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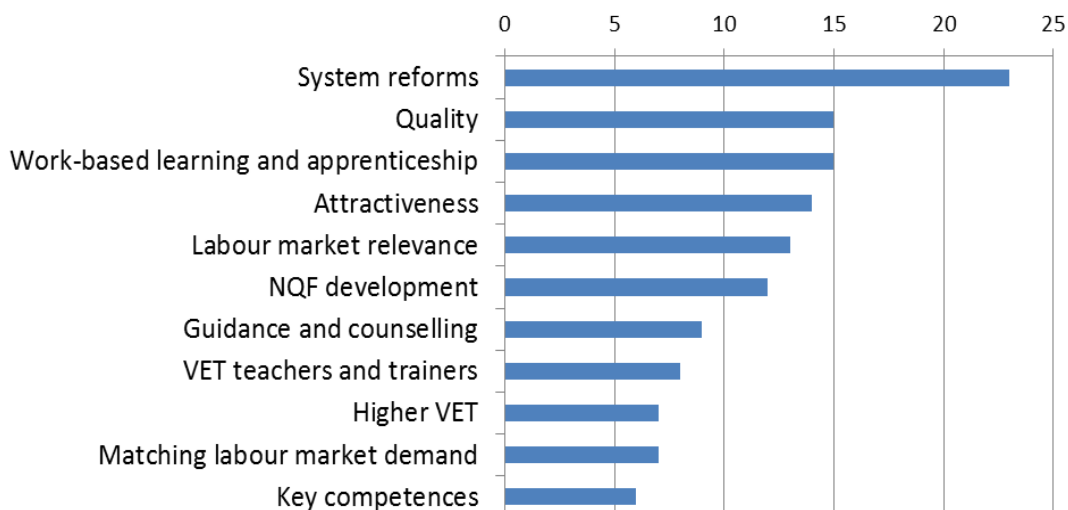
European countries make progress in training reform

Reform of training systems under the voluntary European framework for cooperation in training, known as the Copenhagen process, has improved training in Europe. However, the full benefits of the changes made still need to be felt by people and enterprises.

Since 2010, all countries have been actively reforming their vocational education and training (VET) systems, following objectives set out in the Bruges communiqué. Even countries with strong training systems, such as Germany, France Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Malta, Austria, Finland and the UK, have all adapted existing and introduced new measures since 2010. Others such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Portugal, Poland and Romania have improved their systems and made up ground over the period.

According to [a new report from Cedefop](#), the main changes in training since 2010 made by European countries are systemic improvements, namely legislative or policy changes to adapt existing or introduce new programmes, pathways and qualifications (Figure). Improving training quality and attracting more young people into training have also been high on many national agendas.

Focus of VET policy reform 2010-14 (number of countries)



The reforms made by countries reveal a revived interest in apprenticeship and other forms of work-based learning. National qualifications frameworks (NQFs), which began as a way to support mobility by making it easier to understand and compare qualifications from other countries, have become a catalyst for improving access to learning and individualising learning paths across educational sectors, including higher education. Systems to validate non-formal and informal learning are slowly improving. There is increasing emphasis on using training to bring low-skilled and other vulnerable groups back into the labour market.

Helped by these changes, the European Union (EU) is on track to reach its target of an average early school-leaving rate of 10% or less by 2020 and participation in training by low-skilled people and other at-risk groups is rising.

However, overall participation of adults in lifelong learning has not developed as well as hoped. Most countries have still to reach the EU's target of 15% adult participation in lifelong learning by 2020. Concerns remain over securing funding for training. Employers and social partners need to work more closely with education authorities. Basic skills still need to be improved and teachers and trainers themselves need more learning opportunities.

Adjusting to labour market needs requires flexible education and training opportunities that combine different types and levels of learning throughout life. This is not yet a reality for everyone. European cooperation has made training better, but there is more to learn.

More in the Cedefop briefing note [*Stronger vocational education and training for better lives*](#).

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About Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), an agency of the European Union based in Thessaloniki, Greece, supports European policy-making in the field of vocational education and training. www.cedefop.europa.eu

