In her first visit to Cedefop on 22nd April, Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility praised the agency’s work, which ‘impacts on people’s lives’.

The Commissioner said that Cedefop is an invaluable source of expertise for the European Commission to rely on, adding that wherever I go, in discussions on vocational education and training (VET), Cedefop’s work is on the lips of my interlocutors.’

Cedefop experts presented to Ms Thyssen various aspects of the agency’s work focusing on the Skills Panorama website, the projects on the employability for citizens, particularly on skills anticipation and forecasting and apprenticeships and work-based learning, with special focus on SMEs. Read more here on the visit of Commissioner Thyssen to Cedefop here, see the highlights from her visit here and interview here.

**Highlighted news from Cedefop**

**Call for tenders: Governance of EU skills anticipation and matching systems: in-depth country reviews**

The purpose of this contract is to support Cedefop in carrying out in-depth reviews of the governance process of skills anticipation and matching activities within a selected group of EU+ countries (i.e. EU28, Norway and Iceland). The contractor will work together with Cedefop to develop and apply an iterative and evolutionary methodology, involving an analytical framework for reviewing skills governance infrastructure and processes within a country, raw and secondary data collection and analysis. The deadline for submitting tenders is the 17.06.2016. Requests for additional information/clarification should be received by 07.06.2016. Read more here.

**Upgrading skills: Maritime technology sector to set up a European Skills Council**

The members of the Intergroup had the pleasure to host the final conference of the EU-funded project lead by SEA Europe & Industrial Europe “Creating a European Skills Council for the Maritime Technology Sector”. This Intergroup event was held on the 1st of March at the European Parliament, the main focus being on the persevering shortage of skilled workers in the maritime labour market. It was to our great joy to welcome a total of approximately 80 participants, which shows that indeed this is a highly important topic on the maritime agenda with a variety of stakeholders involved. Read more here.

**OECD: Highly educated men and women live longer**

Gap in life expectancy at age 30 by sex and education level across OECD countries, 2012. There have been huge gains in life expectancy across OECD countries over the past decades, but large disparities remain across socio-economic groups. In all countries, the richest and the most educated are in better health and live longer. At age 30, women with the highest level of education can expect to live four years longer than those with the lowest level of education on average across OECD countries, while the gap reaches almost eight years between the most educated and least educated men. Read more here.

**Eurostat: Employment rate of people aged 20-64 in EU above 70% in 2015**

In 2015, the employment rate of the population aged 20 to 64 in the European Union (EU) stood at 70.1%, up compared with 2014 (69.2%) although still remaining slightly below its 2008 peak (70.3%). A similar pattern can be observed for men: their employment rate hit 75.9% in 2015, an increase compared with 2014 (75.0%) but still below its 2008 level (77.8%). Find more here.

**Highlight of the month**

**Commissioner Thyssen visits Cedefop and is informed on Skills Panorama**

**News from Skillsnet members**

**eSkills for Jobs 2016 Competitions are launched!**

The eSkills for Jobs 2016 European Competitions is coming up, after a very successful campaign in 2015. The category for Young digital talent aims at young people aged between 16 – 25 years old who are interested in coding and video game developing. If you have good digital skills, motivation and willingness to design a video game, or creative ideas and the ability to implement them, start working on your project. More information can be found here.

**Hourly labour costs ranged from €4.1 to €41.3 across the EU Member States in 2015**

In 2015, average hourly labour costs in the whole economy (excluding agriculture and public administration) were estimated to be €25.0 in the European Union (EU) and €29.5 in the euro area. However, this average masks significant gaps between EU Member States, with the lowest hourly labour costs recorded in Bulgaria (€4.1), Romania (€5.0), Lithuania (€6.8), Latvia (€7.1) and Hungary (€7.5), and the highest in Denmark (€41.3), Belgium (€39.1), Sweden (€37.4), Luxembourg (€36.2) and France (€35.1). Read more here.

**Employment up by 0.3% in euro area and by 0.1% in the EU28**

Fourth quarter of 2015 compared with the third quarter of 2015. The number of persons employed increased by 0.3% in the euro area (EA19) and by 0.1% in the EU28 in the fourth quarter of 2015 compared with the previous quarter, according to national accounts estimates published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In the third quarter of 2015, employment increased by 0.3% in both zones. These figures are seasonally adjusted. More information can be found here.

**EU28 area unemployment rate at 8.9% for February 2016**

The euro area (EA19) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 10.3% in February 2016, down from 10.4% in January 2016, and from 11.2% in February 2015. This is the lowest rate recorded in the euro area since August 2011. The EU28 unemployment rate was 8.9% in February 2016, stable compared to January 2016, and down from 9.7% in February 2015. This is the lowest rate recorded in the EU28 since May 2009. More can be found here.

**OECD: Harmonised Unemployment Rates (HURs) for February 2016**

The OECD unemployment rate was stable at 6.5% in February 2016, 1.6 percentage point below the January 2013 peak. Across the OECD area, 40 million people were unemployed, 8.9 million less than in January 2013, but still 7.5 million more than in April 2008, before the crisis. In February 2016, the euro area unemployment rate declined by 0.1 percentage point, to 10.3%, with the largest fall recorded in Slovakia (down 0.2 percentage point, to 10.3%). Read more here.
Employment: Quarterly Review highlights steady improvement in activity rate in the EU

The slow but consistent recovery of the EU’s economy continues, accompanied by a gradual increase in the employment rate and a gradual decline in the unemployment rate. To better understand the gradual labour market recovery, the new edition of the EU Employment and Social Situation – Spring 2016 Quarterly Review looks at the evolution of activity rates (or labour market participation) of different age groups. Related Links:

- EU Employment and Social Situation – Spring 2016 Quarterly Review
- Statistical Annex: EU Employment & Social Situation – Spring 2016 Quarterly Review
- Employment and social analysis
- Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2015

Eurostat: Production in construction down by 1.1% in euro area

In February 2016 compared with January 2016, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector fell by 1.1% in the euro area (EA19) and by 0.4% in the EU28, according to first estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In January 2016, production in construction grew by 2.4% in the euro area and by 0.9% in the EU28. Find more here.

OECD: Employment situation, fourth quarter 2015

The OECD area employment rate – defined as the share of people of working-age in employment – increased by 0.2 percentage point in the fourth quarter of 2015, to 66.5%, just shy of the pre-crisis peak of the first quarter of 2008. Compared to the previous quarter, the euro area employment rate rose by 0.1 percentage point (to 64.7%), the highest quarter of growth, with the highest quarter of growth observed in Spain (up 0.6 percentage point, to 58.6%), the Slovak Republic (up 0.5 percentage point, to 63.4%) and Greece (up 0.4 percentage point, to 51.4%). Read more here.

The training and employee trajectory surveys: a new look at in-firm training

The first strand of the French training and employee trajectory surveys, carried out in 2015, provides a more detailed picture of firms’ use of continuing vocational training. The data collected on new dimensions, such as the extent of statutory training provision and the use of outside expertise in developing training policies, confirm longstanding findings on the gaps between small and large firms. Find more here.

Stay connected to Skills Panorama

Forthcoming events

Twitter Chat #EU4GreenSkills: Investing in green skills is investing for a greener future

What is the EU doing to foster green skills? Where are we in terms of funding to generate green jobs? Ask our experts via Twitter on 3rd June at 11:00-12:00 with the hashtag #EU4GreenSkills! The Twitter chat is set up in the framework of the Green Week organised by DG Environment. It will involve experts from our DG but also from REGIO, MARE, ECFIN, GROW and Cedefop. Find more here.

Opening platform for the Mobility Scoreboard

Date: 3rd June 2016, Place: Thessaloniki, Greece

The event will present the newly created Mobility Scoreboard for Initial VET and the current policy background for mobility. Discussions will focus on how the Scoreboard can support the mission of stakeholders involved in fostering IVET mobility across Europe. More can be found here.

European conference on validation of non-formal and informal learning: Making learning visible

Date: 10 – 11 June 2016, Place: Thessaloniki, Greece

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is about making visible and giving value to this diverse and often unique learning. One major purpose of validation is to make it possible for individuals to take advantage of the outcomes of their learning experiences and use them to gain access to employment and/or education opportunities. The conference is organised in close cooperation with the European Commission and will explicitly address the challenges involved for EU Member States in meeting the 2018 deadline set by the 2012 Council Recommendation for establishing national validation arrangements. More information can be found here.

New Skills Agenda for Europe - Launch event

Date: 20th June 2016, Place: Brussels, Belgium

On 20 June the European Commission is launching the New Skills Agenda for Europe to boost human capital, employability and competitiveness. To address the pressing concerns and prepare for the future, the actions of the New Skills Agenda focus on ensuring higher and more relevant skills, improving visibility and use of available skills, reaching a better understanding of skills needs and trends in the labour market. The launch event will gather a wide spectrum of employment and education stakeholders and will feature high-level speakers from European and international institutions. More can be found here.

The Skillsnet network

Skillsnet members have the opportunity to inform other members of our network about new projects, events, activities or publications related to early identification of skill needs throughout the year. If you are interested to inform other members, please submit your short article / information (max of 100 words) to ioannis.katsikis@cedefop.europa.eu whenever you have any news to disseminate.

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