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PRESS RELEASE

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Digital transition a game-changer for apprenticeships

Digital transition is a game-changer for apprenticeships and apprentices as a [symposium](#), co-organised by [Cedefop](#) and the [OECD](#) on 15 and 16 June in Thessaloniki, showed.

It was the third joint symposium on apprenticeships. This year's topic was 'Apprenticeship and the digital transition'. The event brought together 100 researchers, policy-makers, social partners and practitioners from around the world to explore the links between apprenticeships and the digital transition, and discuss their implications for policy-making.

Digital tools such as simulators, virtual reality, as well as blended learning approaches which combine traditional classroom with online learning can make the learning process even more relevant, engaging and efficient, and can attract new groups of learners. However, digitalisation calls for digital skills to be developed across apprenticeship occupations and requires occupation-specific responses, including opening apprenticeships to new digital sectors.



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The symposium, a [European Year of Skills](#) event, was built around 13 papers from Europe, US, Canada and China that shared new evidence or offered analysis on the challenges and opportunities that digitalisation already brings, or may bring, for apprenticeships in the future.

In his opening remarks, Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel noted: ‘The link between the symposium and the European Year of Skills is timely as the European Union aims to address skills gaps with a focus on reskilling people for the digital and green transitions. Cedefop data on the impact of digitalisation and automation on EU jobs show that it translates into task re-engineering, not massive job destruction. But we see huge upskilling and reskilling needs in relation to digital skills.’

OECD Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Stefano Scarpetta said: ‘A responsible vocational education and training system is critically important to prepare young people for today’s and, in particular, for tomorrow’s jobs and provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities for workers affected by the digital transition. Apprenticeships play an essential role in this respect as they are designed to bring the education system, on one hand, and the world of work, on the other, together.’

The symposium also made clear the great potential, relevance and importance of apprenticeships in helping develop the skills people and enterprises need to shape and adapt to the green and digital transitions.

Presentations by Cedefop and OECD experts set the scene, while UNESCO, the European Commission, the Joint Research Centre and the Swiss Federal University for VET on behalf of the ILO contributed valuable input from international policies and practices. A closing panel of key actors included apprentices, apprenticeship teachers, vocational education and training providers, company and trade union representatives.

The symposium programme, presentations and presenter bios are available on the [event page](#). A publication of the research papers will be available online in January 2024.

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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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