

Conference Programme

19 November 2026 (all times are CET)

9.00 – 9.30	Accessing the platform – technical check
9.30 – 9.40	Welcome <i>Chair: Irene Mandl, Head of Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop</i> Opening speech <i>Jürgen Siebel, Executive Director, Cedefop</i>
9.40 – 9.50	Session 1 The European perspective <i>Chair: Irene Mandl, Head of Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop</i> European VET policy – inclusive vocational excellence <i>Anna Barbieri, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion</i>
9.50 – 10.15	Session 2 Balancing excellence and inclusion in VET systems across Europe <i>Chair: Irene Mandl, Head of Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop</i> Presentation of findings from Cedefop's project 'VET excellence and inclusion for the 21st century' <i>Anastasia Pouliou, Iraklis Pliakis, Vasileios Symeonidis, Cedefop</i> Q&A
10.15- 10.45	Session 3 The way forward for policy and research <i>Chair: Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop</i> Interactive discussion: Reflections and perspectives from participants

- What key future needs should VET policies and systems address?
- What are the key research gaps related to advancing excellence and inclusion in VET, and where is further evidence needed?
- What research is needed to understand and support the use of AI solutions and tools in VET? What are the key questions, for example around their use in assessment, guidance, recognition and other VET processes?

- **POLL**
- **FAMILY PHOTO**

10.45-10.55

Health break

10.55 -11.00

Session 3
Introduction to breakout sessions

*Chair: **Anastasia Poulidou**, Cedefop*

11.00-12.50

Parallel breakout session 1
Topic 1 – Advancing excellence in VET

*Chair: **Iraklis Pliakis**, Cedefop*

The session will explore how the pursuit of excellence is shaping VET reforms, governance arrangements, and pedagogical and policy implementation.

- Introduction to the topic
- Presentation of research papers
- Open discussion

11.00-12.50

Parallel breakout session 2
Topic 2 – Future approaches to inclusion in VET

*Chair: **Vasileios Symeonidis**, Cedefop*

The session will focus on how to widen participation in VET, while supporting social cohesion and integration into the labour market.

- Introduction to the topic
- Presentation of research papers
- Open discussion

11.00-12.50	Parallel breakout session 3 Topic 3 – AI in VET: Opportunities and challenges <i>Chair: Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop</i> <i>The session will focus on whether EU Member States' VET policies and systems are future-ready, by integrating AI into VET while promoting excellence, inclusion and accessibility.</i> • Introduction to the topic • Presentation of research papers • Open discussion
12.50 – 13.00	<i>Health break</i>
13.00 – 13.20	Session 4 Poster presentation <i>Selected authors showcase their research, findings/perspectives to conference participants.</i> <i>Chair: Irene Mandl, Head of Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop</i>
13.20 13.30	Session 5 Concluding remarks <i>Irene Mandl, Head of Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop and Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop</i>

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#VETexcellence #inclusion #FutureofVET

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