

skillset AND MATCH

CEDEFOP'S MAGAZINE
PROMOTING
LEARNING FOR WORK

 CEDEFOP

ISSUE 12 / JANUARY 2018

MAIN STORY:
**SECOND EUROPEAN
VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK &
#CEDEFOPPHOTOAWARD 2017**

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MEMBER STATES: **BULGARIA**

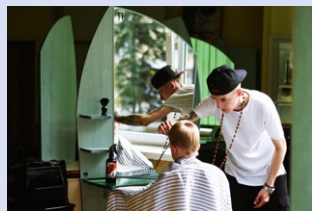
**CEDEFOP**

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

We provide information on and analyses of vocational education and training systems, policies, research and practice.

Cedefop was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75.

Front cover photo © TIME2CREATE



Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

ISSN: 2363-0183
TI-AQ-18-001-EN-N
No of publication: 9125 EN
Free of charge

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Designed by
Missing Element, Prague

Printed in the European Union on elemental chlorine-free bleached paper (ECF)

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VET's future?

Get closer to citizens

JAMES CALLEJA

CEDEFOP DIRECTOR



*VET is for all
citizens and for
all career seasons.
Reform processes
cannot simply wait
– the future of
VET is now*



Developing the policies that will have a positive impact on European citizens is the ultimate challenge. As 2020 approaches, experts in vocational education and training (VET) are contemplating its future, seeking a more meaningful approach that includes all forms of learning.

The articles in this issue reflect this direction. Guidance and counselling are essential to individuals seeking support in creating a career roadmap. At a recent EU Presidency conference on guidance in Tallinn, Estonia, I stressed the need for career guidance to infiltrate workplaces and those locations where young people spend their free time.

Cedefop's opinion survey shows that VET must be kept as a political priority for growth, equity and social inclusion. Over 35 500 face-to-face interviews revealed that VET is widely known across Europe but insufficiently spoken about to learners in compulsory education.

Six in 10 citizens claim that VET gives you a job within a month of finishing studies but only 39% of respondents said that they moved into higher education after post-secondary VET. EU citizens agree that VET strengthens the economy (84%), reduces unemployment (80%) and tackles social exclusion (78%) but it seems that more information and guidance is needed to bring them closer as it develops over the coming years.

Parallel to this survey, Cedefop's project on the changing nature and role of VET is spearheading a Europe-wide debate on its future. By autumn 2018 the project will deliver its results, paving the way for better understanding of VET, its transformation over the past 20 years and its expected profile in the next two decades.

Cedefop's goal is to create new knowledge, to share new evidence on European VET, based on policy analysis, and to establish platforms for knowledge brokerage in Member States and with social partners.

VET is for all citizens and for all career seasons. Reform processes cannot simply wait – the future of VET is now. ■

Lifelong guidance in the digital age



Development of ICT in guidance and e-governance provides an opportunity for the Member States and the EU to offer better access and coherence of services to all citizens

Lifelong guidance provides career development support for people of all ages, at all career stages. It includes information, advice, counselling, assessment of skills and mentoring. Essential in the current fast-changing labour market, it has been attracting growing interest from policy-makers in Europe.

As a result, the Estonian EU Presidency in the second half of 2017, Foundation Innove and Cedefop organised a European guidance week in Tallinn last September. It was an action-packed week that included the launch of Cedefop's CareersNet. At the network's first meeting, EU Member State experts had the chance to exchange examples of best practice in career guidance and suggest new ideas for cooperation.

The week's centrepiece was an international conference on lifelong guidance policy and practice, which brought together 200 experts from 35 countries.

Speaking at the conference, Cedefop Director James Calleja argued that 'guidance must leave its natural home, the school, and penetrate workplaces; it must ride on the potential of ICT and not lose its humanistic approach dealing with individuals on a one-to-one basis.'

In an age of technology and automation, career guidance is indispensable to the employability of both young people and older workers, said Mr Calleja.

A DIGITAL SOCIETY

Estonian Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Education Mart Laidmets was actively involved throughout the conference and spoke to *Skillset and match* about the initiative: 'It is so useful because stakeholders understand that their role is changing fast along with the labour market. One of the topics discussed was how ICT and data can lead to improvement in career guidance in different countries. We have to find the best

solutions, share them and make them accessible to everybody, because we still have millions of people in Europe without access to the internet or who are not using it.'

Digitally advanced Estonia leads the way in innovation in many fields. Wherever you go in Tallinn you are reminded that Skype was developed by Estonians, and new buildings housing tech companies pop up where remnants of the Soviet era used to be. Mr Laidmets told us that his country is taking



Mart Laidmets



advantage of digitalisation to provide better lifelong guidance: 'There is an online career chat service for young people so they don't need to go anywhere if they have questions for our experts. It is a natural environment for young people. We also have electronic registries connected to each other, so we can predict in a way what's going to happen in our labour market, taking account of people's salary and education levels. By doing that, we can make the labour market accessible to everyone.'

Mr Laidmets maintains that Estonia's digital society is based on its good education system: 'People value education highly, and when you have been educated well you don't need to get orders from the government. The decision to create a digital society was made by the government, but to implement it you need the private sector and local communities. It has been working quite well up to now but it relies on cooperation.'

CALL FOR ACTION

The conference conclusions stressed that 'development of ICT

in guidance and e-governance provides an opportunity for the Member States and the EU to offer better access and coherence of services to all citizens. Lifelong guidance needs to be repositioned across the policy fields at national and EU levels, in particular taking into account the future of work and preparing citizens for scenarios of employment, underemployment or no employment in a segmented labour market.' Participants called on the European Commission to take the lead in such repositioning and in developing an implementation strategy.

ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Foundation Innove's Margit Rammo, one of the week's organisers, told *Skillset and match* that a thematic European guidance event had been 'a dream for many years'. Now that it has been realised, her emphasis is on cooperation: 'As practitioners, but also for our clients, we can't skip technology and the need to find solutions in this technology-led world. We have to be up-to-date and part of this process. We have

new and old networks and it has been a clear message from the Member States that they need a structured way to cooperate.'

Cedefop guidance expert Pedro Moreno da Fonseca, who was in charge of the project on behalf of the agency, summed up the experience: 'This week of activities provided a unique opportunity for the guidance community to discuss ways to increase the relevance of its work to the ones who need it the most, such as the unemployed and the educationally disengaged. The potential of labour market intelligence (LMI) and ICT as elements to improve services to the citizen were key discussions. Cedefop's tools to support the integration of LMI and ICT in guidance practices were piloted and the results suggest good uptake and development.' ■

Find out more about Cedefop's lifelong guidance project



International conference on lifelong guidance policy and practice conclusions



SKILLS PANORAMA

at the service of

career guidance

“ *Skills Panorama includes results from Cedefop work, such as forecasts and insights from the European skills and jobs survey, along with intelligence not available elsewhere* ”

Building on unstable ground may be feasible but it is unlikely to be wise. Experienced builders would advise that, before making decisions, it is important to have a good understanding of the elements and factors affecting the stability of the building ground, and that safety relies on a flexible approach to these aspects.

Guidance practitioners are like builders. They support individuals in ‘building’ their future by identifying talents and aspirations, advise on possible education and career pathways, and offer guidance in times of turbulent career points and well-founded hope for new pathways, new careers and choices ahead. But as the labour market is affected by automation, demography and climate change, forcing economic and social changes at an unprecedented pace, guidance practitioners face the challenge of having to build on ‘unstable soil’.

Sound labour market analysis and skills intelligence can help in creating a foundation on which to build career guidance. Offering quantitative and qualitative data and information on skills and the labour market, meaningfully synthesised and analysed, helps support decisions. Blending different types of information allows for a more holistic approach and for deeper understanding of the driving forces and possible impacts on employment and skills.

Skills Panorama is a unique online platform, providing a single entry point for labour market and skills intelligence in the European Union (EU). Intelligence on skills and the labour market is selected and presented to help users keep up with

developments, make useful comparisons or identify anticipated changes. In this way, Skills Panorama addresses issues high on the EU political agenda, such as skills shortages and high unemployment.

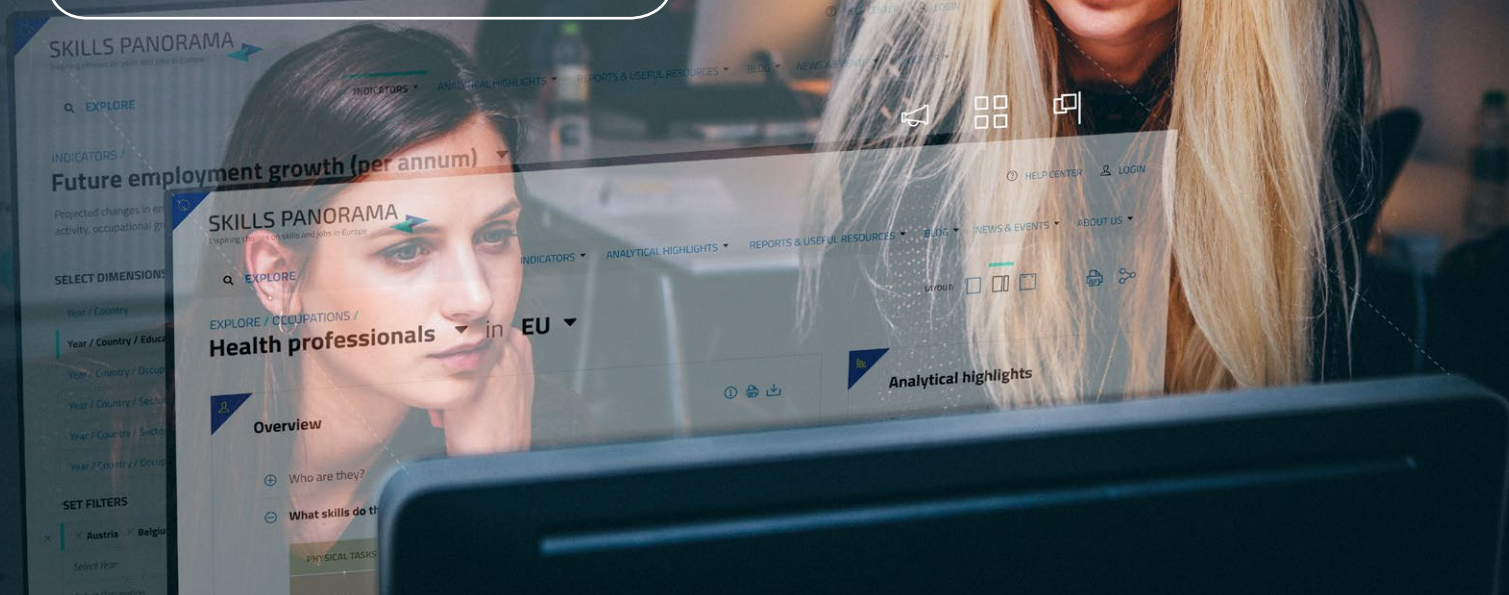
Information in the platform is structured in over 2 000 ‘dashboards’ organised by occupation, sector, country and policy theme. Besides quantitative information and visualisations in dashboards, Skills Panorama offers high-quality skills intelligence in different formats to meet diverse needs and user groups.

The primary target groups have been policy-makers and experts. Building on the rising interest in the platform of users with different profiles, and on



SKILLS PANORAMA was identified as best practice in the European public sector awards 2017

SKILLS PANORAMA, a European Commission initiative managed by Cedefop, aims to improve the transparency of the European labour market by providing online access to data and research findings on skills and labour market prospects at national and EU levels.



the growing need to support lifelong guidance with information on skills and the labour market, Skills Panorama is now expanding its target audience to include, among others, guidance practitioners.

The redesigned platform adapts information delivery to the perspective of varied user groups, including new intelligence that will be useful and relevant to them. Reflecting the importance of user experience and the variety of clients that guidance practitioners serve, Skills Panorama's 'fresh look' extends to data and information as well as presentation and visualisation.

UNIQUE INFORMATION

Getting closer to the needs of career guidance counsellors, Skills Panorama includes results from Cedefop work, such as forecasts and insights from the European skills and jobs survey. It also offers intelligence not available elsewhere: skill opportunities and challenges for 30 occupational groups, and a list of occupations at high risk of mismatch in each of the 28 EU Member States.

Skills Panorama will also host the results of Cedefop's big data analysis from online vacancies. By collecting and analysing relevant data and machine learning, the project will deliver valuable knowledge about skills and jobs in the EU, highlighting what employers actually look for. A fully fledged EU-wide system to collect and analyse data on skill demand, using online job postings, is envisaged for the end of 2020, while the first preliminary data will be available by end-2018.

Bringing skills intelligence to users' fingertips, Skills Panorama can provide valuable support by strengthening counsellors' efforts to help people make informed education and career choices. ■

Having access to information and data sources is part of our SMART culture. In our frequent search for international labour market information, Skills Panorama turns out to be a useful tool.

Kyra Veldkamp, VDAB-EURES, Belgium

Skills Panorama can provide career practitioners with validated labour market intelligence, including skills forecasts, which can be used to increase capacities to navigate the complexities of the current labour market.

Raimo Vuorinen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland



Skills Panorama

Hacking big data for better labour market policies

“ *If we want to continue playing a role in informing public policy and citizens in a world where many decisions are increasingly based on algorithms, developing smart statistics and big data analysis is a must* ”

Internet use has expanded exponentially over the past two decades, prompting a massive increase in global digital content. This vast, ever-growing volume of information known as big data represents an untapped source of intelligence that, if properly processed, can result in reduced workload and added effectiveness for organisations at all levels.

Recognising big data set analysis as one of the current technological requirements for effective regulation of the European Union (EU) market, Eurostat, the EU's statistical information body, organised in March 2017 the first European big data hackathon. Data scientists from across Europe gathered in Brussels to produce innovative tools using open data and public-use files. The team from Croatia won first prize for developing the EU skills and jobs explorer, an application providing information on skill supply and demand at regional level.

HACKATHON FOLLOW-UP

Six months later, eight of the hackathon teams reunited at Cedefop's headquarters in Thessaloniki to present visualisations of their prototype solutions and report on further progress. Cedefop Deputy Director Mara Brugia addressed participants of this follow-up seminar, stressing that 'such events are important building blocks because they pool together expertise across several disciplines to generate cooperation and knowledge-sharing.'

After the team representing France was awarded second prize at the hackathon, the French Ministry of Labour took note of their multi-label classification model and sent the ministry's Cécile Ballini to accompany them to Cedefop. 'It's interesting for us to see all these tools first-hand and learn about what we can do with them for policy purposes,' Ms Ballini told us.

Anders Ekeland, senior adviser at Statistics Norway and member of the European skills, competences, qualifications and occupations (ESCO) maintenance committee, is in agreement: 'Seminars such as this are a meaningful investment in terms of establishing networks of experts who can contribute in the field of registered data.'

ANALYSIS MAKES POLICY

All prototypes originally unveiled at the hackathon were improved for the follow-up seminar, aiming to benefit the European labour market. As Jacek Maślankowski from the Central Statistical Office of Poland noted, 'without effective big data analysis there can be no valid policy-making.'

Sharing that view were third-placed Estonia, who advanced their prototype based on the premise that labour market problems do not rise from internal complications but are caused by megatrends like automation. As



Innar Liiv explained, ‘our goal was to develop a tool that visualises how different jobs are impacted by global tendencies and external interventions.’

Cedefop’s seminar was met with a positive response by participants across the board. ‘Our win at the hackathon caught the attention of the Croatian Prime Minister, who supported expansion of the tool as well as our team’s participation in Cedefop’s seminar,’ reported Leo Mršić, who represented team Croatia. ‘Initiatives such as this enable us to use cutting-edge technology to create simple solutions that can be applied in everyday life,’ he explained.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

For Italian economist Andrea De Panizza ‘Cedefop’s follow-up to the hackathon allowed us to improve our application by coming up with new indicators for market analysis.’ He added that Italian team members were

happy to take note of the ‘stark complementarities in the work presented by colleagues from different countries’.

‘All in all, it was a great opportunity to expand our work by combining multiple statistics,’ said team Portugal’s João Sollari Allegro Machado Lopes. For the Greek team, having worked on development and visualisation aspects in Brussels and Thessaloniki respectively, Panagiotis Vlantis expressed their wish for a third get-together to focus on data science issues.

RESULTS IN PRACTICE

The enthusiasm was shared by Eurostat, with Head of the Big Data Taskforce Michail Skaliotis affirming the European Commission’s commitment to producing statistical solutions for online job vacancies. ‘We would like to map the prototypes presented in the seminar with real policy needs,’ said Mr Skaliotis, adding: ‘We are already using

smart applications, like smart home appliances and intelligent transport. If we want to continue playing a role in informing public policy and citizens in a world where many decisions are increasingly based on algorithms, developing smart statistics and big data analysis is a must.’

Cedefop Head of Department for Skills and Labour Market Pascaline Descy also acknowledges the value of insights for skill needs provided by artificial intelligence, noting that ‘Cedefop is currently working hard to develop an EU-wide system which will harness the power of big data and machine learning to collect input on skills demand across EU countries.’ ■



Cedefop project on big data analysis from online vacancies

Bigger and better: 2nd European vocational skills week



**DISCOVER
YOUR TALENT!**



Over 1 500 events in 45 countries, reaching more than 1 million people. Schools, EU agencies including Cedefop, national and regional authorities celebrated all things VET

Edita and Irena from Lithuania took a photography course to get some additional skills and, perhaps, one day become professional photographers. They found out about the #CedefopPhotoAward, formed a team and took a chance in the competition. They won first prize. Tomás, Adrian and Ramada studied to become kayak and canoeing instructors in Ireland. They too entered Cedefop's photo competition and won second prize.

They all value the vocational skills they have acquired and show what the European vocational skills week, an initiative of the European Commission now in its third year, aspires to achieve: to get more people into vocational education and training (VET) and make it a first choice.

It is having a positive impact. Its second season, in 2017, comprised over 1 500 events in 45 countries (all 28 EU Member States and beyond) reaching more than 1 million people. Schools, EU agencies including Cedefop, national and regional authorities celebrated all things VET.

Edita and Irena, together with their teacher, Lina, and the model of their photo story, young barber Svajūnas, accepted their award in Brussels, at a ceremony on the last day of the main activities (20 to 24 November).

The Brussels events included a conference on promoting the vocational skills agenda, the first European business-education summit, and the closing awards presentation. A third vocational skills week has already been announced, to take place in Vienna (5 to 9 November 2018) in the framework of the Austrian EU Presidency.

CEDEFOP'S INVOLVEMENT

Cedefop contributed several activities to the initiative: a policy learning forum on apprenticeships, a peer learning conference on measuring and



Left to right: Irena Masandavičiūtė, Edita Aleksandravičienė, Svajūnas Pranaitis, Cedefop's Gerd-Oskar Bausewein, EFVET's Rasa Zygmantaitė and Lina Masandavičiūtė



European vocational skills week award winners with Commissioner Thyssen at closing ceremony in Brussels

evaluating the impact of national qualifications frameworks (jointly organised with the European Commission), the ReferNet annual plenary meeting, and the first European guidance week, jointly organised with the Estonian EU Presidency of the second semester of 2017. The agency also provided expert input into the Brussels centrepiece and organised, for the second year running, the #CedefopPhotoAward, which asked teams of VET learners in the EU to tell their story through photos.

At a session on a sector skills alliances blueprint for cooperation, Cedefop expert Stelina Chatzichristou gave a keynote speech on skill needs identification. She highlighted the impact on skills of ‘megatrends’ such as demography, technological developments, automation and climate change, focusing on the sectors of the second phase of the blueprint: additive manufacturing; construction; green technologies and renewable energy; maritime shipping; the paper-based sector; and steel industries. The speech stressed the value of sources such as the Skills Panorama portal and other related Cedefop work.

Newcomers to the European alliance for apprenticeships were welcomed at the Brussels events, various learners and young entrepreneurs gave their testimonies, and global businesses presented their work-based learning programmes. Keeping pace with digital transformation at school and the workplace, Zora and Pepper, two robots who work with health students in Belgium, went on stage to help with proceedings.

POLITICAL SUPPORT

High-level European officials also took to the stage to give their support to VET. European Parliament President Antonio Tajani focused his speech on the younger generation, explaining that 170 million

citizens in Europe are under 30, so ‘we must open society’s door to the workers and leaders of tomorrow.’ Investment in education, he added, is the best path to inclusion.

European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen said that stopping the ticking bomb of employers not finding the skills they need is one of her top priorities. Vocational skills can take you places; VET learners usually find a job quicker than university students, she noted, adding that more work is needed to make vocational education a first choice but ‘we are already seeing the impact, Cedefop tells me.’

Opening the business-education summit, Ms Thyssen highlighted the achievements of the two-year-old pact for youth, a mutual engagement of business and EU leaders to boost the number and quality of business-education partnerships, to reduce skills gaps, and to contribute to EU and national policy developments on skills for employability.

The initiative is led by the European Commission and CSR Europe on the business side. CSR Europe’s President Étienne Davignon issued a joint appeal from business to EU leaders to make business-education partnerships the new norm, make VET and apprenticeships an equal choice for young people, and mainstream entrepreneurship in education.

In a video message to the summit, European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker told business leaders: ‘The EU is playing its part; you have yours to play too and you’re showing the way.’



More on the European vocational skills week

A barber's dream



All photos © Time2Create



DISCOVER
YOUR TALENT!



#CEDEFOPPHOTOAWARD 2017

Bigger and better was the case for the second #CedefopPhotoAward, which focused on teams of VET learners and their education experience.

First prize winners with 'A barber's dream' were Edita Aleksandravičienė and Irena Masandavičiūtė from the Siauliai Vocational Training Centre in Lithuania. They won a trip to Brussels for the award ceremony of the European vocational skills week 2017.

The images showcase the story of Svajūnas, a young barber with artistic tendencies who works at one of the most famous salons in the capital Vilnius. Edita told *Skillset and match* how she came up with the idea: 'I knew Svajūnas and his story before the competition started. We created a team to tell the story of a young man from a little village who wanted to have a career, who is interesting, stylish and competent in what he is doing. Taking photos of him at work showed how focused he was.'

Irena also thought it was a great story to share: 'When you know what you want in the world, when you have a dream, you can find the way to make it happen. You find a school, you study and the world is open to you.'

Winning the trophy and receiving it from Commissioner Thyssen was quite special for the two budding photographers. 'It's a big thing for us personally, but also for our school and for our country, for our name to be mentioned here. There

are lots of people who are inspired by what we achieved,' said a beaming Irena.

Edita concurred: 'It's amazing to be here, to be part of the week.' Irena added: 'To see your work recognised is a very positive emotion. I would strongly recommend anyone who has something to tell – go do it.'

Edita looked to the future: 'I have another job, not related to photography. But this vocational training, I feel, will somehow change my life; it will be more than a hobby.' Irena hopes that people will enjoy their photographs 'and maybe we'll become professionals.'

SECOND PRIZE

'Our outdoor education' was the work of a group of trainees from the Tanagh Outdoor Centre in Monaghan, Ireland. Tomás Mc Kenna, Adrian Callaghan and Ramada Diver won second prize, a trip to Thessaloniki for the opening of the 58th Thessaloniki International Film Festival. 'It was just being together as a group,

#CEDEFOPPHOTOAWARD2017

- 140 teams
- 383 VET learners
- 20 EU Member States
- 2 winning teams from Lithuania and Ireland





Our outdoor education

working together; we just clicked,' Adrian told *Skillset and match* at the opening of the #CedefopPhotoAward exhibition at the Thessaloniki Cinema Museum.

The team included a qualified photographer, Tomás: 'Of the thousands of photographs that we took, it was very difficult to narrow them down to five. We decided to pick those that showed the team spirit. One image captures the moment when the boys are lifting the boat out of the water. You can see Peter at the front struggling, but it puts the emphasis on struggling together. In another, you can see us in a group before a hike, planning our trip; we are looking at maps, deciding where to go and what lessons we might learn during that day. Each of the images depicts that team spirit.'

Eoin Halliday, the team's instructor who also travelled to Thessaloniki, was full of praise for his students: 'This group of students was such a good group anyhow. We entered the competition but we never thought we'd end up in Greece with it.'

The boys plan to continue on the vocational training path. Adrian is saving money for his next course as he needs transport to get to other centres. Tomás has part-time work in Tanagh: 'I am going to build up a bit of experience in the outdoors and try to add some more skills as well.'

Eoin explains that the outdoor course goes beyond practical skills: 'It is a 45-week course and we have also bolted on the academic side because some of the guys

coming in may be school leavers of 15 or 16 years of age. So we give them that as an option as well.'

The group are all happy with their choice of vocational education. According to Tomás, 'there's a few bits and pieces that need improving, as with anything, but I went to college before, I didn't finish, and, having seen both sides, I'd definitely pick vocational. It's more hands-on, more practical and you get to do stuff like work experience, which is very helpful in the outdoors.'

As for Eoin: 'I am a product of vocational training. I've been doing this since I left school. It's hands-on; you are learning constantly, it's changing all the time. I've also experienced the academic side, but I prefer the hands-on.' ■



I-r: Barry Comerford, Eoin Halliday, Adrian Callaghan, Tomás Mc Kenna

Social dialogue

can benefit

digital Europe



MARTINA DLABAJOVÁ

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



Europe will be competitive if there is cooperation between employers and education systems; they must work together on future skills

Digitalisation and new forms of work, their opportunities and challenges, were examined at a working dinner organised by Cedefop and hosted by **Martina Dlabajová**, MEP at the European Parliament in Brussels in November. MEPs, Parliament staff and Cedefop management and experts discussed upskilling and skills policies for workers in the online platform economy.

The discussion was chaired by Cedefop Director James Calleja, who stressed that ‘the future of work is conditioned by these new phenomena, which will impact every worker at some point: adaptability and flexibility are, therefore, important.’

In her opening presentation, Cedefop Governing Board Chair

Tatjana Babrauskiene said that digitalisation and automation increase the need for responsive and forward-looking vocational education and training (VET) systems, adding that ‘the real challenge is getting robots and humans to complement, not substitute each other.’

CEDEFOP'S ROLE

She noted that more training and upskilling opportunities are needed to adapt to the changing labour and industrial relations. Cedefop's work focuses on that area by helping develop European tools and supporting countries in developing national qualifications frameworks, apprenticeship systems and skills governance.

Cedefop expert Konstantinos Pouliakas presented the implications of the online platform economy, pointing out that new digital companies are

becoming dominant and are reshaping the labour market, with the USA leading and Europe lagging behind. He argued that this type of economy offers workers autonomy, work opportunities in other countries, or a supplementary income. Companies also find the flexibility and efficiency of digital transformation appealing. On the downside, companies need to balance internal and external staff and adapt organisational systems, while workers face income uncertainty and lack of collective bargaining and social insurance. Mr Pouliakas concluded that Europe should adopt a more socially oriented model of the platform economy.

Participant MEPs, Jean Lambert (UK), Svetoslav Hristov Malinov (Bulgaria), Michaela Šojdrová (Czech Republic) and Renate Weber (Romania),



affirmed their interest in following and learning more about Cedefop's new research agenda focused on skills formation and online platform worker matching, and on policies and practices for promoting continuous learning.

LEGISLATION IS KEY

Dinner host Ms Dlabajová, a political scientist from the Czech Republic, founded and managed several companies in her country, Slovakia and Italy before being elected to the European Parliament in 2014. She is Vice-Chair of the Budgetary Control Committee and an active member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

Speaking to *Skillset and match* after the event, she thanked Cedefop for organising it. 'It was important to have this exchange, to examine the data, facts and figures. We are looking into the future, trying to anticipate it, and expecting many changes in skills needs. Policy-makers need to understand future needs before they start on legislation.

So, I really appreciate this kind of exchanges, not just between MEPs and the Cedefop team, but also among MEPs, because we don't always have much time to talk to one another.'

It seems people want to be part of the new online platform economy. Can Europe protect their rights in this environment?

We must adapt legislation to these new ways of working. The labour market is not what it was 50 years ago, even 20 years ago; our legislation must reflect this.

Europe lags behind the USA and other countries in the digital transformation. How can start-ups and innovative enterprises be supported to help Europe catch up?

First we have to complete the digital single market, so companies need only one licence for it, like the US. Second, Europe will be competitive if there is cooperation between employers and education systems; they must work together on future skills.

How can vocational education match the pace of the digital transformation?

We need dialogue between education systems, at all levels, and employers. We can't talk about education without thinking about employment, and vice versa. Europe has always had this type of dialogue: it just needs to be strengthened. We must focus on learning by doing. Also, we have to educate teachers in digitalisation as they sometimes lag behind students in digital skills.

You said you are optimistic. Why?

I see change as opportunity. There is change in the way we are working, in innovation, in the future ways of being employer and employee. Being aware of this means being ready for it. Yes, I'm optimistic. We just have to turn challenges into opportunities. ■

More on what was discussed at the Cedefop working dinner





from past to future



Future policy cooperation should focus on how education and training systems as a whole can promote and support practice-oriented and work-related learning



Cedefop's research project on the changing nature and role of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe (2016-18) is at the centre of a debate about VET's future. By analysing developments in the sector over the past two decades, it is able to examine current challenges and to point to future opportunities.

The project focuses on a range of issues relevant to VET's development: its changing definition and conceptualisation; the external drivers influencing VET developments; the role of traditional VET at upper secondary level; and VET from a lifelong learning perspective and at higher education levels. In the final project phase, scenarios outlining alternative progress paths for European VET in the 21st century will be presented.

Cedefop asked experts in the 30 countries covered by the project to share their views of

how national VET systems are perceived and are changing. The results of this survey offer an insight into the diversity of national VET solutions, while also pointing to common trends and shared challenges.

The project looks at VET from a multifaceted viewpoint, combining a system/institution perspective with both pedagogical/epistemological and socioeconomic/labour market perspectives. This makes it possible to observe how vocationally oriented learning forms and formats are spreading, and how a closer link to the labour market is developing, including in institutions not traditionally defined as vocational.

Various issues have to be addressed regarding future European cooperation in vocational education and training. The traditional distinction between education and training subsectors (general, vocational and higher education, initial and continuing VET) is not always practical when it comes to identifying and responding to new challenges.

By operating on the basis of too narrow a definition of VET, policy-makers risk overlooking the need for vocationally oriented education outside the traditional VET sector. Future policy cooperation should focus on how education and training systems as a whole can promote and support practice-oriented and work-related learning. VET development may also require solutions spanning several subsectors and involving institutions and providers currently operating alone. ■

Find out
more about
Cedefop's project



The changing nature
and role of vocational
education and training
in Europe





Bridging the world of education with the world of work is a key intention of recent developments in Bulgaria.

Key measures were adopted in the second half of 2017, including the launch of a vocational education and training (VET) forum with representation of local and national authorities, social partners, education and training providers, researchers, employers, NGOs and youth organisations, to discuss new conceptual ideas for VET developments. Spreading the model of work-based learning (dual training) in the school VET system and elaboration of mechanisms for feedback loop utilisation are other major features.



Work and **VET** join forces in

BULGARIA

Public interest in VET is growing in Bulgaria due to labour market demand for VET qualifications and thanks to the targeted policy initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Science in making cooperation with employers functional and effective.

These national developments and common EU policy vision naturally reflect on the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union priorities in the first half of 2018:

- progress on the European Commission's *New skills agenda for Europe* initiatives;
- promotion of the initiatives in the Commission package on modernisation of education (higher and school education);
- the future of the Erasmus+ programme.

During the Bulgarian Presidency, the Ministry of Education and Science will organise several events to promote VET and to exchange views on the future of vocational training and its reflection on the future of work.

In April, the Directors General for VET from across Europe will hold their regular meeting, and a flagship conference 'VET is for everyone' will be organised in Sofia. An open area VET expo will showcase acting partnerships and cooperation, and will demonstrate the skills of VET learners. ■



by REFERNET BULGARIA
www.refernet.bg/en/

Insights on what EU citizens

think

about

VET

“ *VET is seen by survey respondents as playing an important role in society, strengthening a country’s economy and tackling social exclusion* ”

In the last issue of *Skillset and match* Antonio Ranieri told us about the 2016 Cedefop opinion survey on attitudes to vocational education and training (VET). We decided to dig deeper into the survey results and ask some questions of our own.

We were keen to know if the people of the EU have a common opinion of the value and benefits of VET or if their opinions vary by country. Or do they have little opinion at all, knowing little about VET and its place in their society? The answers lie in Cedefop’s analysis and report on the survey responses.

IS VET WELL-KNOWN ACROSS THE EU?

Most of those questioned (86%) said that they had heard of VET, with 71% saying that they know precisely what it is. Almost nine out of every 10 respondents (87%) associate it with ‘preparing you for a specific occupation’. But while just under three quarters of respondents from vocational education (72%) received information about this option when deciding on their upper secondary route, only 48% from general education were given any information.

DO EU CITIZENS THINK OF VET IN A POSITIVE WAY?

There is a generally positive perception of VET, with 68% of Europeans reporting that it has a positive

image in their country while just under a quarter (23%) say that it has a negative image.

Results in countries

Respondents in Malta (89%), Finland (84%), the Czech Republic (77%), the UK (75%) and Italy (75%) were clear about this positive aspect, while significant numbers in France (44%), Hungary (43%), Belgium (42%) and the Netherlands (41%) saw it as having a negative image.

DO PEOPLE SEE DISADVANTAGES IN STUDYING VET?

Almost three-quarters of respondents agreed that general education has a more positive image than VET; more of those from general education (82%) took this view but 71% from vocational education also agreed.

Results in countries

VET is seen mainly as being for students of lower academic performance, with respondents in Belgium (90%), Sweden (88%), France (85%), and Denmark (84%) saying that students with low grades are directed towards that route. There is a general view of VET as a second choice, rarely connected in people’s perceptions to higher education options such as university.

DO PEOPLE SEE STUDYING VET AS WORTHWHILE?

Most EU citizens agree that people in vocational education learn skills needed by employers in their country (86%). Other benefits are finding a job quickly or leading to well-paid or highly regarded employment (around 60% average in EU). VET is seen by survey respondents as playing an important role in society, strengthening a country's economy and tackling social exclusion.

Results in countries

Reducing unemployment is quoted as a beneficial effect in Sweden (96%), Finland (94%), Denmark (93%) and Malta (91%). Even the lowest levels of agreement on this benefit are still high: Greece (66%), France (69%), Slovenia (70%), Italy and Bulgaria (both 71%).

HOW WILL THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPING VET?

There is notable variation among countries in awareness and perceptions of VET but there are also common deficiencies. Lack of information and guidance

WHAT IS THE CEDEFOP VET OPINION SURVEY?

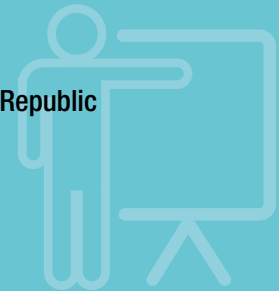


The survey was carried out in June 2016 to examine EU citizens' awareness and opinions on VET's attractiveness and effectiveness. It also asked about their personal experience at upper secondary level – the stage that comes after compulsory education, typically at age 16 to 18. The questionnaire was addressed to a representative sample of Europeans, aged 15 and over, reaching more than 35 500 respondents across the 28 EU Member States.

VET OR GENERAL EDUCATION?

Asked which route they would recommend to students about to start secondary education, respondents chose vocational education mostly in:

- 67% Slovakia
- 65% the Czech Republic
- 64% Poland
- 63% Slovenia
- 61% Hungary



Most likely to recommend general education were those in:

- 49% Ireland
- 42% Luxembourg
- 40% Sweden

contribute to VET being seen as a second choice education; failing to grasp its role in lifelong learning also detracts from proper appreciation of its value.

The survey shows areas where the negative public perceptions of VET can be addressed, both nationally and through shared EU action, with pooling of knowledge and good practice. In carrying out this survey and analysing the results in extensive detail, Cedefop continues its support to policy development and stakeholder dialogue on improving VET's position across the EU. ■

For more findings on all 28 EU Member States, download Cedefop's European public opinion survey on vocational education and training report



Cedefop

apprenticeship reviews make a difference



Cedefop launched thematic country reviews (TCRs) on apprenticeships in 2014 to support cooperation among European Union (EU) Member States and to assist countries wishing to develop quality apprenticeships in line with EU policies.

So far, there have been three rounds of TCRs: in Malta and Lithuania (concluded in 2015); in Greece, Italy and Slovenia (finished mid-2017); and in Cyprus and Croatia (started early 2017). A light version is being piloted in Belgium (French-speaking Community) and Sweden.

Representatives from the countries involved in the reviews discussed developments at a policy learning forum in Thessaloniki. Speaking to *Skillset and match*, Lithuania's Vice Minister for Social Security and Labour Egle Radisauskiene was upbeat: 'We are moving towards better development of apprenticeship and other work-

based forms of training for our people. By bringing different countries together, Cedefop helped us invent our own apprenticeship system.'

Vincent Maioine, from the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology, was equally enthusiastic: 'We have more than tripled the number of companies participating in the schemes, the number of students has grown by five times, the number of courses has doubled and we plan to continue increasing this.'

In Greece, the review contributed to the development of an apprenticeship strategy. According to Aikaterini Zioga from the Ministry of Education, 'the implementation of apprenticeship has already started, with very promising results.'

Fabrizio Dacrema, from CGIL Nazionale, gives the Italian trade unions' view: 'Three things are important: unified national governance to promote

apprenticeship quality with social partners, a policy for improving enterprises' apprenticeship capabilities, and the role of quality bargaining to recognise and valorise the tutor's role and competence.'

In Slovenia, apprenticeship is very important, says Simon Ogrizec (Chamber of Craft and Small Business), 'because we lack skilled people, especially from the employers' point of view. When policies are put into action you see what is good, what is not so good, and you'll need to adapt.'

Elias Margadjis, from the Ministry of Education in Cyprus, explains that 'due to the small size of companies we have more difficulties, but there is always a way when you want to find one.' In Croatia, there is hope that the TCR will bring better cooperation with all stakeholders, as Vanja Oremus from the Ministry of Science and Education points out.

Lotta Naglitsch, from the Swedish National Agency for Education, is also positive: 'It's a way for us to have our apprenticeship documented and evaluated. We are doing a pilot now where the apprentice is going to have a salary for the first time. We hope that the TCR will help us with that as well.' ■

Watch
messages
in full



100 million



CVs and counting!



The Europass documents, including the freely accessible curriculum vitae (CV) and language passport, help citizens communicate their skills and qualifications effectively when looking for a job or training in Europe.

They also help employers understand the skills and qualifications of the workforce, and education and training authorities define curriculum content.

Since its launch in 2005, Europass has been a huge success story, as numbers show. Between February 2005 and August 2017, 100 million CVs were created online through Cedefop's Europass editor. This represents a 20 km high pile, or one CV generated online every 1.5 seconds.

EUROPASS IN FIGURES

- **5 DOCUMENTS** to make people's skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood
- Over **100 MILLION CVs** generated through the online editor
- A portal available in **27 LANGUAGES**
- A network of national Europass centres in **35 COUNTRIES** (European Union Member States, candidate countries and European Economic Area)
- **85% OF USERS** satisfied

User feedback has been very positive, with many pointing out the editor's user-friendliness and the good document structure.

Cedefop's Europass portal coordinator Philippe Tissot is delighted at reaching this milestone: 'Starting with a blank page in 2004, we developed a user-friendly CV editor, paying

constant attention to user needs. Today, 1.5 million CVs are generated through the editor every month, and over 85% of users rate the tool as good or excellent.' ■

Learn more about
Europass and
create your CV



new

CEDEFOP PUBLICATIONS

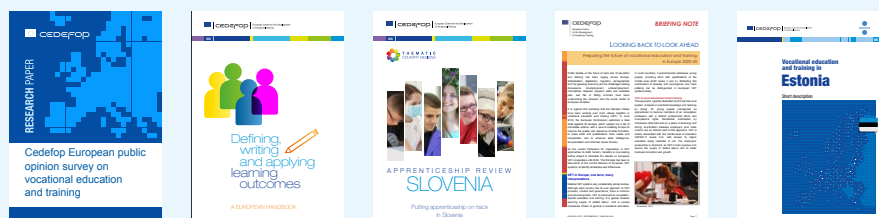


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IN FOCUS

INVESTING IN SKILLS PAYS OFF

This Cedefop study seeks to provide a comprehensive and robust evidence base on low-skilled adults in the European Union. It analyses trends in low skills among adults as well as characteristics, determinants and risks. Through an assessment of the consequences associated with being low-skilled, the benefits of updating individuals' skills through adult and lifelong learning can be identified and appreciated, supporting a rationale for public intervention in this area.



OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Download the publication you wish by clicking on the cover or title

- Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training
- Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes
- Apprenticeship review: Slovenia
- Briefing note – Skills anticipation: looking to the future
- Briefing note – Looking back to look ahead
- Briefing note – People, machines, robots and skills
- Vocational education and training in Estonia
- Spotlight on VET Germany
- Spotlight on VET United Kingdom
- Spotlight on VET Estonia
- Spotlight on VET Luxembourg
- Spotlight on VET Austria

coming up



For more information on what's coming up go to the events page on the Cedefop website: www.cedefop.europa.eu/events or scan this QR code

IN FOCUS

POLICY LEARNING FORUM – UPSKILLING PATHWAYS: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

7–8 FEBRUARY

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



Cedefop, together with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and in collaboration with the European Commission, is organising a policy learning forum to bring together governments, social partners and civil society to help one another define and implement the *Upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults* initiative. The forum is the first in a series of events that aim to create a platform for countries to learn from best practise and explore common challenges in improving the abilities of those with low skill levels.

OTHER EVENTS

FEBRUARY	22–23	THESSALONIKI, GREECE	Cedefop conference: VET in the 21st century – Future trends and priorities
MARCH	13–14	THESSALONIKI, GREECE	Meeting of learning providers' practitioner community to promote quality in vocational education and training
JUNE	1–2	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	European youth event – A European Parliament initiative



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Publications Office

ISSN 2363-0183



9 772363 018305