

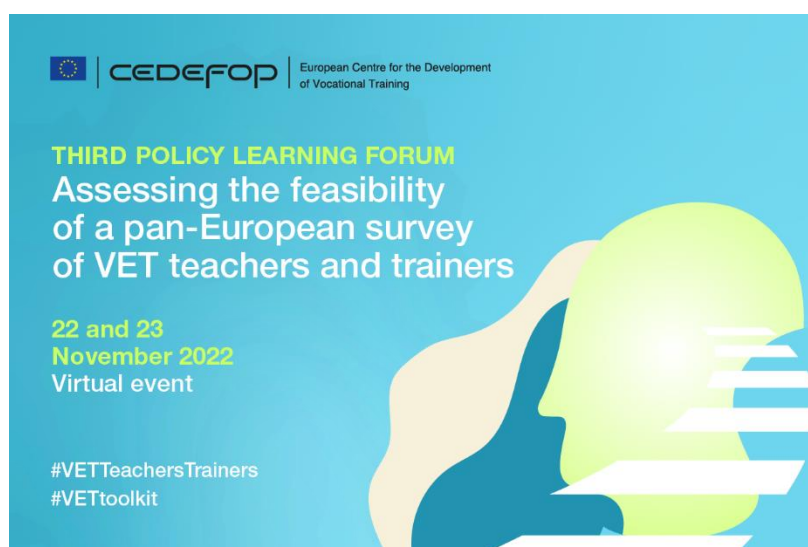


Assessing the feasibility of a pan-European survey of VET teachers and trainers

Online Policy Learning Forum

22 and 23 November 2022

Summary of outcomes



Around 80 participants gathered virtually in this highly interactive policy learning forum (PLF) on 22 and 23 November 2022 to review the findings of the [feasibility study](#) that started in 2021 and discuss different scenarios about upscaling the survey in initial vocational education and training (IVET) to all European Union countries, Norway and Iceland.

Participants included representatives from ministries, European sectoral social partners for education, the [European Commission](#), national social partners, [OBESSU](#), the [European Parents' Association](#) and European Associations of VET providers as well as school principals from the pilot countries: Austria, Croatia, Greece, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Spain. One of the key aims of the feasibility study was to test the methodology of a pan-European survey and take stock of the challenges faced. The feasibility study also aimed at better understanding the conditions that need to be in place for a successful upscaling of the future survey.

Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel welcomed the participants, underlining the relevance of the survey to better understand how to improve initial VET, and Antonio Ranieri, Head of Cedefop's department for VET and skills, thanked the members of the study's advisory group, which consisted of ministry representatives of the participating countries and representatives from the European sectoral social partners for education (ETUCE and EFEE), for their key support for conducting the study.

Irene Psifidou, coordinator of Cedefop's [VET for youth - teachers and trainers team](#) carrying out the study, together with Gerda Burneikaite (PPMI) and Simon Broek (Ockham IPS) presented the [key features of the pilot survey and the obtained findings](#). The four target groups of the feasibility study were teachers, learners, school principals, and in-company trainers in IVET, with a separate questionnaire for each group that ran from February to July 2022. The

methodology was based on random sampling of schools and then random sampling of the target populations within the schools. Recruitment was done through email and phone calls.

Provided that the aim of the feasibility study was to test the methodology of obtaining representative samples, the collected data themselves cannot be considered representative. However, they can be utilised to stimulate discussion and reflection, in particular by looking into the challenges and potential of a future representative European survey. Challenges encountered included getting timely approvals from authorities, lingering issues from COVID, including resource and staff shortages, and lack of time to complete the survey at the end of the school year.

There are several key takeaways from the pilot survey. Although the data are not representative, the findings provide some interesting preliminary insights. (1) New, often younger professionals don't feel fully prepared when they enter the profession. Many teachers are not ready to collaborate with employers, and principals do not feel ready for financial management and conflict resolution. (2) Continuous professional development (CPD) access is good and respondents were mostly satisfied, but the opportunities are mainly informal or non-formal. Obstacles are lack of financial support, plus lack of information for trainers and lack of time for teachers. COVID did not significantly impact the scope, topics, or quality of CPD, but it did impact participation. (3) Teachers, trainers, and principals do not feel fully equipped to support VET inclusion and excellence. (4) Wellbeing is more of an issue for principals versus teachers, trainers and learners.

Ministries from countries that participated in the pilot survey pointed out that one of the biggest value-adds of upscaling this survey in all European countries and collecting representative data from all four groups is that it can provide new evidence for policymakers to establish well informed national and regional policies. It can also help the sharing of best practices and peer-learning activities. In few countries only, there are national surveys in this field and the pan-European survey could actually complement existing data. The future survey may also help the understanding of similarities and differences between EU member states. The European sectoral social partners for education (ETUCE, EFEE) expressed their support for the survey indicating that it would be in line with and complementary to their own (planned) projects, which among others consider the topics of attractiveness, school leadership, wellbeing and enhancing the relationship between teachers, schools, and employers.

Participants discussed in breakout rooms how to support the main actors in VET to make high-quality and inclusive VET a reality in the EU. The specific topics were school principals' professional development, wellbeing of VET teachers and working conditions, CPD of VET school-based teachers, and CPD of VET in-company trainers. The participants stressed the need for more support for principals, teachers and trainers, in particular in conducting continuous professional development (CPD) activities. In terms of improving CPD, peer learning is important but should be complemented by digestible, standardised, and quality-assured formal CPD activities tailored to principals', teachers' and trainers' needs and busy schedules.



CEDEFOP

European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training

THIRD POLICY LEARNING FORUM
Assessing the feasibility
of a pan-European survey
of VET teachers and trainers

22 and 23
November 2022
Virtual event
#VETTeachersTrainers
#VETToolkit



The second day started with a presentation by Cedefop's contractors who carried out the feasibility study: Andrew Cleary (Ipsos) referred to the [conditions for a future EU-wide survey](#). There are several essential points to consider for upscaling the pilot survey in all European countries. (1) Obtaining the relevant permissions from national, regional and local authorities in charge of initial VET and establishing them upfront. (2) Incentivising VET schools to take part, mostly through providing clarity on the benefits of the survey but with other incentives also possible. Special attention also needs to be paid to motivating in-company trainers providing work-based learning. (3) Reducing the school's workload in relation to the survey and allowing a longer fieldwork period, taking into account when the schools are available. (4) Adjusting expectations of response rates according to the size of the schools in respective countries. (5) Deploying all possible sources when it comes to identifying and surveying trainers, including the use of databases where available.

Participants of the PLF discussed in breakout rooms how to make the future EU survey a success. The participants considered different factors, such as the ways to make respondents participate in the survey, how VET system characteristics may influence their participation, the topics of the survey, its branding and marketing.

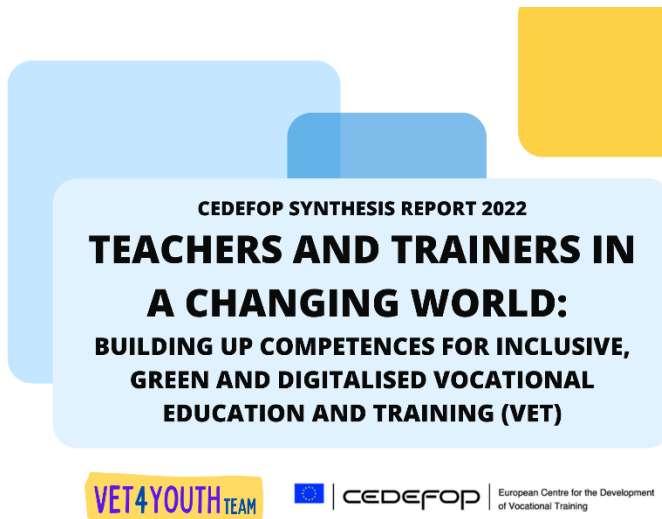
A panel discussion chaired by Mara Brugia, Cedefop's Deputy Director, with representatives from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, national members of ETUCE and EFEE, OBESSU and the European Parents' Association, focussed on the incentives encouraging survey participation. The panellists emphasised that the design of the survey and the desired results need to be aligned with national policy reforms and objectives. They highlighted the importance that principals, teachers and trainers understand the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of the survey to their daily work. Learners also need to see the relationship between the survey and the quality of their learning process. A communication campaign using various channels was recommended, also to facilitate obtaining the consent of parents.

The invited European associations of VET providers (EURASHE, EVTA, EVBB, EfVET, EUProVET, EUCEN) emphasised their support for the future European survey in initial VET. They stressed the investment that should be put into the survey preparation, implementation, translation, and creation of language specific to each target group. Communication to respondent groups should highlight the opportunity to influence change. Collaboration between all levels of regulatory bodies and organisations is crucial for the survey to be a success, and the key stakeholders should be involved to obtain a large support base for the future pan-European survey.

Cedefop's Deputy Director stressed the added value and big potential of Cedefop's future European survey, which will be ensured by the holistic approach it will take, gathering the opinions of the key actors involved in the teaching and training process. The future EU survey will be a unique source of information on initial VET.

So far, Cedefop's work in this field has focused on collecting information on systems, policy developments at country level and challenges countries face to provide quality CPD for teaching and training professionals.

Existing statistics and surveys at national level in initial VET are often not systematic and comprehensive, with few exceptions only. Also, regional or national data collected from these diverse surveys is not comparable across Europe. Cedefop’s [new research report on Teachers and trainers in a changing world](#) drawing from [29 ReferNet national reports](#) has shown that data collection and analysis present a major opportunity for improvements in VET systems in general, and teachers’ and trainers’ professional development in particular.



More specifically, this report has shown there is a lack of data on VET teachers and trainers and CPD provision and demand. This is particularly true for work-based settings and hybrid forms of VET provision.

A European survey in initial VET will allow us to get to know how well teachers, trainers and principals feel they are prepared for their highly demanding professions. Their skills and competences in creating

supportive and inclusive learning conditions and environments in VET. As CPD may be in some countries highly diverse, non-centralised and non-standardised, the survey may allow us to monitor the access, the quality and effectiveness of the CPD in participating countries. We can get to learn the challenges in the working conditions of VET professionals. Understanding and working towards improving their wellbeing and working conditions of teachers, trainers and principals will allow them to perform their work more effectively. Further, as there is scarcity of teaching staff in many of the European countries, improving the working conditions may attract new young teachers and trainers to VET.

Cedefop through this new survey, systematic research and its practical tools available within the [VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) will continue supporting the implementation of the [ET2030 strategic objectives](#), the [Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success](#) and the [Council Conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future](#).