



Workshop 4: Excellence and attractiveness of VET

Excellent VET ensures that individuals acquire skills, competences and qualifications that enable their employability, adaptability, personal development and active citizenship in a lifelong learning perspective. VET excellence to prevail requires commitment, resources, knowledge and systemic capacity for continuous improvement. In this process towards excellence, improving the attractiveness of VET is crucial. Thus, countries invest in promotional activities for VET such as media campaigns, skills competitions, fairs, including participation in the European Vocational Skills Week that has raised awareness of VET and promoted its attractiveness and excellence.

Excellent VET thrives in ecosystems where state-of-the-art infrastructure, up-to-date standards and curricula, competent and motivated teachers and trainers function in partnership with the world of work, research and innovation.

Professional development of VET teachers and trainers has gained increased interest and focus in the context of Riga's policy cycle. Quality teaching is key to excellent learning and qualified teachers and trainers are essential for high quality VET. Complementary and enriching relationships between teachers in schools and trainers in companies contribute to holistic acquisition of learning outcomes by all learners. Professional status of VET teachers can be raised through broader roles and better career progression. Cooperation with higher education can support pedagogical innovation and bring research as a method of evidence-informed innovation of education and training practices. Teachers need access to resources and support to deal with evolving challenges of technological progress, digitalisation, curricular reforms and dealing with more diverse learner groups.

Excellent VET is based on strong cooperation between the world of work and the world of education, between VET schools and enterprises, between teachers in schools and trainers in companies. The social partners play an active role in shaping and making decisions about VET. Countries reinforce school-business cooperation through increased participation of labour market stakeholders in shaping VET policies and implementation measures. This cooperation and flexible governance structures of VET providers contribute to better aligning VET programmes and curricula with the realities of the labour market and industries and address skill mismatches.

The significant progress of the last decade to (re-)establish and improve apprenticeships, expanding them beyond the traditional scope, and to expand and strengthen WBL components of the school-based VET have played a pivotal role in raising the attractiveness of VET. The European Alliance for Apprenticeship (EAfA) attracted and mobilised many businesses to provide apprenticeship places across Europe; this demonstrated the interest and feasibility of active involvement of the labour market actors in shaping and providing VET of high quality and relevance. WBL has shown its benefits as a driver for attractiveness and innovation mainly in initial VET but its potential has been used to a lesser extent for adults in continuing VET, especially those not in employment.

An important component of the EU VET agenda, Centres for vocational excellence (CoVEs) can play an essential role in promoting excellence and attractiveness of VET ⁽¹⁾. CoVEs can

⁽¹⁾ Centres of vocational excellence: An engine for vocational education and training development?

function as beacons of reforms to spread excellence in the VET systems. They demonstrate potential to support the cooperation between VET, industry and research and improve efficiency and performance of VET institutions and their networks through access to state-of-the-art infrastructure, equipment, and technologies. Their strong link with industry facilitates work-based learning (WBL) and contributes to its quality. CoVEs also align and make VET more relevant to local and/or regional needs, hence increasing its attractiveness to local youths and adults as well to local businesses and entrepreneurs. CoVES can be a place to develop and pilot good practices that should be mainstreamed to the VET systems to achieve their excellence and attractiveness.

Examples of practice

- [Omnia, the Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region](#), Sampo Suihko (Finland).
- [Strengthening the Baltic co-operation for the excellence of VET](#), Ilze Buligina (Latvia).

Discussion questions:

- (1) What are countries' priorities and success examples in promoting excellence in VET and making VET attractive?
- (2) How would the cooperation of the world of work and the world of education and training contribute to attracting equally youths and adults to VET and lifelong learning?
- (3) How should support to teachers and trainers in VET be developed in the coming decade?

As a result of the discussion on their topics, the participants of each workshop will propose up to **two key messages** (suggestions for action) to feed into the European cooperation in VET in the coming years.