



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

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Cedefop in brief

Supporting European policies
for skills



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of Vocational Training

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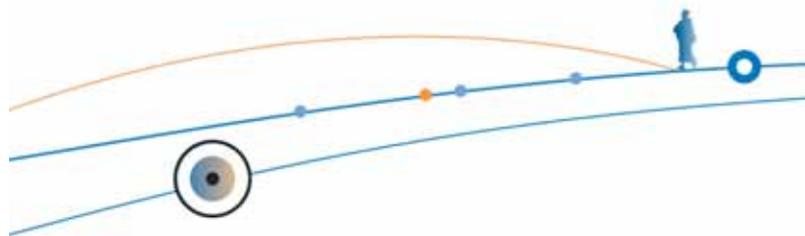
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A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu>).

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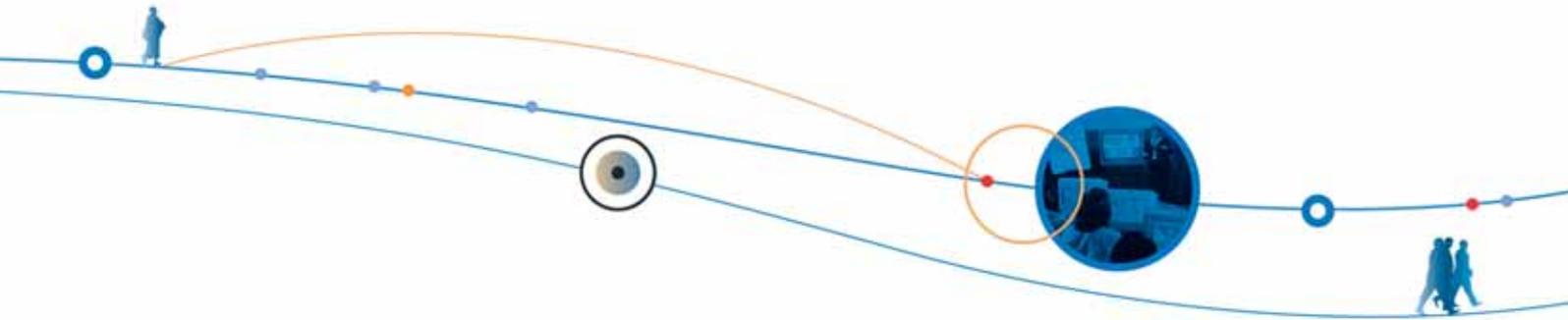
The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference Centre for vocational education and training. We provide information on and analyses of vocational education and training systems, policies, research and practice. Cedefop was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No. 337/75.

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Supporting European policies for skills



Europe has a great tradition of producing talented and skilled people. That tradition has never been more important than today.

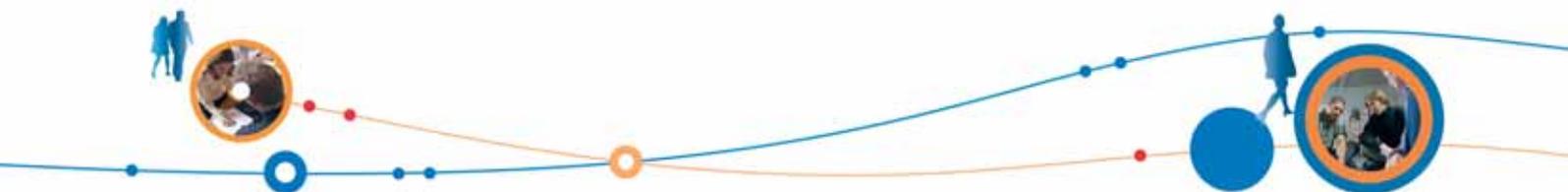
The European Union (EU), its Member States and social partners are committed to making Europe's education and training systems the best in the world.

Cedefop, as the EU's agency supporting policy development in vocational education and training, provides the expertise to help them achieve that aim.



Why vocational education and training is important for Europe

Cedefop strengthens European cooperation in vocational education and training policy



Between 2006 and 2020, Europe is expected to generate 20 million more jobs. More than 19 million **new jobs will require qualifications at the highest levels**; another 13 million new jobs will require upper- and post-secondary level, **especially vocational qualifications**. These increases will be offset by a sharp fall in jobs for those with low-level qualifications. Such jobs, which accounted for a third of all employment in 1996, will make up **less than a fifth of the total by 2020**.

Besides a rising demand for skills, Europe faces demographic change. From 2009, more Europeans will be aged over 54 than aged 15 to 24. Yet older workers are less likely to participate in vocational education and training.

For Europe to raise skill levels, its education and training systems have to improve. For people to acquire the skills they need the right policies must be put in place. But to develop the right policies we need to understand how our economies, societies and people are changing. We need to know more about what, where, when, why and how we learn.

Policies for vocational education and training are decided by Member States; but the EU supports these policies by establishing shared objectives, common principles and tools, guidelines, recommendations and statistics. This is where Cedefop comes in.

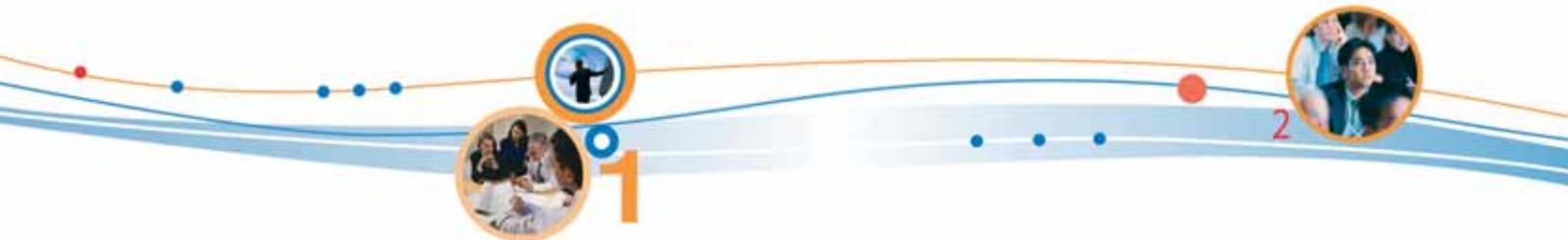
To support the European Commission, Member States and social partners in developing policies for vocational education and training, Cedefop:

- (a) identifies trends and challenges for lifelong learning and vocational education and training policies;
- (b) brings together policy-makers, social partners, researchers and practitioners to share and debate ideas on the best ways to tackle the challenges we face;
- (c) develops ideas and methods for European approaches and tools to achieve the common aim to improve skills and training;
- (d) raises awareness of how vocational education and training is evolving, its role in lifelong learning and how it contributes to other related policies;
- (e) disseminating information through websites, publications, networks, study visits, conferences and seminars.

Founded in 1975 ⁽¹⁾, Cedefop is one of the oldest regulatory EU agencies. It moved to Thessaloniki, Greece in 1995.

⁽¹⁾ Council Regulation of 10 February 1975 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) EEC No 337/75, *Official Journal of the European Communities* L39, 13.2.1975 as last amended by Council Regulation EC No. 2051/2004.

Four priorities for Cedefop's work



Helping to shape European training policies

Cedefop monitors and reports on the training-related policies Member States are putting in place. It analyses progress in implementing common European priorities, principles and tools. More than this, Cedefop helps design, develop and implement these common European approaches.

For example, Cedefop is involved in developing Europass, the European qualifications framework and European credit system for vocational education and training – all of which make it easier to study and work in another Member State.

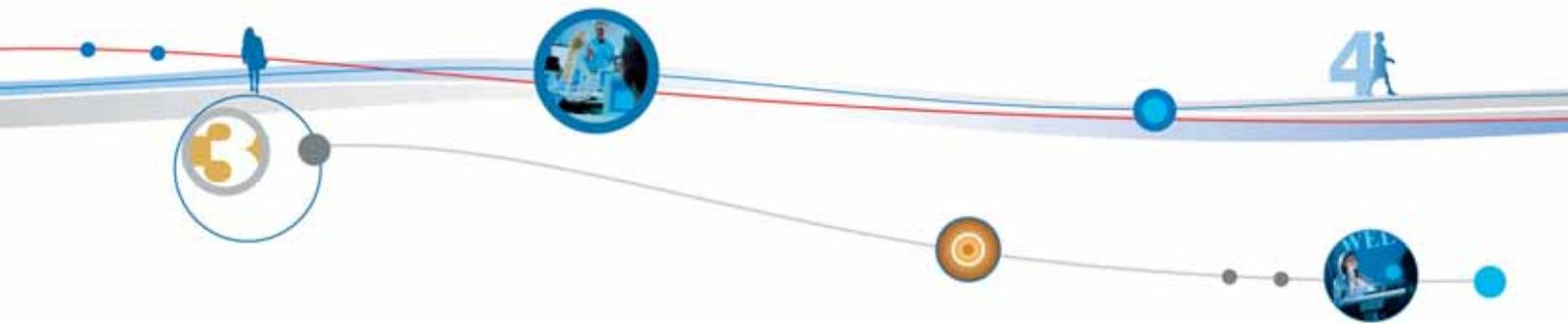
In addition, Cedefop contributes to developing common European principles for validating non-formal learning, improving vocational guidance, and assuring the quality of training.

These principles aim to help people to continue to learn throughout their careers, and make use their learning, regardless of how it has been acquired.

Interpreting European trends in skills and learning

We need to understand more about how the demand for skills will change and how this affects what we need to learn. The better we can anticipate skill needs, the better our policies will be. For this reason Cedefop provides regular forecasts of the supply and demand by occupation and sector and identifies possible mismatches. It is working on devising a common approach to forecasting skill needs in Europe.

In its research work, Cedefop examines how we acquire knowledge and skills and how this learning is measured. People learn in different settings – at work, during leisure, while abroad and at schools, colleges and universities. Cedefop is looking at what this means for institutions, curricula, teaching methods and ways of evaluating learning.



Assessing the benefits of training

Company investment in employees' skills can lead to greater productivity, more innovation and higher profits. Individuals also benefit from training; it helps workers improve their career prospects. It can help protect those who are marginalised or otherwise at risk of losing their job. Yet public and private investment in skills is relatively low in Europe.

Demonstrating the benefits of vocational education and training may encourage both enterprises and individuals to invest in it. Cedefop is looking at the specific benefits that vocational education and training – rather than general education – bring to individuals, enterprises and, more broadly, our economies and societies.

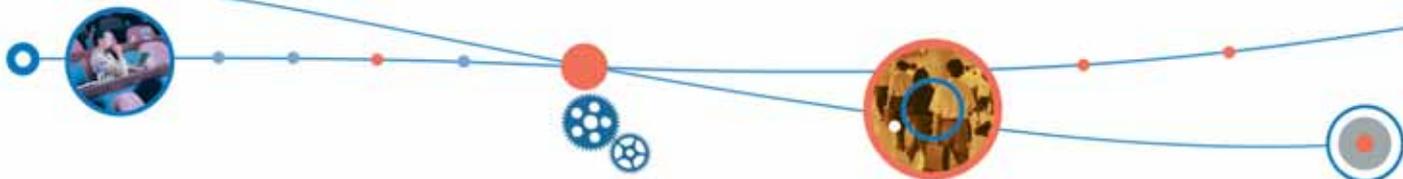
Raising the profile of vocational education and training

To raise the profile of training and increase awareness of its role in lifelong learning, Cedefop disseminates clear, reliable, timely, and – where possible – comparable information to its target groups, namely policy-makers, researchers and practitioners, through **electronic and printed media**.

But one of the best ways to exchange information and ideas about training is still through personal contact. In its **study visits, conferences and workshops**, Cedefop brings together policy-makers, researchers and training professionals from various backgrounds so that they can learn from each other and generate new ideas to tackle common problems.

Cedefop online

Cedefop in print



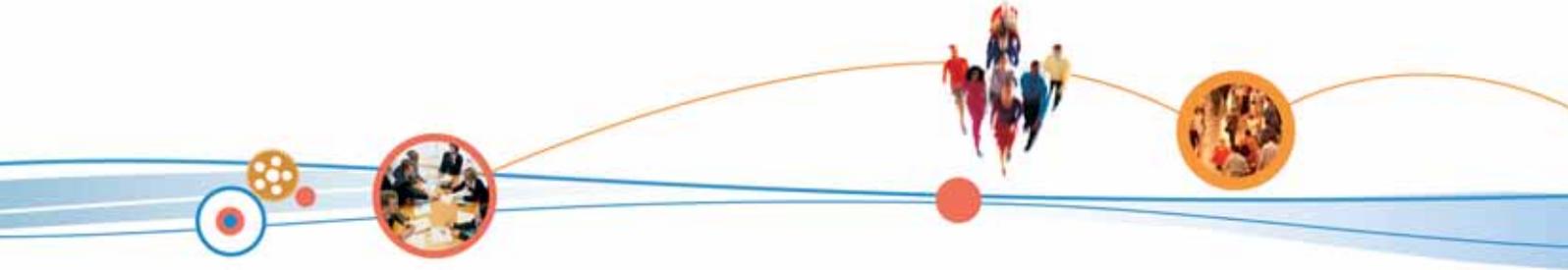
Cedefop's web portal www.cedefop.europa.eu reflects the four priorities of its work and targets information to policy-makers, researchers, training professionals, journalists and citizens. Through the web portal you can find:

- news on training developments (briefing notes, newsletter, press releases);
- forthcoming conferences and events;
- access to Cedefop's bibliographical database and information about training systems;
- insight into the work of Cedefop's major projects and networks;
- access to Europass and the study visits programme,
- information about Cedefop (work programme, vacancies, calls for tender, etc.).

For information about Cedefop's publications, many of which can be downloaded, see the Cedefop bookshop at www.cedefop.europa.eu/index.asp?section=5 for information on:

- policy;
- research;
- future skill needs;
- learning outcomes;
- European qualifications framework;
- validation of informal and non-formal learning;
- teachers and trainers.

Cedefop face to face



Cedefop hosts and organises conferences and events throughout the year. It manages several networks to exchange experience, encourage debate and generate ideas. These include:

- the study visits programme is coordinated by Cedefop on behalf of the European Commission as part of the EU's lifelong learning programme. During a study visit, a group of 10 to 15 specialists from across Europe spend three to five days in another country to examine a particular aspect of lifelong learning. If you wish to participate in a study visit, see <http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu/>;
- ReferNet (European network of reference and expertise in vocational education and training) is Cedefop's primary source of information on developments in Member States. ReferNet is a consortium of vocational education and training organisations in each Member State led by a national coordinator. If your organisation is interested in joining ReferNet, see www.cedefop.europa.eu/index.asp?section=8&sub=3;
- Skillsnet, the network on early identification of skill needs, examines new, emerging and changing skill needs and the implications of change to employment and demography. The network includes researchers, policy-makers, practitioners and social partners from all over the world;
- TTnet, the network for teachers and trainers in vocational education and training, supports the professional development of vocational education teachers and trainers, who are essential to the quality and modernisation of training systems. TTnet provides policy recommendations, guidance and tools for teachers and trainers of vocational education.

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