



## Cedefop Newsletter no. 18 - January 2012

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### Main story

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*A choir opens the Year of Active Ageing conference in Copenhagen. Image: AFP*

### 'How to stay active? Make sure your skills don't become outdated.'

The European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations kicked off in Copenhagen earlier this month. The conference was organised by the Danish Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration and Ministry for Health with support from the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).

## European Year for **Active Ageing** and **Solidarity between Generations 2012**



*What was the opening conference on the year of active ageing about, and what did you present there?*

The conference was titled 'Stay active' and covered all aspects of active ageing. Cedefop spoke on what makes for successful professional guidance for older workers, and how to think about training for an ageing workforce.

There's a bit of cognitive dissonance about this issue. When we measured employer attitudes we found that half of them believe they'll soon run into recruitment problems because of demographic developments, yet only 15% have given any thought to how to keep the skills of their present workers up to date.

*How can we convince employers to do so?*

The two things to underline here is that ageing workers are valuable in themselves, not just because you may not find younger workers in the future. And that spending a lot of money on training isn't necessarily the best way to go about renewing your workers' skills.

Employers need to focus on long-term productivity. If your workers are overspecialised and don't develop new skills, you may have slightly higher short-term productivity but in the longer term you may end up with too many outdated skills. What you need to do is encourage on-the-job learning and workers with a wide variety of skills. This will improve the workplace overall.

*What about the unemployed - what kind of training helps them the most?*

Here too, the evidence suggests that just sending older people to training courses doesn't work very well. Someone who's already been employed for twenty years is a very different customer from a new entrant in the labour market. People need to be convinced of the value of a new skill; in some cases they need to be reassured that they are valued; they need to see how to rework their knowledge and experience into a new skills set.

Take for instance, someone who's lost their job and needs to reskill in a new sector. Well, sending them to a classroom may not be enough. You need to provide a general introduction to the sector, find out what particular skills that worker can bring to

it, and offer training that takes those skills into account - and then ideally arrange for a work placement.

*You seem to be saying that the key factor for the development of workplace and workers alike is an environment that values learning.*

There's something really interesting that emerges from the figures. In fields that don't change at a rapid pace, people may be lulled into concentrating on their own jobs and not following what's going on in the sector in general – and that's where they may run into some very unpleasant surprises.

If you think about it, in a workplace that requires you to learn new things all the time, you will consider learning a natural part of professional life. So you experience change as a gradual and normal thing, and learn to follow developments in your field as a matter of course. Such workers are more likely to work for longer (which has been proven to prevent cognitive deterioration) and to be happier and thus more productive in the workplace.

But for low-skilled people who are less likely to add skills on the job or get timely training, outdated skills are a serious risk. And people who leave the job market whether because they are laid off or for family reasons, also run a significant risk. Their skills have been found to depreciate twice as fast as for those who stay in their jobs.

So in effect staying active for longer - which most of us will have to do - means making sure your skills don't become outdated. And on this, most of us can benefit from guidance and counselling. Providing the necessary support for active ageing will be an increasingly important role for guidance in the years to come.



*Cedefop expert Jasper van Loo spoke at the Opening Conference for the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012, 'Stay active – what does it take?' held in Copenhagen on 18 and 19 January 2012.*

## News from Cedefop

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### Third annual review of National Qualifications Frameworks published

Cedefop's third review of NQF/EQF development shows that all involved countries see the National Qualification Frameworks as valuable tools to support national reforms and coherent lifelong learning policies.

The 27 EU member states, five EU candidate countries and Liechtenstein and Norway are making rapid progress towards establishing and implementing national qualifications frameworks (NQF). By the end of 2011, 12 countries had linked their national qualifications levels to the European qualifications framework (EQF) levels.

By promoting the use of learning outcomes, the frameworks help to remove barriers between the various learning pathways, such as between vocational and higher education.

This report also shows that the links between NQFs and validation of non-formal and informal learning are becoming stronger in most of the countries reviewed, an issue that is currently of great interest to policy makers across Europe.

### Links

- [Download the publication](#)



### A statistician joins the skills team

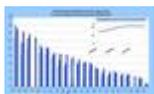
Nick Sofroniou will be working on the Employer Survey of Skill Needs in Europe and on Statistics and Indicators.

Nick Sofroniou, a UK national, holds a PhD in Psychology from the University of Wales, Bangor, and is a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society. Before coming to Cedefop he worked at Trinity College, Dublin, where he directed the Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing and for the Educational Research Centre, Drumcondra, Ireland analysing the OECD PISA studies and national assessments of Mathematics and Reading. At Cedefop Nick has joined area Research and Policy Analysis where he will be working on the Employer Survey of Skill Needs in Europe and on Statistics and Indicators.



### The ReferNet team has a new member

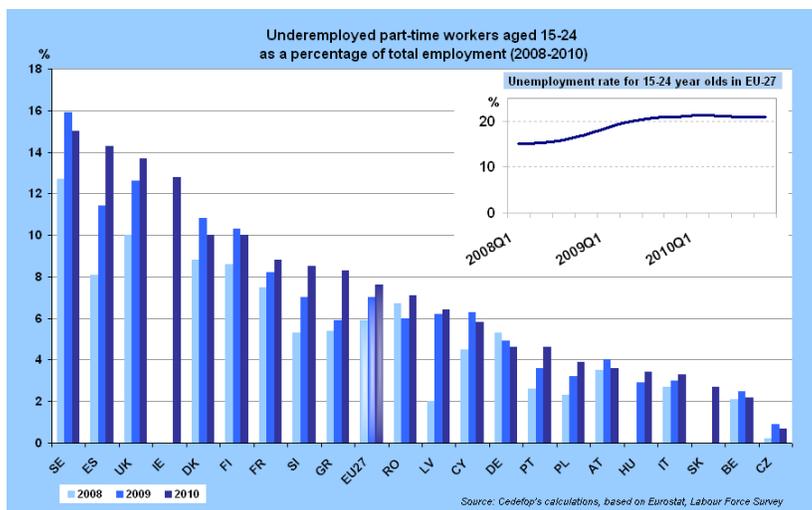
Donatella Gobbi comes to Cedefop from ISFOL (Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori), Italy, where she worked as researcher on VET methods and, more recently, on ReferNet and institutional communication activities. She will be working in the Research and Policy Analysis area with ReferNet, Cedefop's network of information and documentation.



### Crisis pushes young people towards involuntary part-time jobs

6.8 million young people in the EU are either unemployed or underemployed. Ensuring better job quality and working conditions by "flexicurity" (flexibility and security) policies is a European Commission priority in order to reduce unemployment rates. Although, policies to reduce segmentation have been insufficient as vulnerable groups (e.g. young people, temporary workers) have been hit the hardest by the crisis (Flagship Initiative "An agenda for new skills and jobs", Communication from the Commission, 23.11.2010).

The main indicator considered here refers to underemployed part-time workers: the share of young people aged 15-24, who are in part-time work, wish to work more and are available to do so. It is complemented by the unemployment rate for 15-24 year olds.



### Key points

- In 2010, 1.5 million young workers in the EU-27 aged 15-24 were underemployed (7.6% of total employment). The underemployment rate (aged 15 to 24) increased by 1.7 percentage points in the EU between 2008 and 2010. One in four young part-time workers was underemployed.
- Joblessness rose even more than underemployment. Between 2008 and 2010, the

unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 increased by 6 percentage points in the EU (from 15% to 21%).

- In 2010, the underemployment rate of young people varied widely across EU countries: Sweden reported the highest percentage (15% of total employment), followed by Spain (14.3%) and by the United Kingdom (13.7%). The lowest rates in 2010 were reported in the Czech Republic (0.7% of total employment) followed by Belgium (2.2%) and by Slovakia (2.7%).
- Compared to 2008, the share of young people who work part-time although they would like to have a full-time job increased in all EU countries except for Germany where it remained at a similar level
- In 2010, young women were more likely to be forced into involuntary part-time jobs than young men (57.5% of all employment).

## Notes

Data originate from the EU Labour Force Survey and are subject to its methodology. Data were processed by Cedefop and extracted from the Eurostat online database on 19th January 2012. In interpreting the data, possible differences in national implementations of the EU LFS should be taken into account.

More information on the concept of underemployment can be found in [Eurostat's 'statistics explained'](#).

There is a break in series in 2010 for the Netherlands. Data for some other countries are not presented either due to lack of availability or due to lack of reliability in the time series examined here.

## Links

- [An Agenda for new skills and jobs](#)
- [Eurostat's 'statistics explained'](#)
- [Related methodology to EU Labour Force Survey](#)
- [EU Labour force survey](#)
- [More statistics of the month](#)
- [Cedefop Statistics and indicators section](#)

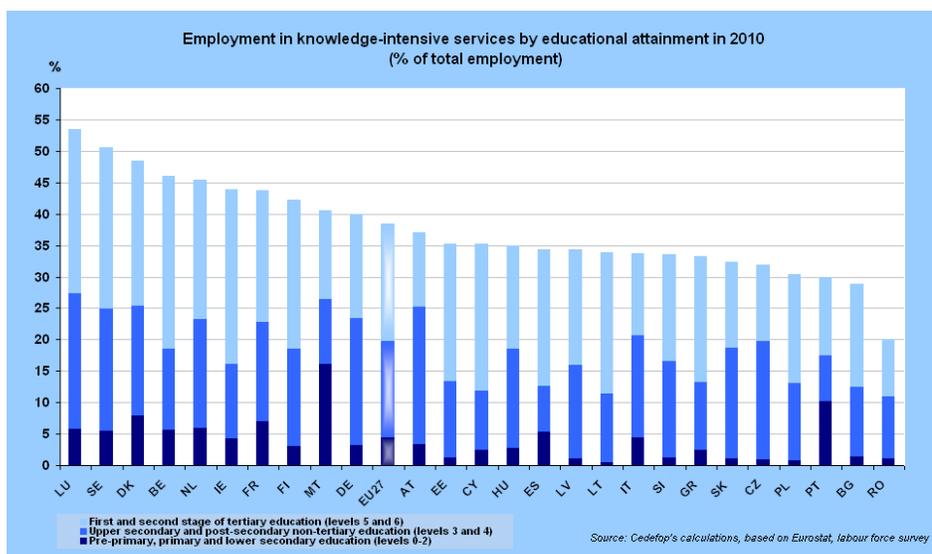


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## Towards a knowledge-based service economy?

Currently, 38.5% of total EU employment is in knowledge-intensive services, and this percentage is on the increase. Economic growth is to be anchored in knowledge-intensive and high value-added activities (Europe 2020 flagship initiative on 'Innovation union').

The indicator presented below is employment in knowledge-intensive service (KIS) sectors, (as % of total employment). It can be complemented with additional information on high-tech or knowledge-intensive manufacturing activities.



### Key points

- In 2010, 83.3 million workers in the EU (or 38.5% of total employment) were employed in knowledge-intensive services. Almost half of them (49%) had high educational attainment (tertiary level), but medium-level education was also in high demand, accounting for 40% of workers in KIS. Only a residual share of 11% had low educational attainment (lower than upper-secondary education).
- In 2010, employment in knowledge-intensive services (as share of total employment) was highest in Luxembourg (55%) and lowest in Romania (approximately 20%).
- Between 2008 and 2010 in the EU as a whole, employment in knowledge-intensive services continued to grow (1.7 million jobs or a 2.1% increase), as did its share on total employment (by 1.7 percentage points).
- Over the same period (2008-10), employment in KIS increased in almost all EU countries, with highest increase (over 6%) reported in Luxembourg, Poland and Austria.
- Employment in KIS dropped in only eight European countries: about 11% in Latvia and 3% or less in seven other countries (Bulgaria, Finland, Netherlands, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania and Greece). Even when declining, employment in KIS resisted the crisis better: job loss was proportionally lower than average, with an increased share on total employment.

### Notes:

Data originate from the EU labour force survey and are subject to its methodology. Data were extracted from the Eurostat online database on 5 December 2011. The indicator is based on employment data in selected economic sectors of service economy. Sectors are selected on the basis of incidence of highly educated workers (share of employed persons with tertiary educational attainment). The criterion is applied to classification of economic activities (NACE Rev. 2, at 2-digit level).



### VET-Alert - Just published on Vocational Education and Training - January 2012 issue

Cedefop's "VETAlert" for January 2012 is now available for download:  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/newsletter/vetalert-newsletter.aspx>

VETAlert is a monthly selection of publications on vocational education and training available from Cedefop's bibliographic database VET-Bib.

Please subscribe to VET-Alert and you will receive this monthly review in your mailbox.



## Eurobarometer survey on Active Ageing

To mark the European Year, Eurostat, has released the new publication "**Active ageing and solidarity between generations – a statistical portrait of the European Union 2012**", prepared in collaboration with the European Commission and Eurofound.

The main themes addressed in this report are:

- overall perceptions of age and older people;
- older people in the workplace;
- retirement and pensions;
- voluntary work and support for older people and
- an age-friendly environment.

It covers the 27 Member States and five non-EU countries; namely Croatia, Iceland, FYROM, Norway and Turkey.

### Links

- [Eurobarometer survey on Active Ageing](#)
- 



## Europe 2020 strategy - Education and training's contribution to reducing youth

This Presidency discussion paper will be a basis for the policy debate on youth unemployment at the EYCS Council meeting on 10 February 2012.

### Links

- [Presidency Discussion Paper](#)
- 



## Youth Opportunities Initiative a Commission's proposal

Between 2008 and 2010 youth unemployment has increased by one million reaching the unacceptable level of more than 5 million unemployed young people. This means that on average one in five young people on the labour market cannot find a job and in certain Member States it is almost every second young person willing to work who faces this problem.

One of the key elements of the Youth Opportunities Initiative is that the European Commission will help Member States to use the European Social Fund (ESF) more efficiently, in particular knowing that 30 billion euro within the ESF is still uncommitted to projects. Furthermore, the new initiative proposes actions to enhance mobility of trainees and young workers.

### Links

- [Youth Opportunities Initiative](#)
  - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- 



## A new issue of the European Qualifications Network Newsletter

A new issue of the EQF Newsletter has been published in the EQF portal.

If you wish to propose contributions in English, French or German to the EQF Newsletter, send your

articles to the [EQF Team](#).

## Links

- [EQF Newsletter December 2011](#)
- 



### Council conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility

The Council has adopted conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility, to complement the five existing reference levels of European average performance (or "benchmarks"), agreed under the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020").

The new benchmark differentiates between three areas: mobility in higher education, mobility in vocational education and training and youth mobility in general, and will result in greater reliability and comparability when it comes to measuring the various types of learning mobility which the EU promotes.

## Links

- [Council conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility](#)
- 



### Council conclusions on language competences to enhance mobility

The Council has adopted conclusions on language competences to enhance mobility which are aimed primarily at re-emphasising that language learning is a key factor in enhancing individual mobility and employability, as well as having a positive impact on competitiveness.

The Polish Presidency recalled that language learning was one of its key priorities in the field of education and training: in addition to the social and cultural benefits it brings, multilingual citizens are better placed to take advantage of the many educational, professional and economic opportunities created by an integrated Europe.

## Links

- [Council conclusions on language competences to enhance mobility](#)

## Agenda

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### First meeting of the Thematic working group on professional development of trainers in VET

■ Dates: 02/02/2012 - 02/02/2012 ■ Venue: Brussels ■ Country: Belgium ■ Cedefop involvement: Co-Organiser

The European Commission and Cedefop are jointly launching a thematic working group on trainers in VET within the framework of European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'). The members of the Thematic working group were nominated by the national authorities of the participating countries.

The Council in its [conclusions of 22 October 2010](#) stressed that 'Member States should work together in identifying best practices and guiding principles with respect to changing competences and the profiles of VET teachers and trainers'. The [Bruges Communiqué](#) foresees that support at EU level will be provided to achieve this objective, to which the Thematic working group will contribute.

The main focus of the working group is on VET trainers at the workplace in both initial and continuing VET. Through peer learning among policy-makers and experts in the field, the working group will strengthen knowledge sharing and help develop policies as regards vocational trainers' competences and continuing professional development.

During their first meeting, the working group members will set its mission and overarching thematic priorities and agree on working methods, work plan and main outputs.

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## Conference From School to Work

■ Dates:06/02/2012 - 06/02/2012 ■ Venue: Roskilde ■ Country: Denmark ■ Cedefop involvement: Participant

The conference, which is organised in collaboration with the Confederation of Danish Employers (DA) and the Danish Trade Union Confederation (LO), will examine the transition from school to work and in particular the role played by vocational education and training in this respect.

### Links

- [Conference programme](#)
- 

## Meeting of Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EYCS) Council

■ Dates:10/02/2012 - 10/02/2012 ■ Venue: Brussels ■ Country: Belgium ■ Cedefop involvement: Not applicable

The Council consists of the Ministers of Education, Youth, Culture and Sport and meet three to four times a year.

The Council is expected to adopt the Joint report under the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training until 2020 (ET2020), including priorities for the 2nd work cycle.

### Links

- [Link to the Council Meeting](#)
- 

## Meeting in the Council for Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO)

■ Dates:17/02/2012 - 17/02/2012 ■ Venue: Brussels ■ Country: Belgium ■ Cedefop involvement: Not applicable

The Council consists of the Ministers of Employment, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Policy and assemble app. four times a year.

The Council is expected to adopt the Joint Employment Report as well as Council Conclusions on priorities for action for 2012.

### Links

- [Link to the Council Meeting](#)
- 

## Skills for a low carbon economy: what next?

■ Dates:27/02/2012 - 27/02/2012 ■ Venue: OECD, Paris ■ Country: France ■ Cedefop involvement: Co-Organiser

Cedefop and the OECD Local Economic and Employment Development Programme (LEED) are organising a joint Green Skills Forum to be held at OECD Headquarters in Paris on 27th February 2012.

The aim of this international forum of researchers, government advisers, employment and policy analysts and social partners actively involved in skills development and training needs for a low carbon economy is to review and discuss new research and policy approaches to foster a greener, more sustainable future.

It will identify tools, strategies and local initiatives from theory to practice. The forum is conceived as an experts' meeting; the discussions will assist OECD and Cedefop to draw future analytical work and research as well as to identify the obstacles and challenges lying ahead for the development of skills, education and training policies for

a low carbon economy. The conference papers, discussions and exchanges are expected to:

- facilitate the understanding of the limitations and potentials inherent in research and policy approaches tackling key skills issues for a successful transition to a low carbon economy;
- compare methods and tools used in monitoring and evaluating developments in the green economy and local labour markets;
- indicate how research can support better targeted policy making and skills strategies;
- provide inspiration and ideas for future research and collaboration;
- provide information for processes towards the Rio+20 and G20 related meetings.

For more information on this event and to register, please refer to the [event's website](#).

## Links

- [Event's website](#)
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## Conference on Reducing Early School Leaving: Efficient and effective Policies in Europe

■ Dates:01/03/2012 - 02/03/2012 ■ Venue: Brussels ■ Country: Belgium ■ Cedefop involvement: Participant

The conference on "Reducing Early School Leaving" will be organised by the Commission and the Danish Presidency

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## Youth conference

■ Dates:18/03/2012 - 21/03/2012 ■ Venue: Soro ■ Country: Denmark ■ Cedefop involvement: Not applicable

The subject of the conference is how to foster young people's creativity, innovative capabilities and talents as means of increasing their active participation in society and their transition to employment.

## Links

- [Youth Conference 2012](#)
- 

## Director Generals meeting in the area of youth

■ Dates:20/03/2012 - 21/03/2012 ■ Venue: Soro ■ Country: Denmark ■ Cedefop involvement: Not applicable

In continuation of the youth conference the Directors General will meet and discuss issues and policy of youth cooperation in the EU.

## Links

- [Link to the event](#)
- 

## e-Skills Week 2012

■ Dates:26/03/2012 - 30/03/2012 ■ Venue: Different cities ■ Country: Europe ■ Cedefop involvement: Not applicable

The European e-Skills Week 2012 is a European campaign focused on showing people how to get jobs through e-skills in the digital age.

Building on the success of e-Skills Week 2010, the DG for Enterprise and Industry has again teamed up with DIGITAL EUROPE and EU Schoolnet, to drive awareness of the need for e-skills and their benefits.

The campaign will deliver an exciting programme of events and activities in more than 30 countries.

## Links

- [E-skills week 2012 website](#)
- 

## Director Generals meeting in the area of vocational education and training

■ Dates:22/04/2012 - 24/04/2012 ■ Venue: Copenhagen ■ Country: Denmark ■ Cedefop involvement: Participant

The Directors General of vocational education and training will meet and discuss – among other things – the cooperation between VET and the business sector.

In addition to this, the meeting contains a follow-up to the Copenhagen Process that was adopted in 2002 and constitutes the framework for the cooperation in the area of vocational education and training in the EU.

## Links

- [Link to the DGVT Meeting](#)
- 

## 3rd International Workshop on Curriculum Innovation and Reform: Changing Assessment to Improve Learning Outcomes

■ Dates:26/04/2012 - 27/04/2012 ■ Venue: Thessaloniki ■ Country: Greece ■ Cedefop involvement: Organiser

This year the workshop will be focusing on policy links. In reforming curricula and assessment, the challenge for policy is to create effective links between teaching, learning and assessing. New curricula and assessment methods are pointless unless they lead to better teaching and learning

Discussions will centre on key findings on how learning outcome approaches shape recent curriculum and assessment policies, drawing from two Cedefop related studies in 32 European countries. Policy makers, researchers and practitioners from all EU countries and beyond, and representatives of international organisations are invited to reflect on the following questions:

- How can curriculum and assessment policies strengthen each other?
- How can curriculum and assessment policies work together more effectively to improve learning outcomes in vocational education and training?

The goal of the workshop is to draw out general lessons for policy development and further research needs on two key issues:

### 1. Ensuring links between curriculum and assessment policies

- The alignment of standards with curricula and assessment
- The relationship between indented and assessed learning outcomes

### 2. Improving teaching, learning and assessment

- Innovations in teaching and assessment methods and tools
- Links between formative and summative assessment

The workshop will take an interactive approach, allowing participants to share experience and brainstorm on the various issues.

More information about this workshop will be available soon in the workshop website currently under development. Project managers in charge: Irene Psifidou and Slava Grm Pevec.

For more information: [rena.psifidou@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:rena.psifidou@cedefop.europa.eu)

## News from the Member States

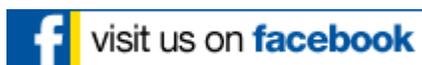
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Items submitted by ReferNet, Cedefop's European network for VET

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