



Commissioner Vassiliou delivers a video message for the Cedefop Agora Conference, Brussels, 17 March 2011

Video message

(322 words)

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to this important conference. Unfortunately, due to conflicting agendas, I am not able to be with you personally.

Today, our host, Cedefop, will present its report "**A bridge to the future**" on the progress we have made to improve training in Europe since our launch of the Copenhagen process in 2002.

I am delighted that Cedefop's report bears good news. It confirms that the EU, its Member States and the European social partners have, together, achieved a lot over the past eight years.

Since 2002 when the Copenhagen declaration was first adopted, the European strategy to strengthen cooperation in vocational education and training has borne fruit. It has helped to align European and national VET policy priorities and to develop European tools, principles and guidelines. This has had a major impact in promoting mobility, transparency and the recognition of qualifications. Ultimately, our strategy has led to significant improvements in the performance, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training.

But challenges remain. We need to ensure that VET in Europe is of high quality and that vocational skills match the needs of the labour market and the people who acquire them.

This next phase of our VET strategy, from 2011 to 2020, must address these challenges. Over the next ten years, our strategy for VET will remain a fundamental pillar of our comprehensive framework "Education and Training 2020" and a vital dimension of our Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth. Therefore, I fully subscribe to Cedefop's conclusions that VET reform needs to be sustained through the next decade.

I would like to thank Cedefop for organising today's conference. Its support has been and will continue to be very valuable. The report provides an excellent basis for your discussions today and will enrich the debate on the future of vocational education and training in Europe.

I wish you a fruitful day.