



4th EVTS Stakeholders Group Meeting – Summary note

1. Background and participants

On 23rd March 2026, the 4th virtual EVTS Stakeholders Group Meeting for the European Vocational Education and Training Teachers Survey (EVTS) took place.

A total of 48 participants from 22 countries, including Cedefop's project team members who leads the EVTS with the support of the contracted research team Verian and its network of national VET experts, the European Commission – DG EMPL, representatives of relevant Ministries and national vocational education and training (VET) agencies from the participating countries, along with European and national members of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), participated in this meeting.

Welcome of participants and overview of the meeting

Rena Psifidou, EVTS Stakeholders' Group Coordinator, welcomed participants and presented the two-fold purpose of this meeting:

- Firstly, presenting preliminary findings from the EVTS pilot survey that will shortly be published in a Cedefop working paper entitled: *VET teachers at a turning point. Pilot evidence from Cedefop's European Vocational Teacher Survey*. Now available here: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/6229>
- Secondly, providing an update on the state of play of the main fieldwork. The discussion focused on the challenges currently faced in some countries and how stakeholder group members could support the ongoing fieldwork in countries currently experiencing lower than envisaged participation rates to ensure successful data collection for the EVTS.

Rena Psifidou also outlined the overall EVTS timeline: Following completion of the pilot phase, the main fieldwork is currently underway and is expected to run until the end of September 2026. Analysis is foreseen to begin thereafter, with publications expected to follow in 2027 and 2028.

Pilot findings of the EVTS

Next, **Konstantinos Pouliakas**, Cedefop expert, EVTS co-project manager, presented the findings from the pilot survey, which covered 735 VET teachers across 23 Member States (including data from the Netherlands, which was part of the pilot, but not part of the main fieldwork). He stressed that the pilot data are not representative and remain unweighted, but that they already provide a first useful indication of the survey's analytical potential and of the relevance of the questionnaire.

The pilot findings point to a number of important issues affecting the VET teaching profession. Teachers reported very low levels of perceived societal value attached to the profession, with only 9% feeling that VET teachers are valued in their country and only 13% feeling that their remuneration is adequate. The findings also suggest teacher shortages, with almost half of respondents stating that they had taken on additional tasks because of a lack of personnel in their school.



The presentation also highlighted challenging working conditions: a substantial share of respondents reported excessive administrative tasks, increasing behavioural demands in the classroom, and considerable health related concerns, including sleep difficulties, physical exhaustion, anxiety and, in a smaller but still significant number of cases, depression.

The pilot further showed skill gaps in areas related to inclusive VET, the green transition, and digitalisation. Teachers reported a need for further professional development to handle challenging student behaviour, support diverse learners, address sustainability related topics, and use artificial intelligence tools effectively, safely, and ethically. At the same time, a sizeable proportion of respondents reported already using artificial intelligence in their work and expected that such technologies would affect parts of their role in the years ahead.

Regarding continuing professional development (CPD), the pilot findings suggest that while teachers participate in a range of formal and informal learning activities, many remain dissatisfied with the opportunities and support available to them. The analysis also indicates that professional development is positively associated with supportive school leadership, autonomy, good working conditions, better health, digital engagement, and informal learning.

Main points of discussion on the pilot findings

The following questions and comments were raised by participants during the discussion of the pilot findings:

1. What does it mean that only 9% of VET teachers feel valued?

Agnes Roman, Senior policy coordinator, European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), welcomed the findings and congratulated Cedefop team for this work. She underlined their policy relevance, especially in view of the emerging European agenda for teachers and trainers. She asked what exactly was meant by teachers feeling “valued” and whether this related to salary, recognition by parents and society, participation in reforms, or other dimensions.

In reply, **Konstantinos Pouliakas** explained that the survey question asked directly whether teachers in VET schools in a given country are valued. He noted that the pilot findings do not yet allow a more detailed interpretation of what lies behind this perception. However, he acknowledged the importance of the question and indicated that the full EVTS dataset would make it possible to explore which factors shape teachers’ sense of value, for example by gender, age or other characteristics. He also noted that such findings could later be complemented by qualitative work, including interviews and school level inquiry.

2. How is “inclusive VET” defined in the survey?

Monika Hoang The, Policy & Project Manager, European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), asked what dimensions of inclusion are covered in the survey. She wanted to know whether inclusion refers only to digital literacy and digital tools, or whether it also includes issues such as special educational needs, school infrastructure and broader accessibility.



Konstantinos Pouliakas clarified that the inclusive VET dimension in the survey mainly focuses on teachers' ability to work with vulnerable learners, including those at risk of dropping out, learners with special educational needs or disabilities, and those facing family or financial difficulties. It also includes teachers' capacity to handle bullying and violence, to work with parents or guardians, and to teach students from multilingual or multicultural backgrounds. He added that digital exclusion can also be explored through the survey's digitalisation module, although infrastructure related issues are not a core focus of the instrument.

3. Can health related findings really be linked to work?

Jussi Pekka-Rode, Finnish Education Employers, member of EFEE, stressed the need for caution when interpreting health-related findings, such as anxiety, depression or sleep problems. He noted that such issues may be linked partly to wider life circumstances and not only to the working environment.

Konstantinos Pouliakas agreed that the pilot findings should not be interpreted as showing direct causality. He explained that the survey provides a snapshot and that health problems may reflect both work related and broader social factors. At the same time, he noted that the survey includes variables on working conditions, school support and household financial difficulties, which may later help to assess to what extent health issues are associated with work related conditions. He underlined that the survey seeks to understand whether teachers' health status may be one of the factors influencing their capacity to continue developing professionally.

4. Should the findings be presented in a more balanced way?

Teun Pauwels, Flemish Ministry of Education and Training representative, observed that the main takeaways presented seemed rather negative, while other international surveys such as TALIS often report relatively high overall job satisfaction among teachers. He suggested that the findings should be situated more clearly in relation to the existing literature and broader evidence.

Konstantinos Pouliakas replied that the pilot data may also show generally positive levels of job satisfaction, but that the presentation had deliberately focused on problematic aspects emerging within schools. He explained that there may be a mixed picture overall, with relatively good work-life balance on the one hand and significant dissatisfaction with particular dimensions of the profession on the other. He agreed that the final analysis should place the findings more explicitly in relation to existing research. He also elaborated on the emerging relationship between school leadership, autonomy, organisational commitment, and innovation, noting that the pilot already points to an important virtuous cycle between these factors.

In the discussion, **Rena Psifidou** also emphasised that the pilot findings had already been communicated to the European Commission and could usefully feed into the new European agenda for VET teachers and trainers, as well as the new VET strategy both to be launched in November this year. She further noted that the final full data collected through the EVTS will be complemented by ReferNet country reports and other sources that would help contextualise the final EVTS findings.



Update on the main fieldwork: state of play

Next, **Nicolas Becuwe**, project leader from Verian, presented the latest update on the main fieldwork. He recalled that the fieldwork covers 22 Member States and aims to collect data from more than 13,000 VET teachers through around 630 schools. As of 20 March 2026, more than 3,000 interviews had been completed and around 300 schools had agreed to participate, meaning that close to half of the targeted schools had been secured. Overall school response rates are broadly in line with those observed during the pilot phase, at around 34%, but they vary considerably across countries. Latvia was highlighted as a particularly successful example, having already exceeded its target number of completed teacher interviews. Participation is also progressing well in some other countries. At the same time, several countries remain significantly behind target, notably Denmark, Sweden, and Belgium.

Nicolas Becuwe stressed that once teachers receive the survey link, their response rates are high. This suggests that the main challenge lies not in teacher engagement but in persuading schools, and in particular school directors, to take part and support the internal distribution of the survey. To reinforce participation, a multilingual social media campaign has been launched across all participating countries. The campaign focuses on four issues emerging from the pilot findings: teacher shortages, teacher and learner well-being, lack of professional and career development opportunities, and limited resources at teacher and school level. Stakeholders were thanked for their role in relaying these messages nationally.

Michail Papazoglou, Cedefop expert, then presented Cedefop's internal monitoring and forecasting tools used to track the progress of the fieldwork across countries. He explained that, in addition to daily monitoring, an "early warning system" had been developed using two types of projection: a simple linear trajectory and a more survey-appropriate S-curve. These tools help identify countries that are on track, those needing close monitoring, and those requiring more immediate action.

Main points of discussion on the fieldwork

The following questions, comments and suggestions were raised during the discussion on the main fieldwork:

1. How much time remains to motivate schools, and how can the stakeholder group help in a more targeted way?

Agnes Roman, Senior policy coordinator, European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), asked how much time remained to motivate schools and whether the EVTS Stakeholders Group members could receive the list of selected schools in order to help target outreach more effectively. She stressed that too much effort and political support had already gone into the survey for several countries to risk falling behind. She also asked whether Cedefop was considering moving beyond the original sampling frame and opening participation to schools and teachers outside those selected through the two-stage random sampling process.



In response, **Rena Psifidou** clarified that the fieldwork is scheduled to run until the end of September 2026, with some flexibility if specific countries require a limited extension. She underlined, however, that opening the survey more broadly at this stage would undermine the representativeness of the sample and the agreed methodology. **Nicolas Becuwe** added that stakeholder representatives could share the schools they had contacts with, which Verian would then cross-reference against the randomly selected sample to identify where targeted outreach could be directed without compromising the methodology. **Agnes Roman**, European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), then suggested bilateral country level meetings involving national representatives of ministries, employers and trade unions so that support efforts could be better coordinated. **Rena Psifidou** welcomed this proposal and confirmed that such bilateral meetings had already proven useful during the pilot phase and would now be organised again where needed.

2. What are the risk mitigation strategies, and how can support be offered without overburdening schools?

Monika Hoang The, European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), asked about risk mitigation strategies and reiterated EFEE's readiness to support targeted outreach. At the same time, she cautioned that schools are already under pressure and that there is a fine line between motivating schools and overwhelming them further.

Nicolas Becuwe agreed and acknowledged the sensitivity of the issue. He noted that the challenge is complex and differs significantly across countries. He welcomed targeted support while recognising the need to strike the right balance.

3. What practical obstacles are being encountered at national level?

Nino Buić, national VET expert for Croatia, shared several practical obstacles experienced in Croatia. First, official school email addresses were often not actively used, meaning that much better results were achieved when school websites were consulted directly to identify the real contact details. Second, obtaining the support of the school director was essential. Third, schools were sometimes reluctant to nominate an internal contact person because teachers did not want to take on extra tasks. Nino also questioned whether the original target number of teachers for Croatia had been too ambitious.

Nicolas Becuwe acknowledged these difficulties and noted that the methodology depends on having a school level contact person in order to preserve sample quality and representativeness. He stressed that efforts are being made to simplify the process for schools as much as possible, although the core methodological requirements cannot be removed. **Rena Psifidou** added that such country specific differences had been expected and that flexibility and targeted support would therefore be necessary.



5. How can a specific institutional bottleneck be resolved in Malta?

Suzanne Gatt, VET expert Malta, explained that, in Malta, most schools had cooperated except for one very large institution. The main barrier concerned data protection and ethics rules, which prevented the transfer of staff email addresses and made the institution reluctant to input a substantial number of addresses manually. Suzanne noted that she had explored several possible solutions and suggested that support from ministry level might help resolve the issue.

Rena Psifidou confirmed that the Malta case was well known to the team and that a solution was actively being examined with Verian. She assured participants that a definitive answer on how to proceed with that particular school would be sought shortly.

6. Can support also be offered in Belgium through a more tailored national campaign?

A written message from **Beatrice Allard**, representative of the French Community of Belgium, was shared in the meeting chat. She explained how a national campaign could be launched and noted that, if a clear list of sampled schools were available for the French speaking part of Belgium, messages and outreach could be tailored accordingly.

Rena Psifidou welcomed this offer and confirmed that Belgium is indeed among the countries facing difficulties. She noted that bilateral follow up would therefore take place there as well.

Overall, the discussion confirmed that the main challenge is not convincing teachers, but persuading school leaders and administrations to facilitate participation. Participants broadly agreed that the next phase now requires targeted and coordinated support at country level rather than only broad awareness raising.

Communication activities and next steps

Rena Psifidou presented the latest communication activities accompanying the fieldwork. These include Cedefop social media posts, press releases translated into national languages, website news items, interviews with stakeholder representatives recorded during the September 2025 launch event, and bi-weekly promotion of these materials. She noted that weekly Instagram stories are also planned to highlight selected pilot insights and thereby demonstrate the relevance of the survey.

Questions on future dissemination of findings

Before closing, **Agnes Roman**, European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), asked about the timing of future policy learning forums related to EVTS findings.

Rena Psifidou replied that two future policy learning fora are currently foreseen. A first forum is planned for 2027 and is expected to focus particularly on the EVTS findings related to digitalisation and artificial intelligence, drawing also on related Cedefop work. A second forum is envisaged for 2028, when the full EVTS findings should be available for broader dissemination and



discussion. She also stressed that stakeholder group members would be involved earlier in the interpretation and contextualisation of the results before publication.

Closing of the meeting

The meeting closed with thanks to all participants for their continued support and contributions. **Rena Psifidou** thanked Cedefop colleagues, Verian, the national experts, and the stakeholder group members for their engagement, especially at this crucial stage of the EVTS fieldwork. She also encouraged participants to continue promoting the survey and to alert Cedefop about relevant events or opportunities where the pilot findings could be presented.

Nicolas Becuwe informed participants that he would present the EVTS methodology on the same day at an international conference in Vienna dedicated to cross-national surveys, thereby further raising the visibility of the EVTS among survey and methodology experts.

Next steps

- Another EVTS Stakeholder Group meeting is provisionally planned for **21 September 2026**. This meeting would provide an opportunity to review the state of play close to the end of the fieldwork and, if necessary, discuss any final corrective action for countries where challenges persist.
- Cedefop and Verian will follow up with bilateral meetings in countries where fieldwork challenges are most acute. Targeted support will be mobilised, in cooperation with national stakeholder representatives, to help engage selected schools and school leaders in countries with low participation.
- The EVTS communication campaign will continue, including further use of pilot findings and existing stakeholder interviews to support school engagement.
- **Two future policy learning fora are envisaged**, one in 2027 focusing in particular on digitalisation related findings, and another in 2028 for the dissemination of the full EVTS results.