challenging digital myths*.

The Chairperson invited members to comment.

Ms Lindén welcomed the cooperation with ReferNet on the Ukrainian crisis and the data provided to DG EMPL on skills implications. The salary adjustment was beyond Cedefop's control, but she hoped that there would be no further consequences for the work programme.

Ms Roman said that the Employees' group congratulated Cedefop on its excellent work. She noted that there were a lot of changes in comparison with the agreed work programme and the information provided to the EEB in June. The workload for Cedefop was already high but expectations kept rising while resources were shrinking. This could potentially affect the quality of the Agency's work. It was necessary to find solutions for the budget constraints, which were very concerning. The group noted with surprise that the data Cedefop provided to DG EMPL concerned skills implications for the energy and industrial sectors. However, the energy crisis was linked to the cost of living and quality of jobs in general. Ms Roman asked if the trade unions of these sectors had been consulted. The report summarising the European skills and jobs survey tool was very welcome. She thanked Cedefop colleagues who participated in the ETUC Education and Training Committee meeting.

Mr Donohoe congratulated Cedefop on its work and flexibility in 2022, which was a rather difficult year. The salary indexation was very concerning and would have an impact on the resources. This was not within Cedefop's remit but would definitely have implications for the Agency's outputs. The Employers' group would like to receive more information on the impact of the energy crisis on all sectors of the business community, particularly the SMEs. The group would also like to be informed of the nature of Cedefop's support to the Ukrainian refugees and the added value that this work would have for the Agency.

Mr Plummer said that in her State of the Union address, President von der Leyen called for more emphasis on the recognition of qualifications from non-EU countries. Taking into consideration the directive on this issue, the group requested more information on the work involved for Cedefop.

Ms Geleng congratulated Cedefop staff and management on the Work Programme 2022. The input Cedefop provided for the Ukrainian crisis was requested by the Commission. She thanked the Executive Director for the clear explanation concerning the salary indexation. The skills and talent package adopted in April 2022 aimed to reinforce the EU action and legal framework in

the area of migration and asylum, focusing on labour migration. Europe had substantial labour shortages that could be addressed by facilitating skills matching with non-EU nationals. The pilot scheme focused on people fleeing the war in Ukraine. As a next step, this could be extended to other partner countries. There were a number of instruments for attracting highly skilled workers, e.g. the blue card directive. European labour markets had shortages of low- and medium-skilled workers. These groups were the target of the Talent Pool initiative. The Commission aimed to facilitate transparency for the recognition of the Ukrainian qualifications at EU level. This would speed up the integration of Ukrainian refugees in the EU labour market.

The Chairperson invited the Executive Director to respond.

Mr Siebel thanked members for the positive feedback. Cedefop's management was also very concerned about the impact of the salary indexation on the Agency's budget. Cedefop was an Agency at cruising speed and as such, its budget had remained stable over the years. This might no longer be sustainable. The energy crisis had indeed affected every sector and Cedefop would try to cover all aspects. As a research organisation, Cedefop could provide relevant information to build the bridge on refugee mobility, especially in the context of the European Year of Skills.

Mr Zahilas said that the summary of the outcomes of the ReferNet survey showed that in some cases, for example Romania or Estonia, recognition of qualifications concerned primary or secondary education. Some degree of recognition of professional qualifications for persons who needed temporary protection existed only in Portugal. A coordinated approach with the Commission was necessary.

Mr van Loo said that the research on the energy sector used existing tools for skills intelligence. This approach had already been used in other sectors, such as cities' waste management, the circular economy and agri-food. It focused on the gas sector but also other sectors directly involved, and on the implications the crisis had on occupations, particularly on skills. The online vacancy data across Europe gave indications of skills trending or disappearing. Although this was an extra task, it was done with existing resources. In addition, this research could be used in an upcoming publication for 2023, which would report on the green skills foresight.

The Chairperson concluded that the MB congratulated Cedefop management and staff on its excellent work and took note of the information.

4. (A) REVISED DRAFT PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT 2023-25, INCLUDING CEDEFOP'S PORTFOLIO REVIEW / OPINION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (DISCUSSION/ADOPTION)

The Chairperson said that the draft SPD 2023-25 had been endorsed by the MB by written procedure, which was finalised on 25 January 2022. It was then sent to the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council on 27 January 2022. The Commission's opinion was received on 29 June 2022. The draft SPD 2023-25 was revised taking into account the developments which had occurred since January 2022, the formal opinion of the European Commission, and the outcome of the Portfolio Review workshop, which took place during the Extended Executive Board meeting of 30 June 2022. For ease of reference, members received a version in tracked changes, showing the differences between the current version of the draft SPD 2023-25 and the

version endorsed by the Management Board on 25 January 2022. As concluded by the Executive Board on 5 October, MB members should agree on the general orientations of the SPD. A revised draft including members' feedback would then be presented at the EB on 1 December. The MB would then be asked to adopt the SPD by written procedure before Christmas. This procedure would allow Cedefop to include more information about Cedefop's contribution to the European Year of Skills, pending the availability of the Commission's plan in this respect. In addition, information on the final impact of inflation on salaries and the overall Cedefop budget was expected towards the end of November.

The Chairperson invited the Commission to present its formal opinion and briefly outline the Commission's plans for the 2023 European Year of Skills.

Commission's opinion on the draft SPD 2023-25

Ms Geleng said that the Commission's opinion commended the quality of the SPD. Cedefop's strategic objectives, activities and priorities were aligned with the Council Recommendation on VET, the Osnabrück Declaration and the Skills Agenda. Cedefop's post-2020 strategy, which was developed with the active participation of the three groups and the Commission, was a good basis for the future and the targeted development of the Agency's activities. The systematic review of Cedefop's portfolio contributed substantially to this development. The opinion left room for addressing new priorities that had emerged in the past years and highlighted the need to align even further Cedefop's activities with those of the Commission. The structured cooperation with the four Agencies falling under the remit of DG EMPL and the broader Agency network should be reinforced wherever possible. The opinion also commended Cedefop's strategy for efficiency gains. The next evaluation of the four Agencies would be launched in October 2022. Its outcomes were expected in 2024.

European Year of Skills 2023

Ms Geleng said that in her State of the Union speech, the President of the Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen, announced that 2023 would be the European Year of Skills. Focus on skills would concern the whole workforce and not only young people. The demographic change in Europe but also the green and digital transitions created a need for radical up- and reskilling of all workers. The President noted that while unemployment rates were decreasing, there were staff shortages across Europe. Job vacancies were high both in low- and in high-end jobs. It was necessary to invest in professional education and training and upskilling. Better cooperation with companies was required. To attract the right skills in Europe, it was also necessary to speed up and facilitate the recognition of qualifications from non-EU countries. The President's objective was to make Europe a more attractive place for high-skilled workers. Skills were high in the political agenda but the digital and green transitions should be just and fair for all. As the Commissioner said, skills meant jobs, and jobs were important for the inclusion of each individual in society. The action plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights had set two targets: (a) an employment target of 78% by 2030, and (b) the participation of 60% of the adult workforce in training every year. Cedefop would play a key role but all stakeholders, Member States and social partners should join forces. The European Year of Skills had a strong external dimension, aiming to attract skills from outside the EU.

The Chairperson invited the Executive Director to present Cedefop's revised draft SPD 2023-25, focusing on the changes compared to the version endorsed by the MB in January.

The Executive Director thanked the Commission for sending its opinion in time. This allowed Cedefop to reflect it in the revised SPD. The announcement of the European Year of Skills was very recent, but reference to it was already included in the revised draft. Cedefop was *the* EU Agency for VET and skills. As such, it was fully committed to contributing with its expertise to the success of this initiative. In a first exchange with the Commission, some already planned activities that could be linked to the initiative had been identified. One of these was the conference on linking technological change, skills needs and learning, which would be Cedefop's flagship event for the European Year of Skills. This high-profile event would link the political dimension to Cedefop's expertise and address the multitude of gaps in the European labour market. The foreword of the SPD had been updated to reflect the State of the Union address of the President. The general context made references to the alignment with the policy framework, the role of VET and skills as drivers for the green and digital transitions, the adoption of the Council Recommendation on micro credentials and ILAs, the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis, and the carbon neutrality objective. The multiannual programme section included Cedefop's functional strategies (HR, ICT and digitalisation) and made references to the extended scope of monitoring and analysing VET policy developments. HR and financial resources had been updated to reflect the 3.9% increase of Cedefop's budget for 2023. Minor updates were also made in Section III and the annexes.

At this point Mr Siebel presented the budget execution from 2016 to 2021 and the budget projections until 2025. He said that, in practical terms, Cedefop's stable budget and establishment plan meant that the Agency should do more with fewer resources.

Break of 15 minutes.

The Chairperson invited members to comment.

Comments from the Employers

Ms Dorn said that the Commission's opinion recommended the strong alignment of Cedefop's activities with the Commission's agenda and working needs. However, less focus was given to services provided by the Agency to the Member States and the social partners. The group asked the Commission to keep a balance and take into consideration all important stakeholders. In paragraph 13, the opinion called Cedefop '*to build a degree of flexibility to adapt swiftly to unforeseen developments of high policy relevance*'. While flexibility was indeed necessary, it was equally important to keep a balance with the work programme included in the SPD and adopted by all groups and the Commission. Paragraph 26 of the opinion asked Cedefop to share with the Commission the raw data already available from its Skills-OVATE project. Ms Dorn requested clarifications on this request. Paragraph 31 invited Cedefop to continue improving the balance between administrative and operational staff. However, the Agency had already shifted resources to the operations. She asked if the Commission requested further deployment.

Mr Donohoe congratulated the Commission on the initiative on the European Year of Skills and on putting the skills high on the political agenda. It was

important to ensure that the skills issue was not left behind due to urgent developments. He looked forward to supporting the activities.

Mr Lundström said that the size of companies should be taken into consideration. It was necessary to lower thresholds and develop structural initiatives that met the needs of SMEs, not only those of big companies. Small or medium companies already engaged in the training of their employees. However, it was difficult for them to align with the targets of the green and digital transitions.

Mr Riemer said that the SPD showed the excellent work done by Cedefop and included a broad range of activities, while at the same time allowing for the necessary flexibility. He congratulated the Executive Director and the management on the successful management of change. The foreword was very well drafted, highlighting the importance of skills and reflecting the political messages in a subtle way. Page 46 showed the work done in the past 2.5 years. Annex 17, detailing the synergies with other organisations, was in line with the Commission's recommendation. He congratulated Cedefop on the SPD.

Mr Donohoe said that it was important to find an easy, assimilated way of showing general synergies across the skills ecosystem. The contextual factors were reflected well in the SPD. However, the labour and skills shortages should be further stressed in the document.

Comments from the Governments

Ms Lindén thanked Cedefop for the revised SPD. She welcomed the initiative of the European Year of Skills. Page 16, paragraph 26 of the draft SPD stated that the green apprenticeship and skilling for sectors driving the green transition were instrumental for accelerating transformation and ensuring it would be just for citizens. This rather narrow scope should be broadened by also including VET systems in general. There were several examples of the importance given to green skills within school-based VET, focusing on further education and training systems, as well as work-based learning in the broader sense. It would be difficult for the MB to make a decision on Cedefop's carbon neutrality objective by 2030 (paragraphs 42 and 83) without having the full picture of the implications and resources involved. Setting this objective would require investments. A discussion on future aims, budget and other potential implications, i.e. on Cedefop's role as knowledge broker and meeting place for different VET experts, was necessary. The Governments' group supported the proposal for a climate neutrality study as it would form a good basis for this discussion, but the timeline and resources for the action plan raised concerns. The process was indeed challenging. The prioritisation exercise gave a clear and structured picture of Cedefop's direction for the next years. The NIPs should be further highlighted in the strategic part of the SPD. The modern communication plan of Cedefop, which included podcast videos and other up-to-date channels, met the needs of the younger target groups. Ms Lindén invited Cedefop to focus on input factors in order to strengthen the attractiveness of VET. She asked Cedefop to expand the long-term risk analysis and reflect on potential implications on the Agency's budget related to the energy crisis and inflation rate.

Comments from the Employees

Mr Patuzzi said that VET policies were not isolated from the economy. At the same time, Cedefop did not operate in a vacuum. The inflation and energy prices were affecting the whole society, causing implications to the Agency's budget. There were not just the green and digital transitions. Workers were affected by the ongoing social transition, the rising unemployment, the disappearance of some jobs and the emergence of new ones, and the high demand for skilled workers. This was precisely Cedefop's work, which was indispensable. However, Cedefop's activities could not continue expanding while resources were shrinking. Carbon neutrality was not only about physical meetings or building investments. It would have implications on the outputs of Cedefop and the job descriptions of staff. Mobilising resources would impact the budget in the short, medium and long term. The carbon neutrality objective should be discussed in relation to the SPD. The group supported the initiative but Cedefop's mission and objectives should not be jeopardised. It was clear that negative priorities should be identified through the portfolio review. It was necessary to strengthen VET and support re- and upskilling of all workers in order to create reliable, future prospects for them as the crisis made this very difficult. The transition should be just for everyone. Cedefop should focus more on these positive priorities in the coming years by having a secure budget and making use of the expertise of its tripartite MB.

Ms Roman said that the European Year of Skills might have an impact on Cedefop's work programme. She thanked the Commission for the presentation and for linking the Year of Skills to the Pillar of Social Rights for a just and fair transition. It was important to address the needs of workers, not only those of companies. Quality training would help workers find quality jobs. In any crisis social dialogue and training provisions declined. The Commission should ensure the budget for any additional Cedefop activities in relation to the European Year of Skills. The budget constraints were known but the SPD did not provide enough information on how the energy crisis would be addressed nor on the impact any measures would have on the functioning of the Agency and the staff's working conditions. The activities for the European Year of Skills might create a need to identify more negative priorities. Cedefop's workload was already huge and more activities would jeopardise the focus of the Agency. Simplifying procedures could reduce the workload, but moving everything online might reduce Cedefop's visibility. The tripartite working groups should continue supporting Cedefop's research. Microcredentials should not be separated from qualifications and learning outcomes. Cedefop should consult the Staff Committee to find ways to attract applications from a wider audience in order to improve its geographical balance.

Ms Babrauskiene said that it appeared as if Cedefop aimed to transform itself into a digital organisation (paragraph 85). Reducing the Agency's carbon footprint was necessary but digital footprints, too, had an environmental impact. According to paragraph 108, missions and meetings would be reduced by 72% in 2023. However, 2023 was the European Year of Skills. Given Cedefop's remote location, this could be a lost opportunity for the visibility of the Agency. As a member of the MB, Ms Babrauskiene could not support the full digitalisation of events.

Ms Cilona said that Member States and social partners were using ESF+ funds for the work on up- and reskilling. This might be a solution for Cedefop's shrinking resources. The Agency had a tripartite MB with varied expertise. Use of its expertise could reduce the workload. Virtual events were useful but could

not replace physical ones in terms of interaction. This would be detrimental for social dialogue.

Ms Coenen said that social partners at national level could contribute substantially to the new study on the role of VET in supporting innovation in regional ecosystems (paragraph 137).

Ms Simeonova said that reference to quality assurance both in initial and continuing VET and CVET should be reinforced in the text.

Comments by the Commission

Ms Geleng thanked Cedefop for taking into consideration the Commission's opinion. Cedefop's strategic objectives were derived from the Council Recommendation on VET of 24 November 2020, which was signed by the Council, the Commission and the social partners (Paragraph 9 of the opinion). There was no imbalance towards the Commission's activities as the latter were always representing the interests of the Union. ESCO was the taxonomy on skills and qualifications on which other instruments like the EQF and EURES were based. It was also part of Europass. It was not only used by the Commission but also by Member States and individuals and facilitated understanding and transparency. Europass could make data from skills OVATE available to more users, and tailored to the needs of the individuals. The call for further efficiency gains was a more general request which applied to all organisations, as public funds had to be spent efficiently. The Commission President mentioned the struggle of SMEs and noted that it was necessary to match the needs of the companies, big or small, with the aspirations of the individuals. The Commission worked closely with social partners, public employment services and companies. In the context of the Pact for Skills, there were 12 large-scale partnerships established and 6 million training opportunities pledged. That was precisely to address labour shortages. Indeed, there was a need to focus on up- and reskilling and skills intelligence. IVET mobility was a clear target of the VET Recommendation and a Union priority. Cedefop's activities would be at the centre of the European Year of Skills and the Agency's role would be crucial.

The Chairperson invited the Executive Director to present Cedefop's pledge to climate neutrality.

Item 8h – Cedefop's carbon neutrality objective

The Executive Director said that the need to reduce the Agency's carbon footprint was a one-way road. It would not be politically or financially viable for any organisation to go back to the gas emissions of 2019. At this point, Cedefop had no action plan, but the pledge was necessary and should be communicated to the stakeholders and the public. The SPD included all available information so far. The study on the climate neutrality and the action plan were foreseen in Cedefop's budget for 2023. The details would be communicated to the MB and would be included in the budget to be adopted.

The Chairperson invited the Executive Director to respond to comments related to the draft SPD 2023-25.

The Executive Director thanked members for their feedback. The synergies with other organisations would be presented in a clearer way. Cedefop's tasks would expand in the future but that might not be sustainable. Cedefop was not managing the ESF+ funds but any funds available would be welcome. The

portfolio review was a good basis for identifying negative and positive priorities. Physical meetings might not always be possible in the future, so some might need to be virtual. The 72% of savings on travelling seemed manageable so far. Cedefop was already working closely with the Staff Committee for the improvement of selection procedures. The management was in the process of procuring a company to assist newcomers. In Mr Siebel's opinion, the geographical balance in Cedefop was very diverse. Concerning the low percentage of female managers, Cedefop was a small organisation with a management team of only six persons. Therefore, any change shifted the statistics. The Agency's activities were closely linked to the European Year of Skills. It was evident that demands would grow, and this would unavoidably draw on Agency resources.

The Deputy Director said that Cedefop's ambitious pledge on climate neutrality would indeed have budget implications. At this stage, members were requested to (a) endorse the pledge as a high-level strategic commitment, and (b) approve the climate neutrality study included in the Work Programme 2023. The outcomes of this study would allow the Agency to shape a strategy (paragraph 173 of the SPD) and a roadmap with scenarios and gradual deployment of measures to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2030. These scenarios would be discussed with members to decide on the best way forward.

Mr Zahilas said that as a member of the inter-agency TVET working group he would discuss a tabular presentation of Agencies' initiatives and projects in its next meeting. The move of the microcredentials to 'expand' in the portfolio review was based on the result of the dedicated workshop. The quality assurance criteria were mentioned in different sections of the SPD, such as in the NIPs and EQF/NQFs. Regarding the tripartite working groups that should continue supporting Cedefop's research, Cedefop's experience was very positive from the case of the tripartite Advisory Group on microcredentials, and the Agency planned to follow the same approach in the future. Cedefop would continue updating the mobility scoreboard and would also include the indicator on learner mobility, but due to lack of resources, the policy learning forum had to be considered a negative priority.

Mr van Loo said that Skills-OVATE was Cedefop's web tool where stakeholders, social partners, policy-makers and other stakeholders could find information on labour market and skill trend based on online job advertisements. Cedefop was no longer responsible for collecting the raw data, a task which was now with Eurostat. The complete classified data and a selection of unclassified data which can be used for experimental analysis were available to the Commission colleagues. Indeed, there was potential for linking the initiative with ESCO and Europass in the context of the web intelligence hub. Discussions with Europass and ESCO were in progress. However, skills intelligence had to be shared in the right context, especially with individuals.

Ms Lindén said that the Governments' group endorsed the pledge and approved the climate study.

Mr Donohoe said that the Employers' group agreed with the proposed way forward outlined by the Deputy Director.

Ms Roman said that the climate neutrality study should be discussed with the MB and the Cedefop Staff Committee in order to ensure that staff's job profiles would not be affected.

Ms Geleng said that the Commission fully endorsed Cedefop's pledge on climate neutrality. The tripartite ESF+ committee was already exploring best practices for the use of funds available at EU level.

The Chairperson concluded that members endorsed Cedefop's pledge on climate neutrality and approved the climate neutrality study in the Work Programme 2023. The outcomes of the study and related scenarios would be discussed with the Executive Board in March 2023. The Management Board agreed on the general orientations of the SPD 2023-25. However, the SPD would become final after adoption of the Union budget setting the amount of the contribution and the establishment plan (expected in December 2022). A revised version of the SPD would be discussed with the EB on 1 December and approval of the MB would be sought by written procedure.

The Chairperson thanked members and closed the meeting at 18.45.

Note: The in-camera meeting of the MB took place on 7 October at 9.30.

Friday 7 October 2022

The Chairperson opened the MB plenary meeting at 11.15.

7. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND DEPUTY CHAIRPERSONS OF THE MB AND COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD/EXTENDED EXECUTIVE BOARD (DECISION)

The Chairperson said that Article 7 of Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 provided that:

The Management Board shall elect a Chairperson and three Deputy Chairpersons as follows:

- (a) one from among the members representing the governments of the Member States;*
- (b) one from among the members representing the employers' organisations;*
- (c) one from among the members representing the employees' organisations; and*
- (d) one from among the members representing the Commission.*

*The Chairperson and the Deputy Chairpersons shall be elected by a majority of **two thirds** of members of the Management Board with the right to vote.*

The term of office of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairpersons shall be 1 year. Their term of office shall be renewable. Where their membership of the Management Board ends at any time during their term of office, their term of office shall automatically expire on that date.

Article 10(4) of Regulation (EU) 2019/128 provides that '[t]he Executive Board shall be composed of the Chairperson of the Management Board, the three Deputy Chairpersons, the coordinators of the three groups referred to in Article 4(6) and one representative of the Commission. Each group referred to in

Article 4(6) may designate up to two alternates to attend the meetings of the Executive Board in the event that a member appointed by the relevant group is absent. The Chairperson of the Management Board shall also be the Chairperson of the Executive Board’.

Article 10(5) of Regulation (EU) 2019/128 provides that *‘the term of office of members of the Executive Board shall be 2 years. That term shall be renewable. The term of office of a member of the Executive Board shall end on the date on which his or her membership of the Management Board ends’.*

The Chairperson said that usually the Commission did not take a turn holding the chairpersonship.

Ms Geleng confirmed.

The Chairperson said that at its meeting of 2 October 2019, the Executive Board concluded that – subject to the agreement of the Management Board – the terms of office of the Chairperson of the Management Board and the Deputy Chairpersons should be renewed for a second year for reasons of continuity. At its meeting of 9 October 2020, the Management Board confirmed the mandate of the then Chairperson (Ms Dorn, Employers’ group) for a second year. Members were invited to elect or confirm the Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons. The chairpersonship should then rotate among the groups in the order applied until now (i.e. next chairpersonships: Employees, Employers).

The Chairperson invited the coordinators to express the views of their groups and elect or confirm the Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons, as well as nominate the members that would participate in the (Extended) Executive Board meetings.

Ms Lindén said that the Governments’ group supported the continuation of the current chairpersonship of the MB. She would remain Spokesperson of the Governments’ group to the Executive Board and Mr Staudecker would remain Coordinator. The group nominated Mr Skiadas, Mr Schuster and Ms Cernosa for the Extended Executive Board.

Mr Plummer said that the Employers’ group supported the current chairpersonship. Mr Donohoe would remain Deputy Chairperson of the group and himself Coordinator. The group nominated Mr Riemer, Ms Saidi and Mr Lundström for the Extended Executive Board.

Ms Roman said that the Employees’ group supported the continuation of the chairpersonship. Mr Patuzzi would remain Deputy Chairperson of the group and herself Coordinator. The group nominated Ms Babrauskiene, Ms Coenen and Mr Christopoulos for the Extended Executive Board.

Ms Geleng said that the Commission supported the continuation of the Chairpersonship. She would remain as Deputy Chairperson of the Commission.

The Chairperson thanked members for their support and trust.

The Chairperson announced that all members had unanimously agreed on the nominations and congratulated the (E)EB members.

4. (B) CHANGES IN FIRST DRAFT SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT 2024-26 (INFORMATION)

The Chairperson invited the Executive Director to present the item.

The Executive Director said that at the EEB meeting of 1 December 2021, members had requested a document that would help them identify the changes between the first draft single programming document for the year N+1 (i.e. the SPD 2024-26) and the final draft of the previous one (i.e. the SPD 2023-25). To maintain readability of the document while making key changes more visible, it was proposed that at the EB in December 2022 members would receive the following set of documents: (a) a clean version of the first draft SPD 2024-26; (b) a one-pager highlighting the key changes between the first draft SPD 2024-26 and the final SPD 2023-25; (c) a tracked changes version of the first draft SPD 2024-26 in comparison with the earlier version of the SPD 2023-25. The changes displayed would concern: list of acronyms; vision, mission and values; Section I – general context; Section II – multiannual programming; Section 2.1.3. – multiannual programme; Section 2.2. – human and financial resource outlook for the years and resource outlook over the years; and Section 2.3. – efficiency gains. Changes to the foreword, executive summary and the fiches, as well as editing details, formatting issues, etc. would not be displayed.

No further comments were received.

The Chairperson concluded that members agreed to Cedefop's proposal and asked the Executive Director to implement it in the first draft PD 2024-26 to be presented at the EB meeting on 1 December 2022.

5. REPORTING FROM THE EXECUTIVE TO THE MANAGEMENT BOARD (INFORMATION)

The Chairperson said that the reporting highlighted the main issues considered by the EB/EEB since the MB meeting of 7 and 8 October 2021 and until September 2022.

This was an updated version of the one members had received on 11 March 2022.

The Chairperson said that this reporting was indicative. Members were invited to refer to the final minutes of the EB meetings, which had been sent to the MB once adopted.

No comments were received.

The Chairperson concluded that the MB took note of the information.

6. UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION (INFORMATION)

The Chairperson invited the Deputy Director to present the item.

Ms Brugia said that as an EU agency, Cedefop was subject to periodical external evaluations led by DG EMPL. The last evaluation had led to three specific recommendations for Cedefop. The action plan had been discussed with the EB and MB, and progress reported regularly to the EB and the MB. The two last pending actions since last year concerned the alignment of performance indicators with other agencies and the full digitalisation of Cedefop's procedures. In the meantime, both recommendations had been

closed by DG EMPL – in May and two days before, respectively – on the basis of the evidence Cedefop provided. The new external evaluation was expected to start in October. Like the previous one, the evaluation would assess Cedefop both individually and compared to the other agencies falling under the remit of DG EMPL.

The Chairperson invited members to comment.

Ms Roman congratulated Cedefop and asked when the results of the new external evaluation were expected. The process of the previous one had raised a lot of comments. There was a public consultation which did not really serve Cedefop's interest. MB members should be more involved in such consultations. The outcome of the evaluation could only be useful for Cedefop if the feedback received was well grounded and based on the right information.

Mr Plummer said that the Commission's opinion called for a further shift of resources to the operational activities.

Ms Lindén congratulated Cedefop on the implementation of the action plan. The group welcomed the management of resources at Cedefop but the feasibility of striving for more efficiency gains should be closely monitored.

Ms Geleng said that the evaluation would be completed by 2024. It would cover Eurofound, the ETF, EU-OSHA and Cedefop, but not the ELA, as that agency was still fairly new. The Commission planned to consult MB members as well as Cedefop staff and management.

The Deputy Director said that although the action plan was formally closed, streamlining and simplification to gain efficiency as well as shifting resources from administration to core business would remain ongoing efforts at Cedefop.

The Chairperson concluded that members took note of the information and congratulated Cedefop's management on the implementation of the action plan.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

(a) Conferences, publications and web services (*information*)

The Chairperson invited Mr Bausewein to present the item.

Mr Bausewein said that the new publication formats had been very well received. He highlighted the conference *Powering the European digital transition*, which would take place in mid-December. This event would be Cedefop's kick-off into the European Year of Skills 2023 and was closely linked to Cedefop's second European skills and jobs survey and the related web tool. The journey to the European Year of Skills had already started with the kick-off meeting of the Heads of Communication from DG EMPL, the ELA, EU-OSHA, the ETF and Eurofound. It was important to join forces in communication and provide evidence to all stakeholders in order to promote up- and reskilling of the European labour force. This was not so much a matter of budget as a matter of making strategic choices for Cedefop's corporate communication.

The Chairperson invited members to comment.

Mr Donohoe congratulated Cedefop on the new publication formats. The Employers' group had some concerns on the balance of online and physical events. Some of the online events had impressive numbers but numbers did

not always represent engagement. It was important to identify what users really liked, as this would contribute to the prioritisation exercise.

Ms Roman said that a few years before, online surveys indeed provided this type of data. The Employees' group supported the digitalisation but printed publications were still very welcome.

Ms Lindén said that the short briefing notes were highly appreciated. There were pros and cons to both physical and virtual meetings. This issue should be discussed again in the future.

Ms Geleng said that the Commission was looking forward to joining forces for the European Year of Skills.

Mr Bausewein said that the new print-on-demand service could be a solution for more printouts on request.

The Chairperson concluded that members took note of the information.

(b) Reporting on Internal Control (ICC) activities – Discharge 2020, audits, evaluations and other sources of assurance (*information*)

The Chairperson invited the Deputy Director to present the item.

European Court of Auditors (ECA)

Ms Brugia said that the ECA's preliminary observations had been discussed at the EEB in June 2022. Cedefop's annual accounts were considered legal and regular in all material aspects. The ECA's final report was expected at the end of October and would be publicly available. The link to the report would be sent to the MB members.

Discharge

The discharge report had been adopted by the Parliament before the summer and was discussed at the EEB in June 2022. The Parliament had praised Cedefop for the high quality of its work on several aspects, including: core business, internal control, budget management and the response to the pandemic. It had also acknowledged that not only did Cedefop accomplish its work programme but also exceeded it, despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic. The report also indicated some areas for further improvement, such as the lack of gender equality in the MB and the externalisation of the legal service, which was still unresolved. In the meantime, however, a vacancy notice for the post of legal advisor had been published and the deadline expired the previous week. The Parliament had expressed concern that Cedefop staff had difficulties in liaising with the Greek healthcare and social security systems. Cedefop did not agree with this comment, as staff were actually strongly supported by the Agency. For example, during the pandemic and in cooperation with the Greek authorities, Cedefop had organised appointments for the vaccination of non-Greek staff. However, in this context the management was developing a comprehensive programme to assist newcomers upon their arrival in Thessaloniki. Once again, the Parliament had commented on the missing declarations of interests. Until the previous week, Cedefop had managed to collect all missing declarations from the main members. In the meantime, some replacements took place and, as a result, six declarations were pending, two from main members and four from alternates. This issue appeared to be a moving target,

but an approach had now been decided which worked, namely: in the absence of a declaration of interests, members or alternates would no longer be invited to meetings, or receive documentation related to the meetings, or participate in written procedures for taking decisions.

The Chairperson invited members to comment.

Ms Geleng said that the Commission welcomed the ECA report. She trusted that the weaknesses identified (i.e. in recruitment procedures and financial management) would be addressed in an appropriate manner. She congratulated Cedefop on completing all actions of previous years. The Commission also congratulated Cedefop on the discharge 2020 and noted the good budget monitoring and the fact that the EP highlighted several instances of cooperation with other Agencies and international organisations.

The Chairperson concluded that the MB took note of the information.

(c) HR developments (information)

The Chairperson asked the Executive Director to present the item.

The Executive Director said that Cedefop was focusing on selecting staff with the right combination of expertise, which would positively impact the Agency's ability to achieve its mission. The establishment plan remained unchanged since 2018 with 91 posts. The target of 95% occupation rate would be met by the end of the year. The multiannual HR strategy had three pillars: talent acquisition, talent management and staff wellbeing. It was worth noting that: selections were now completed remotely; the management had developed a strategic workforce planning routine; the IAS audit on HR and ethics had now been closed; the process on staff performance management was being revised; question-time meetings had been introduced, during which staff addressed questions to the management; Cedefop had close cooperation with ENISA on the dignity at work, i.e. the exchange of confidential counsellors. The management was working closely with the newly elected Staff Committee.

Mr Angelini said that the Staff Committee welcomed the HR strategy and encouraged the Heads of Department to ease the staff workload. Discussions with HR were ongoing. During the pandemic, the management supported staff, but unforeseen situations could always occur. The Committee welcomed the programme for newcomers and the streamlining of the CDR procedure. Dignity at work and equal opportunity was fully respected. The Staff Committee appreciated the constructive social dialogue and the consultation of staff through pulse surveys. The management had invited the Staff Committee to the meeting with the external contractor for the next staff engagement survey. The Staff Committee fully supported Cedefop's pledge to climate neutrality, acknowledged the complexity of this issue, and expressed readiness to discuss relevant actions and measures with management. The efforts of the management to achieve a broader geographical balance were highly appreciated.

The Chairperson invited members to comment.

Mr Donohoe said that Cedefop should ensure the continuity of the follow-up to the staff engagement surveys. The most important outcome of such surveys was the trend. The Employers' group noticed with concern that 75% of respondents did not have time for professional development. This appeared to be quite a high number, especially for an organisation such as Cedefop.

Ms Lindén welcomed the report and the work done on talent acquisition and staff wellbeing. She congratulated Cedefop on the high occupation rate of the establishment plan. The Governments' group noted the high importance of workforce planning and urged Cedefop to develop a forward-looking approach regarding forthcoming retirements.

Mr Patuzzi thanked the Executive Director for the presentation. He also thanked the Chair of the Staff Committee for the information provided. Cooperation with the Staff Committee and the MB members would help set the right questions for the staff engagement survey. The close cooperation with the Staff Committee was also necessary for the climate neutrality objective, as any action might affect the job descriptions and work of the Agency's staff.

Ms Geleng said that the absence of candidates' appeals in 2021 proved that Cedefop's efforts to improve the selection procedures were successful. The Commission welcomed the attention to equality, diversity and staff wellbeing. She agreed that geographical balance was not easy for agencies. The percentage of young (below 40) newly recruited staff had decreased to 5%. She asked why Cedefop had difficulty in recruiting younger persons.

The Executive Director said that the social dialogue with the Staff Committee was continuous, with regular formal and informal meetings with the management. Indeed, the trend of the staff engagement surveys was very important. To ensure continuity, the survey questions were aligned. Cedefop was using the same framework contract with other agencies, so results would be comparable. The 75% of respondents that had no time for training should be balanced with the 70% who declared happy with the training provided. The pandemic had interrupted the internal knowledge seminars right after its first edition on artificial intelligence, but training at work was offered to staff. Cedefop was an old agency and, as such, suffered from demography, but in view of forthcoming retirements, this was expected to change in the near future. The results of the staff engagement survey would be communicated to the MB. However, consultation of members on the questions was not foreseen by the framework contract. The Staff Committee would be consulted on the development of the action plan for climate neutrality. Concerning Cedefop's difficulty to recruit younger professionals, this was mostly due to the required years of experience.

The Chairperson concluded that members took note of the information.

(d) General implementing provisions (if any – decision)

No presentation.

Members took note of the information.

(e) Transfers of commitment and payment appropriations in 2022 (information)

No presentation.

Members took note of the information.

(f) Annual report of the Chair of Cedefop's Appeals Committee for the year 2021 (information)

No presentation.

Members took note of the information.

(g) Amending financing decision 2022 (decision)

The Chairperson said that members had received the draft amending decision on 26 September 2022. She asked the Deputy Director to present the item.

Ms Brugia said that the financing decision was Cedefop's work programme and was an integral part of the SPD. In the course of the year substantial amendments to the work programme might be required. The amendment of the work programme was called 'amending financing decision'. There were two ways to identify amendments that were 'substantial': (a) cumulated changes to the global budgetary envelope in the work programme exceeding 20%; (b) amendments that changed the nature of the work programme, regardless of their amount. For example, a new or cancelled activity was by definition substantial. Members were requested to adopt the draft amending financing decision, which included the list of changes required.

The Chairperson invited members to comment.

No comments were received.

The Chairperson concluded that the amending financing decision 2022 was adopted.

(h) Cedefop's pledge to climate neutrality (information)

Discussed under 4.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Dates of Executive Board meetings and Management Board meetings in 2023 (decision)

The Chairperson said that as concluded at the virtual MB 2021, the MB meetings would take place in Thessaloniki as physical meetings only. Concerning the (E)EB meetings, the last meeting of the year 2021 in December and the first meeting of 2022 in March took place virtually, while the EEB meeting of June 2022 took place as a physical one in Thessaloniki. As agreed with all groups in the MB 2021, the situation should be reassessed in the current meeting. Members were therefore invited to express their views on the format of the meetings for 2023 and to confirm their availability on the dates proposed.

Ms Roman said that the group requested the extension of the EB on 3 and 4 July 2023 in Thessaloniki.

Ms Geleng said that the Commission preferred that all EB meetings be virtual except the one preceding the MB. The extension of the EB would depend on the topics on the agenda.

The Chairperson concluded that the following dates and format of meetings were confirmed. The request for the extension of the EB meeting in July 2023 would be discussed at the EB meeting of December 2022.

Dates	Meeting location
Executive Board meetings in 2023 1 March 2023 3-4 July 2023 4 December 2023	Virtual Thessaloniki Virtual
Management Board meeting 2023 Thursday and Friday 5 and 6 October with an Executive Board meeting on the eve, Wednesday 4 October 2023	Thessaloniki

(b) Pending declarations of interests *(information)*

Already discussed under 8b.

(c) Cybersecurity *(information)*

The Chairperson invited the Executive Director to present the item.

Mr Siebel said that cybersecurity threats had evolved, especially during the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. In respect to the forthcoming Cybersecurity Regulation of the EU, Cedefop's level of maturity in the field of cybersecurity was overall assessed as medium. In order to improve, Cedefop worked closely with CERT-EU and ENISA, and participated in, and followed up on, all relevant EUAN activities in relation to the new Cybersecurity Regulation. This required internal resources and external contractors. Cedefop estimated that, unless shared or centralised services were secured, the ICT team would have to grow significantly. For a small agency like Cedefop this would be rather difficult.

No comments were received.

The Chairperson concluded that members took note of information.

The Chairperson thanked members and Cedefop staff and closed the meeting at 13.00.

Signed on 21 December 2022

Nadine Nerguisian
 Chairperson of the Management Board

Jürgen Siebel
 Executive Director