



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RB(2022)00697

**CEDEFOP**

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## **CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT (CAAR) 2021**

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## CEDEFOP'S MANAGEMENT BOARD ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF CEDEFOP'S CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT (CAAR) 2021

Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training and Article 48 of Cedefop's Decision of 16 July 2019 on the Financial Regulation require the Management Board to send to the Court of Auditors, the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) of the previous financial year together with its assessment, no later than 1 July.

The Management Board, based on its analysis and assessment of the Executive Director's Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021:

- takes note of Cedefop's report on the implementation of the annual work programme 2021, and in particular:
- congratulates and thanks Cedefop's staff and management for their resilience and agility and their achievements in 2021 beyond those planned in the work programme as regards performance, control, audit and assurance in relation to the 2021 budget despite the continued challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic; more specifically,
  - the additional analyses and mainstreaming of the impact of the pandemic on VET, skills and qualifications, and the labour market related activities, including the Cedefop-Eurofound company survey follow-up on business practices in response to the Covid-19 crisis, and the new VET toolkit for empowering young people not in employment education or training;
  - its continued successful crisis management ensuring business continuity and the high priority it gave to minimising staff's health risk and ensuring their well-being;
  - the effective use of new digital solutions, such as e-signature, and adaptation of work practices to suit remote work conditions;
  - the success of its virtual events which achieved a considerably higher outreach;
- commends Cedefop on its continued multiple contributions to EU policy-making notably the initiatives of the evolving European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, and those ensuing from the Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück declaration;
- notes with satisfaction:
  - the value that the European Commission attributes to Cedefop's research and policy support, as expressed by European Commission Vice-President Schinas and Commissioner Schmit during their joint visit to the Agency;
  - the steps taken to strengthen Cedefop's skills intelligence work, specifically the focus on the green transition;
  - the support to the Commission initiative on a European approach to microcredentials through its dedicated work on their use in and for labour market-related learning;
  - the contributions to the debates on financing adult learning and the Commission's initiative on individual learning accounts;
  - the fruitful cooperation with the Portuguese and the Slovenian presidencies, notably the Agency's contributions in the work on the new adult learning agenda and the invitation to the Commission in the Council resolution to take advantage of Cedefop's information and research;

- acknowledges the effective collaboration with EU Agencies in the context of the European network of Agencies and the kicking off a project towards a greener EUAN administration of excellence:
  - takes note of the continued cooperation with ETF specifically on shaping an integrated approach for monitoring countries' follow-up of the Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration;
  - takes note of the cooperation with Eurofound focusing on further exploiting the results of the 2019 European Company Survey;
  - takes note of the efficiency gained through the Agency's collaboration with EU and international partners within the interagency working group with UNESCO, ILO, OECD, the European Commission, the ETF, Eurofound;
  - takes note of the collaboration with ENISA on data protection and in the context of alleged harassment cases;
- invites the Agency to continue its efforts to further increase efficiency gains, both through synergies and exploring additional possibilities of sharing services, and by continuing to implement its strategy for cooperation with international organisations, which is an integral part of its Programming Document 2021-23;
- congratulates Cedefop for its efforts towards harmonising its ICT landscape with that of other EU Agencies and institutions and the move to ABAC as Cedefop's budgetary management tool;
- congratulates the Agency on its overall performance as attested by its performance indicators which:
  - confirm that it is a highly acknowledged centre of expertise on VET, skills and qualifications policies with high impact in these fields and beyond thanks to the uniqueness of its research and policy analysis;
  - demonstrate a 23% increase in visits to the Agency's Web portal;
  - show an increase in the number of social media followers and appreciation of Cedefop's communication across the various platforms;
  - display an increase in the uptake of Cedefop work in academic literature;
  - demonstrate a 97% occupation of the establishment plan meeting the set target and achievement of a good gender balance among Agency staff and in the Management Board;
  - demonstrate the Agency's excellent budget implementation rate of 100% attesting the effective management of the identified risk on budget execution;
- congratulates Cedefop on its new web-portal which offers thematic access points to targeted information from across the Agency's work, qualitative and quantitative data and a variety of interactive tools and data-visualisation;
- congratulates Cedefop on the fact that the European Court of Auditors' final report on the annual accounts for the financial year 2020 confirms the reliability of the Agency's accounts as well as the regularity and legality of the underlying transactions in all material aspects;
- congratulates Cedefop for having successfully implemented the last remaining recommendation of the Internal Audit Service, thus closing all recommendations of the Audit on HR Management and Ethics;
- acknowledges the European Parliament's positive report on discharge as regards the budget implementation for the financial year 2020 which
  - welcomes the fact that, with the exception of one ongoing action related to the method for calculating Norway' and Iceland's contributions to Cedefop's budget, the Agency completed all other actions taken to Court's observations

related to the implementation of the budget for the financial years 2018 and 2019

- notes that the Centre uses a noteworthy performance measurement system
- commends the Centre on its multiple contributions to Union policy-making, in particular the European Skills Agenda, the first ever Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück declaration
- stresses the Centre's importance, autonomy and added value in its field of expertise
- highlights the need to ensure adequate human and financial resources allowing the Centre to continue implementing its work programme with a very high activity completion rate
- welcomes the fact that the Centre accomplished and even exceeded the targets and deliverables set in its work plan 2020 despite the challenges caused by the pandemic
- notes with concern that the Centre's issues regarding the externalisation of its legal service highlighted by the discharge authority and the Court are still not resolved but welcomes the decision of the Centre to re-establish an internal legal advisor in 2021
- notes with satisfaction that the Centre promptly shaped and activated a crisis management plan to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic by taking precautionary measures to ensure business continuity;
- takes note of the declaration of assurance of the Executive Director and the information on the Internal Control system assessment underpinning the declaration; welcomes that suitable controls are in place and work as intended, that no significant weakness has been identified, that risks are being appropriately assessed, monitored and mitigated and that necessary improvements are implemented when required;
- appreciates the Agency's continued improved communication and transparency vis-à-vis its Executive Board and the Management Board as well as staff; in particular:
  - the Agency's participative approach involving the Management Board at crucial junctures of its research and analyses, as in its studies on microcredentials and VET financing including individual learning accounts;
  - the fact that Cedefop's management kept the Executive and Management Boards fully informed and actively involved in the finalisation of the Programming Document 2022-24 and the preparation of the one for 2023-25;
  - congratulates Cedefop for the constant high quality of its reports on the implementation of the annual work programme and of its programming and reporting documents;
- confirms that the Management Board's analysis of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021 is positive and, in its opinion, provides the necessary assurance for the positive assessment of the results achieved by Cedefop in 2021.

8 June 2022

Nadine Nerguisian  
Chairperson of the Management Board

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Cedefop in brief

Cedefop is one of the oldest EU's decentralised Agencies. Founded in 1975 and based in Greece since 1995, Cedefop supports the promotion, development and implementation of the Union policy in the fields of VET, skills and qualifications by working together with the European Commission, EU Member States and the social partners ( <sup>1</sup>).

In line with its vision and values, Cedefop's strategic areas of operation are:

- 1) shaping VET and qualifications: improve transparency, relevance, quality of VET and qualifications by facilitating close interaction between IVET, CVET and general and higher education institutional structures;
- 2) valuing VET and skills: respond to changing needs by promoting quality and inclusive lifelong learning policy, and relevant governance and institutional structures;
- 3) informing VET and skills policies: produce evidence on skill trends and wide-ranging changes in the world of work to inform VET and skills development policies.

The multiannual objectives reflect the Agency's core functions:

- produce innovative and forward-looking research and policy analyses to inspire policy-making and support well-designed policy implementation;
- develop and maintain the knowledge base and the unique blend of expertise at the interface of VET and the labour market to sustain its role as the authoritative source on VET in Europe;
- share skills, VET and policy intelligence, data, information, tools and perspectives and promote policy learning to foster partnerships in European VET and interactivity with our stakeholders;
- focus corporate communication on increasing stakeholder engagement and outreach via social media, a more interactive web portal and online tools, data visualisations, e-publications, audio visuals, webinars and other virtual/hybrid events

The multiannual objectives steer the activities of Cedefop's annual work programmes and ensure continuity of its work, allowing the necessary flexibility to respond to changing needs.

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(<sup>1</sup>) Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and repealing Council Regulation EEC No 337/75. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/what-we-do/cedefop-regulation>

## Implementation of the annual work programme - The year in brief

Performance at a glance
40 publications – 498 000 downloads including country specific reports
34 meetings of which 1 policy learning activity (PLA) – 1,961 external participants
58 contributions to EU-level documents, notably Commission SWD on microcredentials, to inform the SI Presidency's work on the adult learning agenda; and 6 contributions to documents by international organisations
542 references to Cedefop work in 189 EU-level policy documents and 317 references to Cedefop work in 128 documents issued by international organisations (OECD, UNESCO, Council of Europe, ILO, IMF, World Bank, WHO/Commission, UNICEF Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) World Economic Forum, Migration Policy Institute, IIEP)
164 contributions to meetings that inform policies and their implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ACVT and DGVET meetings, notably to the integrated monitoring of the implementation of the Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück declaration.</li> <li>- Several meetings covering the thematic country reviews on skills governance in Slovenia and on upskilling pathways in France and Italy</li> <li>- EU Presidency on themes related to upskilling, reskilling and continuing training of adults</li> <li>- Meeting of the EEA Strategic Framework Working Group on Vocational Education and Training and the green transition organised by the European Commission</li> </ul> Social partner event on financial incentives for research and development and skills investments (ETUC, BusinessEurope, SMEUnited and SGI Europe)
306 000 website visits (+23%), 968 000 pageviews (+18%)
988 citations in academic literature 2020-21.
97% occupation rate of the establishment plan
100% budget implementation rate

*'Cedefop is at the heart of European Union efforts to forge new skills and bridge the important skill gap that the pandemic has revealed' said Vice-President Schinas addressing Cedefop staff.* The joint visit by European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit was *the* highlight of the year for Cedefop. This high-profile visit emphasised the crucial role of skills and VET in the EU's post-pandemic recovery and reaffirmed the significance of Cedefop's research and policy support.

With the EU policy course, and specifically the objectives and targets for VET and skills policy already marked out, 2021 focused on following them up and taking the policy framework further. As in the past, Cedefop's work contributed substantially to this process; particularly as regards the [VET Recommendation](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#), the 2020 [European Skills Agenda](#) and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and [the related action plan](#) endorsed at the Porto summit in May 2021.

Skills development has come into the focus of economic, industry, environmental and social policy making within the EU and around the globe. Against this backdrop, our performance measurement again demonstrates the relevance and added value of Cedefop evidence and

expertise to an array of policy areas and a large audience, beyond the wider VET community and the EU's borders.

### Scaling up skills intelligence for better policy and practice

Sound information and intelligence is a prerequisite for optimising countries' investment in skills. Knowing which skills are required at which levels, in which areas, for whom, and how, is crucial. As advocated by Cedefop, strengthening skills intelligence has become one of the main pillars of the 2020 EU skills agenda and underpins policy approaches supporting the green and digital transitions. For this purpose, Cedefop has been scaling up its skills intelligence activities building on over 10 years of experience in designing and applying cutting-edge tools and methods for EU-wide anticipation and analysis of labour market trends, skill needs and supply. As a compass devised by Cedefop, skills intelligence is much more than just data or statistics. It is the outcome of an expert-driven process of identifying, analysing, synthesising and presenting quantitative and/or qualitative information. As no single data, source or method provides all the answers, it is the use of combined data which provides added value and makes them meaningful for users. The next step is to make better use of their complementarities.

[Getting the future right](#), Cedefop's flagship conference in the spring, showed how to maximise the potential of skills intelligence for policy making in the context of the green and digital transitions and demographic trends. Discussions focused on priority areas for making the next-generation skills intelligence more contextualised, timelier, transition-focused and more relevant to sectors, businesses and people. A policy panel with representatives of the European Commission, Eurostat, Eurofound and the EU social partners reflected on skills intelligence as a strategic policy tool; social partners' role and strong partnerships as a key success factor for effective skills intelligence. Commissioner Schmit stressed that 'Cedefop's work is extremely important since we will need to know what skills will be necessary in various growing sectors and various regions'. The over 230 participants from within and outside the EU, considered this interactive event 'inspiring'. Engaging stakeholders, prior to, throughout the event and in subsequent thematic workshops, helped identify obstacles, gaps and opportunities. Skills for the green transition and the need to point the way from skills needs to suitable training and learning solutions were highlighted as major blind spots – two themes that have already translated into Cedefop initiatives.

The occasion of the conference was marked by the release of relevant materials: new data in Cedefop's real-time labour market information platform, [Skills OVATE](#), powered by big data and offered in cooperation with Eurostat; [research findings](#), a [concise overview of changes](#) induced by the pandemic and a series of [practical guides](#) to using Cedefop's skills intelligence output effectively; and [hands-on information](#) on how big data can be used for skills policy.

### Going greener relies on skills

To fill the 'green' skills intelligence gap, Cedefop has reinforced its long-standing work to explore trends towards a greener and more sustainable economy and its implications for VET. The aim is to create a Green Observatory in 2022.

[A skills forecast scenario](#) published at the end of the year illustrates the implications of the [Green Deal](#). It drives skills and training needs in all sectors. The scenario expects job growth in sectors, such as electricity and water supply, waste management and construction, while decline is expected to accelerate in mining and quarrying. In most others, jobs are likely to become greener without leading to significant net employment change. The services sector is among the



many where indirect employment effects will be felt. Achieving the objectives of the Green Deal could alleviate progressive job polarisation as it may not only require high skilled workers. Although model-driven, albeit imprecise, this scenario can help shape future-oriented VET, employment and skills policies.

Beyond green skills intelligence, it is essential to understand how VET can help citizens and enterprises to shape and manage the 'new green paradigm' and become greener itself. This issue was among the questions discussed at a Cedefop-OECD symposium in the autumn which focused on [apprenticeships for greener economies and societies](#). Apprenticeships allow young people to acquire occupation-specific 'green' skills and more general sustainability competences; but they also cater for adults who need to move from declining sectors to new jobs. The discussions were timely in view of the then forthcoming [European sustainability competence framework](#), to which Cedefop contributed, and the [planned proposal for a Council recommendation](#).

Given their proximity to the labour market and their dual learning venues, apprenticeships enable faster reflection of changes in production processes and technologies in learning outcomes. Discussions at this second Cedefop-OECD joint venture on apprenticeships, were informed by new research, analyses and practice examples. Representatives of companies, workers, apprentices and training providers shared their perspective with 160 participants, including policy-makers, practitioners and researchers, from around the world.

They stressed the need for sound skills intelligence, specifically to help small and medium-sized enterprises understand training needs. Green apprenticeships reskilling adults could help address the gender balance issue in sectors less attractive to young women. Speakers emphasised the crucial role of social partners, and social dialogue more generally as well as the need to listen to the voice of apprentices. Considering the climate and environment movements led by young people and their increasing interest in working in related jobs and sectors, 'green apprenticeships' could help to make this type of training more attractive.

'Apprenticeships, if designed well, bring about green innovation, green mindsets and green ambassadors', according to Professor Gonon of the University of Zurich. His view of apprentices as 'greeners', a key take-away from this event, fits Cedefop's vision: proactive VET that is not simply responsive but empowers learners to shape the future.

### **A fresh look at long-term mobility for apprentices**

While greening apprenticeships is a rather new theme, raising the share of apprentices in the Erasmus+ generations has been on the agenda for a long time. Long-term mobility is a challenge due to the specificities of blending education and employment.

The 2020 policy framework has re-emphasised mobility in VET as one of the priorities and raised the previously set target. With the current Erasmus+ cycle, mobility opportunities for VET learners have doubled. Against this backdrop, Cedefop conducted a [study](#) to identify obstacles to long-term apprentice mobility. It shows that there is a long way to match this supply with demand, among employers and apprentices and their parents. To support policy-making, a [concise paper](#) points the way forward. It suggests starting at sectoral level and using short-term mobility as steppingstones for the long-term option. As a result, the French Presidency invited Cedefop to contribute to its event to mark the 35th anniversary of the Erasmus+ programme.

## **Focusing on microcredentials**

Many see considerable potential in microcredentials as a tool for supporting up- and reskilling within the EU's recovery measures, along with their focus on a green, digital and just transition. They are considered as a new way for people to 'stack' learning flexibly according to their needs. Given the variety of providers and formats in which microcredentials are offered, and the lack of a common definition and standards, the Commission has proposed a common EU approach.

As related research and initiatives mainly focused on higher, academic education, Cedefop has taken a closer look at the use of microcredentials in and for labour market-related learning. This has been the first step in a [comprehensive study](#). Interim findings were discussed at a virtual [conference](#) at the end of the year which looked at microcredentials from a global perspective, as building blocks in national and international skills strategies. With speakers from the European Commission, the European Students' Union, the OECD, UNESCO and the ETF and 240 participants from 40 countries, it was a world-spanning event. Participants agreed that microcredentials can be tools to give visibility and value to the outcomes of short and on-demand learning experiences and also encourage learning. From a European perspective a 'quality seal' seems important to strengthen trust in them.

Understanding if microcredentials will revolutionise how learning is being valued or if they are just a new name for something that has existed all along in different shapes and guises, will be a major aim. This research also contributed to the Commission's work on a proposal for a Council recommendation which was presented at the end of the year. To support Cedefop's further work on the role and potentials of microcredentials, Cedefop has set up a tripartite sounding board with members from its Management Board.

## **Stimulating adult learning support**

An advisory group of Board members also accompanied Cedefop's work to support the Commission's initiative on [individual learning accounts](#), one of the financial instruments for adults and enterprises to engage in training activities presented in the forthcoming update of its comprehensive online database.

The updates and related studies helped inform the Commission's work and a high-level forum of over 800 participants opened by Commissioner Schmit. Invitations to share Cedefop's expertise on ways of financing adult learning throughout the year included several events organised by the European social partners.

It takes coordinated approaches to make support policies for CVET/adult learning more effective. Hence, Cedefop reinforced the links between its strands of work on financing VET/adult learning, lifelong guidance, and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Cooperation with the Commission in this context included help to prepare the update of the European validation guidelines to be released in 2022.

Validation and guidance need to go hand in hand. Working towards comprehensive lifelong guidance systems, many of the EU-27 have linked public employment services, enterprises and education providers and integrated advanced skills intelligence resources. Closely collaborating with its [CareersNet](#), Cedefop has been monitoring these developments, particularly the broad introduction of [ICT-based services](#). In 2021, work focused on [guidance practitioners' changing roles](#), (digital) competences, skill needs and continuous professional development.

These learning support measures matter particularly in coherent upskilling pathway policies. Cooperation with [France and Italy](#) to review their approaches to empowering adults through upskilling pathways has been a further step in Cedefop's support to implementing the related [Council recommendation](#). How to encourage employers to invest in inclusive skills development was one of the main questions discussed at a [joint seminar with the Slovene Presidency](#). Earlier in the year, Cedefop evidence had contributed to their [conference](#) and their work towards [the renewed agenda for adult learning](#).

### **Partnerships for added value**

Joint commitment and cooperation have underpinned the systematic approach to working on [common priorities for VET initiated 20 years ago](#). From the outset Cedefop has contributed to this joint effort by Member States, associated and candidate countries, European social partners and the Commission. Work in 2021, was dedicated to shaping a revamped approach suited to the extended mandate to monitor the VET Council recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration, together with [ReferNet](#) and the [ETF](#). The new approach will be put to the test in 2022.

Pooling resources and expertise translates into more effective services, as the collaboration with Eurostat and Eurofound on skills intelligence and mismatch demonstrated once again. Along with co-authoring publications, Cedefop and Eurofound coordinated a survey within the EU Agencies subnetwork on scientific advice to map how their activities and expertise on socioeconomic effects of sustainable development could support the implementation of the European Green Deal.

Providing effective services and relevant products also means listening to users' needs and tapping their expertise. Cedefop's 2021 activities demonstrate its close cooperation with ReferNet its thematic networks, with researchers, experts and practitioners for this purpose. They also showcase the involvement of its key stakeholders – the European Commission, governments and social partners – at critical junctures of its research and policy analyses.

### **Interacting with the VET community**

Conducting forward-looking research and generating up-to-date and sound evidence on VET, skills and qualifications is not enough. Results and findings also need to be communicated to the VET and skills community.

Cedefop's new-generation web portal, launched in autumn 2021, empowers users to interact with the online content suited to their needs. Thematic entry points, reflecting Cedefop's strategic vision of VET, bring together related data and content from across Cedefop's portfolio. This approach is supported by access points to national VET systems and statistics, which help contextualise the information. User-friendly dashboards, online tools and target-group-specific data visualisations complement the easy access to publications and events, country-specific findings, statistical overviews and indicators, and news, videos and podcasts. With the 'NQF online database', the 'VET toolkit for NEETs', 'Key indicators on VET' and the 'Skills intelligence' section new tools were added. The latter is based on selected data and dashboards of the former Skills Panorama website.

## Agile and resilient

In the second year of the pandemic, Cedefop's crisis management plan again proved successful. Minimising the health risk for staff and ensuring their wellbeing remained our priority. Working remotely remained common practice throughout the year. At the same time, Cedefop remained an active member of the EU Agency advisory group that accompanies their pandemic-induced crisis management. Notwithstanding the challenging situation, Cedefop both implemented and exceeded its work programme and, again fully used its budget, i.e. 100% implementation rate.

Fully committed to the EU agencies' joint priorities to act as role models for administrative excellence and forerunners for sustainable management, Cedefop continued supporting and making use of initiatives to share capabilities and resources; this was particularly so with ENISA, also located in Greece, for data protection and confidential counsellors. Cedefop further reduced print publishing and continued digitalising its work processes as well as harmonising its IT landscape with that of other EU Agencies and institutions.

All Cedefop events were conducted online. With more than 230 participants each, the microcredentials and skills intelligence conferences attracted far more participants than on-site events could have hosted. In total, the number of participants was 30% higher than in 2019. Despite the drawbacks of virtual events, which mostly relate to the lack of networking opportunities, this success points the way forward and demonstrates how Cedefop can extend its outreach even further.

## Performing strongly again

A 23% increase in visits to our web portal, 8% more Facebook likes and 11.25% more Twitter followers and the new systematic use of LinkedIn also signal a broader outreach. Cedefop's social media accounts had been among the top 10 influencers in the #EUVocationalSkills social media campaigns organised in previous years according to a [Commission study](#) released in 2021.

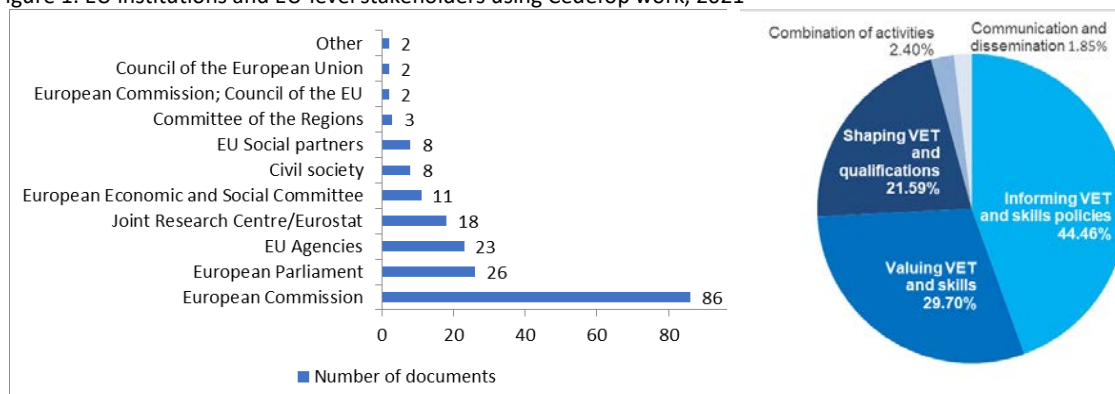
Uptake of Cedefop work in academic literature – fee-based and open access journals – increased by 3.5%. Citations relate to several strands of Cedefop work: from skills mismatch, skills intelligence and the impact of the pandemic, including early leaving from education and training, validation and learning outcomes to qualification frameworks and country specific information. As well as journals specialising in VET and education sciences, our work is also used in articles on economics, industry and IT-related themes, and tourism.

This mirrors the trend that has been evident for several years. Climate and energy, industry, taxation, gender equality and care were among the themes addressed by the 189 EU-level policy documents, studies and reports that drew on Cedefop work; also included were adult learning, education in general, skills imbalances and employment. These documents included more references, e.g. the Commission's [impact assessment report](#) on individual learning accounts or the staff working document on [putting the framework for quality and effective apprenticeships into practice](#). Several documents by the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament acknowledged and suggested using Cedefop's expertise and potential further.

Out of the 542 references in total, over 44% related to informing VET and skills policy, confirming the trend of the previous years. Around half of this share was based on the skills intelligence work, 6% related to the work on green skills. Commission documents on skills imbalances accounted for 20%, those by Cedefop's sister agencies for over 16% of its work on skills and the labour market. Reflecting the focus of policy making in 2021, valuing VET followed suit with

nearly 30% of all references. 9% of these were used in documents by social partners, specifically in the [Skills, innovation and training](#) report.

Figure 1: EU institutions and EU-level stakeholders using Cedefop work, 2021



NB: 'Other' includes the European Investment Bank and the European Security and Defence College

Source: Cedefop's performance measurement system

Figure 2: Type of European Commission documents citing Cedefop work



NB: 'Other' include, for instance: Communication, policy briefs, discussion papers

Source: Cedefop's performance measurement system

## Cedefop expertise and potential reflected in EU-level documents, examples

- The [Council resolution on a new adult learning agenda](#) proposes to take advantage of Cedefop's information and research for analysing adult learning and building evidence for adult learning policy.
- The Commission [proposal for a Council recommendation on individual learning accounts](#) refers to their intention to use Cedefop expertise.
- The [Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication on the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) acknowledges that the pillar is reflected in Cedefop's strategy and refers to its analytical frameworks, toolkits and instruments in all strands of its work.
- In its study on [guidelines for foresight-based policy analysis](#), the European Parliament refers to Cedefop as one of the relevant Agencies in this field.
- In her [Report on strengthening EU social dialogue](#), Andrea Nahles, former Labour Minister of Germany and Special Advisor to Commissioner Schmit highlighted the potential role of the tripartite EU agencies:  

[...] *social partners should hold debates on the future of work more often [... and] decide how such forward-looking dialogues could be promoted. [...] the relevant existing tripartite EU agencies (Eurofound, CEDEFOP, and EU-OSHA) could play a useful role here. Social partners could propose including forward-thinking dialogues of this nature on social dialogue in future work programmes [...].*

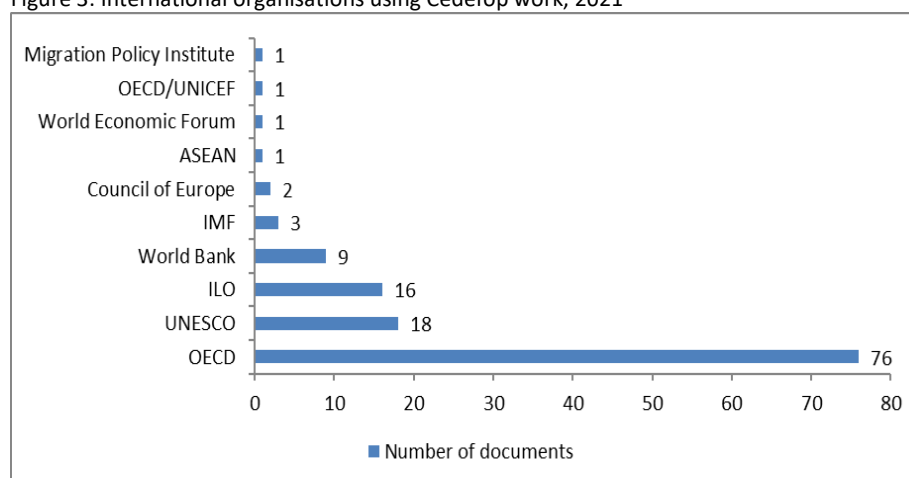
Source: Cedefop's performance measurement system

Once again, the European Commission was the top user of Cedefop work. The uptake of Cedefop evidence and findings in EU-level documents also reflect its contributions to policy making in its

preparation phase, be it through written contributions to papers or through presentations in dedicated events. Besides the Council resolution on a new adult learning agenda and the Commission proposals for microcredentials and individual learning accounts with accompanying documents, examples include the [Eurydice report on adult education and training in Europe](#) and country-specific information for the 2021 [Education and Training Monitor](#).

Among international organisations and bodies, the OECD was again the top user of Cedefop work, ahead of UNESCO and the ILO. With 317 references, take-up was substantially higher than in 2020. Allocating Cedefop evidence and findings to its thematic strategic areas of operation, shows a similar distribution as in the EU policy documents, with the work on skills and the labour market, i.e. informing VET and skills policies again in the lead with over 45%.

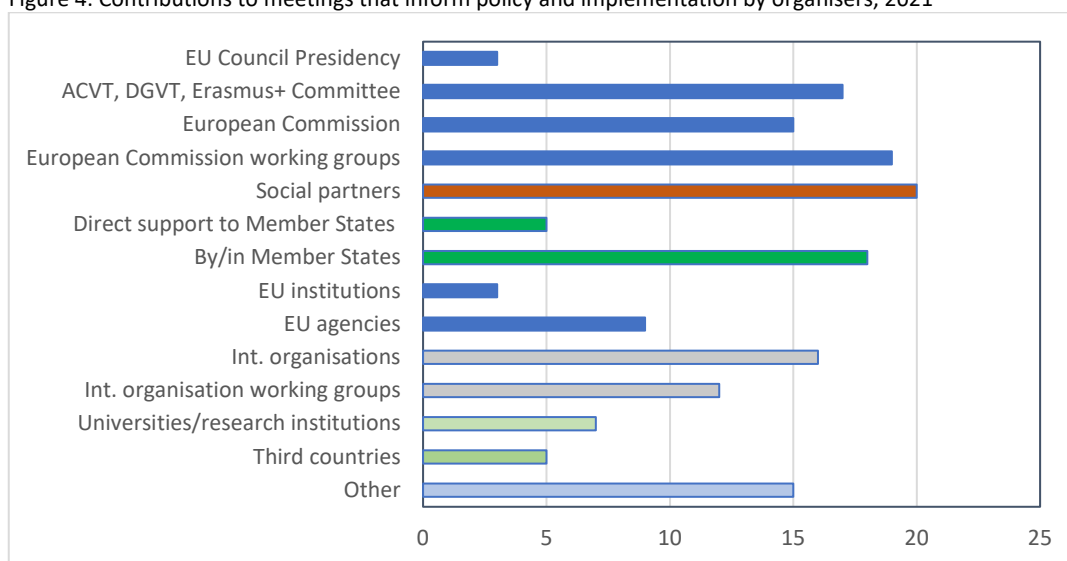
Figure 3: International organisations using Cedefop work, 2021



As in the past, Cedefop contributed substantially to Commission working groups, and events that support policy-making and implementation. Cedefop speeches also informed the adult learning conference, a joint event by the ILO and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and the Slovene Presidency. As in the past, the Agency supported the EQF advisory group as well as the meetings of the advisory committee and directors general for VET, including through substantial contributions to background notes for these events.

Cedefop was also invited to share its experience at a range of events on lifelong learning, skills and labour market intelligence, mismatch as well as jobs and skills for innovation and the green transition. This included events by the European Committee of the Regions and EU-level and national social partner organisations; a range of national events in different Member States, in several cases organised by universities. A speech via video contributed to the French partners' [50<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference of the Loi Delors](#) dedicated to continuing training. International level events were mostly organised by UNESCO, the ILO and the OECD. The highest shares of contributions were based on Cedefop's work on labour market and skills intelligence and the European tools, followed by the support to lifelong learning thorough guidance, validation and incentives. Direct support to Member States through thematic reviews focused on skills governance and upskilling pathways. Overall, over 30% each related to the work on valuing VET and skills and shaping VET and qualifications, 25% to informing VET and skills policies and the remaining contributions drew on a combination of activities from Cedefop's portfolio.

Figure 4: Contributions to meetings that inform policy and implementation by organisers, 2021



NB: 'Other' include, for instance meetings with Commission colleagues

Source: Cedefop's performance measurement system

## PART I Policy achievements of the year

### 1.1 Operational activity: Shaping VET and qualifications

Performance	
<b>117 references in EU policy documents</b>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal for a Council recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability</li> <li>• Commission staff working document: Education and training monitor 2021</li> <li>• Education and youth in post-COVID-19 Europe – crisis effects and policy recommendations from the European Parliament</li> </ul>
<b>53 contributions to meetings that inform policies and their implementation</b>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DGVT webinar on the preparation of the national implementation plans</li> <li>• Meeting organised by the Danish Industry on the future of the Danish VET system</li> <li>• Meetings of the interagency advisory group on technical and vocational education and training (IAG TVET) working group</li> <li>• Meeting organised by the Greek Employers confederation - Research Institute (IME GSEVEE) on continuing VET: the key factor for SMEs sustainable growth - new challenges and strategies</li> <li>• Several meetings on microcredentials organised by OECD and UNESCO</li> </ul>
<b>40 contributions to EU-level documents</b> and 1 contribution to documents by international organisations	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated approach to monitoring the implementation of the VET recommendation and the Osnabrück declaration</li> <li>• Country fiches for the Commission's 2021 Education and Training monitor</li> <li>• Joint documents with the Commission in the context of the EQF advisory group, including (updated) NQF-EQF reports by France, Albania and transversal skills and competences</li> </ul>
<b>Top publications downloads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing note - The hidden potential of level 5 qualifications (7 463)</li> <li>• Vocational education and training in Romania (4 166)</li> <li>• Vocational education and training in Italy (3 308)</li> <li>• Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes (3 066)</li> </ul>

Work under this strategic area of operation in 2021 focused on: monitoring and analysing VET policy developments; implementing European tools and principles for transparency and recognition of qualifications and credentials; and deepening the understanding of the future of VET.



## Monitoring and analysing VET policy developments

### *An integrated monitoring approach for VET priorities*

2021 was an important year for the new cycle of monitoring implementation and analysing national VET systems and policies. In 2020 [the Council recommendation on VET](#) invited the European Commission to ‘ensure qualitative and quantitative monitoring in line with the common objectives’ and ‘report to the Council on the implementation of the Recommendation every five years, building on data available at national and European level and annual monitoring by Cedefop’. The [Osnabrück Declaration](#) also reaffirmed the role of Cedefop and ETF in the process of European cooperation on VET and asked them to monitor implementation of the agreed actions and report annually to the ACVT and DGVT.

In line with the broader mandate received, and responding quickly to the ACVT conclusion in December 2020, which entrusted Cedefop with the combined VET monitoring exercise, Cedefop successfully designed, in cooperation with the ETF and the European Commission, a comprehensive integrated approach to report on and monitoring the two policy documents. The approach includes precise guidelines for the participating countries up to 2025. In cooperation with ETF, Cedefop drafted a proposed structure for the national implementation plans <sup>(2)</sup>. This proposal was agreed at the ACVT meeting in June and the DGVT meeting in October 2021. In November, Cedefop organised, in cooperation with the European Commission and ETF, a webinar to support Directors General for VET on the preparation of their national implementation plans.

[ReferNet](#) is a key Cedefop partner in the integrated monitoring approach and continues to be the main source of information on latest national policy developments on the agreed EU priorities. Cedefop organised dedicated workshops with ReferNet national representatives <sup>(3)</sup> and ReferNet national partners to discuss the new themes, align tools and processes with the forthcoming national implementation plans and identify challenges in implementing the integrated monitoring. The latter requires a comprehensive overview of national policy developments on VET, skills and qualifications considering also the countries’ reporting for the European Semester, their recovery and resilience plans and the social pillar action plan.

### *Country-based information*

In 2021 Cedefop continued to support policy implementation with country-based evidence and analysis. It drafted 27 country fiches on the latest developments in VET, with a special focus on education, resilience and well-being. These fed directly the Commission’s annual publication on policy measures in education and training – the [2021 Education and Training Monitor](#).

As part of the new integrated monitoring approach, Cedefop piloted country policy briefs on the main policy developments related to the national priorities. It also carried out an ex-ante evaluation <sup>(4)</sup> of the data visualisation tool ‘Timeline of policy developments’, to ensure that the tool is fully aligned with the information needs of national stakeholders that are involved in

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<sup>(2)</sup> National implementation plans are a formal requirement in the Council recommendation on VET to be developed by countries until May 2022. They will include (a) brief information on the national context and baseline (b) challenges and general objectives of the plan (c) detailed description of measures (d) governance of the implementation of the plan and (e) expected effects of the plan.

<sup>(3)</sup> ReferNet national representatives are nominated by the government to support ReferNet work in their countries, including validating, on behalf of the national government, information prepared by the national ReferNet partner.

<sup>(4)</sup> 250 people contributed to the ex-ante evaluation including representatives of ministries (education and labour) and other public bodies dealing with VET policy making and implementation, academia, social partners and other data users.

designing and/or implementing VET policies. The country policy briefs, and the 'Timeline of policy developments' will be updated annually to inform relevant EU monitoring and reporting processes.

Some 95 [national news items on VET](#), provided by ReferNet and edited by Cedefop confirm that national and EU level priorities are closely related, and illustrate the variety of policy approaches used across the EU. Countries examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on learner's well-being and the learning process <sup>(5)</sup> and are looking for effective policy responses. Others are finding ways to integrate digital and green skills in VET for a smooth transition to a low carbon economy and a sustainable society <sup>(6)</sup>. National news informed several Cedefop activities and were published in the Cedefop [Skillset and Match magazine](#).

For the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies [short descriptions](#), [spotlights](#) and [videos](#) on VET systems were released in time to inform DGVT and other stakeholders' meetings across the EU. In addition, and in cooperation with ReferNet, Cedefop prepared updated descriptions of VET systems in the EU, Iceland and Norway. A special edition '[Spotlights on VET in Europe: 2020 compilation](#)' was published in May offering a concise overview of VET systems in the EU-27, Iceland and Norway, including latest challenges and policy responses, and graphical systems presentations with key features allowing cross-country comparison. This edition includes a set of statistics on key aspects of VET in the EU-27+ countries, including: share of upper secondary learners in vocational and general education programmes; participation of adults in lifelong learning; early leavers from education and training; and employment rates of young graduates.

#### *Embedding entrepreneurship competence in VET*

The 2020 European skills agenda, the Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück declaration, all emphasise the importance of entrepreneurship competence along with digital and green skills. In May, Cedefop launched a study to provide policy makers, social partners, training providers and other stakeholders with new evidence on how entrepreneurship competence is embedded into VET. The study focuses on entrepreneurial learning ecosystems, including policy, practice and gaps through extensive research in Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Spain and Sweden.

Initial findings from Italy suggest that, despite many initiatives supporting entrepreneurship competence at provider level, most remain pilot initiatives that do not develop into mainstream policies. At national/regional level, since 2018, the syllabus <sup>(7)</sup> for entrepreneurship in upper secondary education and guidelines 'Pathways for transversal competences and guidance' <sup>(8)</sup> are compulsory for VET and offer a strong policy base for promoting entrepreneurship competence. However, policies on entrepreneurship are often detached from the field. For example, the 2018 syllabus that supports promoting entrepreneurship competence in Italy is not well known among VET providers even though it was attached to the well-known guidelines.

In Italy, several factors help VET advance entrepreneurship competence, also compared with other same level education settings: number of teaching hours dedicated to entrepreneurship competence, and strong links with the industry and the professional networks, including

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<sup>(5)</sup> See for example [Croatia: survey confirms impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education](#), [Netherlands: coronavirus impact on Dutch VET: the worst still to come?](#) and [The Vienna training alliance model – Aid for companies in the COVID-19 crisis](#)

<sup>(6)</sup> see for example [Spain: supporting sustainability and green skills in the construction sector](#), [Luxembourg: 'The future is SMART' campaign](#) and [Latvia: new momentum for green approaches in VET](#)

<sup>(7)</sup> overview or summary of the curriculum

<sup>(8)</sup> Pathways for transversal competences and guidance

presence of vocational teachers who come from the industry. While entrepreneurship competence is not only about start-ups but rather refers to transforming opportunities and ideas into financial, cultural and social value for others (EntreComp), at national level, it is mostly perceived as business creation and primarily connected to employability rather than lifelong learning.

## **European tools and principles for transparency and recognition of qualifications and credentials**

### *Supporting EQF implementation*

Cedefop worked closely with the Commission in supporting the implementation of the EQF in line with the priorities of the [EQF recommendation](#). The Agency provided conceptual input to the EQF advisory group meetings in February, June and October. Attention was given to the strengthening and deepening of qualifications transparency, notably by supporting the development of national qualifications databases and by increasing cooperation on learning outcomes to support transparency and comparability of qualifications. Significant effort was put into supporting the work of the EQF advisory group on validation of non-formal and informal learning, aiming to update the 2015 European Commission and Cedefop *Guidelines on validation*.

Cedefop provided written comments to the (updated) ‘referencing reports’ <sup>(9)</sup> of France and Albania. It also contributed its evidence and expertise to the work of several project groups, particularly: the horizontal comparison of qualifications; the short learning outcomes descriptions; and the third country dimension of the EQF.

The work on horizontal comparison of qualifications provided important insights into the use of learning outcomes at national level. It illustrated the potential of the approach and a need for more cooperation and more systematic sharing of experiences to support qualifications transparency. While the project-group initially focussed on how to strengthen the quality of the levelling of national qualifications to the EQF, the material collected provides important insights into the way countries apply learning outcomes. Demonstrating strengths and weaknesses, this work supports mutual learning and the gradual development of transparent and comparable descriptions of qualifications within Europe. Building on these outcomes, a working group including EQF and Europass Advisory group representatives is exploring the development and testing of short, learning outcomes-based descriptions of qualifications aiming at deepening the impact of the EQF, offering insights into qualifications levels, content and profile.

The work on short learning outcomes descriptions for publication on databases/registers connected to Europass started to explore national material and approaches, also considering the principles outlined in Cedefop’s [European handbook on learning outcomes](#). The elaboration of guidelines for drafting short descriptions and a proposal for the revision and possible digitalisation of the Europass certificate supplements is also part of this work. This feeds into digital developments, in particular linked to the development of national qualifications

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<sup>(9)</sup> Referencing reports provide information and evidence on the referencing of national qualifications levels to the EQF levels, following the 10 EQF referencing criteria. These include: a clear and demonstrable link established between NQF levels and the EQF; qualifications based on learning outcomes; transparent procedures and criteria for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF; all qualifications with an EQF level are quality assured. Referencing reports are available at: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/reports-referencing-national-qualifications-frameworks-egf>

databases, connected through Europass. It also paves the way for improving access to content and profile of single qualifications, directly benefitting end users.

The work on the EQF third country dimension focused on how the EQF, through links to third countries' qualifications frameworks, can support the comparison and recognition of qualifications awarded outside Europe. The group agreed on suitable national and regional qualifications frameworks for comparison using Cedefop's conceptual work, their development stages and progress indicators as a starting reference point. The work resulted in an agreement of the EQF advisory group to pilot cooperation with Ukraine, Morocco and South Africa. The joint Cedefop/ETF note on stages of NQF developments (2021) provides the basis for this work.

#### *Analysing NQFs developments in Europe*

In 2021, Cedefop continued the review and analysis of the implementation of national qualifications frameworks. The eighth edition of the [European inventory of national qualifications frameworks](#) (NQF), covering 39 countries and consisting of 43 national chapters, was drafted in-house in close cooperation with national stakeholders.

Data on NQF progress were gathered through a survey on implementation, use and impact of NQF/EQF, carried out in cooperation with the European Commission. A first Cedefop analysis was presented to the EQF Advisory Group in June. A detailed analysis will be conducted in the context of the global inventory in cooperation with the ETF, UNESCO and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Information on NQF developments across Europe was made available on the new Cedefop web portal through a new [NQF online tool](#). The tool allows end users to access and use information in a flexible and targeted way. It also allows for comparisons between countries and for exploring NQF stages of development and their referencing to the EQF.

#### *Supporting ESCO and EQAVET developments*

Cedefop continued to support the revision and further development of the terminology of skills and competences in ESCO. This work supported the publishing of a new version of ESCO (version 1.1) at the end of 2021. Cedefop coordinated the development of the updated terminology on transversal skills and competences. This work was closely related to the development of a new structure to underpin the skills terminology, improving user-friendliness and allowing for increased consistency. The ESCO work on transversal skills and competences was coordinated with the EQF advisory group, strengthening ongoing cooperation on learning outcomes.

In line with the prioritisation exercise and the portfolio review of its activities in 2021-23, Cedefop refocused its work on quality assurance and EQAVET more specifically. It coordinated efforts with the European Commission and the EQAVET Secretariat to align the follow up to the EQAVET implementation with the national implementation plans. It also provided advice and expertise to the EQAVET steering committee, the EQAVET peer learning activities and the EQAVET annual meeting.

#### *Microcredentials in facilitating learning for employment*

Cedefop's work on [Microcredentials in facilitating learning for employment](#), aims at providing better understanding of the role played by microcredentials in supporting labour-market-related and employment-relevant education, training and learning. The findings are expected to offer new knowledge on the characteristics of microcredentials, their added value to individual

learners and employees, as well as their impact on existing qualifications and recognition systems.

In 2021, Cedefop launched four surveys targeting national authorities, employer and employee organisations, and VET providers in 30 countries. The surveys collected data on the use and role of micro-credentials linked to labour market related education, training and learning. The interim findings from desk research and the surveys were presented in the conference 'Microcredentials for labour market education and training'.

Findings were also shared with the tripartite committee, composed of Cedefop's Management Board members, which advises Cedefop throughout the study. Interviews and in-depth case studies in eight countries (Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Poland, and Finland) were conducted in 2021.

The outcomes of the study complemented the Open Public Consultation on microcredentials run by DG EMPL and fed into the Commission's Staff Working Document on microcredentials and the proposal for a Council recommendation on an EU approach to microcredentials.

#### *The use of learning outcomes*

A balanced and reflected use of learning outcomes is critical for strengthening the relevance of curricula, the understanding and comparability of qualifications, for improving learning and teaching practices and for facilitating dialogue between education and training and the labour market.

Cedefop revised and extended its [European handbook on defining, writing and applying learning outcomes](#) addressing four main aims: reflecting on the conditions for implementing the learning outcomes approach for different purposes and drawing attention to the issues involved for each use-case (how learning outcomes are used in national VET curricula), with practical examples in European countries; reflecting on conceptual and terminological issues influencing the use of learning outcomes, in a dedicated chapter on transversal skills and competences; revising the set of 'rules of thumb' offering practical advice to practitioners responsible for defining, writing and applying learning outcomes; and providing an overview of and a direct link to existing online guidance and research material. The handbook is a useful 'hands-on' tool helping those directly involved in writing learning outcomes by providing links to existing guidance material at national or institutional level and in the form of research. This resource is meant to develop and grow over time and turn into a practical tool for policy makers, practitioners and researchers alike.

Cedefop actively contributed to the development of the European sectoral qualifications framework for asylum and reception officials and the accompanying toolkit. The Agency was involved in the activities of the certification and accreditation working group, supporting the validation of the occupational and educational standards based on learning outcomes. Visibility and dissemination of Cedefop's European handbook was part of the events organised by the European Asylum Support Office and representatives of Member States working in the area of asylum and reception.

#### *Comparing VET qualifications*

A [research paper](#) released in 2021 forms part of Cedefop's [Comparing VET qualifications](#) project, which seeks to develop robust and scalable methods for analysing and comparing the content and profile of qualifications. Focusing on the dialogue (feedback loop) between VET and labour

market stakeholders, the paper analysed existing methodologies and outlined how to develop these further. The methodology will support mutual learning between countries, notably by focussing on how a more systematic analysis and comparison of learning outcomes can support the review and renewal of qualifications.

This work is closely coordinated with the EQF working group on horizontal comparison of qualifications and the work of UNESCO on world reference levels. The findings were shared in a dedicated [workshop](#) presenting a series of use-cases where a systematic analysis and comparison of learning outcomes could support researchers, policy makers and practitioners involved in the development, review and renewal of skills and qualifications. It allowed for a discussion on how to strengthen the feedback-loop between education and training and the labour market; and thus provide a better link between the supply and demand of skills and qualifications.

### **Understanding the future of VET**

Cedefop's work on the [future of VET](#) aims to map and explore systematically the changing content and profile of VET programmes and qualifications, deepening the understanding of institutional implications of these changes.

Research in 2021 focused on the impact of assessment on VET learning and the changing interaction between initial and continuing VET. Particular attention was paid to the changing content and profile of VET, notably by seeking to understand how job-specific skills are balanced with research-based knowledge and transversal competences. The research focuses on exploring the extent to which the objectives set by curricula - in terms of content and profile - are supported by assessment. The underlying questions are the relationship between the content and profile of VET qualifications on the one hand, and the influence of assessment on the content-related priorities of learners and teachers on the other.

To explore changes in the content of VET, the study collected information through a survey among Cedefop's ReferNet network, eight in-depth country case studies, complementary ad-hoc research for the remaining 22 countries, and a VET provider survey, addressing managers, heads or directors of VET provider institutions. In parallel, the study looked closely into changes in the delivery of VET, addressing the diversification of institutions and the potential development of hybrid institutions, combining general and vocational content.

Cedefop's research on the future of VET, builds on the findings from the 'Changing nature and role of VET' project, which has directly informed various EU policy initiatives. Continuing research seeks to identify alternative development paths for European VET in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and Cedefop makes sure that the perspectives of different stakeholders, particularly those of national and regional authorities, enterprises and social partners are reflected.



## 1.2 Operational activity: Valuing VET and skills – fostering CVET as a system from a lifelong perspective

Performance	
<b>161 references in EU policy documents</b>	<p>For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The European social partners project's report on Skills, Innovation and Training</li> <li>• Proposal for a Council recommendation on individual learning accounts</li> <li>• Commission SWD 'Putting into practice the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships – implementation of the Council recommendation by Member States'</li> <li>• Council resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-30</li> <li>• Opinion of the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs for the Committee on Culture and Education on the European Education Area: a shared holistic approach to education, skills and competences</li> </ul>
<b>51 contributions to meetings that inform policies and their implementation</b>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint EAfA – ILO High Level Conference: Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and Global Standards in Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Meeting organised by the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions on the role of regions and cities in delivering high-quality apprenticeships for all</li> <li>• High-level forum on individual learning accounts organised by the European Commission.</li> </ul>
<b>8 contributions to EU-level documents and 3 contributions to documents by international organisations</b>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021. Adult education and training in Europe report</li> <li>• Commission SWD on Education for Environmental Sustainability, to accompany a proposal for a Council recommendation, drawing knowledge from the lifelong guidance project and validation project</li> <li>• Contribution to the background paper for discussion on the European Agenda for Adult Learning prepared for the Slovenian Presidency</li> </ul>
<b>Top publications downloads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (4 716)</li> <li>• The next steps for apprenticeship (4 066)</li> <li>• Career guidance policy and practice in the pandemic (3 502)</li> </ul>

In 2021, the work of this strategic area of operation was organised around three main thematic objectives and a transversal one: enhancing young people's employability and participation in lifelong learning; empowering adults through upskilling/reskilling and a systematic approach to CVET; supporting lifelong learning for all through guidance, validation and incentives; and streamlining and enhancing the information base on VET. There was special focus on fostering CVET as a system from a lifelong perspective through the launch of a new study and two country reviews on upskilling pathways in Italy and France.

Work is supported by three networks: [Ambassadors tackling early leaving from VET](#), [Cedefop community of apprenticeship experts](#) and [CareersNet](#).

## **a) Enhancing young people's employability and participation in lifelong learning**

This thematic objective encompasses work on teachers and trainers, tackling early leaving from VET and empowering NEETs and apprenticeships.

On the occasion of the [webinar 'Making excellence inclusive: towards a new Cedefop survey of VET teachers and trainers'](#) in February, Cedefop launched a feasibility study for a future pan-European survey on VET principals, teachers, learners and in-company trainers <sup>(10)</sup>. An advisory group with representatives from the six pilot countries - Greece, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Austria - was set up to support the implementation of the feasibility study getting insight into VET systems, institutions, learning and working environments to inform policymaking. Cedefop also intensified its research on [VET teachers and trainers](#) to collect, in cooperation with ReferNet, updated information about initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers in both school and work-based settings in the EU27 plus Iceland and Norway. Preliminary findings reveal efforts made in European countries in supporting teachers and trainers in the digital age and aiming at inclusiveness in VET. However, there are considerably fewer initiatives focusing on the professional development of teachers and trainers on green skills and sustainability issues.

Building upon its [VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and its network of ambassadors, Cedefop released its new [VET toolkit for empowering young people not in employment, education or training \(NEETs\)](#). The toolkit provides a wealth of resources for policymakers and practitioners using VET as a life jacket for NEETs. The risk factors for young people to become NEETs and the different profiles of NEETs were shaped in close cooperation with Eurofound. Cedefop's work on inclusiveness also supports one of the new European Commission's thematic working groups on schools – the strand on Pathways for school success.

In line with the priorities set by the Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück declaration, on the occasion of the [second joint Cedefop-OECD symposium](#) on the role of apprenticeships for greener economies and societies, Cedefop launched a cross-area collaboration on apprenticeship and green transition, which will be pursued in the coming years and be expanded to the digital transition. The event was the first opportunity to reflect on the potential role of apprenticeship in supporting the green transition with the creation of new apprenticeship programmes or by adapting existing ones. The event brought together policy-makers, practitioners and researchers from around the world to discuss new research and analysis of practices and implications for policy-making. Participants reported that they can apply this knowledge in their work (84%) and will use it to influence policy-making (68%).

Cedefop issued seven publications on apprenticeships, including [mega trends and the link to apprenticeships](#), [governance and in-company training](#), long-term mobility of apprentices – [a short information series paper](#) and [a reference publication – and on the number of apprentices in the EU](#). The [briefing note](#) and the information series paper containing an [analysis of apprenticeship schemes against EFQEA criteria](#) were published timely to inform the Commission's monitoring of the implementation of the European Framework on Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA) 3 years after its adoption by the Council. The analysis on how apprenticeship schemes in [Cedefop's European database](#) compare with several of the EFQEA criteria complemented the Commission's EAFA monitoring survey 2019-2020; the latter built upon on Cedefop's database. Cedefop's analysis revealed areas of strength but also pointed to issues and gaps that require further action. Cedefop argues, inter alia, that more attention needs

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<sup>(10)</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/making-excellence-inclusive-towards-new-cedefop-survey-vet-teachers-and-trainers>



to be paid to the nature of the written agreement between the learner and the employer, as it may make a difference in terms of apprenticeship quality. Attention also needs to be paid to the status of the learner undergoing apprenticeship training. Is the learner a regular worker, a regular student or both? Together with apprentice status, the nature of the agreement has implications for entitlement to social protection and the nature of the compensation.

Cedefop's two publications on long-term mobility of apprentices caught the attention of the European Commission and the French Presidency. The key note speech Cedefop delivered at the French Presidency Conference on 20 January 2022: [New Generation Erasmus: Developing the Mobility of Apprentices](#) focused on Cedefop [research data](#) and highlighted that mobility is a popular option among school-based VET learners but less so among in-company apprentices. This is due to the nature of apprenticeship, which is at the crossroads between education and employment, and to the greater difficulties apprentices face in getting an in-company training experience abroad, especially when it comes to [long-term mobility](#). Following the conference, the [Euro App Mobility](#), an association chaired by the former French Minister Jean Arthuis, prepared the below info-graphic referring to and promoting Cedefop's work.

## **b) Empowering adults through upskilling/reskilling and a systematic approach to CVET**

In addition to the country reviews launched in 2021 in Italy and France, Cedefop initiated a 3-year project *Strategies and partnerships for CVET – towards systems for learning conducive work environments and learning intensive working lives*. The project aims at identifying approaches and strategies leading, in the long-term, to CVET systems underpinned by learning conducive work environments and learning intensive working lives, and by a shift in enterprises' and people's attitude to CVET. Its outcomes will directly feed into one of the main VET priorities of the next decade, CVET and the need to build a systematic approach to it, as argued in the [Cedefop-ETF position paper](#), and acknowledged in the Osnabrück declaration, the VET Recommendation and the updated Skills Agenda. In 2021, work focused on analysing external and internal dimensions and challenges relevant for CVET. Apart from desk research, several interviews with experts from academia were conducted on the challenges that CVET currently faces and is likely to face in the future. Experts pointed out that CVET policies are dependant, in their effectiveness, on the initial vocational education and training (IVET) achieved and on individuals' learning attitude; and on how the distinction between IVET and CVET might be rethought. Experts also suggest reconsidering the scope of policies relevant for CVET systems, as it might be quite broad. For example, transportation policies might have some bearings on individuals' training needs, employability and labour prospects. To account for this, CVET policies might become a transversal policy stream that needs to consider several other fields and initiatives – not only labour and social, but also sector-specific and more industry-related. CVET policies are also related to retirement schemes and policies, and so linked to particularly hot topics in politics, not only to policy.

Together with the Slovenian Presidency, Cedefop organised the 11<sup>th</sup> Cedefop Brussels seminar with a focus on inclusive participation in CVET. Participants agreed that a multifaceted strategic approach is necessary for Europe to reach the target of high-quality and inclusive CVET.

## **c) Supporting lifelong learning for all through guidance, validation and incentives**

Cedefop continued approaching guidance, validation and incentives in a coherent and holistic manner, while keeping their specific identity.

In lifelong guidance, Cedefop published its second working paper: [Digital transitions in lifelong guidance: rethinking careers practitioner professionalism](#). The extensive collection consists of diverse contributions from CareersNet experts and other contributors to the 2020 CareersNet annual meeting. This is an example of Cedefop's effort to investigate how the pandemic and unfolding digitalisation affect policies, in this case initial and continuing training and professional development of career practitioners. It also feeds into core project work on quality career guidance systems, including digital offers and self-help platforms. The briefing note [A fresh look at guidance practitioner professionalism](#) was presented at the network meeting in December. The [5<sup>th</sup> CareersNet annual meeting](#) on 'New directions for partnerships in lifelong guidance and career development' was held in December in partnership with the Slovenian Ministry of Education. The meeting was flagged in the Slovene Presidency calendar as an accompanying event, with one session organised by Slovenia focused on their national guidance expert group. Working group sessions aimed at sharing policy insights and national practices since the pandemic, including career guidance and career development in new skills, lifelong learning and cross-sectoral guidance strategies, integrative tools, and cooperation.

Cedefop work on validation focused on continuing updating the European guidelines. A group formed by experts and members of the EQF advisory group was set up for this purpose. Two notes drafted by Cedefop, together with the Commission, were discussed in plenary meetings: [Developing high quality methodologies](#) and [Exploring complementary routes to certification](#). The first note discussed the main elements to consider when developing validation methodologies. All methodologies should refer to some reference point or standard that need to be well-designed, linking directly to the challenges of writing and applying learning outcomes. Regardless of the methodology used, it is important to communicate and make transparent the way the validation process was carried out and how certification has been obtained. This is important for both the individual candidates and potential users of validation. In addition, methodologies will differ depending on the purpose of validation: they can be summative (aiming at certification) or formative (supporting learning). It is critical to select and apply fit for purpose methodologies. For every validation approach a balance between validity, reliability, scalability and cost should be ensured. The second note Cedefop drafted looks at how the changing landscape of qualifications and the emergence of alternative credentials, such as micro-credentials and digital badges, is affecting the certification phase. Validation should be seen as a 'continuous' process that can happen at different stages of an education and employment career path. For this increased connectivity and accumulation of credentials to be achieved, we need to 'unpack' the certification process and identify the factors influencing its currency and exchange value. These include: the awarding body, the learning outcomes that are certified, the standards to which the certification refers to, and the type of assessment, including its reliability and validity as well as the technical format, if digitalised or not.

The two notes formed the basis of an [expert event](#) organised by Cedefop together with the Commission in November to discuss the updating of the guidelines. Around 100 experts discussed the implications of the thematic focuses <sup>(11)</sup> of the European guidelines for validation. A flash survey carried out between April and June gathered opinions on the current Guidelines, their use and necessary improvements: it produced valuable materials that are feeding the drafting of the new guidelines, expected to be completed in 2022.

Cedefop provided support to the EAfA's Apprenticeship Support Services by leading the webinar '[Financing apprenticeships in the EU](#)' in February. The webinar aimed at demonstrating the variety of financing arrangements for apprenticeships in the EU, explaining differences in

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<sup>(11)</sup> validation in national skills strategies (integrated approach), making validation a reality for individuals, developing high quality validation methodologies, exploring complementary routes to certification.

apprentice pay, discussing the changes to the financing arrangements introduced in reaction to the COVID-19 crisis and related challenges. It also investigated costs for apprenticeships and how they are shared between employers, apprentices, State, schools and other training providers. The 100 participants discussed the main financial flows between the actors involved and mechanisms for collection and distribution of funds. There was special focus on apprentice remuneration and financial support for apprentices. The webinar provided an opportunity to present the findings of Cedefop's study '[Financing apprenticeships in the EU](#)', which was a first-time attempt to collect and analyse systematically information on financing arrangements for all apprenticeship schemes in the EU and the UK.

Cedefop continued updating its [database on financing adult learning](#). Comprehensive information was collected and analysed on instruments targeting companies and individuals: training funds, tax incentives, grants/vouchers/ILA, loans and paid training leave. Country overviews presenting national systems and approaches to financing adult learning were developed, with a focus on demand-side funding. Based on the updates, Cedefop provided input to the Commission's study <sup>(12)</sup> on Individual learning accounts impact assessment and delivered a presentation during the [Commission's high-level forum on individual learning accounts](#) (March), which was opened by Commissioner Nicolas Schmid and brought together nearly 800 participants from 48 countries. Cedefop contributed to the debate by reflecting on the key features of individual learning accounts (ILAs), presenting country examples and providing an overview across all EU Member States indicating which countries have instruments playing a role similar to that of ILAs, in terms of the level of public financial support for individual adult learning.

Reference to Cedefop's database on financing adult learning is made in the Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation on individual learning accounts. Findings from Cedefop's database were also presented at various events (co)organised by social partners: the BusinessEurope and EESC Employers' group event '[Improving EU and national policies – Way ahead](#)' (October); and the seminar '[Financial incentives for research and development and skills investments](#)' organised as part of the European social partners project on skills and innovation (June).

To support EU level work on the ILAs initiative <sup>(13)</sup> and explore further the synergies between financing, guidance and validation, Cedefop launched a study on 'individual learning accounts and the potential for integrated policies and systems for CVET/adult learning'.

Cedefop also continued working on policies/incentives for increasing training provision in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The study offers detailed description and typology of the identified financial and non-financial/ structural incentives. It examines the interplay of these incentives and their effectiveness against the backdrop of the relevant institutional national, regional or sectoral environments.

#### **d) Streamlining and enhancing the information base on VET**

Cedefop developed a concept to serve as blueprint for continual development and strengthening of statistical information on its web-portal. The [entry point to statistics](#) provides users with clear, harmonised and user-friendly access to Cedefop's statistics. The 'VET statistical overviews', were updated and upgraded to produce '[Key indicators on VET](#)' and provide users

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<sup>(12)</sup> Cedefop provided the whole data set, short information for each instrument included in the database and additional information on selected instruments operation, as requested by the Commission.

<sup>(13)</sup> in particular, the Commission's proposal for the Council recommendation on ILAs

with interactive visualisations of quantitative data on key aspects of VET policy. Through graphs and tables, the overviews provide a comprehensive framework of data to describe the status and developments of VET and VET-related labour market outcomes in countries and the EU-27 overall.

Cedefop has also been working on the development of a 'Dashboard on European VET policy'. It draws from the indicators to monitor progress by the EU-27 overall and individual countries' towards achieving the agreed quantitative policy targets for 2025/30 set out in the European VET policy documents.

The 'key indicators' and the 'dashboard' signal the transition from the old to the new European VET policy cycle (2020-25 to 2030) by incorporating the framework provided by the new VET policy documents, statistical developments and new target indicators. Cedefop also worked with the Commission and Eurostat to improve statistics, for example on VET graduate tracking and mobility in IVET.

### 1.3 Operational activity: Informing VET and skills policies

Performance	
<b>241 references in EU policy documents</b>	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission SWD accompanying the Proposal for a Council recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality</li> <li>• BusinessEurope recommendation for an EU Talent Pool</li> <li>• European Parliament resolution on Impacts of EU rules on the free movements of workers and services: intra-EU labour mobility as a tool to match labour market needs and skills</li> <li>• EESC opinion on vocational training: the effectiveness of systems to anticipate and match skills and labour market needs and the role of social partners and different stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>40 contributions to meetings that inform policies and their implementation</b>	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event on big data for the future of work organised by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</li> <li>• Several meetings on the green transition and the green skills for VET</li> <li>• High-level conference on skills for industry organised by the European Commission</li> <li>• Eurostat 2021 conference on new technologies and techniques in statistics</li> <li>• Meetings of the ETUC's education and training committee</li> </ul>
<b>2 contributions to EU-level documents and 2 contributions to documents by international organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inferring job vacancies from online job advertisements - 2021 edition (Eurostat)</li> <li>• Big data, better skills intelligence? Using online job advertisements to map skills trends presented at the ISI world statistics congress on skills intelligence based on big data</li> <li>• Preparing the Tourism Workforce for the Digital Future (OECD)</li> </ul>
<b>Top publications downloads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insights into skill shortages and skill mismatch (3 799)</li> <li>• Briefing note - Preventing skill obsolescence (3 500)</li> <li>• Briefing note - Trends, transitions and transformation (3 387)</li> </ul>

In 2021, work in this strategic area of operation focused on: producing and disseminating new skills research and policy analysis and labour market and skills intelligence; supporting national and sectoral stakeholders; and moving towards labour market and skills intelligence 2.0 – Reshaping skills and policy analysis. All activities contributed directly to realising the priorities outlined in the 2020 EU Commission Skills agenda, which emphasises the role of skills intelligence in future-proofing VET and up- and reskilling initiatives. Because of their relevance to EU policy priorities, Cedefop's findings and conclusions also contributed to expanding the evidence base relevant to the priorities laid down in the Osnabrück declaration and Council recommendation on VET, policies supporting the green and digital transitions, the social rights pillar and other policy documents.

The flagship high-level conference [Getting the future right](#) held on 13 April was one of Cedefop's highlights of the year. Cedefop presented its research and labour market and skills intelligence (LMSI) work to 230 participants from Europe and beyond and discussed with policy-makers opportunities to shape a new generation of skills intelligence. Among the speakers were European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit. Apart from presenting

findings linked to current megatrends such as the twin transitions and ageing population, the event also showcased how skills intelligence can help learners see what it takes to start a career while supporting people already employed in further shaping it in a rapidly changing work of work. Actively involving conference participants in identifying issues, trends and challenges, and expert discussion at the four workshops that followed the main conference contributed to shaping Cedefop's future skills intelligence work.

#### **a) Producing and disseminating new skills research and policy analysis and LMSI**

In 2021, Cedefop continued collecting and analysing online job advertisements in close cooperation with Eurostat, which took over responsibility for data production and storage at the start of the year. A new [Skills-OVATE](#) release with new functionalities was launched at the April conference and was updated quarterly to incorporate newly collected online job advertisements. Throughout the year, jointly with Eurostat, Cedefop identified data shortcomings and inconsistencies and implemented solutions to address them.

In 2021, Cedefop conducted a study on data representativeness, which identified improvement possibilities, and developed a prototype tool to identify emerging skills needs in five countries. Skills-OVATE data were also analysed in a [Cedefop working paper](#) which uses machine and deep learning models to assess how well task profiles of occupations can predict automation risk. Cedefop also contributed to shaping a second round of landscaping, a primarily qualitative expert-driven exercise steered by Eurostat aimed at mapping national online labour markets and the trends that shape them. First findings confirm that the online job market keeps growing and show that in several countries, public employment services are actively reshaping their portals to become more important players. In 2021, Cedefop also prepared several Skills-OVATE development activities to be taken forward in 2022. These include new work on identifying green jobs and skills and using several alternative taxonomies to classify occupations and skills.

Cedefop engaged with the European Commission's Europass team to discuss possibilities for using Skills-OVATE to develop and disseminate skills intelligence to Europass users. Discussions with the Commission's ESCO team aimed at identifying and exploiting synergies between ESCO and Skills-OVATE.

Regular requests for information, invitations to present at a wide range of events and continuing close contacts and cooperation with the Commission, international organisations and other parties are clear signals that Cedefop's real-time labour market information is valued and appreciated. On several occasions social partners expressed their interest in learning more about Cedefop's Skills-OVATE, its findings and its potential. Jointly with Eurostat, Cedefop organised a virtual workshop at the [World Statistical Congress](#) in July, where it presented its approach to developing real-time labour market information.

Cedefop took the lead in reflecting on the potential of big data for skills analysis and policy in a broader perspective. On behalf of the interagency advisory group on technical and vocational education and training (IAG-TVET), Cedefop released a [policy-maker focused publication](#) in March. Apart from drafting the report, Cedefop also developed its *Perspectives on policy and practice*, a format which will be re-used for an IAG-TVET report on post-pandemic employment and skills policies.

Cedefop reached several important milestones in its work and skills surveys in 2021. Following an extensive testing and translation phase, the second European Skills and Jobs Survey was fielded in all EU Member States, Norway and Iceland. Preliminary data reached Cedefop at the

end of the year. Initial findings showcase the potential of the survey in advancing insight into changing skills needs in jobs, skills development and mismatch among EU adult workers in the context of rapid technological development and digitalisation. After consulting with ETF experts, Cedefop agreed to making available the survey instrument to the ETF with a view to implementing the survey in several of their partner countries.

The work on exploiting the micro-data of the fourth joint-Cedefop/Eurofound European Company Survey (ECS) continued throughout the year. The survey was used for a [Cedefop working paper](#) released in December on the determinants and impacts of workplace learning. The paper uncovered that while such learning is crucial for employee wellbeing and corporate performance, most EU companies are not offering optimal learning environments and opportunities. The [Research in Labour Economics volume on workplace productivity and management practices](#) jointly edited by Cedefop and Eurofound was published at the end of 2021.

Cedefop and Eurofound experts jointly analysed and reported on an online follow-up to the 2019 European company survey on COVID-19. A [Cedefop working paper](#) on how companies reacted to the pandemic was released in September <sup>(14)</sup>. Key findings include the slowdown of employer-facilitated training and the acceleration of skills needs spearheaded by the pandemic.

To address the lack of skills intelligence focused on learning, one of the key conclusions of the April conference, Cedefop started working on the first European Training and Learning Survey, which will complement Cedefop's other surveys and research on work and skills. This survey aims at developing new insight into the factors and contextual conditions driving and inhibiting training, workplace learning and other forms of work-related learning among employed adults. In 2021, Cedefop defined the survey concept and started preparing the questionnaire.

Cedefop's European skills forecast work featured prominently in publications, events and presentations throughout the year. Four skills forecast scenarios - on ageing, greening, automation and COVID-19 - formed the basis for a short [report](#) showcasing key labour market trends up to 2030 and their policy implications. The COVID-19 scenario was also used in a [Cedefop working paper](#) to offer insight into the variation in employment loss due to the pandemic between countries, sectors and occupations. Following the early release of key findings on social media, the full results of a dedicated forecast scenario on implementing the European Green Deal were published in a [Cedefop report](#) in December. The report concludes that to facilitate the employment shifts between sectors, occupations and regions and the greening trends within them, policy needs to focus on extensive accelerating of up- and reskilling and on providing guidance and support to the workers concerned.

In 2021, Cedefop started preparing the work on its next skills forecast and the release of the 2022 European skills index (ESI). As in previous releases, the index was further fine-tuned, and the ESI methodology was audited by the Joint Research Centre <sup>(15)</sup>. To benefit from national expertise necessary to interpret and contextualise findings, Cedefop's ReferNet was requested to provide feedback and to promote the findings nationally. To complement Cedefop skills forecasts, which typically have a future horizon of 10 years, a new project aimed at developing

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<sup>(14)</sup> Eurofound released a [report](#) based on the ECS 2020 follow-up in December: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2021/business-not-as-usual-how-eu-companies-adapted-to-the-covid-19-pandemic>.

<sup>(15)</sup> The JRC audit report, which acknowledged the significant efforts by the developers' team to obtain a balanced and transparent result, concluded that the ESI framework is well constructed, the ESI is reliable and the methodological framework has a good statistical coherence.



a short-term anticipation system for occupations and skills that will rely on conventional and big data was launched in the beginning of 2021.

New findings from CrowdLearn <sup>(16)</sup> were released as a [Cedefop Research paper](#) in July. The paper combines survey information on microworkers with the original CrowdLearn survey among online freelancers. The report highlights the potential role of microwork as a viable avenue for labour market integration, income supplementation and skill development opportunities for workers who otherwise underutilise their skills. At the same time, it shows the importance of being aware of crowdwork features - such as repetitive and solitary tasks - that could be a barrier to learning. The findings and their policy implications were widely disseminated to platform work stakeholders and via media channels.

## **b) Supporting national and sectoral stakeholders**

To promote good skills anticipation practices and hands-on advice for stakeholders on how to implement them, Cedefop published three practical guides – on [skills surveys and skills forecasting](#), on [big data and artificial intelligence methods](#) and on [technology and skills foresight](#). These guides inform analysts and policymakers about skills anticipation methods available to navigate through the uncertainty of changing technologies and skill demands. The [Matching skills webtool](#) was restructured, updated to ensure all major national skills anticipation initiatives are covered, and prepared for release in 2022.

The sectoral focus of four newly developed green transition foresight exercises aims at supporting stakeholders in managing the implementation of the European Green Deal. Cedefop launched the first foresight on smart and green cities in 2021 and started preparing the second foresight on waste management. The foresights use multiple rounds of expert consultation and interaction to shed light on the implications of greening for jobs and skills. They provide a solid basis for understanding how VET and up- and reskilling can contribute to helping sectors, organisations and people make transitions that contribute to more sustainable economies and societies. The sectoral approach to greening has sparked considerable interest. Cedefop was invited to present its green foresight work and approach several times during the year by organisations and initiatives involved in greening; these included events in the context of smart cities, urban greening and green economy opportunities for NEETs.

At the request of the Slovenian Labour Ministry, Cedefop supported the country in developing a national skills forecast and a career platform and in strengthening the governance of skills anticipation and matching. At a [first workshop](#) in February, the focus was on providing insight into the challenges of organising and setting up a skills forecast in a small country and to discuss opportunities to overcome them. A [second workshop](#) in November placed emphasis on managing expectations and shaping effective feedback loops between the labour market and education and training.

Stakeholders regularly contacted Cedefop to take part in events in order to benefit from the Agency's knowledge and expertise on skills anticipation methods and skills governance. While not all requests could be accommodated, Cedefop delivered several presentations on its skills intelligence and governance work. These included interventions at events in Greece and Catalonia, in workshops organised by the creative/cultural sector, in a webinar on drivers of employment change in the private security sector, and in a webinar on skills in the healthcare sector.

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<sup>(16)</sup> Cedefop's project on skills and learning in platform work



### c) Towards LMSI 2.0 – Reshaping skills and policy analysis

As part of the development of the new corporate web portal, Cedefop focused in 2021 on reorganising the presentation of its labour market and skills research and skills intelligence. Moving to a thematic and user-centered approach, the labour market and skills information has a more consistent thematic structure and stronger links between different types of evidence on skills and labour market trends. At the end of the year, it was decided to reshape the web portal section on the green transition to become the Cedefop Green Observatory.

Cedefop also successfully accomplished the transition of its skills intelligence from the Skills Panorama portal to the new Cedefop web portal in November. In 2021, only essential updates were made to the Skills Panorama, which remained accessible until its shut-down in December. Preparations for the transition involved informing users and targeted actions to retain them, finalising the selection of content to be retained and re-organising the different indicators and qualitative information to fit the philosophy and approach of the new portal.

Several achievements in 2021 contributed to laying the foundation for developing next generation skills intelligence. The integration of Cedefop skills intelligence in the web portal proved to be a steppingstone towards better linking different types of information on skills needs and trends. The [getting the future right](#) conference helped identify what it takes to future-proof skills intelligence. The forward looking and innovative orientation of Cedefop skills research, analysis and survey work helped provide novel insight into how jobs and work are changing and point towards important priorities for research and policy analysis. The 2021 briefing notes [Trends, transitions, and transformation](#) and [Shifting our perspective on learning](#) give a succinct and forward-looking snapshot of the key features of the skills intelligence work ahead.

## 1.4 Communication, information and dissemination

Performance	
<b>82 000 downloads of Cedefop briefing notes</b>	
<b>404 articles referring to Cedefop in European media</b>	
<b>16 730 followers on Facebook</b> - increased by 8.6% since 2020 <b>11 570 followers on Twitter</b> - increased by 11.25% since 2020 <b>5 650 followers in LinkedIn</b> (measured since June 2021) 13 videos (clips, animations and interviews), including two animations on VET in Portugal (March) and Slovenia (November), were produced, plus 17 short-form videos (logomotion/gif), with a total of over 514 000 views on social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn)	
<b>Events</b> organised by Cedefop –virtually	Close to 98% of respondents considered them as good or very good and 88% gave the same rating to audience engagement/interactivity. 58% were policy-makers at EU/national level 20% researchers 5% social partners 4% representatives of enterprises 4% practitioners

The Agency's corporate communication focuses on achieving the best possible outreach for Cedefop's key messages on VET, skills and qualifications policy to its stakeholders at European, national and local levels. In the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in a radically changing environment, Cedefop continued to optimise its communication activities and adapt to the information needs of its stakeholders.

In 2021, all Cedefop events continued being held virtually. Ongoing and systematic analysis of participants' feedback and close monitoring of technical developments enabled Cedefop to identify and continuously implement new virtual conference requirements. This resulted in high online participation rates and an overall satisfaction rate of 98%. Examples of Cedefop's successful virtual events include the Brussels seminar with the Portuguese Presidency '[Towards lifelong learning – Future-proofing VET skills and competences](#)', and high level Cedefop conferences such as '[Getting the future right: Towards smarter and people-centred skills intelligence](#)' and '[Conference on microcredentials](#)', where the outreach by far surpassed comparable Cedefop physical events in the past. The [conference on microcredentials](#) stood out with about 250 attendees, including participants from Australia, Canada, Colombia, Hong Kong, South Africa and Turkey.

Media and stakeholder communication activities were complemented by 17 press releases, three issues of the magazine 'Skillset and match', 10 issues of Cedefop's electronic newsletter, 56 website headlines, 180 Facebook posts and over 10,100 tweets and retweets. A total of 13 video productions and two animations on the VET systems of the Presidency countries Portugal and Slovenia were published, achieving an excellent outreach with a total of over 514 000 views on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn. Cedefop counted by the end of the year 16,730 Facebook followers (+8%), 11 570 Twitter followers (+11%) and 5 650 LinkedIn followers, a platform which was added to the agency's social media channels in June 2021.

Several interviews with Cedefop management and staff complemented the Agency's communication activities: '[VET in Spain](#)' in the Spanish newspaper El País <sup>(17)</sup>; Cedefop and ENISA Directors interview with Greek news agency AMNA about [EU agencies based in Greece](#); contributions to the *Confédération Européenne des Syndicats Indépendants* CESI talks '[The EU and workers](#)'; and interviews about the gig economy to [Fortune Greece](#) and the Greek radio station [SKAI 100.3](#).

Cedefop published six [briefing notes](#): 'The EU's port of call for VET', 'Apprenticeship: a pill for every ill?', 'Trends, transitions and transformation', 'Analysing and comparing VET qualifications', 'Shifting our perspective on learning' and 'A fresh look at guidance practitioner professionalism'. All briefing notes are available online as PDF and eBook in eight languages, plus the language of the EU Council Presidency countries (DE, EL, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL, PT and SL). More than 30 additional publications, plus language versions, were produced and made available online in 2021. All titles are free to download, and users can [subscribe](#) on Cedefop's web portal for alerts of new content.

A new audio-visual format was introduced in the last quarter of the year and promoted via web portal and social media: the first two episodes of Cedefop's [podcast series 'Skillset and match'](#), produced and published in October and December, are based on interviews with European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, and Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel.

The close collaboration between Cedefop and DG EMPL continued mainly in the area of online events and social media activities. The #CedefopPhotoAward initiative, closely linked to the Commission's vocational skills week and an integral part of the 'Awards for VET excellence' since 2016, was again heavily affected by school closures and other COVID-19 related measures. The competition was postponed to the second semester and was finally concluded in 2021. Out of the three winning teams, two will participate with their photo stories as Cedefop nominees at the European vocational skills week's 'Awards for VET excellence' in May 2022, and the winners of the new category 'best video' will be invited to the Thessaloniki international documentary festival in Greece.

Cedefop's Research Support Centre raised the Agency's visibility at the 2021 [EU open data days](#) and efficiently took care of its records management and archives obligations, adapting related EC decisions and data protection requirements.

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<sup>(17)</sup> [https://elpais.com/elpais/2021/03/01/actualidad/1614596936\\_438297.html](https://elpais.com/elpais/2021/03/01/actualidad/1614596936_438297.html)

## PART II a) MANAGEMENT

### II.1 Management Board

Throughout the year, Cedefop reported on a regular basis to its (Extended) Executive Board and Management Board on risks and control issues. Updates on internal control activities, ECA, IAS, discharge and other sources of assurance are a standing agenda item at all meetings.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all meetings of the (Extended) Executive Board and the Management Board were held virtually in 2021.

#### Key decisions adopted by the Management Board:

- Draft single programming document 2022-24 <sup>(18)</sup>
- Annual report 2020 <sup>(19)</sup>
- Consolidated annual activity report (CAAR) 2020 <sup>(20)</sup>
- Opinion of the Management Board on Cedefop's final annual accounts 2020 <sup>(21)</sup>
- Minutes of the Management Board meeting 2021 <sup>(22)</sup>
- Single programming document 2022-24 <sup>(23)</sup>
- Cedefop's budget 2022 <sup>(24)</sup>
- Decision amending budget no. 01-2021 <sup>(25)</sup>

#### Key issues discussed with the Executive Board and Management Board included:

- a) Consultation of the Executive Board on the follow-up of Court Decision T-187/18
- b) Executive Board meeting on 3 March 2021
  - Draft annual report 2020 <sup>(26)</sup>
  - Reporting from the Executive Board to the Management Board <sup>(27)</sup>
  - Outcomes of staff wellbeing survey 2020 <sup>(28)</sup>
  - Implementation of the work programme 2021 including proposal for integrated monitoring by Cedefop of the VET Recommendation and Osnabrück Declaration <sup>(29)</sup>
  - Cooperation with EU Agencies <sup>(30)</sup>
  - Restructuring of Cedefop's legal function <sup>(31)</sup>
  - Audits and Evaluations <sup>(32)</sup>

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<sup>(18)</sup> RB(2021)00050 - endorsement procedure

<sup>(19)</sup> RB(2021)00351

<sup>(20)</sup> RB(2021)00761

<sup>(21)</sup> RB(2021)00791

<sup>(22)</sup> RB(2021)01543

<sup>(23)</sup> RB(2021)01483

<sup>(24)</sup> [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/cedefop\\_budget\\_2022.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/cedefop_budget_2022.pdf)

<sup>(25)</sup> RB(2021)01620

<sup>(26)</sup> RB(2021)00258-item 2a

<sup>(27)</sup> RB(2021)00149-item 2b

<sup>(28)</sup> RB(2021)00241-item 2c

<sup>(29)</sup> RB(2021)00246-item 3

<sup>(30)</sup> RB(2021)00272-item 4

<sup>(31)</sup> RB(2021)00235 and RB(2021)00236-item 5

<sup>(32)</sup> RB(2021)0133-item 6a

- Discharge 2019 <sup>(33)</sup>

c) Executive Board meeting on 24 June 2021

- Implementation of the work programme 2021 <sup>(34)</sup>
- Update on the progress of the Action Plan following the external evaluation <sup>(35)</sup>
- Proposal for possible solutions for translating Cedefop's publications <sup>(36)</sup>
- Reporting on Internal Control activities, discharge, audits, evaluations and other sources of assurance <sup>(37)</sup>
- Transfers of commitment and payment appropriations in 2021 <sup>(38)</sup>
- Exchange of observers in the Management Board meetings between Cedefop and Eurofound <sup>(39)</sup>
- Update on Management Board members' pending declarations of interests <sup>(40)</sup>

d) Executive Board meeting on 6 October 2021 preceding the Management Board meeting

- Preparation of the Management Board meeting of 7 and 8 October 2021 with special attention to items submitted for decision (see point e) below).

e) Management Board meeting on 7 and 8 October 2021

- Implementation of the work programme 2021 <sup>(41)</sup>
- Cedefop's survey on Making excellence inclusive: towards a new Cedefop survey of VET teachers and trainers <sup>(42)</sup>
- Integrated monitoring by Cedefop of VET Recommendation and Osnabrück Declaration <sup>(43)</sup>
- Revised single programming document 2022-24/Opinion of the European Commission <sup>(44)</sup>
- Reporting from the Executive Board to the Management Board <sup>(45)</sup>
- Update on the progress of the Action Plan following the external evaluation <sup>(46)</sup>
- Reporting on Internal Control activities, discharge, audits, evaluations and other sources of assurance <sup>(47)</sup>
- Awareness-raising session for Management Board members on anti-fraud issues <sup>(48)</sup>
- Human Resources developments including Covid-19 pulse survey <sup>(49)</sup>
- Transfers of commitment and payment appropriations in 2021 <sup>(50)</sup>

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<sup>(33)</sup> RB(2021)00136-item 6b

<sup>(34)</sup> RB(2021)00661-item 2

<sup>(35)</sup> RB(2021)00679-item 4

<sup>(36)</sup> RB(2021)00663-item 5b

<sup>(37)</sup> RB(2021)00683-item 5c

<sup>(38)</sup> RB(2021)00626-item 5d

<sup>(39)</sup> RB(2021)00681-item 6a

<sup>(40)</sup> No document

<sup>(41)</sup> RB(2021)01005-item 3a

<sup>(42)</sup> RB(2021)01024-item 3b

<sup>(43)</sup> RB(2021)01014-item 4

<sup>(44)</sup> RB(2021)01048 and RB(2021)01047-item 5

<sup>(45)</sup> RB(2021)00963-item 6

<sup>(46)</sup> RB(2021)01017-item 7

<sup>(47)</sup> RB(2021)01000-item 8b

<sup>(48)</sup> RB(2021)00980-item 8c

<sup>(49)</sup> RB(2021)00975-item 8d

<sup>(50)</sup> RB(2021)00976-item 8f

- 2020 annual report of the Chair of Cedefop's Appeals Committee <sup>(51)</sup>
- Elections of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons of the Management Board and composition of the Executive Board/Extended Executive Board <sup>(52)</sup>
- Mode and frequency of the Executive and Management Board meetings post-Covid-19 <sup>(53)</sup>
- Updated information on Cedefop's building <sup>(54)</sup>

f) Extended Executive Board meeting on 1 December 2021

- Implementation of the work programme and budget 2021 <sup>(55)</sup>
- Final draft single programming document 2022-24 <sup>(56)</sup>
- First draft single programming document 2023-25 <sup>(57)</sup>
- Reporting on Internal Control activities, discharge, audits, evaluations and other sources of assurance <sup>(58)</sup>
- Transfers of commitment and payment appropriations in 2021 <sup>(59)</sup>
- Update on the Management Board members' pending declarations of interests <sup>(60)</sup>.

## II.2 Major developments

2021 was the first full year of the new EU VET and skills policy cycle to which Cedefop had contributed. The [European Green Deal](#) at the end of 2019, the 2020 [recovery package](#), [the renewed skills agenda](#) and the [Pact for Skills](#) manifested VET's pivotal role in the EU's agenda towards post-Covid recovery and a greener, more digital and fair economy and society. Based on the mandates in [the first ever Council recommendation on VET](#) and the [Osnabrück declaration](#) with its focus areas until 2025 – both adopted at the end of 2020 – Cedefop has been entrusted with a wider and more complex monitoring task than in the past. The more so, as Member States' VET initiatives are likely to interact with their [recovery and resilience plans](#) and those devised in the context of [the European economic, fiscal, labour and social policy coordination](#). This required discussion with Cedefop's Executive Board and agreement on the most feasible monitoring option; designing the new approach jointly with the ETF, given its remit to follow-up progress in the candidate countries, and discussing approach and governance with the ACVT and DGV. As the new mandate will require drawing even more on the expertise from different strands of Cedefop work, it also meant planning adequate resource allocation for the years to come.

The evolving policy framework, which led to the launch and adoption of further Commission and Council initiatives in the course of 2021, impacted also on Cedefop's work. The quantitative targets for VET were complemented by the ambitious targets for adult learning and digital skills set out in [the social rights pillar action plan](#), as endorsed at the [Porto Social Summit](#), and the [strategic framework towards the European Education Area](#). This entailed reshaping Cedefop's approach to following up the respective indicators and reinforcing its support to Member States' work on upskilling pathways. While the [new adult learning agenda](#) was only endorsed at the end

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<sup>(51)</sup> RB(2021) 01015-item 8g

<sup>(52)</sup> RB(2021)00989-item 9

<sup>(53)</sup> RB(2021)00987-item 10a

<sup>(54)</sup> RB(2021)01084-item 10c

<sup>(55)</sup> RB(2021)01395-item 3

<sup>(56)</sup> RB(2021)01404-item 4

<sup>(57)</sup> RB(2021)01406-item 5

<sup>(58)</sup> RB(2021)01396-item 6b

<sup>(59)</sup> RB(2021)01381 and RB(2021)01393-item 6c

<sup>(60)</sup> No document

of the year, the Slovene Presidency's invitation to contribute in the early stages of its preparation confirmed that Cedefop's stronger focus on VET for adults is highly relevant for policy making.

To support the Commission [proposal for Council recommendations on micro-credentials](#), released in December 2021, Cedefop had included a comprehensive dedicated study in its work programme. The high interest in this work led to converting the originally planned workshop to discuss interim findings into a conference which reached a world-spanning audience of over 240 participants.

The Commission's work to prepare [an initiative for individual learning accounts – presented together with the proposal on micro-credentials](#) – resulted in increased demand for Cedefop's long-standing EU-wide expertise on financing instruments for continuing VET. In addition to the evidence provided to the Commission, Cedefop launched a study to investigate individual learning accounts further and examine the potential for integrated financing, guidance and validation policies for CVET/adult learning.

Cedefop's mission, its strategy and values and its Management Board reflect VET's tripartite character and corroborate the principle of partnership and cooperation. Against this backdrop, Cedefop committed to involving its Management Board at critical junctures of its research and policy analyses to ensure the views of the different groups are taken into account. Hence, advisory groups with representatives from all groups on the Board as well as the Commission have been set up to accompany the studies on microcredentials and VET financing/individual learning accounts. This approach is also in line with the stronger role of social dialogue at EU level, as for instance in the context of the European semester.

### **Response to Covid-19 crisis**

In 2020 Cedefop launched a series of additional initiatives dedicated to the impact of the pandemic on VET and skills-related labour market developments. Some of these dedicated activities continued in 2021. This included a dedicated COVID-19 impact scenario carried out for the most recent Cedefop skills forecast and a follow-up to the Cedefop-Eurofound collaboration on the company survey to explore the impact of the pandemic on companies in the EU-27. In other strands of work, like reporting on VET policy developments, pandemic related issues became part of the mainstream information.

All Cedefop events and meetings with its Executive and Management Boards were conducted online with much increased outreach. As regards work organisation, the principle of minimising staff's health risks and ensuring their well-being continued to apply. Based on Cedefop's de-escalation strategy, mode of working and protection measures were adjusted to suit the fluctuating epidemiological situation and rules issued by the Greek authorities. Accordingly, working remotely remained common practice throughout the year (see also section II.5).

### **Digital transformation and information management**

The first-ever Cedefop ICT and digitalisation strategy 2021-24 was adopted by the Executive Director on 13 April 2021. It calls Cedefop for a decisive step towards digitalisation and for the recognition of the importance of the role of ICT in increasing productivity and enabling the successful achievement of the mission of the organisation. The strategy aims at generating greater efficiency and enhancing productivity across the organisation as well as boost collaboration and knowledge sharing with external stakeholders. Next generation corporate services are put in

place, harmonising Cedefop's IT landscape with that of other EU institutions. ABAC was rolled out as the Agency's new budgetary management tool and accompanying electronic workflows and e-signature policy were deployed in 2021.

Work practices, tools and procedures were also adapted to address remote work conditions. The significant efforts undertaken in 2021 ensured seamless remote working for all staff. This entailed equipping staff with proper home office ICT hardware as well as ensuring the deployment of IT tools that enabled collaboration in remote teams.

A number of HR related workflows were also automated. Selection processes were adjusted to allow for remote assessment of candidates.

### **New seat agreement**

On 24 November 2021, concluding a long and thorough process, the Greek Minister for Education and Cedefop's Executive Director signed a new more hospitable seat agreement for the Agency and its staff. Before implementation can start, the new agreement must still be adopted by the Greek Parliament.

### **Internal developments**

Steps taken earlier to streamline the operational departments were consolidated in 2021. Since November 2019, one head of operational department was serving as Head of the Department for Learning and Employability (DLE) and ad interim Head of the Department for Skills and Labour Market (DSL). Considering that this arrangement proved to be effective and well-functioning, the Executive Director decided in November 2021 to consolidate this arrangement by merging the two departments into one now referred to as Department for VET and Skills (DVS). To ensure consistency, the Department for VET Systems and Institutions was renamed Department for VET and Qualifications (DVQ).

A new head of service for human resources took office in October 2021 following the unanticipated departure of the previous head of service a year earlier.

## **II.3 Budgetary and Financial management**

For another year in a row, Cedefop's careful monitoring of the budget implementation allowed for the proactive reshuffling of activities and the reallocation of funds from budget items where savings were achieved to finance the unexpected increase in the staff salary cost, additional core business projects and investments in ICT infrastructure ensuring smooth office operations while staff were working from home, due to Covid-19 restrictions. Within core business, available funds have been targeted in priority to studies and projects aimed at supporting the further alignment of the Agency's work programme with the renewed Skills Agenda, the Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration.

Cedefop reacted to the challenges of the year with agility and effectiveness and managed to achieve 100% execution of commitment appropriation and 98,97% execution of payment appropriations.



### ***Rate and type of implementation of appropriations***

In 2021, Cedefop continued to utilise essentially all of its available funding with an overall budget implementation rate of 100.00%. In particular:

- from a total final Title 1 budget of EUR 11 208 560 commitments to the value of EUR 11 208 560 were raised, representing an execution rate of 100%;
- from a total final Title 2 budget of EUR 1 851 578 commitments to the value of EUR 1 851 578 were raised, representing an execution rate of 100%;
- from a total final Title 3 budget of EUR 5 441 762 commitments to the value of EUR 5 441 762 were raised, representing an execution rate of 100%.

The budget revenue available in 2021 of EUR 18 538 588 included, besides the EU contribution of EUR 18 000 000, an amount of EUR 491 900 of contributions from associated countries Norway and Iceland, and an amount of EUR 46 688 of miscellaneous own revenue and reimbursed amounts.

### **Indication of commitments for actions that will extend for more than one financial year (major items only)**

Title 3 appropriations are differentiated appropriation and multi-annual in nature.

The main contracts <sup>(61)</sup> signed in 2021 which gave rise to commitments extending for more than one financial year, which were booked on Title 3 (Operational activities) of the budget, are listed below:

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<sup>(61)</sup> Only major contracts are shown, with the threshold set at EUR 100 000

Budget line	Title of commitment	Expires	Amount (committed in 2021)
3240	ORDER FORM NO 2 ESJS	30/06/2022	279 840.00
3240	ORDER FORM NO 7 SKILLS INTELLIGENCE	31/01/2022	101 437.50
3240	OF1 PRODUCTION OF THE NEW 2022 SKILLS FORECAST	31/03/2023	312 490.00
3240	AO/DSL/JVLOO-KPOUL/ETLS/011/21 - EUROPEAN TRAINING AND LEARNING SURVEY: DEVELOPMENT AND DATA COLLECTION	20/12/2024	1 549 600.14
3240	AO/DSL/ILIVAN-PPANGEL/STAS/006/21	20/12/2023	258 273.00
3240	ORDER FORM NO 8 SKILLS INTELLIGENCE	31/12/2022	159 325.00
3240	ORDER FORM NO 9 SKILLS INTELLIGENCE	30/11/2022	124 800.00
3340	ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETENCE IN VET	19/05/2023	429 550.00
3340	OF 3 - MICROCREDENTIALS	14/04/2023	130 650.00
3340	ORDER FORM NO 2 – TRANSPARENCY & TRANSFERABILITY	30/04/2023	198 550.00
3340	ORDER FORM NO 5 (WA 5) - THE FUTURE OF VET IN EUROPE	20/12/2022	145 950.00
3440	SUPPORT AND INCENTIVES TO LEARNING AND CARRERS -LOT 2	16/04/2022	189 860.00
3440	PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING OF ADULTS THROUGH CVET SYSTEMS AND UPSKILLING PATHWAYS - LOT 2: THEMATIC COUNTRY REVIEWS (TCRS) ON UPSKILLING PATHWAYS FOR LOW SKILLED ADULTS	22/12/2023	336 175.00
3440	FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR SURVEYING PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND IN-COMPANY TRAINERS IN INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	21/12/2022	199 996.50
3440	AO/DLE/PLI-CHARRISON-EVGAR/ILAS AND INTEGRATED SUPPORT POLICIES/010/21	15/04/2024	399 850.00
3440	PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING OF ADULTS THROUGH CVET SYSTEMS AND UPSKILLING PATHWAYS - LOT 1: STRATEGIES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR CVET	22/12/2023	311 500.00

### Information on transfers and amending budgets

The transfers authorised in 2021 by the Executive Director between budget items are summarised below (net effect between Titles). All transfers are within the allowed limits defined by Art.26 of Cedefop's Financial Regulation:

- an **increase** in Title 1 (staff expenditure) appropriations by EUR 90 960;
- a **decrease** in Title 2 (administrative expenditure) appropriations by EUR 11 722;
- a **decrease** in Title 3 (operational expenditure) appropriations by EUR 79 238.

The transfers directed commitment appropriations to Title 1 in order to fund the increase in the salary scale and the correction coefficient for staff posted in Greece. Transfers involved amounts reallocated within the Titles of the Budget, as soon as underspending was identified, in order to optimise budget usage by investing in ICT infrastructure and services as well as additional core operational projects.

In December, the Management Board adopted Amending Budget 01/2021, adding EUR 13 100 to Title 2 of the budget. The amount corresponds to a slightly increased contribution received from Norway and Iceland due to an adaptation to the calculation of their contributions during the year.

The effect of the amending budget and transfers performed in 2021 is demonstrated in the tables below.

<b>2021 Budget (C1) in Euro</b>	<b>Initial budget (Commitment Appropriations)</b>	<b>Amending budget</b>	<b>Transfers (authorised by the ED)</b>	<b>Final budget</b>
Title I	11 117 600		90 960	11 208 560
Title II	1 850 200	13 100	-11 722	1 851 578
Title III	5 521 000		-79 238	5 441 762
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18 488 800</b>	<b>13 100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18 501 900</b>

<b>2021 Budget (C1) in Euro</b>	<b>Initial budget (Payment Appropriations)</b>	<b>Amending budget</b>	<b>Transfers (authorised by the ED)</b>	<b>Final budget</b>
Title I	11 117 600		90 960	11 208 560
Title II	1 850 200	13 100	-11 722	1 851 578
Title III	5 521 000		-79 238	5 441 762
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18 488 800</b>	<b>13 100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18 501 900</b>

### **Appropriations carried forward to the following financial year**

In 2021, no non-automatic carry overs were needed.

The appropriations carried forward to 2022 in order to honour commitments made in 2021, are summarised below:

- Title 1 appropriations carried forward to 2022 were EUR 244 500 or 2.18% of the final funds for the year on the Title;
- Title 2 appropriations carried forward to 2022 were EUR 589 407 or 31.83% of the final Title 2 funds for the year. As per common practice, Cedefop informed on 23 December 2021 the European Court of Auditors on the list of planned carry overs 2021 for Title 2;
- Title 3 appropriations are differentiated appropriation and multi-year in nature.

### **Implementation of appropriations carried forward from the previous financial year**

Of EUR 264 787 Title 1 appropriations brought forward from 2020, EUR 42 548 were cancelled.

Of EUR 914 930 Title 2 appropriations brought forward from 2020, EUR 34 688 were cancelled.

Title 3 appropriations are differentiated appropriation and multi-year in nature.

### Percentage of procurement procedure types used

23 procurement procedures and one call for proposals (ReferNet Grant agreements 2022) were processed in 2021.

Type of procedure	2021	
	Number	%
Open	11	46%
Negotiated	8	33%
Reopening of Competition	4	17%
Call for proposals (Grants)	1	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Information on interest charged by suppliers through late payments (> 30 days)

Not applicable.

### Cost and benefits of controls

Cedefop assesses the cost and benefits of controls on the basis of the indicators of its Internal Control Framework; direct and indirect costs of the Internal Control function; and control results.

#### Costs

The methodology used to calculate costs of controls is in line with DG BUDG guidelines which Cedefop received in 2021. The functions/activities covered in the calculations include: financial management, budget and accounting, external audit, coordination (incl. strategic programming and planning), anti-fraud, programme management and monitoring, ICT-IT strategy, governance and activities. Indirect costs are calculated on the basis of the 2021 annual average FTEs costs of Cedefop staff by category, i.e.: AD, AST, SNE, CA FG IV, CA FG I to III.

Calculations led to a total internal control cost of EUR 988,545.00 for the year 2021, which includes EUR 55,461 direct costs and EUR 933,084 indirect costs. The total cost of internal control in Cedefop represents 5.3% of its 2021 budget <sup>(62)</sup> which is considered proportionate to the attained objectives <sup>(63)</sup>.

#### Benefits

As defined in its Internal Control Framework, internal control helps achieve Cedefop's objectives and sustain operational and financial performance whilst respecting rules and regulations. Internal control supports sound decision-making by considering risks in the achievement of

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<sup>(62)</sup> EUR 18,501,900

<sup>(63)</sup> the difference between the cost of control reported in the CAAR 2020 (EUR 149,766 - 0,82% of the 2020 budget) and the CAAR 2021 (EUR 933,084 - 5.3% the 2021 budget) is due to the change in the calculation methodology which now – according to DGBUDG guidelines – includes financial management, budget and accounting, external audit, coordination incl. strategic programming and planning, anti-fraud, programme management and monitoring, ICT-IT strategy, governance and activities.

objectives and where necessary reducing them to acceptable levels through cost effective controls. Internal control applies to all activities, irrespective of whether they are financial or non-financial.

Cedefop's internal control framework is designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives, including:

- effectiveness and efficiency of operations;
- reliability of reporting and safeguarding of assets and information;
- prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities;
- adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

To identify internal control strengths and deficiencies, Cedefop uses several tools, including:

- internal assessments;
- improvement actions / internal control strengths and weaknesses reported by staff;
- analysis of risks reported during the risk assessment exercise;
- Cedefop risk register (macro level);
- exceptions and non-compliance registered in the register of exceptions;
- accounting officer's report on the validation of financial management systems.

Cedefop also relies heavily on the work of the European Court of Auditors, and of the Internal Audit Service of the European Commission in ensuring a reasonable balance between the internal cost and the effectiveness of the control environment.

As reported in Part III, the overall assessment of the internal control systems shows that it is effective, all its components are in place and functioning well and for their intended purpose. Its benefits lie principally in the sustained regularity and legality of all transactions and accounts in all material aspects.

The benefits of an internal control system are qualitative in nature and cannot be quantified in monetary terms. A properly designed and effective internal control system can prevent irregularities before they materialise, protect organisations' resources against mismanagement or fraud, and more generally support compliance, diligence and regularity of operation through increasing awareness and expertise of staff. The benefits of internal controls concern outcomes in terms of legality and regularity that are the result of joint processes involving other services, such as finance and procurement, that cannot be disentangled from each other. Nevertheless, in terms of cost-effectiveness it is reasonable to say that the overall cost of Cedefop internal controls, which represents 5.3% of its 2021 total budget, including all direct and indirect costs, appears largely justified and proportionate to the objectives of ensuring legality and regularity while safeguarding efficiency and effectiveness of operations. It is also comparable to the other agencies under the remit of DG EMPL.

### **Summary information on budgetary operations**

Cedefop continues to use its funds effectively and efficiently with a budget implementation rate of 100%. To achieve these exceptionally high figures, Cedefop utilises bespoke systems to constantly track its current and anticipated expenditures to ensure all funds are utilised by the end of the year.

With regard to legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, all costs are subject to audits by both the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and the external auditors whose remit specifically include such testing. All Title 3 costs are required to comply with the procurement plan which is an integral part of the annual management plan. Similarly, all costs are signed off by the authorising officer(s) (by delegation) who has(have) a specific remit to ensure regularity.

The internal controls are effective. Prior to validation by the authorising officers (by delegation), expenditure operations are initiated (operational and financial initiation) and verified (operational and financial verification) by designated actors with a view to ensure legality and regularity, over and above the required 4-eye principle.

External parties monitor and audit Cedefop rigorously. No irregularities were found. The cost of the external audit company which audits Cedefop's annual accounts <sup>(64)</sup> – borne by the Agency – is considered reasonably low compared to the work they undertake and the value of the business they audit.

#### **II.4 Delegation and sub-delegation of the powers of budget implementation to agency's staff**

Delegation of the powers of budget implementation are prepared in accordance with Article 11(5)(j) of the Regulation (EU) No 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019, establishing the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) 337/75, as well as Articles 39(1), 41(1), 43(1), 45 and 46 of Cedefop's financial regulation, adopted by the Management Board on 16 July 2019 (Decision RB(2019)1034).

As Cedefop's Authorising Officer (AO), the Executive Director delegates the powers of budget implementation for all budget lines to the Deputy Director and the Heads of Departments, who are acting as Authorising Officers by Delegation (AOD). The powers delegated include:

- making budgetary and legal commitments as well as carrying out the preliminary actions for these commitments;
- validating and authorising expenditure;
- establishing amounts receivable (including making financial corrections), and issuing recovery orders, waiving recovery and cancelling established amounts receivable;
- taking individual decisions on the award of public procurement contracts, grants or prizes; and
- proposing transfers of appropriations.

No sub-delegation decisions were in place in 2021.

The implementation of delegation decisions is monitored by Cedefop's Finance Service, which is responsible for drafting, amending or repealing a delegation upon instructions received by the Authorising Officer.

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<sup>(64)</sup> According to the arrangements for the annual audits under Article 208 (4) and Article 107 of its Financial Regulation, Cedefop contracted an external audit company (MAZARS) to audit Cedefop's accounts 2020, based on a DG BUDG framework contract.

The delegations are transposed in ABAC with access rights granted by the ABAC Local Profile Manager of the Agency to each individual Authorising Officer by Delegation. The ABAC Local Profile Manager has no other role in ABAC (*ex-ante* control).

In addition, ABAC access rights are assessed by a Neutral Verifier, appointed by the Executive Director, to confirm that the financial actors are granted ABAC access rights corresponding to the delegation decisions of the Executive Director (*ex-post* control). The Neutral Verifier is a staff member assuming no other role in ABAC.

## **II.5 Human Resources Management**

Cedefop is progressing with the implementation of the HR strategy adopted in 2020 which aims at achieving the Agency's multi-annual objectives by fostering high staff engagement, performance and a change embracing culture. The strategy includes three building blocks: talent acquisition and matching; talent management; and staff well-being.

In 2021, the implementation of the strategy continued. Attention was given to further refining the selection procedures, enriching the induction and onboarding processes and supporting the health and well-being of staff. Cedefop purchased a talent acquisition platform that offers leaner and efficient recruitment processes. With respect to modernisation and digitalisation – a key enabling factor of the strategy – the workflows related to the approval of outside activities and authorisation to publish a text or speech have been automated. Selection processes were adjusted to allow for remote assessment of candidates <sup>(65)</sup>.

Staff health, security and well-being continued to be high priorities. The health and wellbeing plan put in place in 2020 continued to be implemented in 2021. Based on the Agency's de-escalation strategy, mode of working and protection measures were adapted to suit the fluctuating epidemiological situation and rules issued by the Greek authorities. Throughout the year Cedefop facilitated vaccination for non-Greek staff members and their families and access to staff and family members to an employee psychological assistance programme <sup>(66)</sup>. A follow-up targeted survey ('pulse' survey) was concluded in September focusing on staff's perception of their wellbeing, and how productivity has been affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Results indicated that staff continue to maintain a balanced mental and physical wellbeing status and overall feel optimistic and motivated. Most respondents reported that they are well-equipped to work remotely, continue to be productive and enjoy the flexibility to dedicate time to their families. Concerns were raised with respect to the lack of informal office interactions, to difficulties in disconnecting at the end of the working day and to the heavy workload.

Regular information was provided to staff via regular general staff assemblies, information notes and 'question time' meetings. Using a bottom-up approach, the latter allows staff to shape meetings' content. Proposed by the working group on 'Boosting organisational culture built on trust', the 'question time' meetings are one of the tangible and impactful actions taken following the 2019 staff engagement survey.

## **II.6 Strategy for efficiency gains**

Cedefop systematically considers further scope for efficiency gains to inform directly management decisions on core business, staff and budget.

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<sup>(65)</sup> Cedefop successfully ran 10 selection procedures remotely resulting in 20 job offers

<sup>(66)</sup> 24/7 psychological support and counselling in Greek and in English



Already in 2009, Cedefop introduced a performance management system (PMS), which the European Parliament has acknowledged as exemplary in the discharge reports for the financial years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. By measuring project, activity and organisational level performance, the PMS helps Cedefop manage and evaluate its impact, efficiency, effectiveness and relevance, and strengthens the alignment of the organisation's activities with its strategic objective and priorities. The PMS thus provides a system for tracking and improving performance and efficiency throughout its activities.

The following initiatives were foreseen in the single programming document 2021-23:

- a) continuous collaboration with other EU Agencies to achieve further efficiency gains through shared services such as inter-Agency resource pooling, joint procurements for common services but also for other services, as available in the Agencies' catalogue of shared services

Based on a service-level agreement, Cedefop uses EUIPO <sup>(67)</sup> as a disaster recovery site for its ICT systems since 2020.

In 2021, Cedefop continued to be an active member of the EU Agencies' network (EUAN) and to share services and enhance synergies with other Agencies.

Cedefop is member of the EUAN working group on new ways of work following the Covid-19 pandemic. The group meets on a bi-weekly basis to share experience and knowledge and cooperate on any relevant matter. Following the 2020 task force on shared services of the EUAN, all EUAN subnetworks have been mandated to identify opportunities for sharing services and capabilities in their respective fields of work. Exploring opportunities for shared services, joint procedures and initiatives is a regular – rolling – activity.

Effective collaboration with EUAN in 2021 also included refining the EUAN's communication and stakeholder engagement framework, kicking off a project towards a greener EUAN administration of excellence and being an active member in the EUAN Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion. In this context, Cedefop co-hosted on 21 September 2021, jointly with EIGE, a session in the DG HR-EUAN Workshop on Gender Balance.

In compliance with the new service-level agreement (SLA) signed with ENISA <sup>(68)</sup> in May 2020, resource-sharing opportunities continue to be identified and are taking place between the two Agencies. To date, knowledge, expertise and capabilities are shared in the fields of data protection, confidential counselling, procurement and ICT. Further opportunities for sharing services and capabilities were identified in a joint workshop with ENISA in April 2021 and the SLA has been updated accordingly. Cedefop's ICT team participates regularly to the ENISA and CERT-EU events and exercises where valuable experience is collected on methods to deal with incidents.

- b) further use of Commission/interagency framework contracts, wherever possible, to reduce administrative overheads

At administrative level, to increase effectiveness and reduce overheads, Cedefop joined several Commission's and other Agencies' inter-institutional framework contracts and organised joint procurement procedures with the Commission and with other Agencies: European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), European Insurance and Occupational

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<sup>(67)</sup> European Union Intellectual Property Office

<sup>(68)</sup> European Union Agency for Cybersecurity

Pensions Authority (EIOPA), European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), European Training Foundation (ETF), European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), Eurostat. Since 2018 already, Cedefop uses e-tendering/e-submission for its open procedures.

- c) further invest in ICT and new technologies to achieve modernisation and digital transformation, bearing in mind that investments in automation lead to temporary cost increases

Streamlining and digitising procedures and harmonisation of the IT landscape with the European Commission and other Agencies are driving the modernisation of Cedefop's ICT and digitalisation strategy and its administrative processes. Cedefop's ICT and digitalisation strategy was approved in April 2021.

- d) in autumn 2021, Cedefop's management adopted the energy efficiency strategy, which was shaped on the basis on the energy efficiency audit carried out by an external contractor. This is a first important milestone towards climate neutrality and the deployment of a progressive decarbonisation strategy and roadmap for the organisation to be delivered in 2023.
- e) participation in selected inter-Agency working groups to pool expertise, resources and best practice and, whenever possible, carry out joint projects across Agencies (such as joint surveys)

In 2021, Cedefop continued its cooperation on content-related issues with the other Agencies that operate under the remit of DG EMPL, in particular through cooperation agreements with ETF and Eurofound and exchange of comments on each other's single programming documents.

Cooperation with Eurofound focusing on further exploiting the results of the 2019 European Company Survey (ECS) continued in 2021. Besides co-authoring publications, Cedefop and Eurofound coordinated a survey within the EU Agencies subnetwork on scientific advice to map how their activities and expertise on socioeconomic effects of sustainable development could support the implementation of the European Green Deal.

The work on exploiting the micro-data of the joint-Cedefop/Eurofound 4<sup>th</sup> European Company Survey continued throughout the year. The survey was used for a Cedefop working paper released in December on the determinants and impacts of workplace learning.

Collaboration with international organisations remained strong in the area of lifelong guidance within the work of the Inter-agency group on TVET <sup>(69)</sup>. In 2021, a new sub-group on career guidance was formed. To further a joint vision, the group published an update of the advocacy leaflet [\*Investing in career guidance\*](#), available in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

- f) revisit regularly HR and budget allocation with a view to securing additional resources to the core business

Cedefop's first ever HR strategy adopted in June 2020 includes strategic workforce planning. Among the objectives of this exercise is the systematic review of staff needs across

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<sup>(69)</sup> UNESCO, ETF, OECD, ILO, Commission and Cedefop

departments and the prioritisation of staff resources for core business activities. In these quarterly management discussions, in-depth reviews of the HR situation across departments are carried out also in a forward-looking perspective for the period 2022-24. Decisions taken in the context of these meetings have systemically aimed at reinforcing the capacity of the core business.

For 2021, one staff member was reassigned from the Department for Resources and Support to core business.

The Covid-19 crisis, which put a lot of additional stress on administrative services to ensure business continuity and deliver fully online services, made it premature to proceed to further redeployment towards operational departments in 2021. Exploring redeployment opportunities will remain a regular exercise in the future.

g) systematic reviews of its portfolio of activities and outputs

Cedefop carries out systematic reviews of its portfolio of activities and outputs with a view to streamlining and focusing them further. The new approach initiated in 2020 provides a broad idea on the direction of change in the period 2021-23 implied by the thematic corporate priorities. It addresses current activities with an increased focus on clusters of thematic activities, how they are prioritised and synergised through cooperation and shared focus. The clusters are considered in a dynamic perspective combining continuity and consolidation with future investment necessary to deepen and expand expertise in line with evolving priorities, also reflecting Cedefop's relative strengths and needs for capacity building. Outcomes of the prioritisation exercise carried out in 2021 informed management decisions on staff and budget. This approach also proved valuable in dealing with the uncertainty of the EU's 2021-27 budget throughout the planning phase. The next portfolio review will be discussed with the Extended Executive Board at its meeting in June 2022 and will inform the finalisation of the single programming document 2023-25.

## **II.7 Assessment of audit and ex-post evaluation results during the reporting year**

Cedefop's internal auditor is the Internal Audit Service of the European Commission (IAS) and the Agency is annually controlled by the European Court of Auditors (ECA). The Agency informs the Discharge Authority on the results of the audits.

Following each audit, Cedefop draws up an action plan for the implementation of all recommendations. A regular monitoring of actions is carried out by the Internal Control Coordinator. A consolidated action plan, which is updated systematically, is posted on Cedefop's intranet, accessible to all staff.

Cedefop also follows up closely the observations from the Discharge Authority.

In addition to the audits conducted by the IAS and ECA, Cedefop has developed several procedures and tools to allow systematic ex-post and ex-ante controls and evaluations and, thus, further ensures that the necessary control layers and actions are in place and implemented. These procedures are outlined in an overarching evaluation policy adopted by the Executive Director in 2019 <sup>(70)</sup>.

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<sup>(70)</sup> Decision DIR 12/2019 of 14 November 2019

The Executive Board and Management Board are kept regularly informed of audit, control and evaluation outcomes as well as on progress in the implementation of the agreed action plans. This is a standing agenda item in all Board meetings.

#### II.7.1 Internal Audit Service (IAS)

In relation to the recommendations from the IAS Audit on HR Management and Ethics, Cedefop implemented in 2020 all actions linked to the remaining open recommendation Nr 3 - HR Strategy, planning and reporting.

On 29 January 2021, the IAS conducted a follow up audit and concluded that Cedefop had implemented the recommendation adequately and effectively. Consequently, all six recommendations of the IAS Audit on HR Management and Ethics had been implemented by the end of 2020 in line with the agreed timetable.

#### II.7.2 Other sources of assurance

### **Risk management**

Following the request of the Commission for a peer review exercise on risk management in Agencies, as part of the exercise to align implementation of the recast Agency Regulations in line with the 'Common Approach', Cedefop's Internal Control Coordinator participated in the cluster with ETF, EU-OSHA, Eurofound and the ELA. The results were shared with the parent DGs. The main benefit for the Agencies in the cluster 'Social and employment' was the comparison of risk assessment methodologies and a common understanding of what constitutes a critical risk.

The assessment of fraud risks is an integral part of the overall annual risk assessment. In 2021, one fraud-related risk was identified: mistakes in procurement/contract management. The risk was properly mitigated.

### **Awareness-raising activities on ethics, integrity and internal control**

As part of awareness-raising activities on ethics, integrity and internal control issues, Cedefop provides regular mandatory sessions on good governance for newcomers. The sessions, open to all staff members, were revamped in 2020 and the approach reshaped to target Cedefop's specificities more directly, allow interaction with staff members and adapt the concept to virtual formats.

Two awareness raising sessions took place in 2021: one on Risk Management for all staff on 29 September 2021 and one on Anti-Fraud for Management Board members on 9 October 2021 during the Management Board meeting 8-9 October 2021.

### **Evaluation and control activities**

Cedefop followed up on the implementation of the action plan agreed as a follow-up to the last external evaluation carried out by the European Commission <sup>(71)</sup>. The state of play was discussed with the Enlarged Executive Board on 24 June 2021 and with the Management Board at its meeting 7-8 October 2021. All actions are progressing according to plan. The action plan prepared by Cedefop became final on 7 November 2019. Two recommendations were fully

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<sup>(71)</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/what-we-do/cedefop-regulation>

implemented and closed by the European Commission on 4 August 2020. A third action relating to the alignment of Agencies' performance measurement systems <sup>(72)</sup> was implemented by Cedefop. In this context, a letter asking the Commission to close recommendation 5 on Agency level innovation (efficiency) set out in the Commission staff working document SWD(2019)159 final was sent on 8 April 2022. By its letter of 5 May 2022, the Commission confirmed that this recommendation can be considered closed.

In compliance with its updated Evaluation Policy, Cedefop conducted evaluation and control activities according to its Annual Management Plan 2021.

Ex-ante evaluations <sup>(73)</sup> are carried out for procurement procedures above 500,000 Euros. A report reviewing progress and lessons learned was prepared by the Head of Finance and Procurement on 22 December 2021. The report concludes that the procurement procedures launched in the period examined were compliant with the requirements of ex-ante evaluation.

Cedefop carries out ex-post evaluations <sup>(74)</sup> for projects/activities that have come to an end and entailed a total budget expenditure of above 500,000 Euros.

For 2021, ex-post evaluation focused on the following activity:

- Informing VET by offering labour market intelligence and skill needs analysis, framework contract AO/DSL/VKVET-RUSSO/Real-time LMI/009-16 (contract value EUR 1,088,350)

The ex-post evaluation exercise was finalised end of April 2022. The outcomes confirm that the activity was effective, efficient, coherent and brought EU added value. The ensuing action plan will be shared with the Executive and Management Boards.

Cedefop carries out ex-post control on a sample of 3 procurements procedures. A working group was appointed by the Executive Director in February 2021. Final outcomes were received end of April 2022. Based on the review of substantive elements in the 3 procurement procedures, it was concluded that the criteria related to effective and efficient internal controls were in place and followed. No need for immediate corrective actions was established.

Cedefop conducts ex-post controls on recruitment procedures to ensure that all reported declarations of interest and confidentiality notes by selection panel members are in place and adequately and consistently assessed. In 2021, Cedefop conducted ex-post controls on selection procedures which took place in 2019 and 2020. The report concludes that overall the assessment of the ex-post control on reported conflicts of interest and confidentiality notes in Cedefop's recruitment procedures, shows that the majority of controls is in place and works effectively, with some areas for further improvement by introducing mitigating actions in the short and medium term.

Evaluations and controls are carried out with the support of external evaluators, selected through an inter-Agency call for evaluation services launched by ETF, which Cedefop has joined to further increase synergy and efficiency gains. Ex-post evaluations assess the following criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, EU added value of the projects/actions. Evaluation outcomes inform management decisions on future activities.

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<sup>(72)</sup> Cedefop, ETF, Eurofound and EU-OSHA

<sup>(73)</sup> Article 29.2 of Cedefop Financial Regulation adopted by its Management Board on 16 July 2019

<sup>(74)</sup> Article 29.3 of Cedefop Financial Regulation

## II.7.3 European Court of Auditors (ECA)

### Annual accounts 2020

On 22 October 2021 the European Court of Auditors published its final report on Cedefop's annual accounts for the financial year 2020 <sup>(75)</sup>.

In the Court's opinion, Cedefop's annual accounts 2020 the accounts of the Centre for the year ended 31 December 2020 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Centre at 31 December 2020, the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with its Financial Regulation and with accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer. These are based on internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector.

In its report, the Court included observations on the legality and regularity of transactions and on budgetary management. More specifically:

#### **Observations on the legality and regularity of transactions**

*3.4.9. 'In June 2020, Cedefop launched a procurement procedure, with an estimated budget of €10 000, for the provision of web services for the Europass scheme. It envisaged that the contract would be implemented over two years. CEDEFOP signed a contract based on a negotiated procedure with one tenderer, the prior contractor, and it stated that this was because of the low estimated value of the contract. However, this assessment was not supported by any cost estimates based on current market values, or on any documented market research.*

*The price offered by the contractor and accepted by Cedefop, exceeded the estimated budget by 98 % (€19 800). It also brought the value of the contract above the threshold (€15 000) above which a negotiated procedure with a single tenderer is not permitted under the Financial Regulation. Cedefop was unable to justify why it had treated this case as an exception to this requirement. According to the EU Financial Regulation, Cedefop should have sought offers from at least three tenderers.*

*The procurement procedure is therefore irregular. There were no related payments in 2020. After our audit, Cedefop cancelled the contract with effect from 26 February 2021.'*

Cedefop acknowledged the Court's observation and took prompt action to address it. On 24 February 2021, as per Article 18.1 'Grounds for termination by the Contracting Authority' of the General conditions of the contract and Article 18.3 'Procedure for termination', Cedefop terminated the contract with effect as of 26 February 2021.

#### **Observations on budgetary management**

*3.4.10. 'Similarly to 2019, the method for calculating contributions set out in the Statement on Cedefop-EFTA cooperation was not applied correctly in the 2020 financial year.*

*The Cedefop-EFTA cooperation agreement states that EFTA cooperation partners contribute at a level determined by the proportion of their GNP to the total GNP of the EEA. However, Norway's and Iceland's contributions in the initial budget were calculated according to the proportion of*

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<sup>(75)</sup> [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/CEDEFOP\\_2019/CEDEFOP\\_2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/CEDEFOP_2019/CEDEFOP_2019_EN.pdf)

*their GDP (2.27 % for Norway and 0.14 % for Iceland) to the GDP of the EU Members of the EEA, not to the total GNP of the EEA. As a result, Norway and Iceland contributed €8 601 less to the 2020 Cedefop budget than they should have done. The EU contributed €8 601 more.*

*In addition, although payment appropriations and revenues were reduced by €1 100 000 in the first 2020 budget amendment (27 November 2020), no part of the budget reduction was returned to Norway and Iceland. Consequently, Norway and Iceland contributed €25 886 more to the 2020 Cedefop budget than they should have done, and the EU contributed €25 886 less. Moreover, no part of the budget surplus for 2020 was returned to Norway and Iceland. In addition, there were no plans to reduce Norway's and Iceland's future contributions by the amount of the budget surplus. Consequently, Norway and Iceland contributed €2 987 more to the 2020 Cedefop budget than they should have done.*

*Overall, taking into account the three items mentioned in the paragraphs above, Norway's and Iceland's contributions to the 2020 Cedefop budget were €20 272 higher than they should have been, and the EU's contribution was €20 272 lower than it should have been.'*

Cedefop has been using the proportionality factor provided by the Commission to calculate EFTA contributions to the general budget. Cedefop acknowledged the audit finding and took prompt action to address it. The Agency has sought the advice of DG BUDG through DG EMPL. They recommended that the agreement be transferred under the umbrella of the 'Agreement on the European Economic Area - Protocol 31'. The Agency is keen to establish a transparent and easy-to-apply methodology. It is anticipated that the Agency will move to requesting its contribution as part of the 'Agreement on the European Economic Area - Protocol 31'. This will obviate any questions on how to deal with amending budgets and surpluses.

#### *3.4.11. Follow-up of previous years' observations*

*'The method for calculating contributions set out in the Statement on Cedefop-EFTA cooperation was not applied correctly. Norway's and Iceland's contributions to the 2019 Cedefop budget were €38 924 lower than they should have been, and the EU's contribution was €38 924 higher than it should have been'.*

### **On the annual accounts 2021**

On the annual accounts for the financial year 2021, ECA conducted its audit remotely from 11 to 15 October 2021. The ECA final report is expected by autumn 2022. According to the arrangements for the annual audits under Article 104 of its Financial Regulation and based on a DG BUDG framework contract, Cedefop contracted an external audit company to audit Cedefop's accounts 2021.

### **II.8a Follow up of recommendations and action plans for audits and evaluations**

Following each audit and evaluation, Cedefop draws up an action plan for the implementation of all recommendations. A regular monitoring of actions is carried out by the Internal Control Coordinator. A consolidated action plan, updated at least biannually, is posted on Cedefop's intranet, accessible to all staff.

Since 2020, Cedefop uses the 'degrees of implementation' logic. For each action Cedefop indicated its status at the outset and a target date for completion to help track progress - an



approach that the Commission considered exemplary and also recommended to others <sup>(76)</sup>. By the end of 2020, a dedicated tool had been designed to support ‘degrees of implementation’ progress tracking which was deployed in 2021 to track the progress of the external evaluation action plan and more generally of the Agency’s consolidated action plan.

## **II.8b Follow up of recommendations issued following investigations by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)**

An OLAF investigation is currently ongoing since 2018 <sup>(77)</sup>. Details of OLAF’s requests and Cedefop’s follow-up actions are not provided in this document for sensitivity reasons. The Executive Board is kept informed in in-camera meetings.

## **II.9 Follow-up of observations from the Discharge Authority**

In accordance with Article 107 of Cedefop’s decision on the Financial Regulation of 16 July 2019, Cedefop follows up promptly and systematically on the observations and comments accompanying the discharge decision. The Executive Director takes all appropriate steps to act and reports back to the Discharge Authority on measures taken.

On 17 September 2021, the Executive Director sent his report <sup>(78)</sup> to the Discharge Authority on measures taken by Cedefop in light of the observations and comments from the Discharge Authority related to the implementation of the budget 2019 with the aim of further improving the Agency’s operations.

By the end of 2021, Cedefop had implemented 9 out of 15 follow-up measures addressing the observations of the Discharge Authority from previous years. The table below reports on the status on 31 December 2021 of the actions that are still ongoing.

<b>Observation / Recommendation</b>	<b>Follow-up measures</b> (status on 31 December 2021)
<b>Budget and financial management – rec 2</b> Notes with concern from the Court’s report that the Centre did not apply the proper method for calculating the contributions for Iceland and Norway, resulting in a too low contribution;	Cedefop has consistently used the ‘proportionality factor’ provided by the Commission to calculate EFTA contributions to the general budget. Cedefop accepts that the grant agreement drafted in 1996 indicates a slightly different ratio which has led to marginal differences working both ways from year to year. To eliminate this inconsistency Cedefop, in consultation with DGBUDG, DGEMPL and the EFTA Secretariat, is exploring a move to Protocol 31 whereby Cedefop would receive the amounts through the EU Budget as almost all other EU Agencies.
<b>Performance – rec.7</b> Appreciates the Centre’s expertise and continuing high-quality work, providing research, analyses and technical advice in vocational education	As an institution whose remit is to help develop, disseminate and implement Union policy, its main target audience are policy-makers, social partners and the wider VET community. Its wider communication activities to traditional and via social media also address a wider audience. In its host country, Greece, Cedefop also

<sup>(76)</sup> DI 1 refers to ‘problem identified’, DI 2 to ‘solution conceptualised’, DI 3 to ‘solution implementation planned in detail’, DI 4 to ‘solution implemented (go-live date)’, and DI 5 to ‘solution impact established’

<sup>(77)</sup> OC/2018/0606/A1

<sup>(78)</sup> RB(2020)00958

Observation / Recommendation	Follow-up measures (status on 31 December 2021)
<p>and training (VET), qualifications and skills policies with the aim of promoting high-quality training tailored to the needs of individuals and of the labour market; notes with concern, however, that while it has a positive image in the Union, VET is still seen as a second choice when compared to general education;</p>	<p>organises and participates in events targeted at young people/the general public to make the case for VET. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, onsite events/physical meetings have, however, not been possible.</p> <p>Cedefop press releases and social media activities on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube communicate Cedefop's key messages on VET, skills and qualifications beyond the VET community. They promote VET as a way to empower people not only to adapt but also to manage and co-shape change and VET as an engine of innovation.</p> <p>Cedefop's followers on Facebook have increased by 8.6%, those on Twitter by 11.25% since 2020. In 2021, Cedefop produced 13 video clips and 17 short-form videos (logomotion/gif), with a total of over 514 ,000 views on social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn). Examples of Cedefop's contributions to increasing the image of VET among the wider public include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animated videos explaining the VET systems in the Council Presidency countries demonstrate possible pathways and progression routes not only within VET but also to/from 'academic' programmes</li> <li>• Cedefop's annual #CedefopPhotoAward competition, which has become an integral part of the European Commission's European skills week and its initiative on Awards for VET excellence (since 2016) and has proved an excellent tool for raising VET visibility, particularly among young people but also adults;</li> <li>• prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Cedefop organised meetings for guidance counsellors and educational institutions with their students, e.g. on the occasion of 'Europe day' in May, to inform them about Cedefop's work and VET's benefits; Cedefop also participated in relevant events, roadshows etc. organised locally, regionally and nationally; e.g. in 2021 a roundtable discussion organised by the Greek Ministry of Digital Governance in the context of the 85<sup>th</sup> Thessaloniki International Fair;</li> <li>• information on future and current skill needs, e.g. through visualisations, that is easy to access and use by education and career counsellors;</li> <li>• dissemination of information on VET's benefits through its expert network on lifelong career guidance and development CareersNet</li> <li>• briefing notes on themes that are also relevant for a wider public, available in 8 languages.</li> </ul> <p>With the shift to its new generation of skills intelligence in 2021, Cedefop also worked towards a more user centred information on skill needs and learning intelligence which will be useful also for individuals, potentially nudging them to choose VET.</p>

Observation / Recommendation	Follow-up measures (status on 31 December 2021)
<p><b>Performance – rec.11</b> Welcomes the Centre’s actions to increase digitalisation in terms of internal operation and management but also with regard to the acceleration of the digitalisation of procedures; stresses the need for the Centre to continue to be proactive in that regard in order to avoid a digital gap between the agencies at all costs; draws attention, however, to the need to continue all the necessary security measures to avoid any risk to the online security of the information processed;</p>	<p>Streamlining and digitising procedures and harmonisation of the IT landscape with the European Institutions, Cedefop assigns a high level of priority to cyber-security and undertakes continuous actions to reduce risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our LISO (Local Information Security Officer) follows regular advanced training and delivers regular ICT cybersecurity awareness sessions to all Cedefop staff.</li> <li>• Cedefop’s ICT team participates regularly to the ENISA and CERT-EU events and exercises where valuable experience is collected on methods to deal with incidents.</li> <li>• Security policy and risk register have been implemented for the major web services of Cedefop.</li> <li>• Cedefop utilises a second antivirus engine to filter all incoming e-mails and reduce the risk of malware infecting the internal systems of the Agency.</li> <li>• E-signatures and e-seals are deployed since late 2020.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff policy – rec. 15</b> Notes the gender imbalance among the Centre’s senior management (4 men and 2 women); notes with satisfaction that the management board is almost gender balanced (53 % male and 47 % female); welcomes the staff’s geographical representation within the Centre;</p>	<p>Cedefop middle management team comprises of 2 females (40%) and 3 males (60%). The Agency monitors closely this ratio as part of its HR scoreboard. The number of middle management positions being limited, it is only on rare occasions when there is a vacancy for a middle or senior management position that female applications can be encouraged.</p> <p>Cedefop is also intensifying efforts to improve its visibility as an equal opportunities employer, e.g. by strengthening the Agency’s employer brand and by being active member in the EUAN Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion, including co-hosting, jointly with EIGE, a session in forthcoming DG HR-EUAN Workshop on Gender Balance (21.09.2021).</p>
<p><b>Staff policy – rec. 16</b> Notes with concern that the Centre’s issues regarding the externalisation of its legal service highlighted by the discharge authority and the Court under discharge 2018 are still not resolved and that the externalisation has increased the workload and cost for the Centre; calls on the Centre to consider reinstating the internal legal service to mitigate the high cost and to ensure a proper audit trail for legal expenditure, as well as to continue to report to the discharge authority on any developments in that regard;</p>	<p>Since July 2018, Cedefop management has repeatedly discussed with the Executive Board the high cost and risks that the full externalisation of the legal service entailed. These risks had been confirmed by the European Court of Auditors in their annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2018. The Discharge Authority had also expressed concerns that a full outsourcing model created a risk to the consistent treatment of cases and the principle of sound financial management, namely the principle of efficiency.</p> <p>During the 98th Management Board meeting on 8 and 9 October 2020, the Executive Director proposed a make-or-buy decision logic to the re-establishment of an internal legal advisor in the Agency.</p> <p>During the Executive Board meeting of 3 March 2021, on the basis of a thorough assessment of the Agency’s status-quo Legal Function, the Executive Director reported that the 2020 total annual legal costs were well</p>

Observation / Recommendation	Follow-up measures (status on 31 December 2021)
	<p>above the set make-or-buy decision threshold of EUR 300 000 and that the number of legal cases processed by the Agency had increased by 10% in 2020 over the previous year.</p> <p>Executive Board members supported the Executive Director's decision to re-establish an internal legal advisor and the timeline proposed for the launch of the selection procedure in the second half of 2021.</p> <p>Implementation of the decision is ongoing and Cedefop will continue to report to the discharge authority on developments regarding the re-establishment of an internal legal advisor in Cedefop.</p>
<p><b>Staff policy – rec. 18</b></p> <p>Encourages the Centre to pursue the development of a long-term human resources policy framework which addresses work-life balance, lifelong guidance and career development, gender balance, teleworking, geographical balance and the recruitment and integration of people with disabilities;</p>	<p>In June 2020 the Agency adopted and is currently implementing an HR strategy 2021-2023 which has three main building blocks (BB):</p> <p>BB 1 (talent acquisition and matching) aims to ensure that the Agency avails of the right talents and attracts and retains the right people for the right job. The BB covers strategic workforce planning, building a strong employer brand of the Agency to attract the broadest pool of top-notch candidates from a broad geographical base; high-quality selection procedures and effective onboarding of newcomers.</p> <p>The objective of BB 2 (talent management) is to enable Cedefop's sustained performance through the development of its people, including interventions related to career guidance, development and mobility etc.</p> <p>The third B3 focuses on staff well-being and fostering a healthy, engaged and resilient workforce. Throughout 2021, Cedefop conducted targeted staff 'pulse' surveys focusing on staff's perception of their wellbeing, and how productivity has been affected by the COVID-19 crisis, the results of which inform the Agency's decisions.</p>

The report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of Cedefop for the financial year 2020 <sup>(79)</sup>, adopted by the European Parliament on 4 May 2022, praises Cedefop's high quality work on several aspects such as budget and financial management, performance, prevention and management of conflicts of interest and transparency, internal control, COVID-19 response and business continuity.

Observations and comments will be duly addressed, and follow-up actions will be reported by the end of July 2022, in accordance with Article 107 of Cedefop's Financial Regulation.

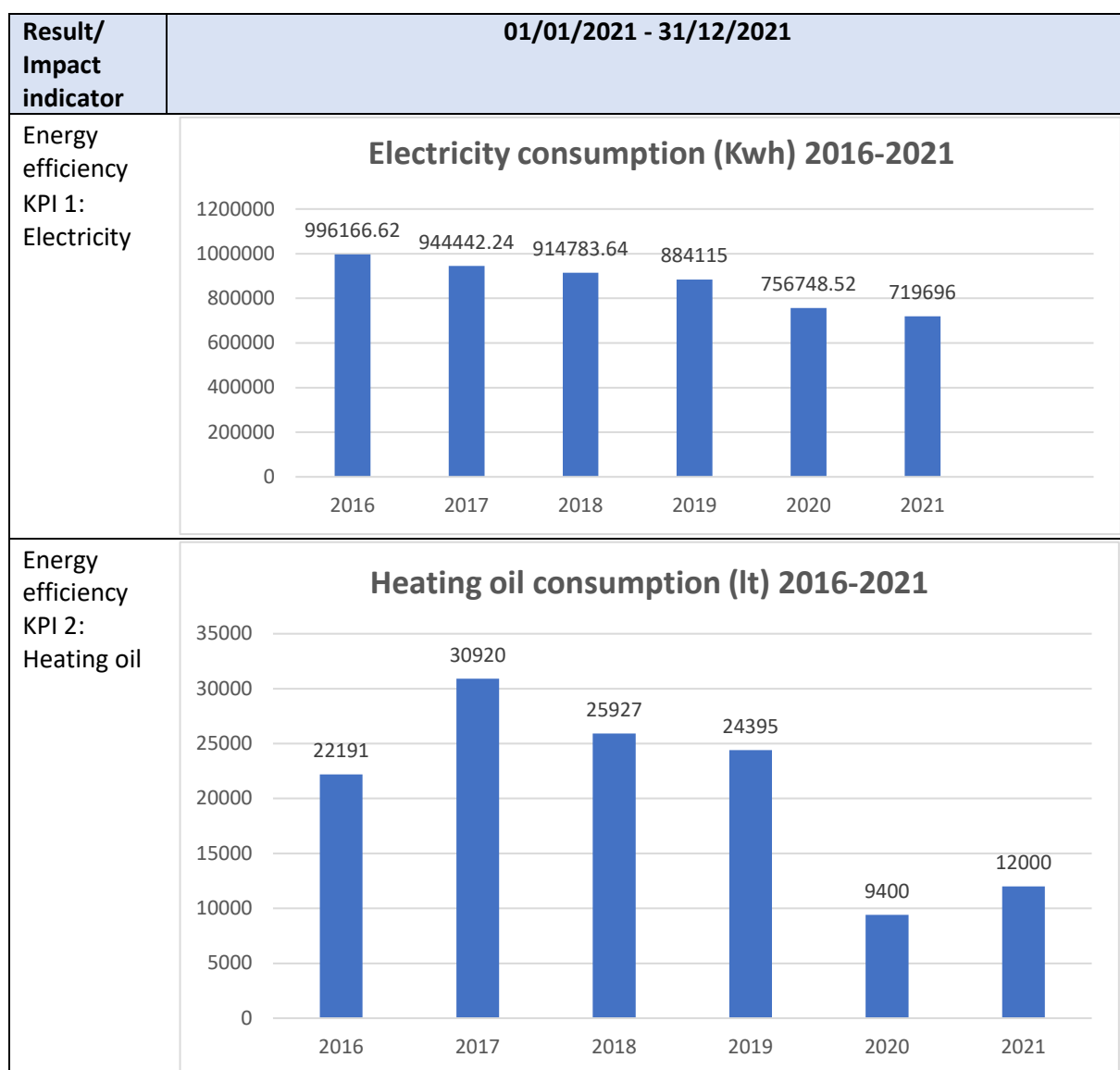
<sup>(79)</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0154\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0154_EN.pdf)

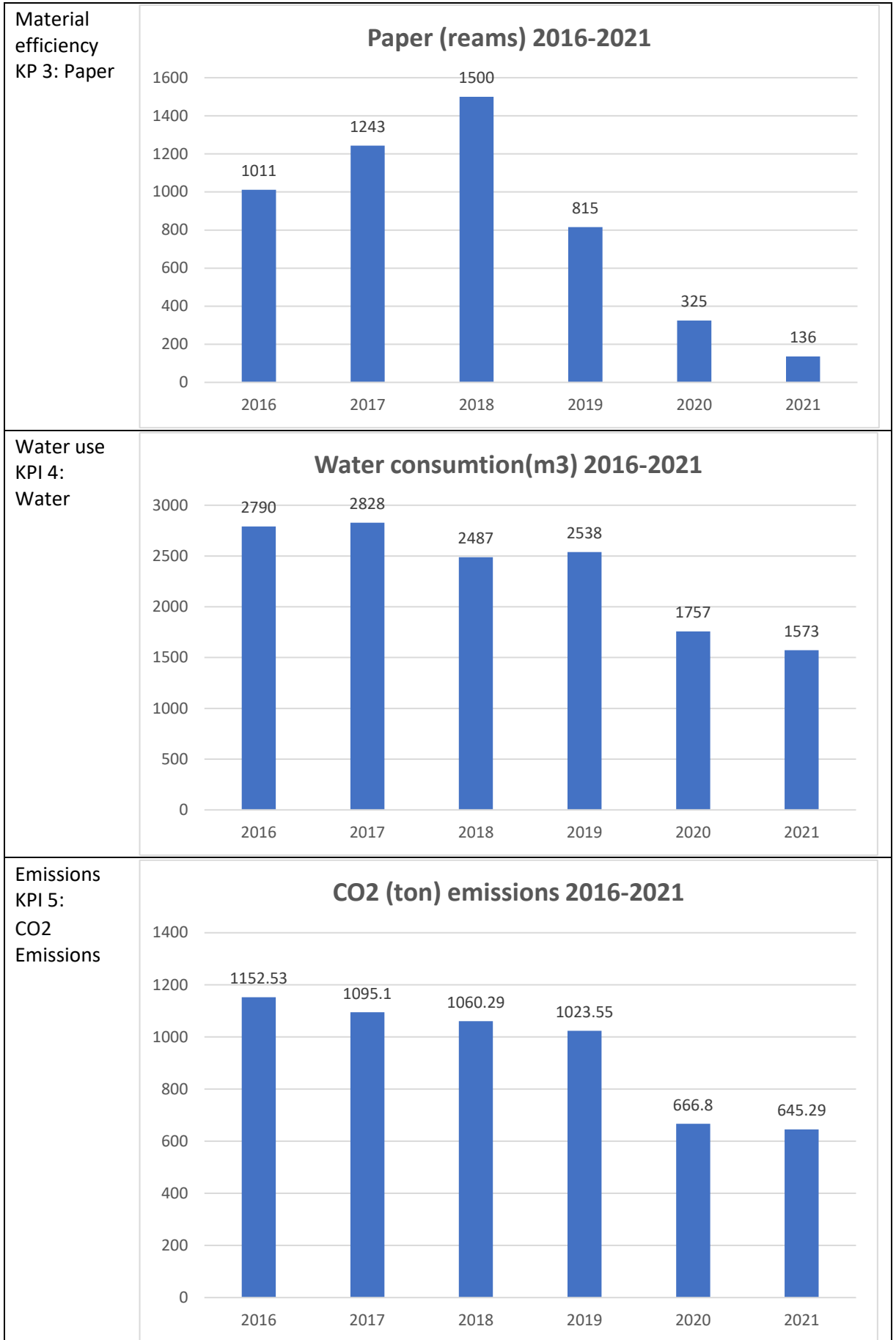
## II.10 Environment Management

Cedefop monitors and reports its impact on various environmental and social sustainability indicators on a yearly basis.

Latest results of environmental indicators are presented below, offering a comparison across years since 2016. The target set for each indicator is to decrease or at least maintain the 2016 level of consumption/emissions.

The decreases observable for the year 2021 are mainly attributed to the fact that the building was not fully utilised due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and the introduction of recommended and/or mandatory teleworking. With respect to heating oil consumption, the only environmental indicator displaying a slight increase between 2020 and 2021, it must be noted that the building's heating system was switched on for a longer period in 2021. Also, heating oil consumption is largely affected by the weather and the number of staff present in the premises, two variables that fluctuated over the last two years due to Covid-19 measures.





Also, as part of its core business in 2021, Cedefop placed emphasis on expanding the work on VET and skills in the context of the green transition. The results of a dedicated forecast scenario on implementing the European Green Deal were published in a [Cedefop report](#) <sup>(80)</sup> in December. New foresight work on the green transition in smart and green cities and the waste management sector started in 2021, aiming at supporting stakeholders in managing the implementation of the European Green Deal. New work on identifying green jobs and skills was launched as part of SkillsOVATE development activities to better reflect on emerging green transition trends in the labour market (see Part I - 1.3 for more information).

In line with the priorities set by the Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück declaration, Cedefop launched new work on apprenticeship and the green transition, an area where little evidence and policy information is yet available. Paving the way for future work, the [second joint Cedefop-OECD symposium](#) <sup>(81)</sup> on 'Apprenticeships for greener economies and societies' showcased practices, research and analyses of scholars from different countries and disciplines on how skill needs are changing due to the green transition, how this impacts apprenticeships systems and how apprenticeships can support and enable the transition (see Part I - 1.2 for more information).

Working at the interface of VET and the labour market, Cedefop's work as a whole also directly contributes to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education) and 8 (decent work and economic growth).

## **II.11 Assessment by Management**

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by Cedefop's management that support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives.

These elements are: (a) comprehensive set of processes and documents to plan its annual work programme; (b) comprehensive set of processes to monitor and report on the implementation of its annual work programme and the deployment of its human and financial resources; (c) processes to monitor and report on legality and regularity; (d) internal control framework; and (e) safeguarding of assets.

### **a) Comprehensive set of processes and documents to plan the annual work programme**

- i The single programming document 2021-23 was adopted by the Management Board on 21 December 2020 by written procedure <sup>(82)</sup>.
- ii The annual work programme 2021 is embedded in the single programming document and includes the risk management plan which results from an in-depth ex-ante assessment of the generic risks and risks by project and by Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB) activity. The work programme also includes a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators within Cedefop's Performance Measurement System (PMS).
- iii Along with the adoption of the annual budget (estimate of revenue and expenditure) a multi-annual staff policy plan (MASPP) sets out the human resources required for the implementation of the annual work programme. The MASPP forms an integral part of the single programming document and annual work programme.

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<sup>(80)</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/4206>

<sup>(81)</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/2021-joint-cedefopoecd-symposium-apprenticeships-greener-economies-and-societies>

<sup>(82)</sup> written procedure number 2020-14



- iv Finally, the annual management plan (AMP) 2021 comprises detailed planning for the Agency's key deliverables - e.g. conferences, publications, web tools, procurement procedures - outlined in the annual work programme. It also includes evaluation and audit plans, risk assessment and the anti-fraud strategy action plan for the year 2021.
- b) Comprehensive set of processes to monitor and report reliably on the implementation of the annual work programme and the deployment of human and financial resources
- i The Executive Director, Deputy Director and Heads of Departments meet on a weekly basis. The aim of these meetings, chaired by the Executive Director, is to monitor developments in operational, administrative and support activities and take strategic decisions on issues related to financial and human resource management, internal controls, outreach activities of management and experts <sup>(83)</sup> as well as the day-to-day administration of the Agency. Follow-up actions are reviewed on a weekly basis.
  - ii The Executive Director, Deputy Director, Heads of Departments, Internal Control Coordinator, Head of Finance and Procurement, Head of Human Resources, coordinators of services (ICT and facilities) and the accounting officer meet in Performance Monitoring Meetings (PMM) three times per year to discuss systematised reports on financial issues (budget implementation, procurements), human resources developments, and monitoring reports on achievements compared to the planned objectives. In the first yearly meeting, the PMS team and a representative of the Staff Committee are also invited. In the third meeting, budget correspondents also participate. Achievements are monitored through the performance indicators and targets set in the annual work programme. In addition, these meetings support strategic considerations and opinion exchange on policy issues, planning, and other operational and organisational issues.
  - iii A budgetary mid-term review is conducted in September to discuss in detail progress on the implementation of the budget and the work programme and to agree on corrective actions as necessary. The budget correspondents assigned to each Department provide regular monitoring of the budget's planned commitments and payments throughout the year.
  - iv The annual report and the consolidated annual activity report are discussed with the Executive and Management Boards, besides the regular reporting to the Executive Board/Management Board on the implementation of the annual work programme, results of audits and evaluations, budget implementation, transfers of appropriations.
  - v Executive and Management Board members are systematically informed on key changes that may occur in the implementation of the annual work programme. This is a standing agenda item in all meetings.
  - vi As requested under Art. 31.4 of Cedefop's Financial Regulation, the Agency makes available on its [website](#), no later than 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the funds were legally committed, information on the recipients of funds financed from the budget of the Agency, including experts contracted. The published information is easily accessible, transparent and comprehensive.

c) Processes to monitor and report on legality and regularity

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<sup>(83)</sup> e.g. events, publications, briefing notes, web tools and visualisations

As regards legality and regularity of underlying transactions, the objective is to ensure that the estimated annual risk of errors in commitments and payments at the time of the authorisation of the transactions is less than 2%. No deviations were recorded in 2021.

As foreseen in the Commission's Anti-Fraud Strategy and in the action plan of the Inter Institutional Working Group's roadmap, Cedefop's Management Board adopted its updated Anti-Fraud Strategy on 28 January 2019, which repealed the first version from 2014.

Following the IAS audit on HR management and ethics, new guidelines on reporting potential conflicts of interests in selection and recruitment processes were adopted on 29 March 2019. Rules on the prevention and management of conflicts of interests for Management Board members, independent experts, seconded national experts and other staff not employed by Cedefop were adopted by Cedefop's Management Board on 2 October 2019.

Internal procedures on reporting irregularities/whistleblowing, including the legal framework, basic principles and steps to be followed by staff members, already in place since 2008, were revised and complemented with Cedefop's guidelines on whistleblowing in 2019 <sup>(84)</sup>, based on the Commission's Guidelines and in compliance with the requirements set out in Art. 22c of the Staff Regulations.

#### d) Internal control framework

Internal Control standards are in place in Cedefop since 2009. The Agency revised its Internal Control Framework in 2019 to align it to the European Commission's own revised Framework, basing it on the highest international standards set by the COSO framework <sup>(85)</sup>. Shifting from a compliance-based to a principle-based approach, Cedefop's revised Internal Control Framework, adopted by the Management Board on 9 January 2019, is structured around five components: control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, monitoring activities. Each component consists of several principles, 17 in total.

e) With regard to safeguarding of assets, regular controls and checks are in place, which are in line with the Commission's control structures. They are tested and proved to be sound. Procedures and recordkeeping concerned with the safeguarding of assets and reliability of financial records are designed to provide assurance that:

- i transactions are executed in compliance with management's authorisation;
- ii transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of financial statements in conformity with the Agency's Financial Regulation and to maintain accountability for assets;
- iii access to assets is restricted through the hierarchical structure of verifications and in line with the Financial Regulation;
- iv the recorded value of assets is compared with existing asset checks e.g. inventory controls and bank reconciliations at reasonable intervals.

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<sup>(84)</sup> DGE/37/2019 of 9 April 2019

<sup>(85)</sup> Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) - Framework for internal control against which organisations measure the effectiveness of their systems of internal control

## PART II b) External Evaluations

As required by Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing Cedefop and by the Financial Regulation, Cedefop is subject to periodic external evaluations which are carried out by the Commission. The most recent one was conducted in 2017 for the period 2011-16 as part of a comprehensive exercise aiming at implementing a more coherent framework for decentralised EU Agencies <sup>(86)</sup>. The evaluation covered the four Agencies that (at that time) fell within the remit of DG Employment <sup>(87)</sup> and assessed them individually and in a cross-cutting perspective, considering also the European Labour Authority being planned at that time.

In April 2019, the European Commission published its conclusions on the Agencies' performance <sup>(88)</sup>. Confirming the overall assessment that they operated effectively and efficiently and contributed to EU-level policy making, the Commission highlighted some areas for improvement and issued Agency-specific as well as general recommendations addressed to the four Agencies. Cedefop received only two specific recommendations (see table below).

As requested, Cedefop drew up an action plan which was discussed by the Management Board and submitted to the Commission in October 2019. It comprises detailed actions to address Cedefop-specific recommendations:

- i continue efforts to reallocate even more resources from administration to its core operations;
- ii present the results of its performance measurement indicators that relate to informing policies and their implementation in a more detailed manner;
- iii further align the four Agencies' performance indicator methods.

Cedefop-specific recommendations	Actions to be continued	Progress <sup>(89)</sup> - end 2021
The Agency could continue looking for ways to reallocate even more resources from administration to its core operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revisit HR situation to see whether additional staff can be deployed to operational areas</li> </ul>	<p><b>Current DI: 5</b></p> <p>In June 2020, the Executive Director adopted Cedefop's first ever HR strategy, including strategic workforce planning. Among the objectives of this exercise is the systematic review of staff needs across departments and the prioritisation of staff resources for core business activities.</p> <p>The annual job screening exercise showed an increase in the</p>

<sup>(86)</sup> The 'Common Approach' on decentralised Agencies signed in 2012 by the European Parliament, Council and the Commission.

<sup>(87)</sup> European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA).

<sup>(88)</sup> SWD(2019) 159 final

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=85&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9348> [accessed 08.05.20]

<sup>(89)</sup> Cedefop tracks progress by degrees of implementation (DI), whereby DI 1 refers to 'problem identified', DI 2 to 'solution conceptualised', DI 3 to 'solution implementation planned in detail', DI 4 to 'solution implemented (go-live date)', and DI 5 'solution impact established'.

Cedefop-specific recommendations	Actions to be continued	Progress <sup>(89)</sup> - end 2021
		<p>resource dedicated to operational activities (+0.4 percentage points in 2020 in comparison to 2019). In 2021, Cedefop moved from the yearly exercise to regular workforce planning discussions within management (21/02, 08/06, 20/07, 11 and 22/11). A further meeting will take place in October. In these discussions in-depth reviews of the HR situation across departments have been carried out also in a forward-looking perspective for the period 2022-24 as part of the new HR strategy. Decisions taken in the context of these meetings have systemically aimed at reinforcing the capacity of the core business. As for 2021, one staff member has been reassigned from the Department for Resources and Support to core business. The Covid-19 crisis, which put a lot of additional stress on administrative services to ensure business continuity and deliver fully online services, renders it premature to proceed to further redeployment towards operational departments at this stage. Exploring redeployment opportunities will remain a regular exercise in the future, i.e. a rolling activity. <i>Cedefop considers this action implemented.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify transfer opportunities from administrative to operational budget lines 2020 target: EUR 20 000 (budget and/or FTEs)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Current DI: 5</b> Following substantial savings linked to Covid-19 across budget titles, the amount of EUR 469 713 was transferred to operational budget lines. As this is a rolling activity, transfers from administrative to operational budget lines takes place every year. <i>Cedefop considers this action implemented.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further streamline</li> </ul>	<p><b>Current DI: 3</b></p>

Cedefop-specific recommendations	Actions to be continued	Progress <sup>(89)</sup> - end 2021
	administrative workflows and procedures using more electronic tools (NB: investments in automation may lead to temporary cost increases)	<p>The ICT and digitalisation strategy 2021-24 was adopted by the Executive Director on 13 April 2021. It includes a strategic initiative aiming at deploying the next generation of corporate services. As part of this initiative, the full digitisation of workflows and procedures is planned. The project has started and a tool for automation of workflows has been selected and acquired.</p> <p>A first set of financial workflows were deployed by the end of June 2021. The second set contains mainly HR workflows which are planned to be gradually deployed by December 2021.</p> <p><i>Target date for DI 4 (fully implement all digital workflows): end 2022.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with other Agencies to achieve further efficiency gains through shared services (e.g. using the Agencies' catalogue of shared services) and joint procurement procedures, e.g. for ICT helpdesk services with ENISA in 2018</li> </ul> <p>Some of the ongoing actions have already reached DI 5 (e.g. joint company survey with Eurofound)</p>	<p><b>Current DI: 5</b></p> <p>A service-level agreement was signed with ENISA on 4 May 2020. Resource-sharing opportunities have been identified and are taking place. To date capabilities are shared in the fields of data protection, confidential counselling, procurement. Further opportunities for sharing services and capabilities were identified in a joint workshop with ENISA in April 2021 and the SLA has been updated accordingly.</p> <p>Cedefop is a member of the EUAN working group on new ways of work following the Covid-19 pandemic. The group meets on a bi-weekly basis to share experience and knowledge and cooperate on any relevant matter. Following the 2020 task force on shared services of the EUAN, all EUAN subnetworks have been mandated to identify opportunities for sharing services and capabilities in their respective fields of work. Exploring opportunities for shared services,</p>

Cedefop-specific recommendations	Actions to be continued	Progress <sup>(89)</sup> - end 2021
		joint procedures and initiatives is a regular activity, i.e. this is a rolling activity. <i>Cedefop considers this action implemented.</i>
The Agency could provide greater detail when presenting indicators relating to evidence, to inform policies and their implementation. In particular, it is advised that the indicators 'Policy documents citing Cedefop work' and 'Participation in Presidency events and meetings of senior stakeholders, or which support policy', would not present aggregated figures for items of a very different nature.	Indicator on citations in policy documents: present disaggregated data showing the different nature of the EU-level policy documents and reports that cite/use/refer to Cedefop work	<b>Recommendation closed as per DG EMPL letter ref. EMPL E/SC/ps(2020)4712160 of 04/08/2020</b>
	Indicator on contributions to policy-relevant meetings of senior stakeholders: present indicator in disaggregated manner	<b>Recommendation closed as per DG EMPL letter ref. EMPL E/SC/ps(2020)4712160 of 04/08/2020</b>

## **PART III Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems**

### **III.1 Effectiveness of the Internal Control systems**

The methodology applied for the assessment of Cedefop's Internal Control Framework is compliant with the Implementation Guide of the European Commission (2018 updated version of Ares(2017)3293999-30/06/2017).

The assessment of the Internal Control Framework is founded both on ongoing continuous monitoring and on specific periodical assessments and was carried out at three levels:

- the principles - based on the analysis of the detected strengths and deficiencies;
- the components - based on an analysis of the results at principle level;
- the internal control framework as a whole - based on an analysis of the results at component level. See section III.2.

The final conclusion, based on professional judgement, assessed also whether the components are operating well together in an integrated manner.

Ongoing monitoring is built into business processes and performed on a real-time basis at all levels of the organisation. This enables the Agency to timely react to changing conditions and to correct deviations from intended performance and effectiveness levels. The Internal Control Framework is monitored by performance and specific indicators adopted by the Management Board.

Cedefop updated its policy on reporting of exceptions, non-compliance events and notes to the file on 5 November 2020 <sup>(90)</sup> in line with the Commission's guidelines and Cedefop's Internal Control Framework adopted by its Management Board on 9 January 2019.

Deficiencies identified in the context of the ongoing monitoring activities and actions are registered in a 'Deficiencies Register'. Appropriate mitigating actions addressed the identified issues. In 2021, Cedefop registered 26 non-compliance events and exception requests linked to issues of contract and financial management. Recommendations issued by the ICC were implemented and followed up to help avoid reoccurrence.

### **III.2 Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems**

The goal of the annual internal control assessment is to provide reasonable assurance that Cedefop's internal control principles are functioning, deficiencies are communicated and corrected in a timely manner, with serious matters reported and followed up as appropriate.

The assessment of the overall Internal Control Framework shows that it is effective, all its components are in place and functioning well and for their intended purpose.

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<sup>(90)</sup> Decision DIR 07/2020 - RB(2020)01239



The overall assessment was performed by the ICC, using the tool (excel file) provided by DG BUDG to Agencies' Internal Control Coordinators. DG BUDG and IAS delivered a specific training session to ICC teams of EU Agencies on the annual assessment of the internal control system.

The assessment tool comprises:

- a a register of deficiencies populated from different internal sources: register of non-compliance events and exception requests, recommendations from IAS, ECA, OLAF and ICC, deficiencies reported spontaneously by staff, the action plan of Cedefop's Anti-Fraud Strategy, Cedefop internal control indicators, notes to the file;
- b an assessment of each principle with regards to the related deficiencies, ranked from 1 to 4 (1= None, 2=Moderate, 3=Major, 4=Critical);
- c an assessment of each component with regards to the related principles, also ranked from 1 to 4;
- d overall assessment of the internal control system (see table below).

### Overall (Specific) Assessment of Internal Control System

To be done globally at Directorate-General level. In addition this assessment can be done for one part of the organisational structure (Delegation, Representation, Directorate, Function, etc.)

Internal control Component	Present and functioning (Category 1/2/3/4)	Explanation/Conclusion
CONTROL ENVIRONMENT	Category 1. The component is present and functioning well	The Management has set properly the tone at the top with respect to the importance of internal control, including expected standards of conduct.
RISK ASSESSMENT	Category 1. The component is present and functioning well	Overall risks are properly mitigated
CONTROL ACTIVITIES	Category 2. The component is present and functioning but some improvements are needed	Control activities are well in place and functioning.
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	Category 1. The component is present and functioning well	External communication is well organised and functions well. Internal communication can be improved
MONITORING ACTIVITIES	Category 1. The component is present and functioning well	Continuous assessments provide timely information on any deficiencies. Findings are assessed and deficiencies are communicated and corrected in a timely manner.
<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT (1/2/3 or 4).</b> Are all components operating together in an integrated manner? Assess globally the combination of the assessments of the internal control components.	Category 1. The internal control system is present and functioning well, only minor improvements needed	
Is the overall internal control system effective? Category 1. Minor- Yes Category 2. Moderate- Yes Category 3. Major- Partially Category 4. Critical- No	Yes	
Comment	The assessment of the internal control framework concludes that the organisation is able to deliver its objectives. The key component 'Control environment' is present and functioning well.	

### III.3 Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control

**CEDEFOP**European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

DEPUTY DIRECTOR – INTERNAL CONTROL COORDINATOR

RB(2022)00836

Thessaloniki, 23 May 2022

#### STATEMENT OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND INTERNAL CONTROL COORDINATOR TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MR JUERGEN SIEBEL

I, Mara Brugia,

in my capacity as Deputy Director and authorising officer by delegation,

declare that in accordance with my responsibilities as authorising officer by delegation, I have reported to the Executive Director my assessment, advice and recommendations on the issues under my responsibility.

I hereby also declare that in accordance with my responsibilities as Internal Control Coordinator I have reported my assessment, advice and recommendations to the Executive Director on the overall state of internal control in Cedefop.

I declare that on the basis of my managing and monitoring operations I have reasonable assurance that the underlying actions have been legal and regular and that the information I have provided has been accurate and complete.

I hereby declare that the information provided in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021 and its annexes, to the best of my knowledge, are accurate, reliable and complete.

Digitally signed by:

MARA BRUGIA (EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR  
DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING (CEDEFOP))

Date: 2022-05-23 09:58:19 UTC

**Mara Brugia**

Deputy Director and Internal Control Coordinator

## PART IV Management assurance

### IV.1 Review of the elements supporting assurance

Cedefop's Internal Control Framework is built under the direct supervision of the management. Taking Cedefop's size into account, a flat hierarchical structure has been adopted. Heads of Departments delegate various functions such as staff assessment of contract agents or contract implementation to Heads of Service and project managers/experts.

Heads of Departments, Heads of Service and project managers/experts are closely and actively involved in the planning, reporting and monitoring processes, as well as in the risk assessment exercise. Not only does this assure alignment of objectives; it also ensures buy-in and a common understanding of the strategic objectives and the annual work programme.

Planning and monitoring tools for the ABB, procurement, events and publications are in place and used to inform management decisions.

A comprehensive set of procedures and guidelines was developed to build and implement the Internal Control Framework. All main procedures and workflows have been documented and digitalised, backups appointed to ensure business continuity - as also documented in the job descriptions of all staff - and further skills development trainings provided to staff to ensure proper implementation of the annual work programme and effective controls <sup>(91)</sup>.

Additionally, department and project team meetings or written briefings by the Heads of Departments/Services are used to inform all staff of relevant issues and new developments.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and prolonged periods of teleworking for Cedefop staff, increased communication needs arose. In 2021, general staff assemblies were organised virtually throughout the year, more specifically on:

- 21 January 2021, to present new colleagues, Cedefop's achievements and key figures of 2020, and inform staff on the new post-2020 strategy, the 2022-24 single programming documents and upcoming highlights;
- 25 February 2021, to present new colleagues and the first EUSA interinstitutional learning & development awards, and to inform staff on the progress and target dates of the ABAC project and the Employee Assistance Program;
- 17 March 2021, to present an update on the Covid-19 situation one year after operating fully off-site, information on vaccination, awareness on ICT security and inform staff on the upcoming Cedefop high level conference of 13 April 2021;
- 16 April 2021, to present new colleagues, the highlights of Cedefop's high level conference on skills intelligence, inform staff on the equal opportunity policy and future Sports and Leisure club activities;
- 19 May 2021, to present new colleagues, update staff on the ABAC project and present the job titles and e-signatures policies;
- 29 June 2021, to debrief staff on the Executive Board meeting of on 24 June 2021, and inform staff on the transition to ABAC and FlowForma workflows;

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<sup>(91)</sup> e.g. trainings and knowledge sharing on e.g. ABAC, data protection, Intellectual property, skill assessment, machine learning, effective note and minute taking, writing online content, strategic foresight, team management, Risk Management.

- 7 September 2021, to inform staff on the new Covid-19 related measures and the updated de-escalation strategy;
- 10 September 2021, a hybrid staff assembly took place on the occasion of the joint visit of Vice-President Schinas and Commissioner Schmit;
- 8 October 2021, to present new colleagues, to report on the outcomes of the 99<sup>th</sup> Management Board meeting and introduce the new Management Board Chairperson to staff;
- 20 October 2021, to present new colleagues, the new missions and meetings reporting system (MMRS), the new approach to the Trello Board and inform staff on the return to the office as per Phase 3 of the De-escalation Strategy;
- 2 December 2021, to debrief staff on the outcomes of the extended Executive Board meeting of 1 December 2021 and present the results of the phishing <sup>(92)</sup> exercise;
- 17 December 2021, for a virtual staff Christmas party.

The Executive Director in his capacity as authorising officer and the authorising officers by delegation in their areas of responsibility base their assurance declarations on the results of their direct management supervision. Statements of assurance delivered to the Executive Director by the Deputy Director/Internal Control Coordinator (ICC), Heads of Department and Heads of Service represent an additional layer of internal control and assurance.

Following the assessment of the Internal Control system no significant weakness has been identified. In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Executive Director, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation signed the Declaration of Assurance.

#### **IV.2 Reservations**

N/A

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<sup>(92)</sup> fraudulent practice of sending emails purporting to be from reputable companies in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information

## PART V. Declaration of assurance

**CEDEFOP**European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RB(2022)00842  
Thessaloniki, 24 May 2021

### DECLARATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I, Jürgen Siebel,

Executive Director of Cedefop

In my capacity as Authorising Officer

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view <sup>(1)</sup>.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the ex-post and ex-ante evaluation and other sources of assurance as steered by the Internal Control Coordinator, the observations of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the report of the Court of Auditors for years prior of this declaration.

I confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of Cedefop.

Digitally signed by:

JÜRGEN SIEBEL (EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING (CEDEFOP))

Reason: I am the author of this document.

Date: 2022-05-24 07:31:15 UTC

Jürgen Siebel

Executive Director

<sup>(1)</sup> True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the Agency.

## **ANNEXES**

## Annex I: Core business statistics

Outcome indicators	2021
<a href="#">Citations of Cedefop's work in policy documents of</a>	
a. EU institutions	189
b. International organisations	128
<i>Captures references to and take-up of Cedefop's work; demonstrates that Cedefop is acknowledged and valued as European source of evidence and information on VET, skills and qualifications; demonstrates alignment and relevance of Cedefop work to the EU policy framework</i>	
<a href="#">Cedefop's contribution to the preparation of policy documents</a>	
a. Contribution to EU policy documents	58
b. Contribution to policy documents of international organisations	6
<i>Captures written input Cedefop is asked to provide to inform and report on policy development in VET and skills; demonstrates alignment and relevance of Cedefop work to the EU policy framework</i>	
<a href="#">Cedefop's contribution to meetings that inform policies and their implementation</a>	164
<i>Captures Cedefop contributions to committees, working and expert groups and other high-level events at European, international, and national level; demonstrates alignment and relevance of Cedefop work to the EU policy framework</i>	
<a href="#">Downloads of Cedefop publications</a>	498,000
<i>of which briefing note</i>	82,000
<a href="#">Citations of Cedefop publications/studies/analyses in the academic literature</a>	988
<a href="#">Quality and expected impact of events organised by Cedefop</a>	98%
<a href="#">Web site traffic</a>	
Visits	306,000
Unique Visitors	192,000
Visits by Returning visitors	118,000
Returning visitors	34,000
Page views	968,000
<a href="#">Media coverage</a>	
a. Take-up of Cedefop's work in press clippings	404
b. Take-up of Cedefop's work in social media	
Facebook followers	16,730
Twitter followers	11,570
LinkedIn followers	5,650
<b>Key performance indicators for the Director</b>	<b>2021</b>
<a href="#">Rate of implementation of commitment appropriations (budget execution)</a>	100%
<a href="#">Rate of outturn (payment appropriations)</a>	99%
<a href="#">Rate of payments completed within the legal/contractual deadlines</a>	87%
<a href="#">Percentage of establishment plan filled</a>	97%



Output indicators	
Number of Cedefop publications	40
Number of meetings/events organised by Cedefop	34
of which policy learning activities	1
Number of participants at Cedefop events	1,961
Number of Cedefop's press releases	17
Environmental indicator	645.29
<i>Assesses Cedefop's environmental performance such as greenhouse gas emissions and overall waste emissions</i>	

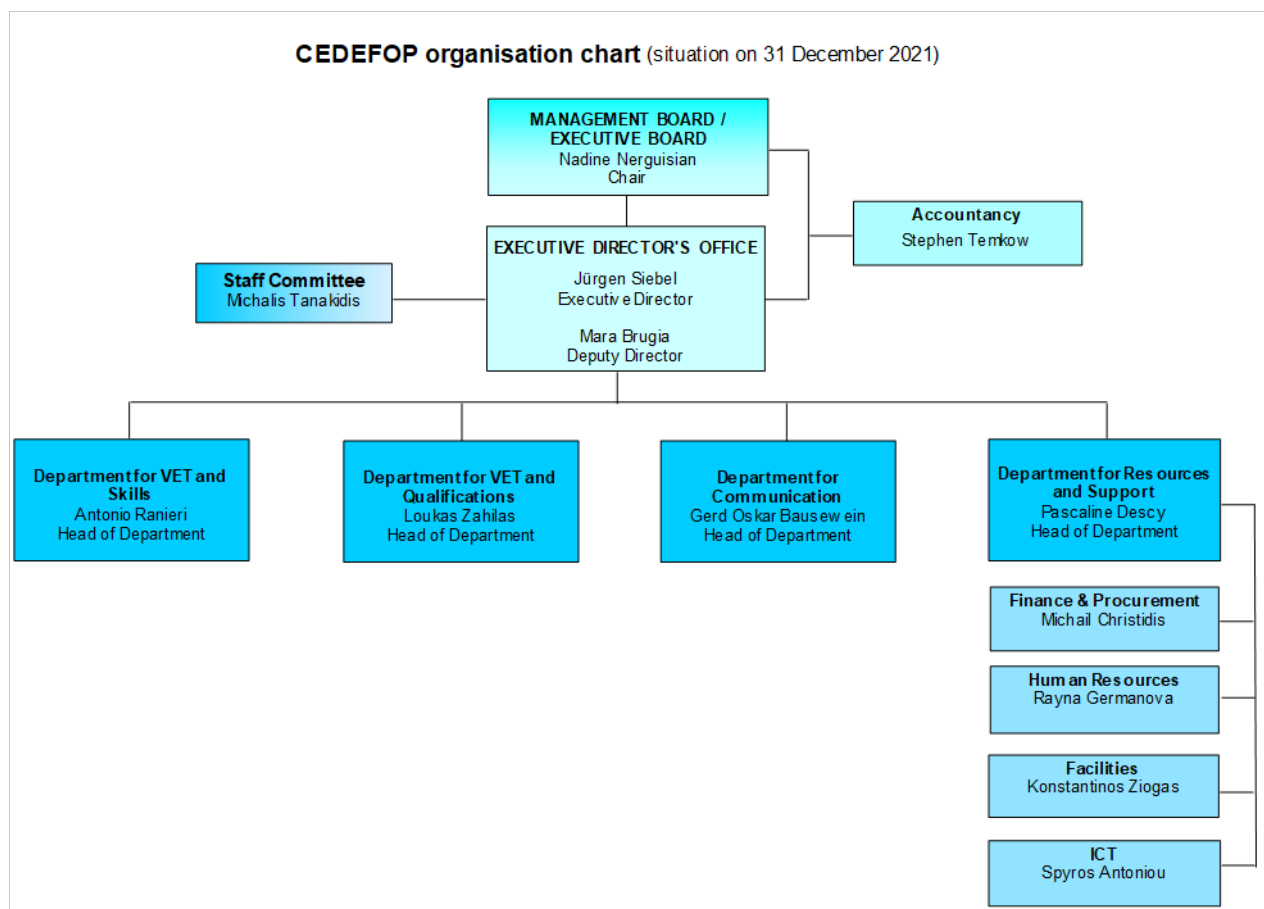
## Annex II: Statistics on financial Management

Budget outturn	N-4 (2018)	N-3 (2019)	N-2 (2020)	N-1 (2021)
Revenue actually received (+)	17,912,176	19,308,595	17,173,664	18,538,589
Payments made (-)	-17,653,998	-18,342,813	-15,918,322	-17,580,672
Carry-over of appropriations (-)	-670,287	-827,786	-1,218,993	-879,615
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	62,137	59,332	58,261	77,236
Adjustment for carry-over of assigned revenue appropriations from previous year (+)	373,605	0	33,514	39,277
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	-1,122	-1,948	-1,123	-858
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year (-)	0	0	0	0
Total	22,510	195,379	127,001	193,957

The budget outturn 2021 is EUR 193 957.

Detailed information on budget execution is presented in Part II.3.

## Annex III: Organisational chart



## Annex IV: Establishment plan and additional information on Human Resources management

Key functions	Type of contract (official, TA or CA)	Function group, grade of recruitment	Indication whether the function is dedicated to administrative support or operations
Executive Director	TA external	AD14	Operations
Deputy Director	TA reassignment	AD12	Operations
Head of Administration	TA reassignment	AD11	Administrative
Head of Department	TA external	AD10	Operations
Administrator/Expert	TA external	AD 7	Operations
Administrator/Expert	TA external	AD 5	Operations/ Administrative
Expert	CA	FG IV	Operations/ Administrative
Senior Assistant	TA internal	AST 10	Operations
Assistant	TA external	AST 2	Operations
Assistant	TA external	AST 4	Administrative/ Neutral
Assistant	CA	FG III	Administrative
Assistant	CA	FG II	Operations/ Administrative/ Neutral
Head of Human Resources	TA external	AD 8	Administrative
Head of Finance and Procurement	TA inter-agency	AD 9	Neutral
Security officer	TA reassignment	AST 4	Administrative
Editing assistant	TA external	AST 2	Operations
Press officer	TA external	AD 5	Operations
Web manager	TA external	AST 4	Operations
Data Protection Officer	TA	AD 7	Administrative
Accounting Officer	TA external	AD 7	Neutral

## Job screening/benchmarking against previous year results

Job Type (sub category)	2020 (%)	2021 (%)
<b>Administrative support and Coordination</b>	19.50%	19.28%
Administrative support	17.18%	17.63%
Coordination	2.32%	1.65%
<b>Operational</b>	73.53%	72.49%
Top level Operational Coordination	4.64%	4.94%
Programme management and implementation	68.89%	67.55%
Evaluation & impact assessment	0.00%	0.00%
General operational	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Neutral</b>	6.97%	8.24%
Finance/Control	6.97%	8.24%
Linguistics	0.00%	0.00%

## List of HR implementing rules adopted in 2021

N/a
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Gender representation - Data on 31/12/Year N-1 (2021) / statutory staff (only officials, AT and AC)

		Official		Temporary		Contract Agents		Grand Total	
		Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%
<b>Female</b>	<b>Administrator level</b>	2	33.3%	17	39.5%	1	11.1%	20	34.5%
	<b>Assistant level (AST &amp; AST/SC)</b>	4	66.7%	26	60.5%	8	88.9%	38	65.5%
	<b>Total</b>	6	100.0%	43	100.0%	9	100.0%	58	100.0%
<b>Male</b>	<b>Administrator level</b>	1	33.3%	28	80.0%	4	44.4%	33	70.2%
	<b>Assistant level (AST &amp; AST/SC)</b>	2	66.7%	7	20.0%	5	55.6%	14	29.8%
	<b>Total</b>	3	100.0%	35	100.0%	9	100.0%	47	100.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>		9	33.3%	78		18		105	

Data regarding gender evolution over 5 years of Middle and Senior management

	N-5 (2017)		N-1 (2021)	
	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Female Managers</b>	3	50.0	2	33.3
<b>Male Managers</b>	3	50.0	4	66.7

**Geographical balance:** Explanatory figures to highlight nationalities of staff (split per Administrator/CA FG IV and Assistant /CA FG I, II, III)

a - Table on 31/12/year N-1 (2021) - statutory staff only (officials, AT and AC)

Nationality	AD + CA FG IV		AST/SC-AST + CA FGI/CA FGII/CA FGIII		TOTAL	
	Number	% of Total Staff members in AD and FG IV categories	Number	% of Total Staff members in AST SC/AST and FG I, II and III categories	Number	% of total staff
AT	1	1.9%	1	1.9%	2	1.9%
BE	2	3.8%	3	5.6%	5	4.8%
BG	1	1.9%			1	1.0%
CZ	1	1.9%			1	1.0%
DE	5	9.6%	3	5.6%	8	7.6%
DK			2	3.7%	2	1.9%
EE	1	1.9%			1	1.0%
EL	19	36.5%	30	55.6%	49	46.7%
ES	3	5.8%	1	1.9%	4	3.8%
FR	1	1.9%	8	14.8%	9	8.6%
IT	8	15.4%	2	3.7%	10	9.5%
LV	2	3.8%			2	1.9%
NL	1	1.9%			1	1.0%
NO	1	1.9%			1	1.0%
PL	2	3.8%			2	1.9%
RO	1	1.9%	1	1.9%	2	1.9%
SE			1	1.9%	1	1.0%
SK	1	1.9%			1	1.0%
UK	2	3.8%	1	1.9%	3	2.9%
TOTAL	52	100.0%	53	98.1%	105	100.0%

b - Evolution over 5 years of the most represented nationality in the Agency

Most represented nationality	N-5 (2017)		N-1 (2021)	
	Number	%	Number	%
EL	49	43.8%	49	46.7%

## Annex V: Human and financial resources by activity

# CEDEFOP

# ABB 2021 Compact report

Budget 2021	Title 1	Title 2	Title 3	Total
Initial Amount:	11,117,600.00	1,850,200.00	5,521,000.00	18,488,800.00
Various Transfers:	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
BRS (supplementary amending budget):	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Final Amount:	11,117,600.00	1,850,200.00	5,521,000.00	18,488,800.00

Budget Execution 2021	Title 1	Title 2	Title 3	Total
Blocked:	5,187,175.37	1,182,191.15	2,058,269.41	8,427,635.93
(Blocked/Final Amount) %	46.66%	63.90%	37.28%	45.58%
Paid:	5,072,889.59	473,610.68	1,024,227.83	6,570,728.10
(Paid/Final Amount) %	45.63%	25.60%	18.55%	35.54%

**Note:** In addition, to the committed and paid title 3 direct cost as shown in the table on the top of the page there are also transversal title 3 cost which are not directly attributed to activities and which are included in the table on budget execution above. These account for the differences between the committed and paid direct cost for title 3 and the committed and paid total costs for title 3.

**\*Paid:** The final stage, that is, the payment run or physical payment which is made via the banking system.

**\*Blocked (or legal commitment):** is the act whereby the authorising officer enters into or establishes an obligation which results in a charge (for instance a contract, grant agreement or order form).



## **Annex VI: Environment management**

In the context of the inter-agency Performance and Development Network (PDN), a proposal emerged in October 2020 to promote a common approach to the programming and reporting requirements on Environment Management <sup>(93)</sup> in the form of a practical guide providing succinct practical advice and inspiration to Agencies on how to structure and present the programming and reporting information of their environmental performance. Cedefop's approach is in line with this initiative.

### **Context of the Agency and its environmental management strategy**

Sustainability reporting is the practice of measuring, disclosing and being accountable to internal and external stakeholders for organisational performance towards the goal of sustainable development. Sustainability reporting is both a management and an accountability tool. It involves reporting on how the organisation considers sustainability issues in its operations, and on its environmental, social and economic impacts <sup>(94)</sup>.

### **Overview of the Agency's environmental management system**

Since 2008, Cedefop is making a firm commitment to environment management practices. The Agency introduced a comprehensive and structured internal Environmental Management System (EMS) in 2014 <sup>(95)</sup>.

The EMS is a framework helping the organisation achieve its environmental targets through consistent control and assessment of its operations, aiming to provide:

- a better regulatory compliance: ensuring that the Agency's environmental legal responsibilities are met and better managed on a day-to-day basis;
- b more effective use of resources: managing resources and waste more effectively and at reduced costs;
- c improved public image: improving the Agency's credentials as an environmentally aware institution that has made a commitment to continual environmental improvement;
- d protection of the environment: moderating or eliminating major impacts, monitoring and controlling impacts that cannot be eliminated or mitigated.

As most EMS models <sup>(96)</sup>, Cedefop's EMS is built on the 'plan, do, check, act' (PDCA) model.

To measure progress towards the achievement of the Agency's green objectives Cedefop's EMS uses the following indicators:

- energy consumptions: electricity and heating oil consumptions;

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<sup>(93)</sup> New Framework Financial Regulation (2019) for EU agencies, EC's new templates and guidelines for the Single Programming Document (SPD) and the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR), EP discharge questionnaire.

<sup>(94)</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/> [accessed on 13.11.2019].

<sup>(95)</sup> RB(2014)00321 of 24 April 2014.

<sup>(96)</sup> Including ISO 14001 or the eco-management and audit scheme – EMAS.

- water consumption;
- paper consumption;
- waste;
- co2 emissions.

Integrated into Cedefop's performance measurement system, PMS indicator 26 (Environmental indicator) assesses the Agency's environmental performance using greenhouse gas emissions (ton CO<sub>2</sub>) <sup>(97)</sup> and overall waste emissions <sup>(98)</sup>.

In addition to its EMS, Cedefop also reports on social sustainability indicators. Gender equality indicators are reported in Annex V – D (Human resources – qualitative – Gender representation) of the Agency's Single Programming Document as well in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report.

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<sup>(97)</sup> Energy consumptions.

<sup>(98)</sup> Recyclable material and household.

## **Annex VII: Draft/Final Annual Accounts**

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/finance-and-budget/annual-accounts>