



*skill*set AND *MATCH*

*CEDEFOP'S MAGAZINE
PROMOTING
LEARNING FOR WORK*



CEDEFOP

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INTERVIEWS:

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ARTICLE:

KEY COMPETENCES: APPROACHES
AND CHALLENGES

MEMBER STATES: **CROATIA**

OCCUPATION IN FOCUS: **MACHINE
AND PLANT OPERATORS**



CEDEFOP

The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications.

We provide information, research, analyses and evidence on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications for policy-making in the EU Member States.



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VET in and for the world

JÜRGEN SIEBEL

CEDEFOP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Cedefop encounters
'VET for the
world' whenever
we collaborate with
organisations that
reach out beyond the
European Union*

”

Everything is new: the year, the European Commission, the multi-annual financial framework of the European Union, its emerging policy priorities in the context of the digital and green transformations. And even I feel I'm still new in my position.

Cedefop is not new: it has been around for 45 years. But this proud EU agency is ready: ready for change, able to adjust its research, tools and services to the ever-evolving needs of our stakeholders, and willing to advance 'vocational education and training (VET) in and for the world'.

The title of this editorial was also the motto of the anchor conference of the 2019 European vocational skills week. *Skillset and match* covers the events, interviews Director-General for Employment Joost Korte on new VET priorities, and retells some of the stories that were shared in Helsinki's Finlandia Hall. The word 'stories' really applies, because the fourth edition of the skills week was very personal in many ways. Read what some VET ambassadors, including Germany's First Lady, Elke Bűdenbender, told us about their individual vocational experiences.

Cedefop encounters 'VET for the world' whenever we collaborate with organisations that reach out beyond the European Union. In this context two events stood out recently: our joint workshop with the OECD on apprenticeships in Paris in September, and the Cedefop seminar on key competences in Thessaloniki in October. An interview with Jos de Goy from WorldSkills looks into taking such competences to competition levels.

One key competence is creativity. For one particular sector, creativity is front and centre in terms of domain skills as well. Anita Debaere from Pearle* shares how performing artists can acquire transversal and interpersonal competences, managing their careers in sectoral training schemes.

Every VET student can be an artist, too, at least when it comes to Cedefop's annual photo award. See the prize-winning pictures and the respective narratives. VET unleashes enormous creative potential, 'in and for the world'. ■

Improving **skills** is an **investment** in people



© Cedefop, 2019/Aris Dellopoulos

JOOST KORTE

“We all agree that skills need to be improved. The challenge for the EU, and also for Cedefop, which is a very important partner to the European Commission, is what we do specifically

DIRECTOR-GENERAL, EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S
DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION

Joost Korte has had a long career in public service in the EU institutions and, as the current Director-General of Cedefop's parent DG, his remit includes skills and vocational education and training (VET). During a recent visit to Cedefop, Mr Korte shared with *Skillset and match* his expertise in the policies that will shape VET's future.

New European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmitt has placed great importance on the role of skills and VET. How do you see this fitting in the post-2020 strategy?

If we look at the political guidelines that the President

of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen set out, it's clear that skills, and the relationship with VET and broader education, are a main priority. Our societies will undergo fundamental transitions in developing a carbon-neutral economy by 2050 and also through digitalisation: both of these will have a tremendous impact on society, particularly on the way we are working in the European Union. If we want these transitions to be successful, we need to invest in people; a key approach is to improve their skills. Nicolas Schmitt has been asked to take this forward in three concrete ways: by modernising the existing skills agenda in light of new developments, by putting forward a new strategy for VET, and by exploring the possibility of individual learning accounts.

We all agree that skills need to be improved. The challenge for the EU, and also for Cedefop, which is a very important partner of the European Commission, is what we do specifically. The analysis, the political messages, that's the easy part. How do we take this forward in an operational manner? The EU has quite limited means, both in terms of powers, where it supports the Member States, and in terms of funding: we have a budget that is going to be around 1% of GDP, of which, if we are lucky, 10% will be made available for investing in people. We should not create expectations that we cannot fulfil. I'm pretty sure that the Commission will be extremely active in this field and we all need to work closely as we do with Cedefop.



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How do you see Cedefop playing its part?

There's also something of a new start for Cedefop. Its governance structure has been modernised with the new Regulation now in force, it has a new Executive Director and a new Chair of the Management Board. I'm taking as a starting point that Cedefop, as an EU agency, has to work with the EU agenda. There are various concrete things that can be done. First, help the Member States and social partners develop this new agenda for VET: the Croatian and German EU Presidencies want to take it forward. Second is skills anticipation. What skills are needed for the future? Technical skills certainly are, but also transversal ones. And the tools that Cedefop has, which are already quite powerful, can be improved; use of big data in particular, linking with Europass. The third action is to refine analysis of the real situation in the Member States. In the EU, on average and according to our statistics, only 10% of people who have a job regularly engage in training. This is much lower than other parts of the world.

Can Cedefop help, getting more granular information and seeing what this means? Which sector, which country, which region? That would be extremely useful in developing policies to tackle the real problems.

In the labour market, big businesses normally have the budget and the human resources to improve workforce skills. Small and medium-sized enterprises simply don't have the capacities. Is there anything there that we can do more specifically? I'm keen to explore the feasibility of the individual learning account and I would welcome Cedefop's help in getting the correct analytical basis. Learning accounts are being introduced in France, also in other countries. There are different modules and the jury is still out. Being able to do something concrete, which is what the EU should do, distinguishes us from a think-tank. The individual learning account is promising because it also motivates employees to take their own training more seriously. But they need to be helped, to be given the time and the financial support to do this.

Cedefop has worked with Member States who have asked for help, for example in apprenticeships and skills governance. How can the Commission, and Cedefop in this case, take advantage of the fact that some countries are taking steps in areas including the individual learning account?

By studying how this is being done. From what I understand, France is quite advanced; it's a complete system and everybody must have an account. It's all digital, financed by a social contribution, offering a certain number of points that everybody can use. To date it has been largely used for language learning. My own country, the Netherlands, is also thinking about this. Comparing, learning from each other and analysing what is happening, even in places like Singapore, which has a powerful system, would be one way in which Cedefop could help; as a tripartite agency it has proximity to the labour market with the social partners at the table. It's not just a matter of engaging governments, strategies or legislation; Cedefop also works with employees and employers. That dimension is extremely enriching. ■

EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK opens to the world



© EU, 2019

Since its inception in 2016, the European vocational skills week, an initiative to promote vocational education and training (VET) visibility and excellence across Europe and beyond, has become a much-anticipated annual rendezvous of learners, practitioners, experts and policy-makers.

Organised by the European Commission, with Cedefop as one of its partners, the 2019 edition incorporated over 1 600 events in 46 countries, with a reach of over 2.5 million people. Helsinki hosted the main celebrations last October, and Berlin has already been announced as the host for the fifth staging in 2020.

Skills for the future and VET in the world were the main themes in Helsinki. Cedefop had a central role, with a team of experts organising meetings, moderating workshops or making presentations of the agency's work.

Executive Director Jürgen Siebel gave a keynote speech at the Vocational education and training (VET) for all, skills for life conference. As jobs and ways of working transform, so does the emphasis on

skills and learning, he said, adding that adaptability to change is the skill most in demand, according to Cedefop's analysis of online job vacancies.

Mr Siebel noted that digital transformation breeds digital skill gaps, potentially affecting one in three workers; sound digital and technological literacy is essential to social and economic participation. He concluded: 'Building the skills for tomorrow will require deep learning from one another, will impact on VET, and require policy choices.'

Outgoing European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen said at the VET in and for the world conference that 'we decided to open the VET week to the world because we all face the same challenges; wherever we are, our people and our companies need the right skills.'

To promote VET in Europe, the week organisers have recruited volunteer ambassadors in various countries, and *Skillset and match* talked to some of them (see pp. 8-12). ■

Connecting **VET** research and practice



RENÉ VAN SCHALKWIJK

SENIOR POLICY ADVISER, EUproVET

A community of practice strongly linked to research is really important. It can be very effective and raise quality and excellence in VET

The meeting of Cedefop's community of learning providers kicked off the European vocational skills week events in Helsinki. Four European associations for vocational education and training (VET) and two for higher education are active in the community. Three working groups on migration, mobility and technology-enhanced learning for teachers and trainers exchanged views and best practices in the Finnish capital.

One of the group moderators, EUproVET's René van Schalkwijk, talked to Skillset and match about the initiative:

The idea of the community is to connect research and practice. You ask people to describe their best practices and concepts in a community context; this then produces a cross-sectional view on what is effective and allows it to be reproduced. One of the challenges is to involve teachers and trainers because they are the ones who do the work in practice. Another challenge is to have a good platform for communication; this demands appropriate ICT facilities. Cedefop's Tina Bertzeletou had the arduous task of trying to get the working groups online, working towards the same goal, inviting everybody to meetings and trying to create coherence in the work. She did a great job.

Going around the groups we noticed lively discussions, even arguments.

Many people accept that dialogue, communication, and sharpening your ideas by listening to ideas from others is the way forward. Take the concept of migration, an entirely political subject in Europe. How are we going to manage it to ensure we have the migrants that are accepted in Europe and can give them a new future and training for a new profession? Of course there are differences of opinion. This helps to make clear where the challenges are for VET because, for most people involved, VET is the way to a profession, to employment, to money and to building a life for yourself and your family.

Following the discussions here what are the next steps?

The unanimous view of the groups was that a community of practice strongly linked to research is really important. It can be very effective and raise quality and excellence in VET. As providers associations we will now ask the European Commission to do a feasibility study on how we can realise a community of practice and do it cost-efficiently. It would be open to every VET teacher and practitioner. Even those who don't contribute can benefit from the results of others. And with artificial intelligence and data-mining you can build an enormous resource available to all VET teachers. I think it's going to be a major instrument for innovation in VET in the future. And we were there at the beginning, and it started at Cedefop! ■

Equal participation for a more equitable society



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ELKE BÜDENBENDER

JUDGE, SPOUSE OF GERMANY'S FEDERAL PRESIDENT



Young people's career choices should not be based on social conventions or stereotypes, but on their interests and talents alone

Being the spouse of a President brings various formal obligations, but it can also offer a platform to promote causes close to the heart. In Elke Bündenbender's case, becoming vocational education and training (VET) ambassador for Germany provides visibility to a traditionally important sector in her country, one reflecting her own background. She is a former apprentice who went on to become a judge and has been married to the current Federal President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, since 1995. Ms Bündenbender is particularly keen to promote gender balance in

VET, which she spoke about at the closing event of the European vocational skills week in Helsinki. She also spoke to *Skillset and match* about her life journey and her ambassadorial role.

You have been the German ambassador to the European vocational skills week for two years running. How did this come about and what have you offered and gained by the involvement?

The German Federal Government approached me with the idea of becoming the national ambassador for the European Commission's European vocational skills week. It was a great opportunity because,

during my husband's term of office as Federal President, I have been actively involved in promoting educational equity and equal opportunities. My goal is to improve how vocational education is valued and regarded in Germany. I see myself as an ambassador for vocational education, which is why this opportunity to work for the European Commission has been especially welcome, giving me the chance to share my beliefs beyond Germany's borders, at European level.

You had a vocational education yourself, training to become an industrial clerk. What prompted that? And how did you then change careers to study law at university and become a judge?



After finishing school in 1978 I first wanted to do an apprenticeship, but I had in mind that I would eventually also do my A levels. On the advice of my parents and, naturally, seeing what my friends planned to do, I eventually decided to do an apprenticeship as an industrial clerk. This experience confirmed my desire to continue learning once my apprenticeship was over. I also became a member of the trade union, where I received a lot of support and was greatly encouraged to take my A levels. Later on, I decided to go one step further and study law, pursuing a career as a judge.

What makes vocational education and training an appealing choice in your opinion?

We all reach that stage in life where school is over and we wonder what comes next. Should I study or do an apprenticeship? What job would I enjoy doing? What job would give me security? There is no single right answer.

There are so many individual paths – probably as many as there are young people in Europe – all with their own merit. Young people must pursue their own career paths; for many this is not necessarily down the academic route of university studies but through the practical route of vocational education and training. No one path is better than the other: they are just different routes to achieving the same goal of a job that makes you happy and that offers social and professional security.

In your speech in Helsinki, you talked about the lack of gender balance in VET, particularly in the STEM fields. How can this be addressed?

Society cannot afford to neglect even a single talent, whether in Europe or elsewhere. And on no account should we women allow men to reign supreme in the fields of the future, especially in the field of digitalisation. The future belongs to us all – both men and women – and we need

to shape it together. We must also harness the diverse perspectives and experiences of men and women. This will give rise to equal opportunities and will allow women to break through the infamous glass ceiling. Equal participation makes our society more equitable, improves our political responses and provides our democracy with a solid foundation for the future. In Germany, we have the *Initiative Klischeefrei* (Cliché-free initiative), instigated by representatives from various federal ministries. It campaigns for career choices to be made free from gender stereotypes, because there is no reason why women cannot be IT professors, or men cannot work in caring professions. I am the patron of this initiative, and I think it is very important to remember, constantly, that young people's career choices should not be based on social conventions or stereotypes, but on their interests and talents alone. As adults, it is our job to help young people discover and cultivate these talents. ■

An Italian football legend in VET's dream team



DEMETRIO ALBERTINI

TECHNICAL SECTOR PRESIDENT,
ITALIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION



I'd love to think that I can contribute through communication with young people and be a positive influence. At the end of the day, this is our duty

He was an integral part of the Italian national football team and AC Milan's midfield engine in the 1990s. Now, Demetrio Albertini puts his skills to good use as Technical Sector President of the Italian Football Federation. When asked to become Italy's ambassador for the European vocational skills week, he didn't think twice. It is our duty to reach out to young people, he told *Skillset and match* when we caught up with him in Helsinki.

You have been able to speak to many people since you've been in Helsinki and you may have heard about other projects too. How does being here appeal to you?

This is a terrific meeting place of many associations involved in vocational education and training (VET) from different countries. I am delighted to have been able to take part, to be able to bring my contribution from Italy to Europe, especially because of my current role in the Federation. My team and I are dealing with the vocational training of directors of football, coaches, scouts, all the professionals that work for a football club in Italy. In this process we also work with UEFA, the European association. This connection is something that we definitely need to make the most of, so we can bring it to the service of Europe.

Football is about training, about skills, learning to be part of a team, but when people think

of VET, they usually don't think about football.

Football is a very important commercial sector. It's not only about the talent of a footballer on the pitch; there's a whole organisation around that which needs to be appreciated. The training and improvement of these professionals comes through studying and goes hand-in-hand with what the club, the business, requires. Ultimately, football is an enterprise but there is one aspect that differs from other sectors: the popularity and media exposure. I believe that football must also be a supporter of VET for other professions: this is why I accepted the role. In some cases, in Italy we lag behind, but in others, such as sport, we are a great example for the whole of Europe.

Many clubs have schools for young players to gain other skills, apart from football ones, because not all of them are going to play for the first team.

There is the vocational part of football, which includes training until someone becomes a professional player. This is a situation that we always need to appreciate because a footballer's career is relatively short and then they have to get back into the labour market. Some may have had financial success in managing their future, but others may not have been so lucky; these are the ones who have to get back into the labour market. The other thing about football is that it is a business. Today in Italy it accounts for around EUR 3 billion with more than two million people involved. The sector is evolving as it follows important and rapid changes in society.

Have you managed to make your role as a vocational skills ambassador known to a bigger audience back in Italy?

Being a focus for media makes many things easier. We have issued press releases; I have taken part in various meetings as an ambassador, including one about careers with the Confindustria in Rome. We have planned more before the end of the year to communicate to young people the importance of VET for finding a job, as well as the professions in demand from businesses. In the next three years Italian companies will look to fill around 200 000 VET jobs and we need to train people for these jobs. There are still too many young people outside the VET network, missing the opportunity to find a secure job. We can make a comparison with football, where



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someone has the talent but needs to develop it with work, knowledge and professionalism. Then they show this talent on the pitch. The same goes for the young people who must do a vocational course and then have the ambition to put their talents to work and find their place in the labour market.

How can the European Commission, EU agencies, and governments help you in that respect?

It's important for such a project first to secure funding and then identify the appropriate vocational paths in each case; across Europe every place has its peculiarities. We have to match the paths with the requirements in each case. I'm thinking of Italy and the differences between the North and the South; they are two completely different realities and the requirements are also

completely different. Then we need to communicate with more intensity how VET can help young people find a job and be independent. Europe needs to communicate more with young people to be able to create even more opportunities for the current and future generations.

Would you like to continue in the ambassador's role?

This is a role forever in the sense that I'd love to think that I can contribute through communication with young people and be a positive influence. At the end of the day, this is our duty. I have enjoyed so much popularity through football and to be able to give something back is important. It may be decided to change the ambassador every year, but the message remains the same, and we have to carry it with us always. ■

Inspiring young people in Greece



OLGA PAPAKYRIAKOU

PEDIATRIC NURSE, RADIO PRODUCER



What I tell students is that they can go far in their lives with VET, working in a profession they love

European vocational skills ambassador for Greece, Olga Papakyriakou, comes from a vocational education and training (VET) background. She works as a nurse at a children's hospital in Athens. At the same time, she promotes volunteering through her weekly radio show 'It's up to you to save a life'.

How do you interpret your role as an ambassador?

This is my second year as an ambassador. We mainly use press articles, radio and television programmes to promote the attraction of VET, the fact that there are many education options to choose from. I also help with promotion through my radio show on volunteering. To become an ambassador you have to be a volunteer. I believe that if you love what you do, you can inspire other people too.

Have you been in direct contact with the people you are targeting?

I speak directly to young people. The Education Ministry sets up meetings in vocational schools and I share my personal life story. What I tell students is that they can go far in their lives with VET, working in a profession they love.

VET is not a first choice for young Greeks. Most of them want to go to university. How can this trend be reversed?

The ministry has made a great effort in the past few years to change this. The number of students who choose to follow the VET path has risen, and so has satisfaction. A programme called A new beginning in vocational upper secondary schools (EPAL), started as a pilot in nine schools in 2017/18 with very promising results. The following academic year, it was extended to about 80% of the 400 EPAL across Greece. It provides the services of a psychologist in every school and a second teacher for every class where modern Greek and maths are taught. This is important for the students who are behind in academic achievement, helping them catch up with their classmates. There is also another new programme, the apprenticeship year, which started with 1 100 participants in 2017, increased to 3 000 in 2018 and now has 4 000. This has several advantages: for nine months students work four days a week and go to school for one day. They acquire work experience, get social security and about 75% of the minimum wage. ■

Do it like the Finnish!

The hosts of European vocational skills week 2019 exemplify what works in vocational education and training (VET). Nine out of 10 Finns see VET as high quality, leading to good jobs. Many young people actively choose the VET path.

The Helsinki Vocational College, run by the City of Helsinki, offers free education, has five campuses in 17 locations, and boasts 15 000 students, 29 qualifications and over 50 professions. We visited three locations to meet teachers and learners from fields as different as media studies, hairdressing and massage.

International team coordinator Taina Rahkola told *Skillset and match* that the college is a frontrunner in Finland's VET reform. It combines school and work-based learning, and, since 2018, offers personal study plans for every student. Plans are created in discussions between the employer, the teacher and the learner.

College work is in modern facilities with the latest equipment. There are 500 students and 50 teachers in media studies alone, in a state-of-the-art building where learners produce their own programmes. Valeria Borovskaya is one of them. Now 24, she abandoned her nursing studies because 'it didn't feel like the right thing for me' and turned to photography and film editing: 'Practical experience is a huge part. I went to the Finnish TV news Yle for three months, which was very nice.'



Konsta Polkutie and Valeria Borovskaya

Valeria is deaf and uses an interpreter, provided free by the state, at school and work: 'I hope to find a job, but it might be hard because deaf people encounter prejudices.' She is happy with her time at the college: 'It's the best. The quality of teaching is great, the teachers are very friendly'.

Game art lecturer Konsta Polkutie believes that VET reform is still work in progress. 'There is still no implementation formula for individual learning paths. For some students it's an advantage to plan their studies beforehand and pick different courses; for others it can be a disadvantage as they don't really know what they want to do. They need guidance, which teachers provide.'

One of those who knew what he wanted to do early on was 19-year-old game development student William Rueter: 'I enjoy playing games, but I also want

to make games for other people. It's my passion and I'm excited to be able to do it.' His classmates motivate each other: 'We work in groups: if one of us is motivated, everyone gets inspired too. The school also helps because it allows you to fail, to learn from your mistakes; grading is only for your final product.'

Rosa Nykänen studied art and worked as an artist but felt she 'didn't know enough technical stuff'. She decided to get technical skills by doing a course on visual effects. She still works as a video and media artist but has another job to ensure a steady income. College flexibility allows her to combine work and study: 'You can pick and choose your courses without it being every day, nine to four.' The personal learning plan works perfectly for her 'because I can vocalise what I want, and teachers find it for me.' ■

#CedefopPhotoAward

a source of inspiration

The #CedefopPhotoAward continues to inspire vocational education and training (VET) learners of all ages across the European Union, Norway and Iceland. Asked to relate a memorable VET experience through a photostory and a short narrative, learners have shared, in the award's four editions, such diverse activities as applying make up to a woman posing as a mermaid in the cold waters of Thessaloniki's Thermaic Gulf to cutting a real human heart in an anatomy class at a Portuguese medical school. The 2019 competition featured entries from 20 European countries, with 112 teams, 380 VET learners and 76 teachers/trainers sharing their stories. The top two teams, from Austria and Croatia, won a trip to the European vocational skills week celebrations in Helsinki, in October. They went head-to-head for the honour of being first; the winner, Austria, was announced at a special gala, following a public online vote. The *Prix du Jury*, a trip to Thessaloniki for the opening of the city's international film festival, went to a group of learners from Romania.



First prize: Cultureconnects – Austria (‘cultureconnects’ team), HTBLVA Graz- Ortweinschule

Anna Fachbach, Sarah Steinhäusler, Jacob Jabornig and Benjamin Wedemeyer bring together the experiences of four individuals from different environments and diverse vocational art schools in Germany, Austria, Poland and Italy. Their photostory alludes to VET's power to connect people no matter

where they come from. They shared their Erasmus+ experience where, during a one-week workshop, they had the opportunity to get to know one another and learn about different educational approaches in arts and design.

Watch interviews with the three
winning teams!





© Chefs

Second prize: Skinny chef – Croatia ('The Chefs' team), Ekonomska i turistička škola Daruvar

Lara Ivesa, Martina Stari and Domink Zulj were inspired by the talent of young chef Matej who has found favour with various top-notch hotels. They

show his love of food, especially in making desserts. On the night before the photoshoot he was up until 4am making birthday cakes! Matej has already had numerous job offers, but is also looking forward to possibilities of further education and improvement.



© Artisan in Maramures

Prix du Jury: My path, our path – Romania ('Artisan in Maramureș' team), Marmăția Technological High School

Business students Beatris Panas, Carina Czako, Patrick Liszkovics and Alin Pașca show how tradition and art can become a source of inspiration to start one's own professional venture. Their fascination for a grandmother's embroidering of traditional shirts,

the pride in wearing them and the impression they left on an encouraging teacher were the incentive behind the creation of a micro-company. With the help of associates from different nationalities, this company promotes a strong connection between locals and the traditional products of three cultures: Romanian, Hungarian, and Ukrainian. ■

Key competences: approaches and challenges



For vocational education and training, key competences are as important as occupation-specific skills

Key competences are crucial for employment, social integration and lifelong learning. For vocational education and training (VET) – a driving force for growth, jobs and competitiveness in Europe – they are as important as occupation-specific skills. Cedefop's new comparative study brought together literature and policy reviews, more than 500 interviews and 39 focus groups across the EU, Iceland and Norway. It shows the variety and complexity of approaches and challenges for promoting three key competences – digital, literacy and multilingual – in initial VET.

BROAD POLICIES

The study revealed that, in the past decade, 79 national policies were applied supporting the selected key competences. They are mainly broad policies, around half of them having a scope wider than initial VET. Most focus on more than one key competence, combining two or all three. Research shows that such policies often limit their aims to raising awareness about key competences and setting a vision, rather than embedding them into the system.

Around a third of the policies attempt to promote key competences in initial VET without setting explicit objectives. It is still possible that such policies, such as a broad lifelong learning strategy, have an effect on the embedding of a specific key competence in VET.

Vague and abstract objectives make it difficult to operationalise policies and, therefore, to monitor the results and impact. For example, absence of concrete targets for the digital strategy in one country

made it difficult to assess the extent to which the policy has achieved its objectives. For the same country, the Eurobarometer survey showed positive results (increased connectivity and increased digital competences among secondary school teachers) but these were not directly related to the national strategy.

EU initiatives have an impact on policies promoting key competences. Almost half of policies referred to EU or international initiatives; the EU frameworks for key competences, languages (CEFR) and digital competences (DigComp) are examples. The timing of adoption of national policies indirectly confirms this: most were adopted in 2014, linked to the EU policy planning schedule 2007-13 and 2014-20. However, for national policies supporting key competences and main EU policy initiatives for VET (Bruges communiqué and Riga conclusions) the links between the two are less evident.

KEY OR OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC?

The study also looked at sample curricula from 105 programmes in three sectors: accommodation/food, manufacturing and construction. Digital and multilingual competences in VET can be occupation-related, as with IT programmes requiring digital competence as a requirement for an occupation. However, a key competence *stricto sensu* may not be directly linked to an occupation; everyone needs such competences to be able to live and work in our modern society.

While the two often overlap in practice, there are differences by sector. For example, the share of multilingual as 'pure' key competence in the manufacturing sector (57%) is almost three times



© Cedefop, 2019/Eetu Laane

that in the accommodation sector. The share of digital as an occupation-specific competence is higher in manufacturing.

SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES

Some policies are more successful than others. Policies for digital competence development in VET are more often and more successfully focused on teacher training than others. We measure success by the extent to which policies result in actual changes in standards, delivery, assessment and/or teacher training. Policies aiming to embed the key competences through programme delivery and teacher training were often observed to achieve their objectives faster compared to those addressing the revision of occupational, education and assessment standards that usually require more time.

NEXT STEPS

The identified approaches and challenges may help countries review and plan new policies that need to take into account particularities for promoting digital, literacy and multilingual competences in initial VET. This includes the fine balance between targeted and broad policies, the need for robust policy implementation monitoring, external factors and better coordination between stakeholders.

Cedefop will publish the detailed research results, including national policy examples and detailed analysis, in the coming weeks. ■

Cedefop project: Key competences in vocational education and training



COMPETENCES ARE DEFINED AS A COMBINATION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES, WHERE:

- knowledge is composed of the facts and figures, concepts, ideas and theories which are already established and support the understanding of a certain area or subject;
- skills are defined as the ability and capacity to carry out processes and use the existing knowledge to achieve results;
- attitudes describe the disposition and mindsets to act or react to ideas, persons and situations.



THE 8 KEY COMPETENCES

- Literacy
- Multilingual
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering
- Digital
- Personal, social and learning to learn
- Citizenship
- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression



Source: Council of the European Union recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, 2018.

Skills competitions: a vehicle for excellence



© Cedefop, 2019/Sakis Gioumpasis

JOS DE GOEY

WORLDSKILLS PRESIDENT

“

WorldSkills is now promoting and benchmarking vocational education and training excellence. It is logical to be part of that!

The idea of engaging young people in international skills contests was inspired by the huge skills shortage which followed World War II. As a result, WorldSkills was born. It organised the first skills competition, modest by today's standards, in Madrid in 1950. The latest edition, held in Kazan, Russia, in 2019 featured over 1 300 young professionals from 63 countries in 56 skills. The organisation's new president, Jos de Goey, has taken on the task of maintaining its success. He spoke at Cedefop's recent workshop on key competences (see pp. 16-17) and gave *Skillset and match* his views on the relationship of the competitions with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) structure.

WorldSkills competitions have come a long way since the 1950s. What's the secret of their success?

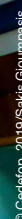
Countries are increasingly aware that they need a quality TVET system. WorldSkills is a way to learn about how other countries are working with TVET and the position of some qualifications on a global level. With the world now one big market, global competition is increasing. You have to be aware of what is going on in other parts of the world as well. WorldSkills is now promoting and benchmarking vocational education and training excellence. It is logical to be part of that!

How are the key competences reinforced through the competitions?

Key competences are very important because, if you look at TVET systems around the world, they are focused on reaching above average competence, or

just a little above it. Performing at a level that can be described as 'excellence' is not the objective of TVET programmes. The competitions are different: you need to perform excellently to be able to win a medal. Key competences are vital for the training in excellence, on top of the normal VET programme that a student follows, and being best prepared for the international competitions. Some schools create classes of excellence for those students who are passionate and enthusiastic about their trade, about their skills, but perhaps are not selected for a WorldSkills competition. This ensures that the knowledge and approach of those students who participate in the WorldSkills competitions flows back into the TVET system.

WorldSkills follows this up as well in preparing the next competition?



In that context, how useful is it for you to take part in events such as this one?

for our competitions from the world of VET. And to make sure that the relationship between the competitions and the VET structure, taking into account the world of work, is matched in the best possible way.

We need to look in a positive way at what is sustainable and will still have the impact that we strive for. We also need to look at our regional organisations, for instance at WorldSkills Europe which has grown to a certain level. It's important that we continue to promote VET through skills competitions. The challenge is to manage the growth and to help our regional and national members further develop their structures, to create a stronger movement for the benefit of young people and of the quality and further development of VET. ■



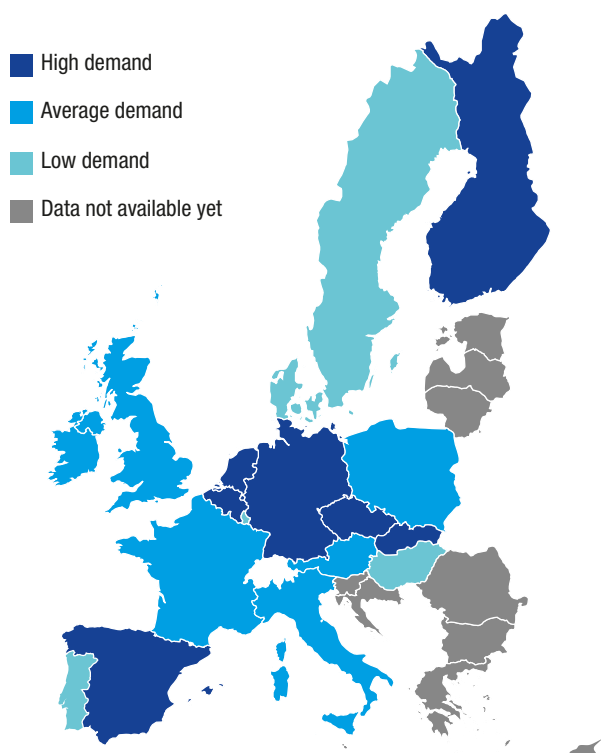
Machine and plant operators

Machine and plant operators are responsible for controlling and monitoring various forms of machinery and equipment in industrial plants. In 2017 they were the second most important occupation in terms of employment in EU manufacturing. Total employment was 5.5 million, 300 000 more than in 2012.

The strong performance of the EU economy and manufacturing were the main driving forces behind this employment growth. Cedefop's online vacancy analysis shows that machine and plant operators continue to be in high demand in several EU Member States, especially those with a robust industrial base, such as Czechia, Germany and Slovakia.

Despite being an occupation exposed to significant automation risk, machine and plant operators are expected to have solid future employment prospects: in 2018, only 16% of EU manufacturers were using industrial robots. Additionally, Cedefop's skills forecast indicates that high job demand for machine and plant operators

Demand intensity for machine and plant operators in online job vacancies (2018-19)



MACHINE AND PLANT OPERATORS

- **5.5 million** employees in the EU (2017)
- **Male-dominated** occupation (66.6%)
- **Solid employment prospects** across EU Member States
- **Rising transversal skill** needs

ESTIMATED DEMAND FOR MACHINE & PLANT OPERATORS IN EU, 2018-30

- Job losses: **29 000**
- Replacement needs: **2 071 000**
- Total job openings: **2 042 000**

is expected between 2018 and 2030 due to a high number of retirements.

Machine and plant operators are a traditional vocational occupation, with almost half of workers holding qualifications in technical fields. However, Cedefop's online vacancy analysis shows employers also value transversal skills such as adapting to change, teamwork or problem solving.

In the coming years, both automation risk and skills needs for machine and plant operators will grow. Machines will become more sophisticated and autonomous, and will require operators with stronger IT, analytical and interdisciplinary skills. Continuous skills upgrade will keep these workers employable and competitive in the age of the 4th industrial revolution. ■

Learn more about
machine and
plant operators



Cedefop's
skills in online
job vacancies
analysis



More on
Cedefop's skills
forecast



Cedefop's
digitalisation, AI
and the future of
work project





Vocational education and training (VET) plays a major role in Croatia. Traditionally, its strengths lie in:

- high participation in VET at upper secondary level (69.6% compared to the 2017 EU average of 47.8%);
- strong key competence development and progression to tertiary education, primarily by four-year VET programme graduates (80% take *matura* exams and around 60% of all VET graduates continue to higher education);
- lowest rate of early school leaving in the EU (3.3% in 2018, compared to the EU average of 10.6%);
- high effectiveness of public administration and VET providers in using EU funds to innovate and modernise.

Revamping **VET** in



The priorities for VET development focus on increasing its relevance, quality, and attractiveness. VET curriculum reform, to be implemented in 2022/23, aims for improved quality and relevance through comprehensive curriculum redesign in line with labour market needs and the learning outcomes approach. It will increase the volume of work-based learning and strengthen contemporary teaching, with comprehensive support to VET teachers and providers.

The first WorldSkills Croatia competition launched a reformed model of student competitions with over 580 competitors in 46 disciplines and over 10 000 visitors in 2019. Designed to promote excellence and raise VET's attractiveness, the event ensured high visibility and stakeholder endorsement, becoming the leading national event for the promotion of VET.

In 2018, Croatia also established a network of 25 regional centres of competence, which will become operational in 2022/23. These will offer state-of-the-art technologies, teaching excellence and work-based learning, training for professionals, VET teachers and workplace mentors, as well as close cooperation with local businesses.

An experimental dual education programme, piloted since 2018, aims to improve the quality of work-based learning and apprenticeships.

A new model of VET teacher training was developed in 2018-19, offering extensive training opportunities. Teachers and trainers are a focus of the current Croatian EU Presidency priorities. ■



by REFERNET CROATIA

The next steps for apprenticeship



Cedefop and the OECD organised a joint symposium to discuss research findings on how external factors (might) have an impact on apprenticeship

Apprenticeship became a focus of EU policy-making in 2013-14 in the context of combating youth unemployment. It was seen as a way to ensure faster school-to-work transitions for young people, based on its potential to reduce the disparity between skills supply and demand. It is also increasingly discussed and promoted as a valuable option for qualifying adults, either low-skilled in the context of the upskilling pathways initiative, or at higher qualification levels.

In recent years, governments across Europe and the OECD countries have invested considerable resources in introducing and reforming apprenticeship to reach even more learners.

Cedefop and the OECD organised a joint symposium on the future of apprenticeship, in October in Paris. This discussed research findings on how external factors – such as socio-demographic changes, new technologies and new forms of work organisation – (might) have an impact on apprenticeship with implications for its design and delivery.

IDENTITY QUESTIONS

Cedefop's recent work has showed that countries develop apprenticeship to address a mix of divergent policy purposes, ranging from social inclusion to education and excellence. This poses challenges in terms of a shared understanding of apprenticeship function and identity among the stakeholders in the national contexts.

The symposium came at a time when policy-making needs to address several fundamental questions, linked to the identity of apprenticeship: Does apprenticeship primarily serve specific

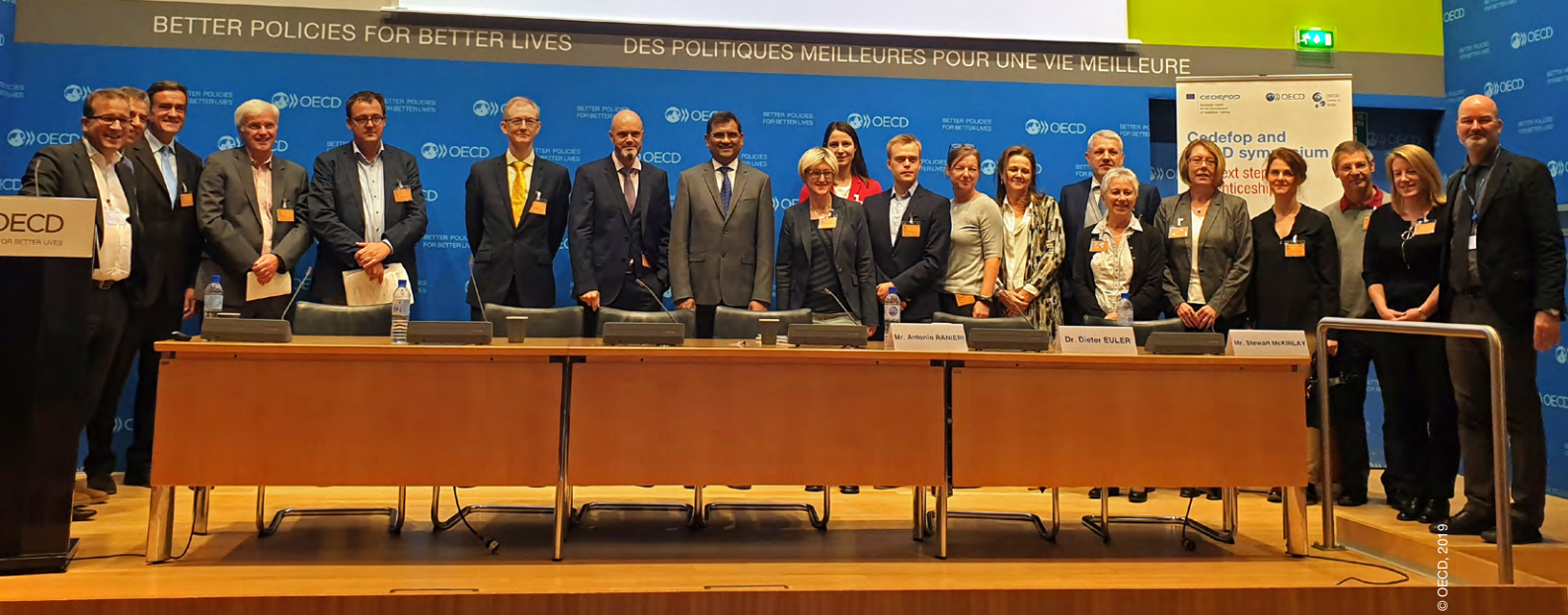
company needs and a narrow, short-term understanding of employability? Or does it address skill needs at sectoral or occupational level, and a broader, long-term approach to employability? To what level should apprenticeship be offered (upper secondary or higher)?

Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel's opening remarks reflected these considerations: 'It is time to think about where apprenticeship is headed. Accelerating labour market change, new forms of work and learning, and changing partnership and cooperation models require fundamental reflection on how best to shape the apprenticeship of the future.'

SCENARIOS AND EXAMPLES

The symposium explored [different scenarios for apprenticeship](#): from a more traditional role, associated with educational goals, tripartite governance, and long-term commitment for human capital development, to approaches where employers use it as a screening tool to recruit low-cost labour, with little educational value, low attractiveness and visibility, and highly individualised and fragmented.

Future scenarios also stem from [the possible relationship between apprenticeship and higher education](#): the historic distinction between the two might not always meet the requirements of modern economies, and their emerging convergence might lead to potential overlaps. A [graduate apprenticeship scheme](#) in Scotland, offered at higher education level, showed how apprenticeship could provide the high-level and specialised skills increasingly required by the labour market. It also highlighted the essential



role of cooperation between the university and the employers in a specific sector.

Focusing on changes at the workplace, examples from companies in Australia showed [how they are already adapting their apprenticeship provision](#) to cope with changes due to 'Industry 4.0', economic structural adjustment, globalisation of companies, global labour mobility and the 'gig economy'. Results from an online survey among German companies showed that, although [digitalisation](#) leads to transformation within companies, there is still a lot of potential for companies to apply digitalisation in apprenticeship provision. The need for modernisation of existing apprenticeship training occupations, rather than introduction of new ones, is also highlighted.

A study in England revealed that [apprenticeship provision in 'non-traditional' settings](#) may pose challenges to organisations and learners, and lead to varying experiences, including differences between newly recruited young apprentices and existing employees who become apprentices. In contrast, a Swiss case showed the importance of [innovative learning culture](#) in companies in supporting apprentices in developing new, in-demand competences, and promoting, even leading, innovation.

Various policy drivers and initiatives put pressure on apprenticeship. Countries with a strong tradition (Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland) look for [excellence](#) at different levels as a means to increase and stabilise apprenticeship attractiveness. A Danish case showed that the intention to raise quality might lead to unintended outcomes in terms of [participation of low-income students](#), as the actual preferences of companies (and learners) were not fully considered in policy-making. In contrast, a project promoting [collaborative training](#) among Italian and Belgian companies with complementary

activities enables apprentices to acquire the full set of learning outcomes listed in training profiles.

QUALITY AND VALUE

Experts and policy analysts from the European Commission, ETF, ILO, UNESCO, OECD and Cedefop discussed the research findings and acknowledged the importance apprenticeship continues to have. Cedefop expert Ramona David warned, however, that such value is not yet visible because evidence about it is mostly unavailable and the quality of the learning experiences and their comparability are not always guaranteed. Clear and coherent policy design supported by commonly understood and shared goals between education and training and labour market is a *sine qua non* condition to achieve apprenticeship quality and accrue value. This has been valid in the past and will continue to be so. ■

Cedefop's **Apprenticeship schemes in European countries: A cross-nation overview**, focuses on three features common to all analysed apprenticeship schemes:

- a scheme's link to a formal qualification
- a contractual link between the learner and company
- that the apprentice receives a form of compensation



Cedefop/OECD symposium: The next steps for apprenticeship

Multiskilling for success in the creative sectors



ANITA DEBAERE



The live performance sector has a specific ecosystem, which can thrive on an abundance of talent and creativity, despite lacking specific technical profiles

PEARLE* – LIVE PERFORMANCE EUROPE DIRECTOR

We hear a lot about skills, qualifications and labour market needs in major sectors such as engineering, IT, communications and manufacturing. But how often do we hear about the creative sectors – especially the audiovisual and live performance sectors – and the various professions that fall under their umbrella? What skills are needed there and how could these sectors improve and grow? Is it mere talent that artists need or particular technical skills such as camera filming and video editing?

In a 2016 report, the Creative Skills Europe initiative tackles these questions, looks at the main drivers of change and offers

recommendations about future progress. The report puts the creative sectors into the broader context of factors such as the digital shift and globalisation.

Various stakeholders, including Pearlle* – Live Performance Europe, the association representing organisations and management in the sector, piloted the recommendations. Pearlle* offers a good example of the work done in the creative industries, of the concerns they face and the changes they are experiencing. Pearlle* Director Anita Debaere spoke to *Skillset and match* about the initiative and their own work.

How is Pearlle* involved in this initiative?

Pearlle* is a European employers association, recognised by the European Commission, involved in skills matters for over

20 years. Creative Skills Europe is a joint initiative of employers and unions. Its strength lies in the common concerns for the continuity of the sector: what is needed to keep it going?

What has changed since the Creative Skills Europe report?

The report revealed a number of key trends in the live performance and audiovisual sectors. Skills needed for tomorrow were also investigated. This was initially done through thematic workshops; in 2018 and 2019 other aspects were covered during our conferences. A deepening of our understanding of the trends outlined in the report and of future skills needs is enabled through our longstanding relationship with the conservatoires and higher music education and vocational training providers in theatre technical training.



What challenges do the professionals of the live performance sector face?

The challenges are multiple. The live performance sector has a specific ecosystem, which can thrive on an abundance of talent and creativity, despite lacking specific technical profiles. Many, especially dancers, actors and musicians, are highly specialised in their field. During their education little attention is paid to the acquisition of other skills in demand in the labour market, which would enable them to manage their own career. Employers are looking both for highly-specialised people, perhaps even in more than one artistic field or technical area, as well as with transversal and interpersonal skills. This means that education institutes have to adapt to the changing labour market and create more options in curricula for students to take on additional modules. It also requires frameworks for continuous training; acquiring new skills is a continuous process and increases individual potential in the job market. Another sectoral issue is the cross-country mobility of workers for varying periods. It is very much at the heart of live performance to tour around the world and explore career

opportunities internationally. For light, sound or stage technicians, working internationally involves questions of safety standards among others. Knowing well an individual's skills is a support to working freelance. Pearle* has been involved in various European projects to analyse skillsets across Europe with the aim of identifying the core set of skills and competences required for different occupations. A 2017 report from our British members (Solt/UKtheatre) revealed other challenges our sector is facing, such as the need to embrace a more diverse workforce and create opportunities for an influx of people from other sectors.

How can their job chances increase?

Initiatives in Germany and France were presented at our latest members meeting, in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, detailing training programmes developed for migrants: these included technical occupations, to boost their chances in the job market, with consideration of work in the live performance sector. Besides targeted programmes, theatre technicians such as stage hands have typically engaged in work-based learning, acquiring additional skills as their level of responsibility increases.

Vocational training and dual learning paths in secondary education programmes have been developed, in close collaboration with the sector in various countries, for young people preparing for theatre technical occupations. This increases their job chances and, thanks to apprenticeships and this dedicated training, they gain knowledge of potential employers.

The report speaks about a 'multiplatform environment' and 'multiskilling'. How do you understand 'multiskilling'?

The report mentions multiskilling in the context of the audiovisual multiplatform environment. As live performance also increasingly integrates audiovisual and digital departments, there is a need for people who also possess journalistic qualities and digital skills to record, livestream, communicate and use social media. Those who master writing and presentation skills, in combination with thorough digital competence, are in high demand. ■

Trends and skills in the European audiovisual and live performance sectors



new

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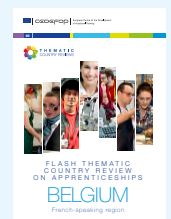
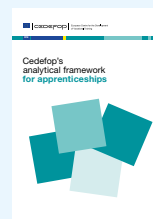
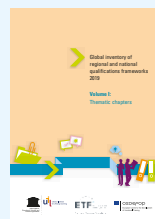
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IN FOCUS

CREATING LAWFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULT REFUGEE LABOUR MARKET MOBILITY

Creating labour mobility opportunities allowing refugees to move lawfully from first asylum countries to receiving countries, based on their skills and qualifications and recipient labour market needs, is a policy idea that deserves to be explored and tested. The conceptual framework presented in this report sketches the potential, the key elements and main issues to be addressed in creating such opportunities through a skills-based complementary pathway to protection. The central element of a skills-based pathway is matching refugees' skills and qualifications to labour market needs in a potential receiving country, offering adult refugees a clear perspective of employment with a defined route to self-reliance.



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OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

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- Spotlight on VET – Finland
- Apprenticeship review: Cyprus
- Flash thematic country review on apprenticeships: French-speaking Belgium
- Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships
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coming up



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IN FOCUS

REFERNET ANNUAL PLENARY MEETING



5-7 FEBRUARY

THESSALONIKI, GREECE

ReferNet is Cedefop's network of institutions which provides information on national vocational education and training (VET) systems and policies in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. Its 17th annual plenary meeting will welcome the 30 new partners under the 2020-23 framework partnership agreement and the national representatives. The meeting will provide briefings on the latest EU VET policy developments and prepare the network's 2020 work plan. The plenary will include knowledge-sharing on VET policies, peer review, hands-on workshops, joint reflection sessions, face-to-face talks and mentoring.

OTHER EVENTS			
JANUARY	23	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM	European skills and jobs survey (ESJS) expert group meeting
MAY	5-6	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM	3rd Policy learning forum on flexible learning pathways for low-skilled adults, organised jointly by Cedefop and the European Economic and Social Committee
JUNE	24	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM	Cedefop seminar with the Croatian EU Presidency: The role of transversal skills and competences in transforming education and employment


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