



ANNUAL REPORT



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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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. Cedefop was originally established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75. This decision was repealed in 2019 by Regulation (EU) 2019/128 establishing Cedefop as a Union Agency with a renewed mandate.

Europe 123, Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE
Postal address: Cedefop service post, 57001 Themi, GREECE
Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020
Email: info@cedefop.europa.eu
www.cedefop.europa.eu

Jürgen Siebel, *Executive Director*
Barbara Dorn, *Chair of the Management Board*



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FOREWORD

A memorable year lies behind us. Virtually overnight, it put our resilience, agility and ability to fulfil our workplan to the test. At the same time, it gave us the chance to demonstrate our flexibility, creativity and reliability as the EU's port of call for VET.

And I am pleased to say that our team rose to the challenge. As our performance recap shows, we even exceeded our plans. The real-time evidence on the pandemic's impact on the labour market, skill needs and VET, which we offered soon after the pandemic had brought Europe to a halt and throughout the year, received positive feedback; notably this included by the Employment Committee of the European Parliament and the public television of our host country, Greece.

As the pandemic disrupted our economies, people's jobs and education systems, a new EU VET and skills policy was in the making. The aim to fast-track the move towards a digital, green and fair economy and society to bolster recovery, required suiting VET better to the even more prominent role it will have to play in this effort.

We are proud to see that the evidence and expertise we shared in the shaping of the new policy were taken on board. The new Skills Agenda, the first ever VET recommendation and the Osnabrück declaration, all highlight VET as an enabler of recovery and innovation, based on strong skills intelligence, not just a remedy. And they place more emphasis on advancing continuing VET. These were key aspects that we had made the case for together with the ETF in our joint discussion paper on challenges and opportunities for VET in the next decade.

The invitations by Commissioner Schmit and the German Presidency to contribute to the new policy, and the monitoring mandates we have been entrusted with, are not only a sign of trust in the relevance of our work; they are also a recognition of our role at the heart of EU VET and skills policy-making.

Continuing VET needs to become the 'new normal' for all adults to help make lifelong learning a reality, and, thus, a main principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights. This conviction also underpins our own course for the years to come, which we were shaping in parallel in what was a successful and inclusive process, together with our Management Board, staff and management. The ambition of our newly designed strategy – to support proactive, learner-centred, enabling and flexible VET throughout people's lives – fully

supports the EU policy framework objectives and reflects the wider remit assigned to us in 2019.

Developing new ideas and embracing change are part of our DNA. Our instant research, and the quick shift to new ways of working with our stakeholders, provided the visible proof of this capacity. The high interest that our web-based events attracted, plus the participants' positive feedback, confirmed that we have managed this transition speedily and successfully. Virtual events are certainly here to stay with us and make it possible to engage the wider VET community even more actively in the future.

Less visible, but none-the-less crucial for our success was what happened behind the scene of our activities on VET, skills and qualifications in COVID-19 times. Without the swift adoption of digital solutions, we would not have been able to offer our remarkable content-related outputs and hold our events. Our business continuity plan and crisis management strategy helped us safeguard our operations and the wellbeing of staff. This highly demanding year for all staff also highlighted the crucial role of support services staff in the Agency's success. Cedefop has been certified as compliant with the Greek health protocols related to the pandemic and we were also cited as exemplary in the way we took care of our staff by the independent expert on our Management Board nominated by the European Parliament.

I would like to thank all staff and management wholeheartedly for their tremendous commitment, great team spirit and professionalism fulfilling their jobs beyond duty. We are all grateful to our Executive and Management Boards for their invaluable support and engagement throughout this year. Personally, I am very proud that they rated the quality of our consultation with them as very high.

Last but not least, I would like to thank our sister agencies and our EU and international partners for the fruitful cooperation. This challenging year has displayed the added value that collaborating across institutional boundaries can achieve. Besides planned joint initiatives, such as those with the ETF, Eurofound and the European Economic and Social Committee, we proved our capacity to pool resources and act instantly to meet emerging needs. The survey on guidance led by us and conducted jointly with the members of the inter-agency working group on technical and vocational education attests to this fruitful cooperation.

While we are still in the midst of the pandemic and it remains uncertain when we will be back to normal and welcome our stakeholders again on our premises, I can assure you that Cedefop will move full-steam ahead and remain your reliable partner along the value chain of VET, skills and qualifications. We are an incubator of ideas and a platform for policy learning, a provider of sound research and analyses, and a valuable partner in policy implementation.

Jürgen Siebel
Executive Director



CEDEFOP

Cedefop was one of the first EU decentralised agencies. Founded in 1975 and based in Greece since 1995, Cedefop supports the promotion, development and implementation of the Union policy in the fields of VET, skills and qualifications by working together with the European Commission, EU Member States and the social partners ⁽¹⁾.

In line with its vision and values set for 2017-20, Cedefop's strategic areas of operation are:

- (a) shaping VET: support the understanding of the future of VET and fostering the renewal and modernisation of VET systems and institutions in response to rapidly changing policy needs and priorities; support the development and use of European tools and principles promoting lifelong and life-wide learning;
- (b) valuing VET: support the development and implementation of VET and continuing/adult learning policies, creating the conditions for all people to gain the knowledge, competences and values required for employability, entrepreneurship, innovation and a tolerant and inclusive society;
- (c) informing VET: inform the design of VET and skills policies that ensure the availability of a qualified workforce and its continuous and effective skilling in light of marked technological and social developments shaping the future of work; promote policies that can facilitate skills utilisation of individuals in alignment with changing skill needs.

Cedefop's multiannual objectives – providing evidence and new knowledge; monitoring and analysing policies; acting as a knowledge broker for countries and stakeholders – reflect the core functions of the Agency. Combined with the thematic strategic areas of operation, they define the type and scope of the Agency's deliverables. The multiannual objectives steer the activities of Cedefop's annual work programmes and ensure continuity of its work, allowing the necessary flexibility to respond to changing needs.

In 2020, Cedefop jointly shaped with its key stakeholders a new post-2020 strategy, which brings about a revised vision and values and is fully in line with the new EU policy framework. Cedefop's new strategy will support the Agency's activities as of 2021.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and repealing Council Regulation EEC No 337/75.

CEDEFOP GOVERNANCE



MAIN BUDGET SOURCES:

general Union budget,
Norway, Iceland

reports to ↓ ↑ gives discharge

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

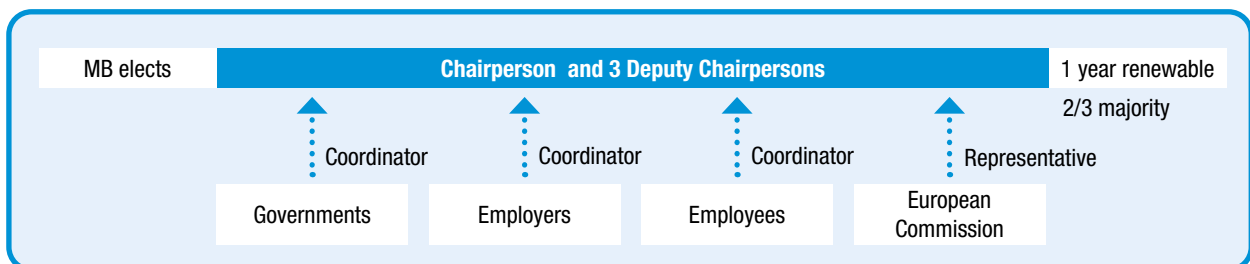


4 years renewable
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CEDEFOP'S MANAGEMENT BOARD: DIRECTS, APPOINTS, AUTHORIZES, SUPERVISES



Meet 1x/year

also on request of Chairperson,
Commission, or min. 1/3 of members



Decision-making

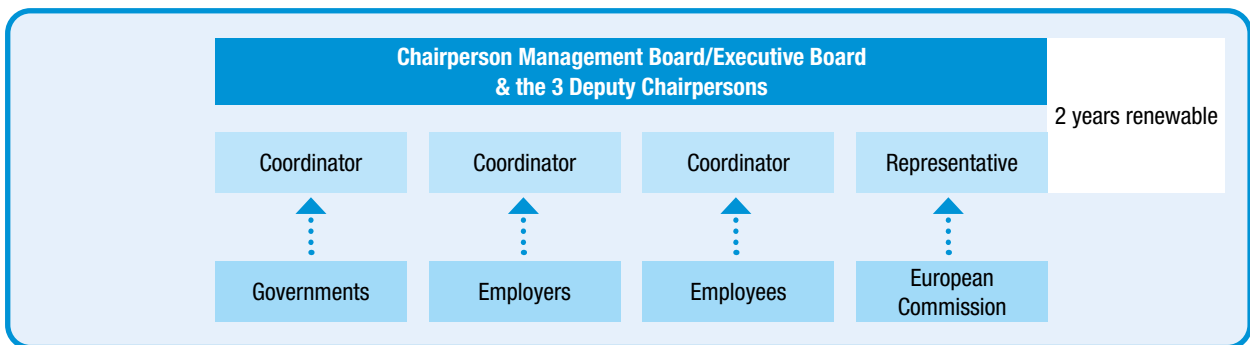
simple majority if absent
→ voting rights to alternates



Adopts its own and
the Executive Board's
rules of procedure

EXECUTIVE BOARD TO ASSIST THE MANAGEMENT BOARD

- discusses planning documents and financial matters
- prepares Management Board decisions, may take provisional decisions if urgent
- advises the Executive Director in implementing Management Board decisions to reinforce supervision of administrative and budgetary management
- together with the Management Board, monitors follow-up of evaluation, audit, investigation findings



Meet 3x/year
also upon request
of Chairperson or its members



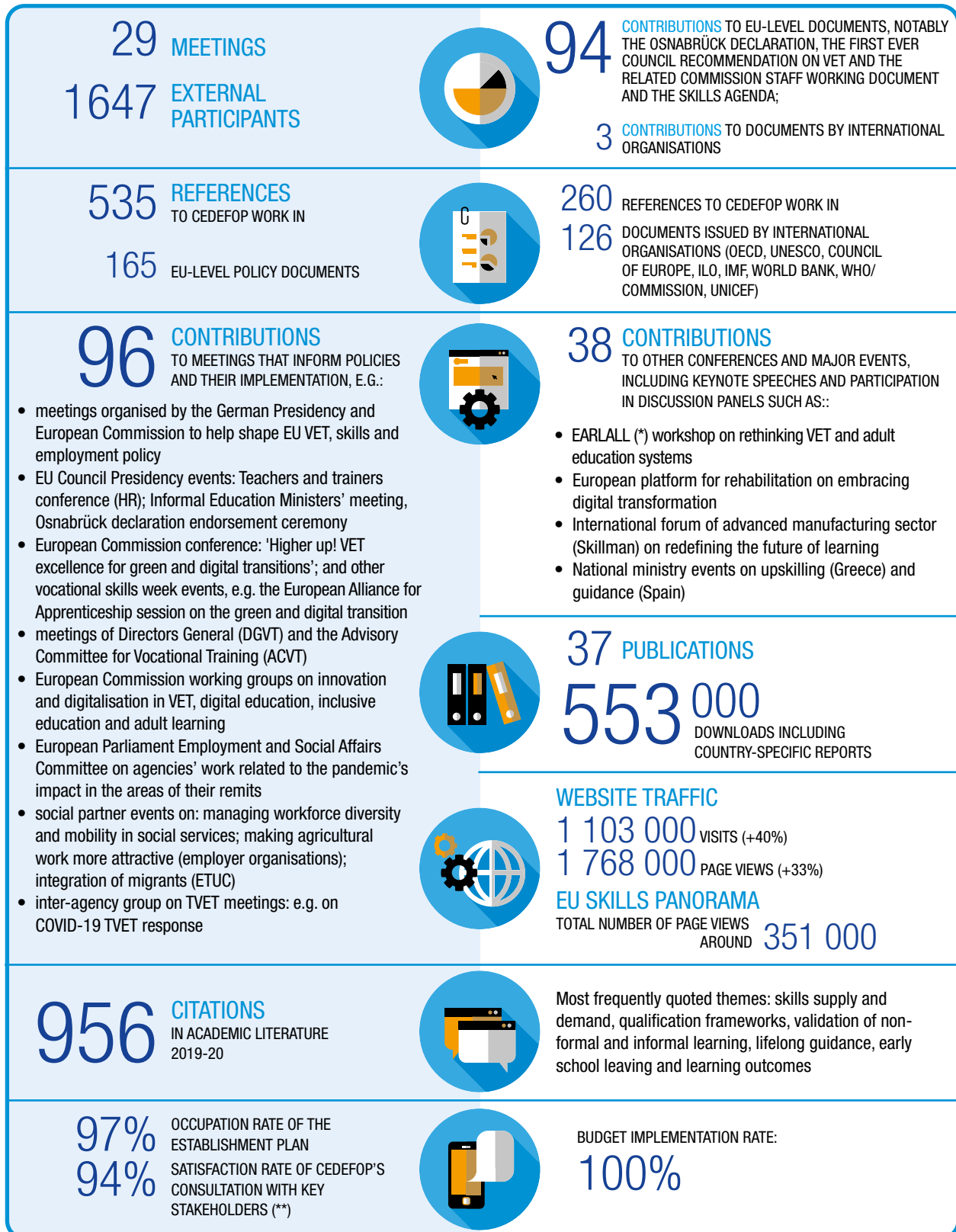
Each group may designate
up to 2 alternates



Coordinators keep
their group members
informed

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE



(*) European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning.

(**) The term 'key stakeholders' refers to the groups represented in Cedefop's Management Board (social partners, governments, European Commission and the independent expert nominated by the European Parliament).

Against all odds, Cedefop accomplished and even exceeded its work plan in 2020, which will be remembered as a watershed year. The pandemic's disruptive impact on economic sectors, employment and learning coincided with the already planned design of a new post-2020 EU policy framework for vocational education and training (VET) and skills. This entailed enabling VET to reveal its full potential to help shape and manage the necessary digital, green and fair transitions and boost recovery at the same time. This challenging year was therefore also an opportunity for us to confirm our role at the core of EU policy-making, show our flexibility to meet emerging needs and prove our resilience.

1.1. HELPING TO SHAPE POLICY

Following consultation with Commissioner Schmit, Cedefop evidence informed the renewed Skills Agenda and the first ever Council recommendation on VET, as reflected in our performance indicators. The Skills Agenda includes specific actions on upskilling and reskilling of adults, the Pact for skills initiative, and on strengthening skills intelligence; this is an area where Cedefop's expertise has been in high demand, from the EU-level forecasts to its recent real-time overviews on skill demand based on big data.

Also, the German Presidency invited Cedefop to share its expertise in the shaping of the Osnabrück declaration, which sets out concrete actions accompanying the VET recommendation. This gives new impetus to the Copenhagen process, the European cooperation in modernising VET since 2002. From the outset, Cedefop has informed and supported this process. For the coming period, Cedefop has again been entrusted with analysing countries' progress.

The new EU VET and skills policy largely reflects a stronger focus on continuing VET (CVET), advocated by Cedefop for all adults. The pandemic-induced job crisis increased and accelerated the need for massive up- and reskilling. To inform the 2020 policy-making processes, Cedefop joined forces with the ETF. In the discussion paper *The importance of being vocational*, we set out the key challenges and opportunities for VET in the light of the pandemic's impact, future trends and the changing world of work. We made the case for a policy shift to advance CVET, which is crucial for upskilling and reskilling

citizens and creating a dynamic workforce. We also stressed VET's potential as an enabler of recovery and successful transitions.

This notion underpinned the debate at the high-level conference jointly hosted with the ETF. *Enhancing European cooperation in VET: looking back – planning ahead*, held under the auspices of the Croatian and German Presidencies, was one milestone on the road to the Osnabrück declaration. It built upon the Cedefop/ETF monitoring report on the 2015-20 cycle of the Copenhagen process and the discussion paper.

1.2. SUPPORTING CVET AND UPSKILLING AS A PATH FOR JOBS AND LIFE

Skills development of adults was at the core of Cedefop and Eurofound cooperation on the European company survey, an example of how joint ventures not only help to add value to a complementary expertise but also aid in saving costs. Survey findings were presented in the Cedefop-Eurofound report *Workplace practices unlocking employee potential* and discussed in joint seminars. How to shape workplaces to help staff learn and use skills to their full potential is a crucial question, considering the massive need for up-/reskilling and the still low participation in adult learning.

However, according to Cedefop's 2019 opinion survey, nearly all respondents in work stated that their jobs require them to keep their skills constantly up to date. People also believe that CVET and adult learning brings them benefits and the need for updated skills will increase in the future. Overall, they have a positive view on the offers available and at least two-thirds in every Member State see adult learning as important as school or university. They also agree that their governments should prioritise investment in adult learning. Nevertheless, 'no need' is the most important reason for non-participation in continuous training, besides lack of time and costs. This paradox was highlighted by Cedefop's latest [opinion survey](#), which aimed to understand better how adults perceive continuing training and learning.

Why is participation in adult learning low although millions of jobs are changing or disappearing, and how can the ambitious targets of the renewed Skills Agenda be reached? These questions kicked off the debate at the Cedefop and German

Presidency's jointly organised seminar, [Attractiveness of CVET in the EU](#). It brought together representatives from the European Commission, Parliament, EU social partners, Member States and other stakeholders. Establishing a CVET culture is a necessity: this was the commonly agreed conclusion of this event. Making CVET the new norm for adults, requires coordinated systems that consider learner and employer needs, are based on strong partnerships and shared responsibilities, and are underpinned by incentives and support measures for citizens and employers.

Coordinated approaches, partnerships and support were also underlying principles at the policy learning forum [Upskilling pathways: a vision for the future](#). This event was part of a series that Cedefop organises together with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to help countries make upskilling pathways a reality. With these forums Cedefop contributes directly to the follow-up of the related Council recommendation and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

1.3. DIGGING DEEPER INTO SKILLS AND SKILL NEEDS

Empowering people to learn throughout their lives, help shape and manage change and develop personally, requires a strong foundation. Key competences provide this foundation, as the 2020 Skills Agenda and the renewed EU VET policy reiterate. Our study on digital, multilingual and literacy competences confirmed that their promotion in IVET is usually linked to these broad objectives. However, strategies often failed to guide implementation. The findings were timely given the fast shift to digital learning and working caused by the pandemic. The pandemic also highlighted the significance of entrepreneurial minds. How entrepreneurship competence is embedded in the different types of VET, and how these different ecosystems promote its acquisition, remains an under-researched area, as our exploratory work in 2020 revealed. This issue is at the core of a subsequently designed project within our key competence work strand.

ENHANCING EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN VET: LOOKING BACK – PLANNING AHEAD

The conference focused on informing the next policy-making steps from two perspectives: the main findings and lessons learned from the joint Cedefop-ETF monitoring report on countries' achievements in VET up to 2020; and its current and future challenges and opportunities as outlined in their joint discussion paper.

Vice President Schinas and Commissioner Schmit stressed the value of Cedefop's and ETF's support in the effort to achieve the necessary skills revolution, referring to their work as 'a real goldmine'. The Education Ministers of Croatia, Germany and Greece reflected on VET's role and their initiatives to put VET centre stage.

Over 190 experts, stakeholders, European Commission, government and social partner representatives joined the debate on the role and future of VET at a time of unprecedented challenges due to the coronavirus. The discussions highlighted that current economic and societal changes – digitalisation, green deal, demographic

shifts, economic uncertainty – place VET in the foreground as a flexible means of preparing people for a changing world of work. The following key take-aways informed the German Presidency's work on the Osnabrück declaration:

- VET needs a new vision: an enabler for people, enterprises, economy and society, not just a remedy;
- VET needs to be flexible and transparent: this means better links to other education paths, more higher-level VET; and the use of the tools designed to ease comparing and recognising qualifications within and across borders;
- VET needs highly qualified teachers and trainers;
- digital and green transformation requires excellent and innovative VET underpinned by advanced skills intelligence;
- a lifelong learning culture is a prerequisite for CVET to reach its potential and for more permeable learning pathways to become a reality.

To foster the skills learners need to succeed in work and life, VET policy and provision require sound skills intelligence. Generating unique and policy-relevant quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the current and future world of work is one of our main ambitions. In 2020, this included research on the impact of technological change, automation and artificial intelligence (AI) on EU labour markets and jobs and insights into countries' responses. The report highlights how important human resource practices and social dialogue are for ensuring a smooth transmission of businesses and workers towards a new digital future.

Besides the update of our regular long-term skills forecast [entrusted to Cedefop by the Council since 2010](#), we continued to provide information on current trends. Our EU-level real-time labour market information based on big data technologies is ground-breaking work that has

attracted considerable interest from the European Commission and other stakeholders. 2020 saw important steps forward in developing Cedefop's skills online vacancy analysis tool further to inform smart European statistics. The collaboration with Eurostat for this purpose was set out in a memorandum of understanding.

1.4. SERVING EMERGING NEEDS

As the crisis unfolded, a need arose to understand its impact on the EU labour market, workforce and VET systems. In response, we swiftly adapted our work on skills intelligence, by adding new perspectives to existing evidence and adjusting research in the planning stage. But this was not all: initiating new work and in-

UPSKILLING PATHWAYS: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Four years after the adoption of the Council recommendation on empowering low-skilled adults to upgrade their skills, the 2020 joint Cedefop-EESC policy learning forum discussed the following:

- success factors and challenges countries face when putting them in place;
- how Cedefop's specifically designed analytical framework can support them;
- future priorities and directions for this work.

This series of events addresses members of the EESC and the Commission's Advisory Committee for Vocational Training, bringing together social partners, government and civil society representatives. In 2020 the forum explored the lessons learned in Ireland, the Netherlands and Finland, where strategies are under way and starting to bear fruit. Their experience confirmed some key factors for success:

- a comprehensive approach across policy areas and coordinated efforts by all stakeholders;
- tapping social partners' potential to reach the most vulnerable groups of the population;
- governments' continued commitment to ensuring that the low-skilled can access learning.

Reflections were also informed by Cedefop's opinion survey on adult learning and CVET and its most recent research on the low-skilled: 46% of the adult population in the EU-27, Iceland, Norway and the UK, the study suggests, need to upgrade or update their skills or gain new ones to be able to keep or get a job. This requires a systematic approach bringing tailored offers together with support systems, such as guidance, skills validation and financing. Cedefop's analytical framework can help design coordinated approaches, pull together resources, create synergies and identify key areas of action.

Participants stressed the urgency of upskilling pathways, especially in the face of the pandemic's disruptive impact on labour markets. Several countries' ambitious agendas signal awareness at the highest political level. Using this momentum is crucial to creating a new learning culture underpinned by a common vision where systematic learner-centred lifelong upskilling and reskilling is the norm, sustained by effective cooperation of all stakeholders at all levels and targeted approaches to reach those most at need.

stant surveys in collaboration with our ReferNet and thematic networks – apprenticeships, early leaving and career guidance – enabled us to provide speedy information across our portfolio of activities. Besides reporting on labour market disruptions and changing skill needs, we offered immediate insights into countries’ general crisis management in VET, the pandemic’s impact on apprenticeships, and new demands on VET and career guidance.

To avoid duplication of work and improve relevance and value of the information collected, Cedefop joined forces with other EU and international organisations. Besides supporting a global survey investigating the pandemic’s impact on training of employees, apprentices and interns in all types of jobs, we coordinated an international survey on career guidance. The report *Career guidance policy and practice in the*

pandemic provides a snapshot of early responses and gives an outlook into the potential role of guidance in recovery policies.

With our new research, data and in-depth analyses we aimed to assist policy-makers and social partners as they prepare for a new reality. Involving our networks and adopting new working methods to tap the combined potential of our teams has proved valuable. A wealth of instant information was made available in a dedicated landing page on our web portal, which we updated throughout the year. An interactive flyer offers our users a structured overview of the rich information we generated for our stakeholders.

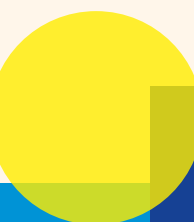
EXPLORING THE PANDEMIC’S IMPACT ON LABOUR MARKET AND SKILL NEEDS

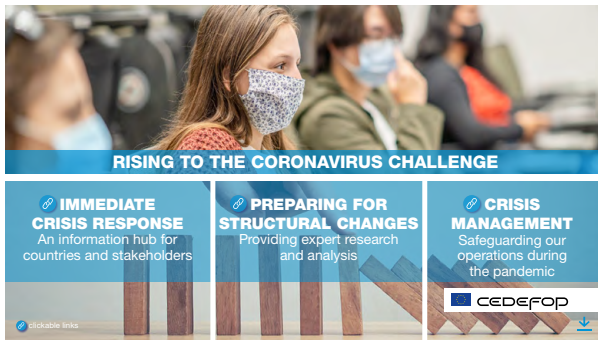
As the COVID crisis unfolded, and affected countries’ economies and people’s livelihoods, Cedefop embarked instantly on providing real-time insights and medium- and longer-term perspectives on changes in skill needs and employment. Our aim is to support policy-making and VET provision in helping people adjust to current skill needs and prepare for those to come on the way towards recovery.

- Through our OVATE platform we provided insight into how recruitment changed and developed in different sectors: following a fall in online job offers by more than a third in comparison to 2019, we could see some recovery in the summer but in several sectors the situation remained depressed.
- Unsurprisingly, digitalisation and large-scale telework increased the need for ICT and ICT-related skills; but sales and marketing skills were also in demand to help develop or expand online shops or digital sales strategies, as were engineering, architecture and construction skills to make production or service delivery coronavirus-proof.
- Together with Eurofound we designed a follow-up to the European company survey to col-

lect empirical data on how organisations dealt with the challenges of the pandemic.

- We also adjusted the design of our skills and jobs survey, which will investigate changing skill needs in the context of digitalisation.
- As our forecast data on long-term trends were generated before the outbreak of the pandemic, we complemented them by providing additional information on our web portal and by developing a forecast scenario to assess the pandemic’s impact.





Rising to the coronavirus challenge

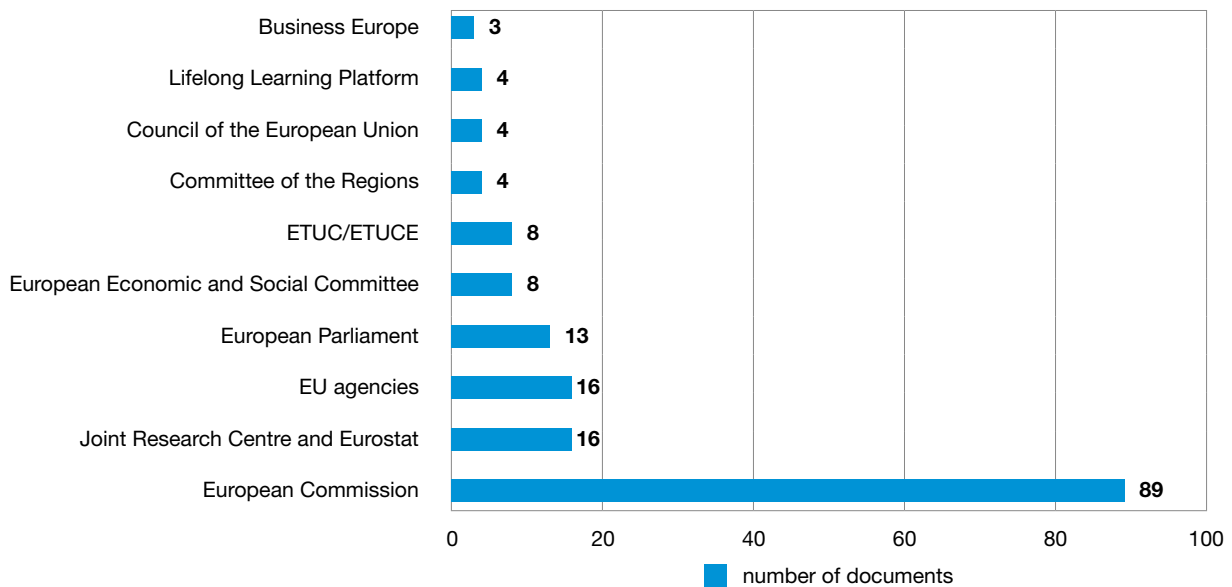
As evident from our achievements and performance indicators, we did not only prove our agility and flexibility in responding to socioeconomic developments and emerging challenges. We also manifested our role as a proactive central provider of intelligence for EU policies on VET, skills and qualifications.

1.5. ASSESSING THE USE OF CEDEFOP'S OUTCOMES IN 2020

Cedefop's contribution to EU policy-making is evident from the policy documents adopted in 2020. The VET recommendation and the Osnabrück declaration not only entrust Cedefop with monitoring countries' follow-up; they also invite the Commission to make use of Cedefop's evidence and support, in areas such as skills intelligence, apprenticeships and skills development. Cedefop evidence is also reflected in the Council conclusions on reskilling and upskilling and the Council's and Commission's joint employment report. The Commission's work on lifelong guidance and validation of non-formal learning has made most extensive use of Cedefop sources and findings.

Once again, Cedefop evidence was used by various DGs besides DG Employment and DG EAC; this demonstrates the value of our work

Figure 1. EU institutions and EU-level stakeholders using Cedefop work

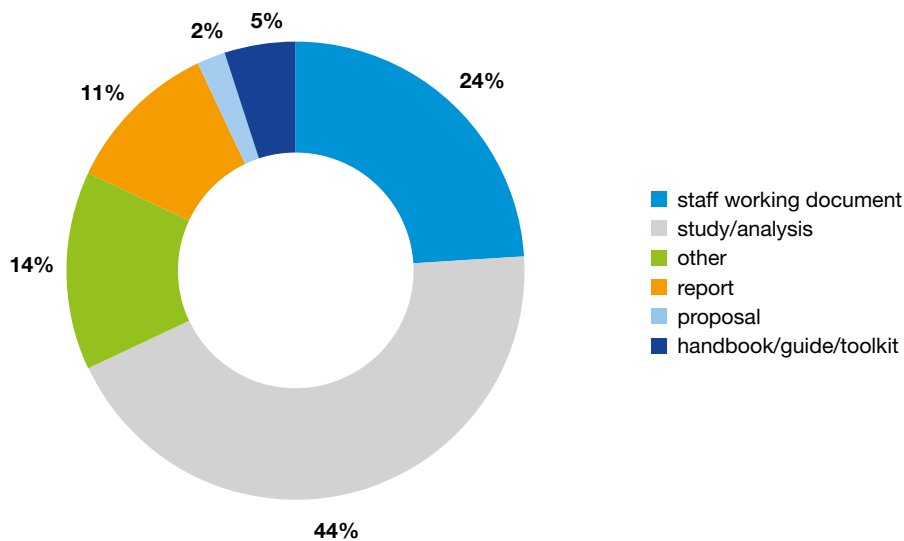


535 citations/references in 165 EU-level documents/reports/papers:

39%	Informing VET by offering labour market intelligence
34%	Shaping VET systems and qualifications
20%	Valuing VET to empower people
7%	Combination of activities

Source: Cedefop performance measurement, indicator 1: EU-level documents citing Cedefop.

Figure 2. Type of European Commission (*) documents citing Cedefop work

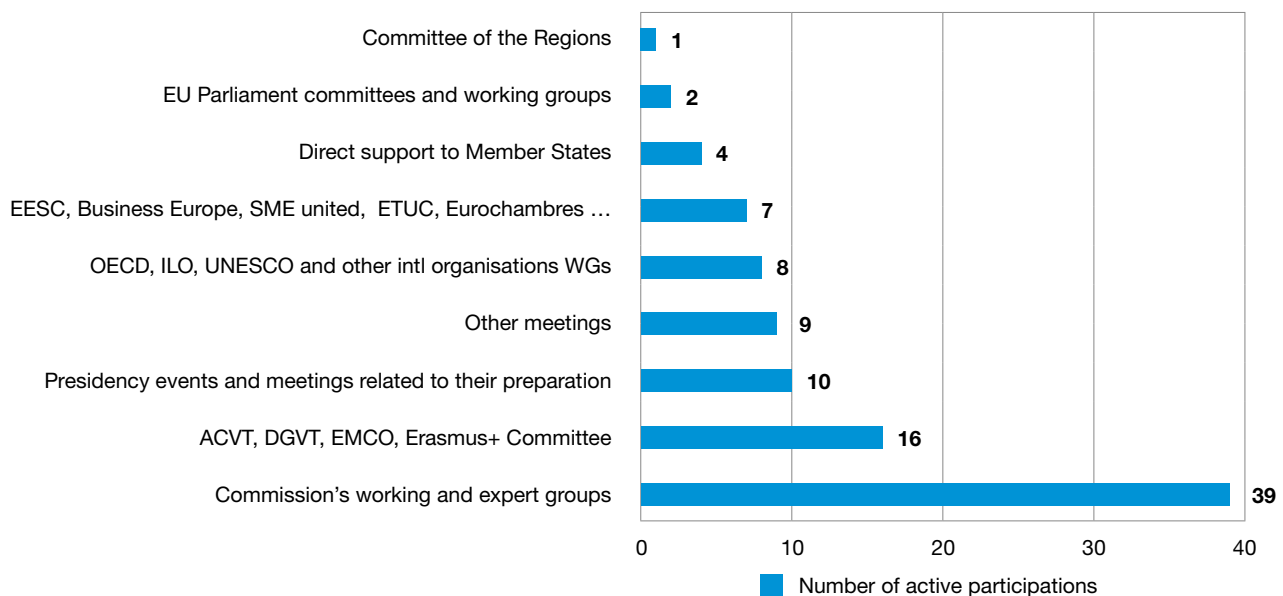


(*) Including publication from the Joint Research Centre and Eurostat.

NB: 'Other' includes background documents for discussion by policy-makers and experts, for instance in Commission working groups, working papers, executive summaries, brochures, policy and economic briefs, newsletters, etc.

Source: Cedefop performance measurement, indicator 1: EU-level documents citing Cedefop.

Figure 3. Contributions to meetings that inform policies and their implementation



Contribution by strategic area of operation

40%	Valuing VET to empower people
25%	Combination of activities
23%	Shaping VET systems and qualifications
12%	Informing VET by offering labour market intelligence

Source: Cedefop performance measurement, indicator 4.

beyond the immediate VET community. Nearly half of the European Commission's country-specific European Semester reports cited at least one Cedefop source. A range of Commission papers that quoted Cedefop mirrored the emphasis on skills development in EU policy. They included policy documents and studies by the DGs for research, growth, economic and financial affairs that looked into up- and reskilling in micro and small enterprises, the relationship between innovation and skills, or competences to make digitalisation a success. Papers that used Cedefop sources also related to the EU's climate ambition, barriers for the single market or the European strategies for the Danube and Adriatic regions. Once again, Cedefop's work on skills anticipation and matching made up the highest share of references, followed by monitoring VET developments and promoting access to, and attractiveness of, VET. References in documents and reports issued by international organisations show a similar picture, with the OECD accounting for around half of those citing Cedefop work, followed by the ILO and UNESCO.

Cedefop contributed substantially to EU-level meetings that inform policies and their implementation and events organised by EU, international and national organisations, even though fewer events took place in 2020 due to the pandemic and some of the working groups reached the end of their mandates. This included our continued support to the EQF advisory group and meetings of the General Directors for VET, through background papers and presentations as well as social partner events on various themes. Consultation meetings organised by the German Council Presidency and the European Commission to inform their work on the renewed VET and skills policy are particularly noteworthy.

As in previous years, Cedefop shared its expertise at Presidency conferences, notably those on teachers and trainers and artificial intelligence in the world of work, organised respectively by the Croatian and German Presidencies. There was also a European conference on platform work hosted by Berlin's Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Services. Contributions to the European vocational skills week events included presentations and support in shaping and moderating the conference on VET excellence for green and digital transitions. Cedefop was also invited to share its findings in a joint conference on guidance organised by the Spanish education

and employment ministries and several events organised by the education ministry and other organisations in its host country, Greece. This included an invitation from a public TV channel to a programme on labour market shifts induced by the pandemic and future prospects.

As participant satisfaction rates prove, Cedefop managed the shift to virtual events speedily and successfully. Most felt that the events were interactive, and all expressed their interest in attending other virtual events organised by Cedefop in the future. Several of the events attracted a considerably higher number of participants than originally planned. The dissemination of our publications also turned fully virtual, which led to a substantial rise in visits to our web portal and publication downloads. Frequent communication activities through social media went hand-in-hand with increasing numbers of followers on Facebook and Twitter. The increasing use of our online sources is also reflected in academic literature citing Cedefop work.

As our performance indicators show, Cedefop successfully ensured business continuity and fulfilled its statutory obligations. We speedily shifted to remote working and adjusted our IT infrastructure, management, business and work plans accordingly. In a survey among our Management Board members, they rated the consultation quality substantially higher than in the previous one conducted in 2017 (an increase by 17ppt). Despite some rescheduling of activities that became necessary due to the pandemic, we implemented 100% of our budget and achieved an outturn rate of 99.2%.



RESULTS ACHIEVED

2.1. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY: SHAPING VET BY MODERNISING VET SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS AND BY SUPPORTING THE USE OF EU TOOLS AND PRINCIPLES

PERFORMANCE

197

REFERENCES
IN EU POLICY DOCUMENTS



For example:

- Council recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience and the related Commission staff working document
- European Commission 2020 country reports on the European Semester
- *Education and Training Monitor country analyses*
- ET 2020 working group report on innovation and digitalisation
- European Parliament analysis on the future of tertiary education in Europe
- Business Europe position paper on EU Skills and Youth Package

22

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO MEETINGS THAT INFORM
POLICIES AND THEIR
IMPLEMENTATION

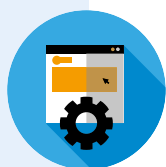


For example:

- meetings of the EQF advisory group on horizontal comparisons of qualifications, international qualifications and national qualifications frameworks
- EQAVET annual and steering committee meetings and policy learning activity on evaluation and review
- ESCO maintenance committee and Member States working group meetings

73

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO EU-LEVEL DOCUMENTS



For example:

- Commission proposal for a VET recommendation and accompanying staff working document and Osnabrück declaration
- *Education and Training Monitor 2020* and European Semester-related country analyses
- Joint documents with the Commission in the context of the EQF advisory group

94⁰⁰⁰

DOWNLOADS OF CEDEFOP
PUBLICATIONS



TOP THREE PUBLICATIONS:

- *Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes* (7 380)
- *Vocational education and training in Romania* (6 153)
- *Vocational education and training in Europe, 1995-2035* (4 650)

In 2020, work under this strategic area of operation focused on: (a) monitoring and analysing VET policy developments; (b) implementing European tools and principles for transparency and recognition of qualifications; and (c) deepening the understanding of the future of VET. Cedefop also acted as a knowledge broker through contributions to several EU and international events, including a high-level virtual conference organised in

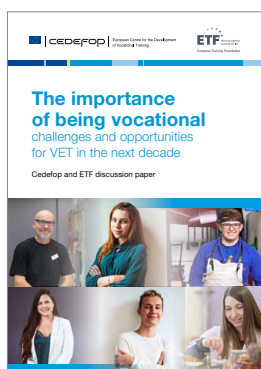
cooperation with the ETF and focusing on the key challenges and opportunities for VET cooperation in the post-2020 era.

2.1.1. REPORTING ON EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN VET

2020 was an important landmark in Cedefop's contribution to the **European cooperation in mod-**

ernising VET, known as the Copenhagen process. As in previous years since 2002, Cedefop analysed countries' progress towards the achievement of the common priorities for VET agreed in 2015 for Member States, Iceland and Norway, and the candidate countries. The joint Cedefop-ETF report *Enhancing European cooperation in VET: outcomes of the Riga cycle* identified common trends and key challenges countries faced and also paved the way to the post-2020 European policy framework on VET. The report shows that, since 2015, countries have taken new steps to develop and expand apprenticeships and dual systems, systematise school-business cooperation, and establish wide-scale graduate tracking and training needs anticipation. Retraining a growing range of vulnerable groups has become the norm. Awareness of identifying and promoting key competences has also risen. Considerable attention has been paid by countries to VET teaching, with a view to boosting its attractiveness and strengthening teacher and trainer professional development.

Outcomes of Cedefop analysis informed DGVT and ACVT discussions and the Commission's Staff Working Document accompanying the proposal for a [Council recommendation on VET](#).



2.1.2. DISCUSSING FUTURE ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

To debate the outcomes of its analysis of **VET policy developments**, Cedefop jointly hosted with the ETF a high-level virtual conference *Enhancing European cooperation in VET: looking back – planning ahead*. Discussions focused on the key challenges and opportunities for VET in light of the pandemic's impact, future trends and the changing world of work, as outlined in the Cedefop-ETF

discussion paper *The importance of being vocational*. Held under the auspices of the Croatian and German Presidencies on 30 June and 1 July, the conference was a key milestone on the road to the Osnabrück declaration.

Over 190 experts, European Commission, government and social partner representatives joined forces to debate the role and future of VET at a time of unprecedented challenge. Among the speakers were European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit, the Croatian Minister for Science and Education Blaženka Divjak, the German Federal Minister for Education and Research Anja Karliczek, and the Greek Minister for Education and Religious Affairs Niki Kerameus. The conference highlighted that current economic and societal changes – digitalisation, green deal, demographic shifts, economic uncertainty – place VET to the fore as a flexible means to prepare people for a changing world of work. Continuing VET is critical for upskilling and reskilling EU citizens and creating a dynamic workforce, ready to respond to the economic and societal challenges ahead and allow a smooth transition to a digital and greener economy.



2.1.3. PROVIDING COUNTRY-BASED INFORMATION

As an integral part of its work to support policy implementation with country-based evidence and analysis, Cedefop drafted 27 country fiches on the latest developments in VET, with a special focus on digital education and digital competence. This fed directly into the Commission's annual publication on recent policy measures in education and training: the *2020 Education and Training Monitor*. In addition, Cedefop contributed to the European

Enhancing European cooperation in VET

looking back – planning ahead

30 June and 1 July 2020
Virtual conference

#VETconference2020

WORKSHOP 1 TRANSPARENCY AND PERMEABILITY FOR STRONGER VET

SPECIAL PRESERVE and in-service-training for TEACHERS and TRAINERS on GREENING and DIGITAL SKILLS to keep up with and ahead of the TRANSFORMATION

SPEAKERS

EDUARD STAUBECKER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH, AUSTRIA
KÜLLI AAL, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, ESTONIA

WORKSHOP 2 VET FOR LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

SPEAKERS

MLADEN PERAZIC, CHAMBER OF ECONOMY (CEM), MONTENEGRO
MARY LYONS, SOLAS, IRELAND

COMPREHENSIVE NQFs have INCREASED
Common understanding and TRUST among QUALIFICATION SYSTEMS

VET will become AGE OPEN instead of AGE NEUTRAL in the future
LESS clear-cut BARRIERS and MORE interaction of IVET and CVET
A CULTURE of CVET is NEEDED TO DEVELOP ITS POTENTIAL
flexibility in teaching and training PROVISION

INDEQUAL TOPVOTED MESSAGE
A NEW VISION FOR VET
as an ENABLER OF PROGRESS and ECONOMIC and SOCIAL PROSPERITY and COHESION. A key player in enabling every individual to progress in SOCIETY and the LABOUR MARKET

INDEQUAL TOPVOTED MESSAGE
VET POLICY TOPVOTED MESSAGE
A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH IS NEEDED to enable EVERY INDIVIDUAL to have access to LIFE LONG LEARNING and SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

FOUR WORKSHOPS EIGHT KEY MESSAGES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO VOTE ON

INVEST in EMPLOYEE TRAINING to keep the SOCIAL PILLAR in FOCUS. the principles of the SKILLS GUARANTEE will need to be put into practice and EMBRACE ALL WORKERS including SMEs, SELF EMPLOYED and GIG WORKERS

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS and EXPERIENCED TRAINERS including HYBRID MODELS of TEACHERS and TRAINERS who work in BOTH VET INSTITUTIONS and COMPANIES

INDEQUAL TOPVOTED MESSAGE
FLEXIBLE and ATTRACTIVE LEARNING PATHWAYS also EXPANDING VET TO HIGHER LEVELS

WORKSHOP 3 VET AND SKILLS FOR THE GREEN DEAL AND NEW DIGITAL AGE

SPEAKERS

SIGRID TANI, TARTU VET CENTRE, ESTONIA
ALPTUG CALIK, PES, TURKEY
STELINA CHATZICHRISTOU, CEDEFOP

WORKSHOP 4 EXCELLENCE AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET

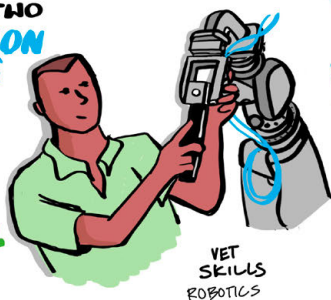
SPEAKERS

SAMPO SUHKO, OMINIA, FINLAND
ILZE BULIGINA, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, LATVIA



DAY TWO SESSION FIVE

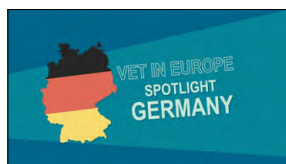
LOOKING AHEAD: DISCUSSION IN FOUR PARALLEL WORKSHOPS



@chapplecartoons.co.uk

Commission's work on the preparation of country-specific recommendations in the context of the European Semester.

For the **Croatian and the German Presidencies** of the EU, [short descriptions](#), [spotlights](#) and [animated videos](#) on VET in Croatia and Germany were released and disseminated at several high-level meetings, including the meeting of Directors General for VET and the European vocational skills week. A best seller of Cedefop publications, the [Spotlight on VET in Europe – 2020 compilation](#), was updated and will be published in the first quarter of 2021.



2.1.4. VET SYSTEMS RESPONSES TO COVID-19

Cedefop's ongoing efforts to support its European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) were successful in developing quality criteria and guidelines for the national news on VET. As Cedefop's main source of national information, ReferNet members provided 115 national news items on recent developments in VET and VET-related labour market issues, which were published on Cedefop's website in 2020. A special feature this year included an analysis of EU countries' responses to the effect of COVID-19 on their education and training systems. A total of 33 national news items were published from 28 countries, providing insights into the main challenges that countries came up against, including transition to distance learning, arrangements to keep students engaged, organisation of grad-

uates' final exams and planning for the 2020/21 school year in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis.

2.1.5. FOCUS ON KEY COMPETENCES

The results of Cedefop's [study on digital, multilingual and literacy competences in initial VET](#) are encouraging and alarming at the same time. Many policy actions promote key competences in initial VET: these have been reflected in most qualification types in IVET between 2011 and 2018, with increasing attention to digital competences. Two-thirds of policies contributed to observable changes in programme delivery, reference documents, teacher/trainer training, and assessment standards. Although national policies only occasionally referred directly to the EU VET agenda, many have been in line with, and even guided by, EU priorities. However, not all policies are exploiting their full potential. For example, around one-third of the analysed policies promoting digital competences across EU Member States seems to lack an explicit objective of embedding the competence in initial VET. Overall, most policies that promote key competences in IVET have an agenda-setting purpose and longer-term visions; fewer policies are focusing on short-term, practical implementation plans.

Cedefop's study confirmed that promoting key competences in VET is usually linked to broader societal objectives. Comparatively, policies on multilingual competence more often have broader objectives related to supporting lifelong learning. Social inclusion is more often the wider objective of policies promoting literacy. Policies promoting digital competence have employability as the most common broader societal objective.

In 2020, Cedefop's preliminary analysis of entrepreneurship competence showed that, despite a rich literature on the topic, little is known about how entrepreneurship competence is embedded in VET. This will be the focus of a dedicated study in 2021.



2.1.6. SUPPORTING EQF IMPLEMENTATION

Cedefop worked closely with the Commission in **supporting the implementation of the European qualifications framework (EQF)** in line with the priorities of the revised 2017 EQF recommendation. The Agency provided conceptual input to the EQF advisory group (AG) meetings in February, June and November. Attention was given to the question of how to develop further and deepen the role and impact of the EQF, notably through interconnected databases and more systematic use of learning outcomes. Significant effort was put into supporting the work of the EQF AG on validation of non-formal and informal learning, aiming for an update of the 2015 European Commission and Cedefop *Guidelines on validation*. Cedefop provided written comments to the (updated) 'referencing reports' ⁽²⁾ of Serbia and Ireland. It also contributed its evidence and expertise to the work of several project groups, in particular on the horizontal comparison of qualifications and the third country dimension of the EQF. Horizontal comparison of qualifications has been an important discussion topic in the EQF AG in the past five years. This work, supported by the European Commission and Cedefop, has explored how contextual factors and learning outcomes descriptions can be systematically used to improve comparisons of qualifications, for referencing to the EQF as well as for other purposes, building on further developing a methodology for analysing learning outcomes. The work on the EQF third country dimension explores possibilities for the development and application of criteria and procedures to enable, in accordance with international agreements, the comparison of third countries' national and regional qualifications frameworks with the EQF. The project group discussed and agreed on suitable national and regional qualifications frameworks for comparison using Cedefop conceptual work on qualification frameworks, their development stages and progress indicators as a starting reference point.

⁽²⁾ **Referencing reports** provide information and evidence on the referencing of national qualifications levels to the EQF levels, following the 10 EQF referencing criteria. These include: a clear and demonstrable link established between NQF levels and the EQF; qualifications based on learning outcomes; transparent procedures and criteria for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF; all qualifications with an EQF level are quality assured.

2.1.7. ANALYSING NQF DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE

In 2020, Cedefop continued reviewing and analysing progress in the implementation of national qualifications frameworks and how they relate to the EQF. The report *National qualifications frameworks developments in Europe 2019* was drafted in house in close cooperation with national stakeholders. It illustrates the state of play of the 43 frameworks created to date in the EU, EFTA, candidate and potential candidate countries and the UK. A concise *NQF overview* was released to capture the latest developments.



Cedefop's analysis shows that comprehensive frameworks are expanding in Europe and are becoming maps for lifelong learning. In 2019, more countries have opened up their frameworks to include qualifications acquired outside formal/regulated education and training; they have also made progress in creating, filling and mainstreaming their national qualification databases to support end-users with clear information on single qualifications. The EQF, based on learning outcomes, is the central hub linking all NQFs across Europe. The new Europass portal is connected and linked to 15 national databases providing information to end-users about qualifications. Additionally, many NQFs are now fully operational, firmly anchored in national education and training systems. They are undergoing updates and supporting synergies between EU policies and tools, such as guidance and validation.

As part of Cedefop's work to make qualifications easier to understand and compare, the study *European qualifications framework: initial vocational education and training: focus on qualifications at levels 3 and 4* took a closer look at qualifications

acquired through initial VET. It explored what they have in common and in what way they differ. The study looks at their purpose and value on the labour market or for further learning, and how they are assigned to the national qualifications frameworks and EQF levels. It also sheds light on the different weighting of occupational and transversal skills and competences and levels of complexity, and between qualifications at both levels within the same occupational area. While confirming that describing the intended outcomes of learning improves understanding and eases comparison of vocational qualifications, the study highlights other equally important aspects, such as their currency and value on the labour market and in further learning. The study results show that vocational qualifications linked to EQF levels 3 and 4 have distinct profiles, market value and progression possibilities. While learning outcomes are key to understanding and comparing vocational qualifications across borders, social and contextual considerations also play an important role.



2.1.8. SUPPORTING ESCO AND EQAVET DEVELOPMENTS

Cedefop supported the revision and further development of the terminology of skills and competences in European skills, competences, qualifications and occupations (ESCO). This work supports the publishing of a new version of ESCO (Version 1.1) in 2021. Specifically, Cedefop coordinated the development of the updated terminology on transversal skills and competences to replace the existing terminology. This work was closely related to the development of a new structure to underpin the skills terminology, improving user-friendliness and allowing for increased consistency.

Cedefop supported the implementation of the European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) recommendation by providing advice and expertise to the EQAVET steering committee, the peer learning activities and the annual meeting. The European community of learning providers continued its work and, in 2020, reached its final stage. The [three reports](#) of the respective working groups were finalised in cooperation with Community members and published on the Cedefop website: on (a) the challenge of technology-enhanced learning: enhancing teachers' and trainers' e-skills; (b) EU mobility: reinforcing learning, attractiveness and employability; and (c) migration: empowerment and integration through learning.

2.1.9. COMPARING VET QUALIFICATIONS

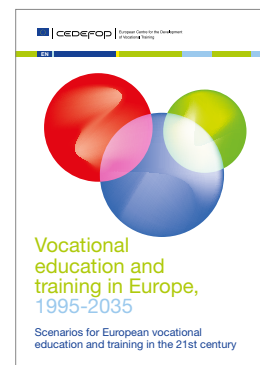
The main results of the work on a **methodology for comparing the content and profile of VET qualifications** became available in 2020. Building on the basic work carried out in 2019, a toolbox for comparing VET qualifications was finalised in 2020 (to be published in 2021). The methodology will support mutual learning between countries, notably by focusing on how a more systematic analysis and comparison of learning outcomes can support the review and renewal of qualifications. This work is closely coordinated with the EQF AG working group on horizontal comparison of qualifications and the work of UNESCO on world reference levels.

2.1.10. UNDERSTANDING THE FUTURE OF VET

Building on the work on comparing VET qualifications, the synthesis report from the *Future of VET* project provides a stepping stone for analysing the changing content and profile of VET programmes and qualifications, and better understanding the institutional implications of these changes. This focus reflects important changes taking place at national level, notably through the broadening of profiles and a reduction in the overall number of qualifications. We can also see a changing relationship between occupation-specific skills, general subjects and transversal skills and competences, indicating that future VET skills may look different from how they do today. Cedefop developed an

analytical model allowing for a systematic analysis and comparison of VET content. A first phase of testing was carried out in 2020. Work has been significantly strengthened through the involvement of ReferNet in identifying relevant national sources and data.

This initial phase of the project sets the scene for additional work assignments, looking at the impact of assessment on VET learning and the changing interaction between initial and continuing VET. The project's research questions were presented to, and discussed in, a dedicated workshop in November 2020, involving researchers, policy-makers and practitioners from 36 countries. Cedefop's research on the future of VET, including the findings from the *Changing nature and role of VET* project, has already directly informed various EU policy initiatives, including those launched in 2020: the updated European Skills Agenda, the Council recommendation on VET, the European Education Area and the Osnabrück declaration.



2.2. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY: VALUING VET TO EMPOWER PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE COMPETENCES AND SKILLS FOR WORK AND LIFE

PERFORMANCE

111

REFERENCES
IN EU POLICY DOCUMENTS



For example:

- Council conclusions on reskilling and upskilling as a basis for increasing sustainability and employability
- Commission proposal for a recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience
- Commission communication and staff working document accompanying the proposal for a recommendation to reinforce the Youth Guarantee
- Commission study on lifelong guidance policy and practice
- European Parliament study on rethinking education in the digital age
- ETUCE report *Your turn! Teachers for trade union renewal*

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CONTRIBUTIONS
TO MEETINGS THAT INFORM
POLICIES AND THEIR
IMPLEMENTATION



For example:

- EAfA/Apprenticeship support services
- EU social partners: 'Labour market integration of migrants: a multi-stakeholder approach'
- OECD webinar: '*New insights on teacher and school leader professionalism: what to expect from the latest TALIS 2018 results*'

16

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO EU-LEVEL DOCUMENTS



For example:

- Commission proposal for a VET recommendation and accompanying staff working document and Osnabrück declaration
- Commission staff working document and study on the evaluation of the recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Reports of the ET 2020 VET and adult learning working groups

32 000

DOWNLOADS OF CEDEFOP
PUBLICATIONS



TOP THREE PUBLICATIONS:

- *Empowering adults through upskilling and reskilling pathways* (4 674)
- *Apprenticeship schemes in European countries: a cross-nation overview* (2 488)
- *Handbook of ICT practices for guidance and career development* (2 352)

In 2020, work under this strategic area of operation included: (a) providing EU-wide knowledge and evidence through online tools and platforms, such as the European database of apprenticeships and the European inventory on lifelong guidance; (b) analysing policies and practices, such as the reports on upskilling and reskilling pathways and on financing apprenticeships in the EU; and (c) exploring new research direc-

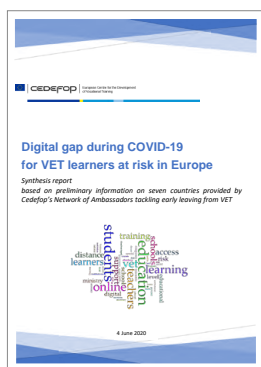
tions through, for instance, the Cedefop-OECD joint publication on the next steps for apprenticeships. Cedefop also acted as a knowledge broker through contributions to several high-level EU and international events, including major events organised under the Croatian and the German Presidencies. Cedefop also supported policy learning between countries, social partners and VET stakeholders on several areas of policy, in

particular apprenticeships and upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults.

2.2.1. COVID-19 RELATED OUTPUTS

Capitalising on its three networks – Cedefop’s community of apprenticeship experts, CareersNet and Cedefop’s ambassadors tackling early leaving from VET – Cedefop provided timely evidence on how VET and career guidance adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic.

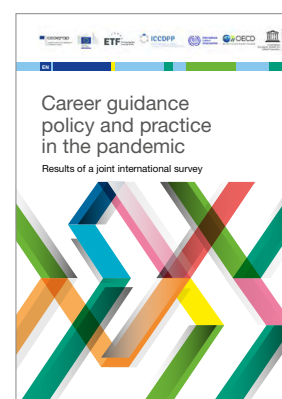
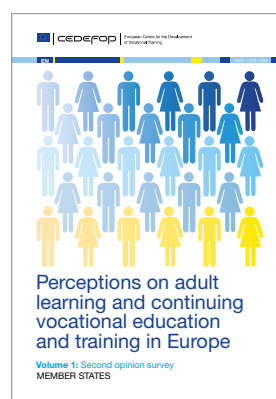
Drawing on inputs from Cedefop’s ambassadors tackling early leaving from VET, Cedefop’s report *Digital gap during COVID-19 for VET learners at risk in Europe* presented the challenges faced and the efforts made to ensure that learning continues for all VET learners. The report points to learners at risk who most likely are not participating in distance education and may eventually drop out from their VET programmes.



The report *How countries are managing apprenticeship in the COVID-19 crisis*, based on input from the Community of apprenticeship experts, provides evidence about continuation or discontinuation of school-based and workplace components, early responses, and other aspects of how apprenticeship provision was affected by the first COVID-19 wave. The main findings were widely cited in the Commission’s proposal for a Council recommendation on VET and in the corresponding Council recommendation.

A note by CareersNet members with *early insights into career guidance adaptation due to the pandemic* was released in April. It was followed by an international survey coordinated by Cedefop and carried out in cooperation with six international and EU organisations, which led to the final report *Career guidance policy and practice*

in the pandemic. The survey gathered information from more than 90 countries across the globe. It provided insights into how the pandemic forced the adaptation of guidance services provision and stakeholder collaboration; the key challenges in maintaining services across sectors and settings; and the critical policy aims for guidance during the crisis recovery, as seen by survey respondents.



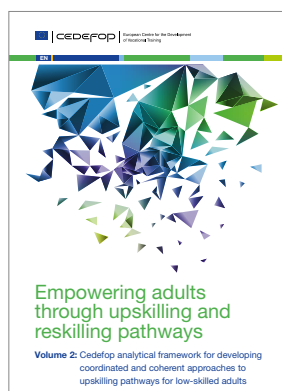
2.2.2. INCREASED FOCUS ON UPSKILLING, RESKILLING AND CVET FOR ADULTS

Anticipating the importance of focusing policy efforts on enhancing adult participation in education and training through adult learning and CVET, Cedefop strengthened its focus on adult upskilling, reskilling and CVET. In line with the new priorities identified in the Cedefop/ETF discussion paper and reflected in the updated EU policy framework for VET and skills, Cedefop intensified its conceptual work on supporting the establishment, scaling-up and upgrading of CVET systems supporting a systematic approach to continuous learning for adults from a lifelong learning perspective. As part of this work, Cedefop drafted the background paper *Shaping a new learning culture in CVET* for the DGVT meeting held under the German Presidency on 10 and 11 November 2020.

Cedefop’s second opinion survey brings new insights into citizens’ perceptions of **awareness, attractiveness and perceived effectiveness of adult learning and CVET in Europe**. To complement existing data sources, the survey delivered data from more than 40 000 interviews on the perceptions and opinions of European workers, learners and citizens about adult learning and CVET at EU and national levels. Cedefop’s

data analyses show that people in all Member States value adult learning and CVET. They regard them as important and associate them with real practical benefits, such as finding a job, career progression and personal development. People in all Member States believe that adult learning and CVET will become more important over the coming years and should be a priority for public investment in their country.

In 2020, Cedefop continued its support to the implementation of the *Upskilling pathways* recommendation and the European Pillar of Social Rights by supporting the development of systematic and coordinated approaches to lifelong upskilling and reskilling pathways of low-skilled adults. The first volume of Cedefop research *Empowering adults through upskilling and reskilling pathways* focused on understanding the magnitude of the low-skilled adult population and identifying which groups of adults are most at risk being low-skilled, and in which skills. The second volume focused on supporting the development of coordinated and coherent approaches to upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults by putting forward an analytical framework to help policy-makers and stakeholders develop such approaches. To complement its research work, Cedefop continued to provide a platform for countries and social partners to learn from each other and explore common challenges. The third policy learning forum on upskilling pathways took place as a virtual event on 5 and 6 November, focusing on upskilling pathways implementation and future directions. It triggered cooperation with Member States to undertake in-depth thematic country reviews of their national approach to the implementation of the *Upskilling pathways* recommendation.



Together with **Germany's Presidency** of the Council of the EU, Cedefop organised the ninth Cedefop-Brussels seminar with a special focus on continuing VET. There was consensus among participants that CVET is a key instrument that is needed now, as millions of jobs are changing or disappearing around the world. To take up the challenge, a shift is required from understanding CVET mainly as training delivery addressing short-term skill needs to adopting CVET as a systematic norm for all adults and establishing a European CVET culture.

2.2.3. EARLY LEAVING FROM VET AND TEACHER AND TRAINER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

While COVID-19 challenged the education and training of an entire generation of VET learners, learning continuity has been ensured thanks to teacher and trainer creativity, adaptability, flexibility and engagement. The current crisis challenged VET teachers and trainers in new ways. They have been called to teach both on site and online, keeping students on their learning journey.

Online DGVT meetings under the Croatian and German Presidencies focused on the challenging roles of VET teachers and trainers. Cedefop supported both Presidencies by providing new evidence through three background papers: (a) *New roles of teachers and trainers in VET and adult learning*; (b) *Attractiveness of VET teachers' and trainers' profession*; (c) *Preparing teachers, trainers and students for green and digital transitions*.

Cedefop also supported the Croatian Presidency conference *Teachers and trainers for the future: towards the 'new normal'* with a keynote speech on **The evolving roles of teachers and trainers in VET and Adult learning in Europe** and the note *Digital gap during COVID-19 for VET learners at risk in Europe*. The executive summary was made available in English, Spanish, French, Italian and Greek.

Prior to the pandemic, EU countries had made significant progress in lowering the rates of **early leaving from education and training**. Cedefop's **VET toolkit for tackling early leaving** has never been more important in supporting policy-makers and VET practitioners who fear a dramatic increase in the early leaving rates from education worldwide due to the pandemic. This was widely acknowledged during the **Skillman International**

Forum 2020 on redefining the future of learning (over 400 participants), during which the toolkit was presented.

To support the European Commission, Member States and social partners in implementing the newly adopted **Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future**, recognising teachers and trainers as an essential driving force of education and training, Cedefop launched a **feasibility study for a pan-European survey** on teachers, learners and principals in initial vocational education and training at ISCED level 3, as well as on in-company trainers. As evidence on these target populations is scarce in the EU, Cedefop aims to close this gap and inform evidence-based policy-making for supporting VET teachers and trainers in current and future learning environments, as well as in monitoring the learning conditions of students and apprentices.

2.2.4. CONTINUING THE WORK ON APPRENTICESHIPS

Cedefop's long-standing work on apprenticeships is fully in line with the priorities identified in the Osnabrück declaration and the Council recommendation on VET. The update of the **European database of apprenticeship schemes** continued in 2020, with the contribution of the Cedefop **Community of apprenticeship experts**. Information was updated, reflecting the state of play of apprenticeship-related legal frameworks and registering changes in enrolment figures. The database is a key information source for Cedefop's work on apprenticeships, supporting analysis of EU-level policies and initiatives, such as the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships.

In 2020, Cedefop continued collecting and analysing information to provide evidence in support of the EU policy priority on the long-term geographic mobility of apprentices, a key dimension in the Osnabrück declaration. A series of **articles on international long-term mobility in apprenticeships** was published for 28 countries. They identify and analyse framework and system-level enablers and disablers of long-term geographic apprentice mobility.

Building on its study **Apprenticeship for adults – Results of an explorative study**, Cedefop published a **briefing note**. The main message is that all EU Member States have taken steps in opening apprenticeship provision to adults, and their

participation in this form of VET is clearly on the rise. This does not imply new types of apprenticeship or radically new concepts. It is rather about policies and initiatives facilitating adult participation in apprenticeship, including promoting more flexible learning options considering their life situations and learning needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed how important it is for education and training systems to be flexible and ready to respond to external pressures. The combination of the emerging economic crisis, together with long-term structural trends that affect our economies, will entail a profound transformation of the world of work and require effective policy responses in the years to come. Prior to the pandemic, and anticipating the importance for apprenticeships to be agile and prepared to respond to external changes, Cedefop and the OECD invited researchers and practitioners across the world – EU, US, Canada, Australia – to submit research papers exploring future scenarios for apprenticeship, the impact of technological change in the workplace and the repercussions of policy choices in apprenticeship design and provision. Cedefop and the OECD published 16 research papers in a joint publication on **The next steps for apprenticeships**.



In 2020, Cedefop published its report on **Financing apprenticeships in the EU**, which draws on the wealth of information presented in Cedefop's **online database**. While the database provides detailed financing information for each of the apprenticeship schemes in EU countries and the UK, the report focuses on the main findings, and offers comparisons of financing arrangements. Aiming at better understanding the patterns of financing apprenticeships and contributing to policy learning, the report demonstrates the wide

variety of ways in which apprenticeships are financed and proposes a typology of financing arrangements for apprenticeships. The analysis shows, *inter alia*, that there is a relationship between apprentice remuneration levels and the way they are set. Apprentice remuneration negotiated by social partners at sectoral or trade level tends to be higher than one centrally set, and often related to national minimum wages. Apprentice remuneration is also higher and more dispersed in larger, traditional apprenticeship schemes which cover a wider range of trades.



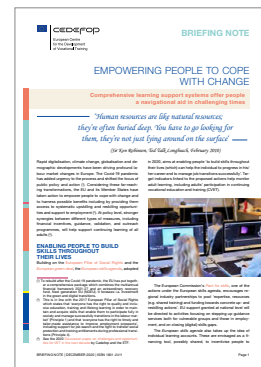
2.2.5. FURTHER INTEGRATING THE WORK ON GUIDANCE, VALIDATION AND INCENTIVES

Cedefop provided technical input and expertise to the drafting of the [final reporting to the 2012 Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning](#); this was largely based on information from the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning. Cedefop also worked in close cooperation with the European Commission for the [accompanying study](#) that supported the evaluation.

In 2020, Cedefop also published the [executive summary of the 2018 edition of the European inventory on validation](#) and participated in different events, such as the vocational skills week, and continued providing input to the EQF AG meetings on the issue of validation. Work towards the updating of the European guidelines started in 2020 and will continue in 2021.

Cedefop is working towards a better understanding of how validation and guidance could be integrated in a comprehensive learning support system for adults, and how financing and incentives for individuals and companies relate to

the two services. The briefing note [Empowering people to cope with change](#) emphasises how support structures and offers can help people manage major social and economic changes.



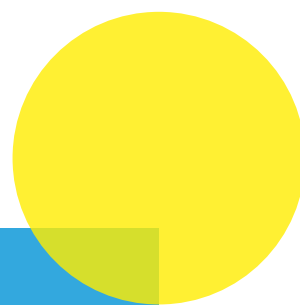
The study [Support and incentives for adults to their learning and careers](#) explores the interconnectivity of the different supporting systems and services. During 2020 Cedefop gathered information on initial costs associated with services for career support for individuals and on financial and non-financial incentives to support training activities in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Further, work started on the update of Cedefop's database on financing adult learning. A review of the available research on systems for monitoring and evaluation of career development support was conducted to provide input for a forthcoming publication on this subject.



Cedefop's [European inventory on lifelong guidance policies and practices](#) was launched in February 2020, providing a rich, structured source of information on career guidance systems in Europe. It also provides a basis for assessing

progress in relation to the 2008 Council resolution and the European guidelines. New country records were uploaded throughout the year, including special updates following the pandemic. Web-based resources and tools dedicated to developing quality lifelong guidance are being updated, with the recent addition of the interactive version of the decision-making tool for the transferability of ICT and LMI practices for decision-makers, guidance managers and professionals.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic intensified the challenges and forced innovations and steep learning of new technologies among guidance practitioners and users. The October [annual CareersNet meeting](#) focused on this policy discussion through expert and stakeholder peer exchange, discussing the urgent need to enhance career practitioners' professional competences in the new digital and social context, and revisiting relevant frameworks to guide policy development and action.



2.3. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY: INFORMING VET BY OFFERING LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE AND SKILL NEEDS ANALYSIS

PERFORMANCE

217

REFERENCES
IN EU POLICY DOCUMENTS



For example:

- joint employment report by the Commission and the Council
- European Commission staff working document and report on Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2020
- European Commission communication on the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience
- European Commission report on blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills
- Commission micro-credentials higher education consultation group report
- EESC own-initiative opinion: Towards an EU strategy for enhancing green skills and competences for all
- Business Europe position paper on reforming active labour market policies in turbulent times
- ETUC position paper on the European Skills Agenda and future skills strategies

12

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO MEETINGS THAT INFORM
POLICIES AND THEIR
IMPLEMENTATION

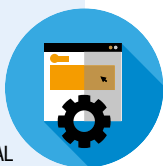


For example:

- European Commission sector skills councils: meetings for blueprint projects
- Executive Agency for SMEs: skills supply and demand in advanced technologies for industry
- Direct support to Member States: meeting related to country review on skills governance in Estonia

3

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO EU AND INTERNATIONAL
LEVEL DOCUMENTS



For example:

- European Commission Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience
- ILO report on the feasibility of using big data in anticipating and matching skill needs

45 000

DOWNLOADS OF CEDEFOP
PUBLICATIONS



TOP THREE PUBLICATIONS:

- *Briefing note – Artificial or human intelligence?* (6 193)
- *Insights into skill shortages and skill mismatch* (5 611)
- *Briefing note – The skills employers want!* (4 478)

168 000

EU SKILLS
PANORAMA WEBSITE
VISITS



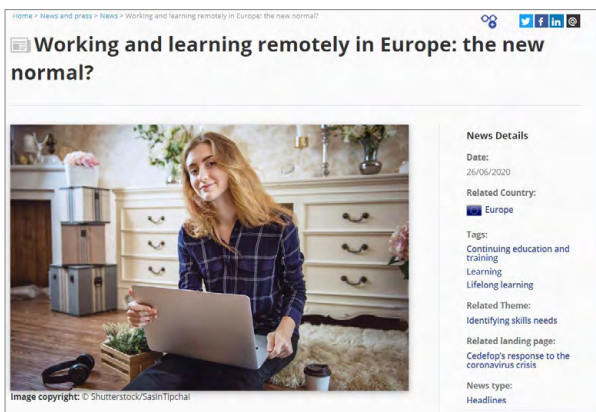
PAGE VIEWS: APPROX. 351 000

Most popular content: dashboards with quantitative data/indicators and analytical highlights; sector, occupation and country landing pages.
Most popular dashboards: Cedefop skills forecast, the European skills index, and the Skills in online job advertisements

In 2020, Cedefop's work under this strategic area of operation focused on skills research and analysis to support policy-makers and other VET and labour market stakeholders. The insights into labour market and skills trends aimed at supporting their efforts to ensure the availability of a qualified workforce and its continuous and effective skilling in light of marked technological and social developments shaping the future of work. Cedefop also engaged directly with national stakeholders and social partners to strengthen their capacity for anticipating and matching skill needs and analysed and promoted policies and practices that support lifelong skills development and utilisation in response to changing skill needs.

In parallel to developing further and updating its key skills intelligence products, Cedefop completed the four national skills governance reviews, released new research findings on the role of work organisation for skills development and prepared the roll-out of the second European skills and jobs survey.

2.3.1. COVID-19, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE FUTURE OF WORK AND VET

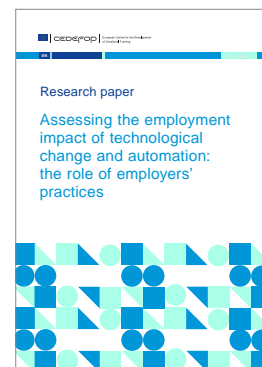


The COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating the digital transformation in EU labour markets. As a consequence of COVID-19 measures, which forced many EU workers to **work and learn remotely from home**, the vast opportunities of digital technologies for individual learners and firms came to the fore. The trends brought about by the pandemic are also clearly visible in the continuing development of the EU skills policy context. In its **communication of 27 May 2020 on the next EU budget**, the

European Commission reiterated its commitment to 'help boost competitiveness and technological sovereignty' by 'investing in digital infrastructure and skills', stating that 'the crisis has (shown) the importance of digital skills, for children, students, teachers, trainers and all of us to communicate and work'. The **2020 EU Skills Agenda** placed strong emphasis on the medium-term goal of EU countries achieving the digital and green transition and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

At the same time, concerns about the COVID-19 crisis accentuating automation have resurfaced, highlighting the importance of continuing VET for reskilling and upskilling individuals affected by technological disruption. Cedefop research shows that HR and management practices have considerable impact on the relationship between automation and employment. The report **Assessing the employment impact of technological change and automation: the role of employer practices** suggests that firms which were early adopters of new technologies were more likely to experience employment gains and were also more successful in implementing human-centred HRM policies.

Thematic **insights into VET for the future of work** showed that the transition from analogue to digital VET systems is progressing steadily in EU Member States. They highlighted that, with increased distance learning, more EU countries have been looking into **developing AI technologies to build learner-centred solutions** and open education resources. Key insights into the impact of AI technologies on EU job markets were presented by Cedefop at the German EU Council Presidency symposium 'Artificial intelligence in the world of work' on 1 October.



2.3.2. EVIDENCE ON THE LABOUR MARKET IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Cedefop used data from the first [European skills and jobs survey](#) to reflect on the negative **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work and incomes**. Cedefop's first working paper [EU jobs at highest risk of social distancing](#) used the survey's unique data on skill needs and tasks in EU jobs to highlight the threat of rising inequalities in learning and work opportunities due to the pandemic. The [COVID-19 social distancing risk index](#) – based on skills descriptors that help distinguish between jobs relying on physical proximity or contact with others and jobs enabled by digital technologies – showed that vulnerable groups in the EU workforce are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 social distancing risk. Cedefop also provided insight into [skills developments and trends in the tourism sector in the wake of the pandemic](#). The skills forecasts were used to make the case for [continued investment in human health and social work](#), crucial sectors for dealing with the impact of the pandemic, where the scope for automating core tasks is relatively limited.



The [skills OVATE platform](#) helped provide real-time insight into the extent to which employers scaled down and adapted their recruitment efforts in response to the challenges brought about by the pandemic. With European employers advertising 35% fewer jobs on online job portals in the second quarter of 2020 compared to 2019, the analysis showed the **dramatic impact of the first wave**. The improved epidemiological situation in most EU countries in summer 2020 contributed to recovery, but **in many sectors the situation remained depressed**. Skills OVATE also showed the

pandemic is transforming the skills profile of jobs. COVID-19 both increased demand for ICT(-related) skills linked to digitalisation and the massive shift to telework, and led employers to place more emphasis on sales and marketing skills, to help them develop or expand online shops or digital sales strategies, and on engineering, architecture and construction skills to make production or service delivery coronavirus-proof.

Cedefop used the [Matching skills online tool](#) to draw valuable lessons for policy-makers wishing to tackle the adverse labour market and social consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. Several examples of policy programmes and initiatives implemented in Member States in recent years were identified as a source of inspiration for new measures to deal with the impact of the pandemic.

2.3.3. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND UTILISATION IN A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

The first report based on the European company survey [Workplace practices unlocking employee potential](#), jointly prepared by Cedefop and Eurofound, helped shed light on the contribution of HR and workplace practices to skills development and utilisation. The [report](#) showed that, despite the perceived importance of workplace learning for skills utilisation and development, only a minority of organisations coherently combines workplace practices that optimise skills use and support skills development. This suggests organisations should be supported in adopting workplace practices that capitalise on the skills of the workforce and support skills development. Measures could focus on education to make the next generation of managers aware of organisational practices, leveraging skills utilisation and development, and on backing national governments and social partners in developing networks and support structures to provide advice to organisations on the most suitable combinations of workplace practices for their circumstances. The report was presented at a joint [Cedefop-Eurofound launch event](#) held on 13 October. A COVID-19 online follow-up to the European company survey – aimed to collect empirical data on how organisations dealt with the challenges of the pandemic – was jointly developed by Eurofound and Cedefop and fielded at the end of 2020.



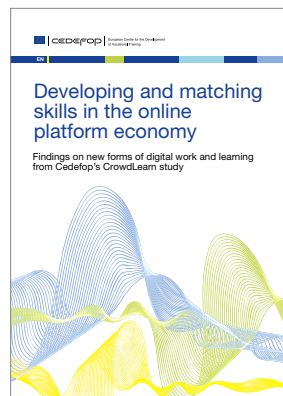
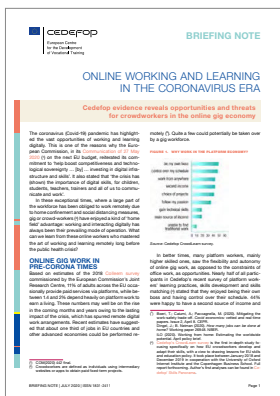
People engaged in work outside a standard employment arrangement face different circumstances and skills challenges. Cedefop pointed out that, during the pandemic, gig or crowdworkers enjoyed a home field advantage, as interacting digitally was already their prevailing work mode. The report *Skills development and matching in online platform work* and the briefing note *Online working and learning in the coronavirus era* concluded that key lessons learned from crowdwork can also inform future-oriented debates on vocational training, qualifications and algorithmic skills matching in a wider sense. Insights from this work were presented in the Berlin Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Services European conference ‘Platform economy – Decent work in times of digital transformation’ on 21 September.

2.3.4. UNDERSTANDING SKILLS AND LABOUR MARKET TRENDS AND SKILLS SYSTEMS

Skills intelligence mapping overall current and future trends and contextualising developments remained a key pillar of Cedefop’s work. Updates of the *European skills forecast* and European skills index were released in 2020. As the skills forecast was developed before lockdowns were imposed in many countries, it does not capture the highly uncertain economic impacts of the pandemic, so the short-term outlook is likely to be over-optimistic. However, population ageing, automation and artificial intelligence, globalisation, resource scarcity and the move towards a carbon-neutral economy and other long-term trends *will continue to drive change* as EU Member States put plans in place to deal with the pandemic and to help their economies recover. An exploratory analysis of the long-term impact of the pandemic suggested *the crisis may speed up retirement*. To complement information on long-term trends – which were analysed using the pre-COVID-19 forecast and promoted via Cedefop’s web portal – a forecast scenario to assess the impact of COVID-19 was developed for publication in 2021. In 2020 Cedefop also ran a ‘green’ skills forecast scenario to assess the likely impact of the *European Green Deal* on the sectoral employment structure in the EU-27 as a whole, and at sectoral level, and started a skills foresight project to reflect on the consequences of implementing the green deal in selected sectors.

A new release of the *European skills index*, which for the first time also included Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, was published in March. ReferNet members were asked to reflect on the results and to disseminate the index nationally in their respective languages. The index was also used to explore the *links between skills systems and gender equality*.

The report *The role of work-based learning in VET and tertiary education – Evidence from the 2016 EU labour force survey* provides a comprehensive overview of the prevalence of different types of work-based learning and its benefits. It fully taps the new information on work-based learning available in the 2016 ad-hoc module of EU labour force survey, which used an experimental and innovative approach to measure it. The analysis shows that work-based learning is more widespread than apparent from work using other data sources, confirms its importance in



easing the education-to-employment transition, and shows that continued policy attention is needed to promote its availability and quality in countries which so far have not fully benefited from its potential.

[Skills Panorama](#) continued offering updated labour market and skills indicators and qualitative analysis on tasks and skills, future employment trends, automation risks and other topics. In 2020, 37 indicators and 29 analytical occupational highlights were updated and published.

2.3.5. STRENGTHENING THE EVIDENCE BASE: DATA COLLECTION AND SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

Work on Cedefop's **real-time labour market information** progressed steadily throughout the year. Activities in 2020 focused on further developing, updating and quality-proofing the [skills OVATE platform](#), formalising Cedefop-Eurostat cooperation in a memorandum of understanding and a joint procurement procedure to organise the maintenance and further development of the European online job advertisements system, and organising the transfer of the data production system to Eurostat's big data infrastructure. An expert workshop helped gather user feedback on skills OVATE, which will feed into advancing the platform further. The steps taken in 2020 set the stage for further development of skills OVATE in the context of Eurostat's Web Intelligence Hub and strengthened interinstitutional cooperation to develop big-data-powered skills analysis based on online job advertisements and other web-based sources on skills.

Cedefop prepared the roll-out of the second [European skills and jobs survey](#) in the first half of 2021. The survey aims to inform the continuing policy debate about the potential enriching or destructive impact of digitalisation on jobs and the future of work, as well as heightened concerns about what may be a non-transitory, [long-term, impact of the COVID-19 crisis on EU job markets](#). Providing state-of-the-art information, the second ESJS will inform EU skills policy development, particularly the 2020 Skills Agenda for Europe and the [Digital Agenda for Europe](#).



Jointly with a technical expert group, Cedefop developed the survey questionnaire and carried out cognitive testing in 2020. Cedefop agreed with the European Training Foundation (ETF) to cooperate on implementing the survey so that, after the fieldwork in all EU Member States in 2021, the survey can be carried out in some of the EU accession countries under the ETF remit.

2.3.6. SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDERS: DIRECT SUPPORT AND SKILLS POLICY INTELLIGENCE

Cedefop completed its work with four EU Member States aimed at strengthening their governance of skills anticipation and matching systems and arrangements. Building on the comprehensive [skills governance analytical framework](#) developed by Cedefop, and in close consultation with national steering committees, the Agency collected in-depth information on national development priorities and stakeholder views on how best to achieve them.


The findings of the four **skills governance reviews** are laid down in dedicated reports on [Bulgaria](#), [Estonia](#), [Greece](#) and [Slovakia](#). Following a request for assistance by Slovenia, Cedefop developed a 'light' support activity aimed at strengthening the country's capacity in skills forecasting and providing skills intelligence to be rolled out in 2021.

Cedefop prepared the 2021 update of [Matching skills](#), an online tool providing information on how skills intelligence can be put to use in skills policies and practices. Following renewed conceptual work and consultation with experts, guidelines were developed for collecting targeted information on national skills assessment/anticipation activities in each EU Member State and on training

programmes, policies and measures that rely on skills intelligence.

Cedefop continued to develop resources for policy-makers wishing to develop or strengthen national skills anticipation systems and practices. As coordinator of the inter-agency TVET group's thematic activity 'Skill mismatch in digitalised labour markets', Cedefop led the development of an interinstitutional publication on the value and challenges of using big data for skills policies aimed at policy-makers. Guides on methods for identifying the implications of technological change for emerging skill demands were prepared for publication in 2021. A working paper on the opportunities and pitfalls of using matched employer-employee surveys to identify skill mismatches was also prepared. Cedefop also led the development of a background paper on the role of skills intelligence for policy and practice for the DGVT meeting held under the German Presidency on 10 and 11 November.





Matching skills


Inspiring policies for anticipating and matching skill needs

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Policy instruments
Country fiches
Map
Feedback tool

Brexit Disclaimer

This website as well as the publications and online tools accessible via this website may contain UK data and analysis based on research conducted before the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020. EU averages or other statistical parameters including the UK reflect the situation in the European Union before 31 January 2020 and should not be considered as representative of the situation in the EU thereafter. Any data or information pertaining to the UK will be gradually phased out from Cedefop's website, publications and online tools, as ongoing research projects with the United Kingdom's participation are concluded. Data coming from UK were collected, processed and published before its withdrawal from the EU. Therefore, EU averages contain UK related data up to 2018.



Welcome

This information tool is designed for policy makers working on education and training, skills, (active) labour market policy and related policy areas. It showcases a collection of policy instruments from EU Member States that use information on labour market trends and anticipated skill needs to inform and shape upskilling or other skills matching policies for the current and future world of work.

The focus is on innovative policy instruments that have been recently implemented and typically aim at tackling unemployment, facilitating transitions to jobs better matching people's skills or making VET more responsive to future labour market developments.

Going beyond officially published information, the tool helps understand, in a comparative manner, the approaches used and the rationales behind them. It provides information on practical organisation, funding and stakeholder involvement and provides insight on how innovative and successful a policy instrument is and whether it could be successfully applied elsewhere. The tool structures and displays the information in a way that you can readily access and interpret.

COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION

PERFORMANCE

88 000
DOWNLOADS OF CEDEFOP
BRIEFING NOTES



Continued, systematic and targeted promotion and dissemination of Cedefop publications succeeded in a high demand for briefing notes targeting policy-makers. Downloads increased by 22% (since 2019)

598 ARTICLES
REFERRING TO CEDEFOP IN
EUROPEAN MEDIA



Over 52% refer to skills anticipation and matching, approx. 20% to the Skills index and approx. 14 % to Cedefop's work on the pandemic's impact on VET and skills

15 400
FOLLOWERS ON
FACEBOOK
(INCREASED BY 11.14%
SINCE 2019)



OVER **392 000**
VIEWS

OF CEDEFOP VIDEO CLIPS AND INTERVIEWS RELEASED IN 2020, INCLUDING ANIMATIONS (E.G. VET SYSTEMS IN CROATIA AND GERMANY).

10 400
FOLLOWERS ON
TWITTER
(INCREASED BY 18.21%
SINCE 2019)

29 EVENTS
ORGANISED BY
CEDEFOP –
13 VIRTUALLY



MORE THAN

97% of respondents considered them as good or very good and 88% gave the same rating to audience engagement/ interactivity.

52% were POLICY-MAKERS at EU/national level

18% RESEARCHERS

8% SOCIAL PARTNERS

4% PRACTITIONERS

2% REPRESENTATIVES OF ENTERPRISES

This activity focuses on communicating Cedefop's key messages on VET, skills and qualifications to its stakeholders and on promoting a positive image of the Agency at European, national and local levels. In 2020, Cedefop communication responded swiftly to the coronavirus pandemic, adapting very efficiently to the pressing information needs of an unprecedented emergency and managing to deliver additional value by reshuffling, retargeting and even reinforcing its communication activities.

As an intermediate crisis response, Cedefop radically refocused its event strategy and switched to virtual conferences and webinars using professional online meeting tools. Based on an intensive market research and needs analysis, new virtual conference requirements were identified. This enabled Cedefop to bring together more than 800 participants by carrying out successfully 13 virtual events between June and December 2020, starting with the high-level Cedefop-ETF conference 'Enhancing European cooperation in VET – Looking back planning ahead' on 30 June and 1 July, and ending with a joint seminar with the German Presidency on 'Attractiveness of continuing vocational education and training in the EU' on 7 December.



Regular crisis communication and Kanban board meetings triggered additional pandemic-related publications, web headlines, news items and social media activities.

In total, 77 news items, publications and videos were published in 2020 on a [COVID-19-specific landing page](#) on Cedefop's web portal. Media and stakeholder communication activities were complemented by 11 press releases, three issues of the magazine *Skillset and match*, 10 issues of Cedefop's electronic newsletter – including a thematic newsletter on the coronavirus impact – 68 website headlines, 187 Facebook posts and

over 1 260 tweets and retweets. Twelve Cedefop video productions and two animations on the VET systems of the Presidency countries Croatia and Germany were published, achieving an excellent outreach with a total of over 392 000 views on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.



A number of interviews with Cedefop management and staff complemented the Agency's communication activities: examples include the *Impact of coronavirus on the labour market*; *Coronavirus and the gig economy*; *Which jobs the pandemic hit hardest* (with the Athens/Macedonian News Agency and its radio station); *Automation and coronavirus impact* (with the Greek public radio station ERT 102); *VET and the coronavirus pandemic* (on Spain's educaWeb.com); and *Skills and job openings in the wake of the pandemic*, live on TV at the Greek public broadcaster ERT3.

An interview related to the Cedefop/ETF conference 'Enhancing European cooperation in VET – Looking back planning ahead' with Greece's SKAI radio, a podcast about the *Future of VET* with Emerald Publishing, and a wide-ranging interview of the Executive Director, published by Germany's Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) in its magazine and as a podcast, are worth mentioning.

Cedefop published seven briefing notes: *Towards new horizons*; *On the move but not there*

yet; Apprenticeships for adults; Online working and learning in the coronavirus era; NQF developments 2019; Adult learning and continuing vocational education and training valued by Europeans; and Empowering people to cope with change. All briefing notes are available online as PDF and eBook in eight languages, plus the language of the EU Council Presidency countries (DE, EL, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL, PT and HR). As a pandemic-related safety measure, Cedefop suspended the distribution of hard-copy publications, and encouraged stakeholders to visit its web portal, where all titles are free to download, and users can subscribe to alerts for new content. In total, 37 new publications, plus language versions and formats like PDF and e-pub, were produced and made available online in 2020.

2020 has also been a crucial year for Cedefop's web portal, a cloud-based platform, which continued to focus on online tools and new data visualisation functionalities for increased usability and outreach. Major technical developments were achieved for the launch of a new-generation web portal in 2021 with a strong focus on data visualisation, online tools and cross-thematic interconnectivity. The Lifelong guidance systems and practices database was upgraded, permitting cross-country comparative perspective of policy progress, the 2020 datasets of the European Skills Index and the Skills forecast were imported to display an updated online visualisation, and the data visualisations of the Skills online vacancy analysis tool (OVATE) were adapted to cover additional countries.

The preparations for the launch of the new Cedefop web portal in 2021 included an intensive user consultation, the development and implementation of a new technical platform based on the open source content management system Drupal 8 and the migration of current content, core functionalities, existing online tools and data visualisations. Aiming at providing a dedicated entry point on the new web portal, the migration of the Skills Panorama data sets was set in motion. Another important milestone for the new web portal has been the implementation of a web-based contact database, integrating Cedefop's legacy customer relationship management system and its registered web portal user contacts, being fully compliant with the General data protection regulation (GDPR) recommendations.

The close collaboration between Cedefop and DG EMPL continued mainly in the area of online events and social media activities. Extensive communication support was provided to the virtual European vocational skills week, including the production of video contributions and live social media coverage over the whole duration of the event from 9 to 13 November (#DiscoverYourTalent, #EU VocationalSkills). The #CedefopPhotoAward initiative, endorsed by the European Commission and recognised as an integral part of the week's Awards for VET excellence since 2016, proved once again to be an excellent tool for raising VET visibility, engaging stakeholders and reaching out to EU young people in IVET and learners in CVET.

Even though this year's #CedefopPhotoAward was heavily affected by school closures during the pandemic, 43 teams of 143 VET learners and 39 teachers/trainers, representing 34 learning providers from 13 EU countries, took part in a revised competition, which also featured optional video contributions. Due to the coronavirus crisis the winning teams from Czechia, Greece, Poland and Slovakia were only honoured in virtual award celebrations, and physical photo exhibitions had to be replaced by an online slideshow. Video messages were produced for Executive Director J. Siebel's virtual interventions at the VET excellence awards ceremony at the European vocational skills week and a local online celebration event, organised by the 2nd VET School of Thessaloniki OAED.



Lastly, a review of service portfolio and staff needs for Cedefop's Research Support Centre was concluded, aimed at streamlining processes and achieving further efficiency gains.

RELATIONS WITH EU AGENCIES



European Training Foundation

4.1. COOPERATION WITH THE ETF

Since 1997, the ETF and Cedefop have created synergies in areas of work that are relevant to both agencies, taking into account their different mandates, geographic scope and stakeholders. This has led to increased efficiency, economies of scale and increased service levels.

In 2020 the two agencies continued their long-standing collaboration. The framework of cooperation 2018-20 came to an end and a new framework covering the period 2021-23 was prepared. This aims at more structured collaboration in thematic areas and activities of common interest to stakeholders and regulatory functions.

Cedefop and ETF experts were involved in events and activities of mutual interest. Cooperation and systematic exchange of information took place in the frame of the EU Agencies Network and in the process of providing input to the European Commission on the European Labour Authority.

The two agencies continued working together on VET policies and systems. Results of the progress towards the achievements of the Riga priorities and the post-2020 European policy framework on VET were discussed at the high-level joint Cedefop/ETF virtual conference [Enhancing European cooperation in VET: looking back – Planning ahead](#), organised on 30 June and 1 July 2020.

Cooperation on EQF implementation continued covering all EU, EEA and candidate and potential candidate countries. The ETF and Cedefop started collaborating on the fifth edition of the *Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks*, coordinated by UNESCO, and planned to be published in 2022.

The two agencies continued their collaboration on careers guidance ⁽³⁾, work-based learning and adult learning, as well as in the framework of the inter-agency working group on work-based learning together with the OECD, the ILO, UNESCO and other international organisations.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 crisis, the two traditional joint knowledge-sharing seminars did not take place. The two agencies attended each other's virtual Management Board meetings.



Eurofound

4.2. COOPERATION WITH EUROFOUND AND EU-OSHA

In 2020, Cedefop continued cooperating closely with Eurofound on the European Company Survey, jointly organised and funded by the two agencies and fielded in 2019. The first overview report was launched in a webinar in October, giving high-level representatives the opportunity to reflect on the findings. Two 'Ask the expert' webinars were organised to allow a wide audience of stakeholders to ask questions on the survey findings. Cedefop and Eurofound also jointly developed and implemented a communication strategy to release the survey findings. Academic experts who had been invited to use the survey's data for more detailed analysis presented papers at an [online conference](#) held in August. The contributions are candidates for inclusion in a special issue of the *Journal of Labour Economics*. In 2020, steps were also taken to prepare two other survey reports planned for publication in 2021.

Cedefop and Eurofound jointly took the initiative to organise an online follow-up survey on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in companies. The in-house developed survey looks at how employers adapted their work practices and HR and training

⁽³⁾ Joint survey with UNESCO on COVID-19 impact.

policies in response to the pandemic. The follow-up survey was fielded at the end of 2020.

Cedefop and Eurofound exchanged their programming documents and work programmes, discussed potential scope for further cooperation and laid down priorities for 2021 in an action plan. The agencies also commented on each other's work and publications in areas of mutual interest. Regular online meetings between the contact persons took place throughout the year and a meeting to discuss and evaluate the cooperation over the year at management level took place in November.



Cedefop-Eurofound cooperation also contributed in the context of Recommendation 5 of the Commission's Staff Working Document on the agencies' external evaluation, in which EU-OSHA and the ETF also participated. The recommendation suggests the performance measuring systems of the four agencies should be made more comparable by aligning the performance indicator methodologies. Exchange of information and documentation took place, and commonalities, differences and possibilities for future synergies were explored. The four agencies agreed to further the cooperation through a task force to address other aspects of Recommendation 5.



4.3. COOPERATION WITH THE ELA

Cedefop's contribution to, and cooperation with, the European Labour Authority (ELA) started as early as March 2018, a time at which the Commission decided to set up an advisory group on the swift establishment and future functioning of the ELA. Cedefop became part of the advisory group, together with representatives of Member States' authorities, EU-level social partners, and the other agencies under the remit of DG EMPL.

In 2018 and 2019, Cedefop attended the five meetings of the ELA advisory group and followed the developments until the agency was formally established on 31 July 2019. From the outset, Cedefop has had the role of observer in the ELA Management Board. Cedefop also participates in and contributes its evidence and expertise to various intra-agency workshops organised by the ELA with EU agencies, such as the one held in November 2020 on 'Labour mobility analyses and risk assessment'.



4.4. COOPERATION WITH ENISA

Besides the meetings with its sister agencies, Cedefop communicates regularly with Enisa, the other EU agency located in Greece. Cedefop and Enisa signed a service-level agreement on 4 May 2020, relating to cooperation in IT services, procurement, facilities, compliance, regularity and legality. As of 2021, Enisa and Cedefop will share resources in the form of shared Data Protection Officers.



4.5. COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN NETWORK OF AGENCIES (EUAN)

In addition to participating in the biannual meetings of Heads of Agencies and Heads of Resources, Cedefop participated in an extraordinary Head of Resources online meeting on 16 April 2020 to discuss agencies' responses to the COVID-19 crisis. Another extraordinary online meeting took place on 17 November to discuss with the European Court of Auditors (ECA) the key findings of their

reports on the annual financial audits of EU agencies and Joint Undertakings. On this occasion, the main learnings of the horizontal performance audit of the future of EU Agencies were also presented by the ECA. With the transition period coming to an end on 31 December 2020, the EUAN organised on 26 November 2020 an extraordinary Heads of Agencies meeting on BREXIT with the UKTF. Throughout the year, Cedefop also participated in meetings and activities of the EUAN subnetworks, including the EU Agencies ICT Advisory Committee (ICTAC), the Performance Development Network (PDN), the EU agencies procurement officers (NAPO), the Heads of Communication and Information Network (HCIN) and the Inter-Agency Legal Network (IALN).

A large part of the EUAN cooperation focuses on identifying and harvesting interagency synergies, predominantly in administration. This is realised through exchanging knowledge, sharing procurement and sharing services and capabilities. Collaboration also occurs daily on a working level. EUAN members regularly consult each other on various administrative matters, exchange best practices and documentation.

ADOPTION OF THE EUAN MULTIANNUAL STRATEGY 2021-27

The EUAN multiannual strategy 2021-27 was adopted in November 2020. While building on the acquis of the previous strategy of the network, the new strategy reaches conclusions on the COVID-19 pandemic and integrates the key priorities of the EU recovery plan: greening, digitalisation and resilience. EU agencies and Joint Undertakings agreed to strengthen their cooperation articulated around two strategic pillars: the EUAN as a role model for administrative excellence and as a valued institutional partner.

EUAN ADVISORY GROUP ON NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Following the extraordinary meeting of the Heads of Resources on 16 April 2020, it was agreed that the EUAN would create an advisory group to discuss the strategies to return to the office amid the COVID-19 outbreak and to agree on relevant elements for the agencies and Joint Undertaking to propose for discussion at the interinstitutional COVID-19 group led by the Commission. Cede-

fop actively participated in the advisory group. By end 2020, a total of 25 meetings had taken place and the group is expected to continue to operate in 2021.

EUAN TASK FORCES

In 2020, Cedefop participated in two EUAN task forces:

- **shared services:** the task force's first strategic proposal on the further development of EUAN cooperation in sharing services was approved by the Heads of Resources on 7 October 2020. The main suggestion of the proposal is to make subnetworks key players in sharing services. To follow this up, the subnetworks are introducing shared services and capabilities as a strategic priority in their work programmes;
- **use of contract agents and interims:** 13 Agencies, including Cedefop, joined the task force on the use of contract agents and interims. The mandate of the task force is to review thoroughly these two types of contractual relationship used by EU agencies and Joint Undertakings. The three deliverables of the task force will be presented at the EUAN February 2021 meeting: the EUAN position on the importance of maintaining flexibility in the use of contract agents; EUAN guidelines on the implementation of the model decision on the use of contract agents; and a EUAN position on the importance of maintaining flexibility in the use of interim staff and service providers.

Finally, Cedefop, EU-OSHA, Eurofound, the ETF and the ELA, together with the Centre de Traduction, met within the 'social and employment cluster' for a peer review exercise on risk management. The agencies under DG EMPL also exchanged best practices related to internal control activities.

RESOURCES

The performance indicators of the Agency attest to the efficient and effective delivery of administrative services, in support of the core business, despite the significant challenges of moving all processes and procedures online and ensuring business continuity in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

From the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, Cedefop has successfully shaped and promptly activated a crisis management plan. All precautionary measures were taken and sustained to minimise the health risk for staff, in due consideration of instructions issued by national, EU and international authorities. These included teleworking, cancellation of missions and physical events and their replacement by virtual meetings.

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a necessary revision of Cedefop's risk assessment for the year 2020 to identify new/increased risks which could possibly jeopardise the achievements of some of the objectives identified in the work programme 2020. In this context, management identified two additional risks which were flagged as critical: budget implementation and occupation rate of the establishment plan. The relevant actions identified and put in place allowed an effective mitigation of both risks.

Cedefop's response to the COVID-19 crisis followed the steps defined in its Business Continuity plan and Crisis communication paper. Throughout, the priority has been to protect staff while ensuring business continuity.

The response, designed and managed by the Business Continuity team, was divided into several phases. On 14 March, the Executive Director activated the crisis plan and Cedefop started operating off-site as of 17 March. During this period, the Business Continuity team ensured the full and continuous operation of the Agency. The Agency also prepared a four-phase strategy towards a progressive return to normal operation, in line with the evolution of the pandemic.

Since the end of the first lockdown on 4 May, Cedefop has operated in alignment with different restrictions and measures decided by the Greek authorities in accordance with the evolution of the pandemic.

To provide the necessary assurance to its staff, Cedefop contracted a private accredited European inspection and certification company to audit the measures taken in response to COVID-19. Following an on-site inspection, Cedefop received an attestation of conformity for complying with the requirements of the reference of health protocols and instructions established by the competent public authorities which determine the necessary measures to limit the transmission of the SARS-COV2 virus.







BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The COVID-19 crisis resulted in significant savings ⁽⁴⁾ in the 2020 budget due to cancellation of physical events and necessary delays in implementation. However, a careful monitoring of the budget implementation allowed for the proactive reshuffling of activities and the reallocation of funds to finance core business activities principally, as well as some investments in hardware rendered necessary to equip all staff with a proper home office. Despite the challenge, Cedefop managed to ensure 100% execution of commitment appropriation and 99.23% execution of payment appropriations, thus effectively managing the identified risk on budget execution.

SELECTION PROCEDURES AND HR PROCESSES

Since 2019, Cedefop has significantly progressed in further modernising and improving its selection procedures, as attested by the closure by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) of the critical recommendation related to recruitment procedures. The recent COVID-19 crisis required review and adjustment of the selection procedures to allow for remote assessment of candidates. Since March 2020, six selection procedures have been successfully run with the newly designed remote system. Even after the COVID-19 crisis, it is likely that remote selections will remain the norm, building on the lessons learned.

⁽⁴⁾ Around EUR 900 000.

	<p>Activation of the crisis plan (17 March – 3 May 2020)</p>	<p>Cedefop started operating off-site. Regular meetings of the Business Continuity team to prepare the de-escalation strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular communication to staff to inform on announcements of Greek Authorities • communication with external stakeholders on the measures taken by Cedefop to protect staff while ensuring business continuity • virtual General staff assemblies • provision of remote ICT Helpdesk services to staff • preparations to conduct HR selection procedures remotely • conducting all internal meetings virtually • providing online training
	<p>De-escalation – Phase 1 (4 May – 17 May 2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compulsory teleworking • access to the building permitted only for staff executing premises-dependent tasks • Cedefop's selection procedures started to be processed fully remotely
	<p>De-escalation – Phase 2 (18 May – 30 June 2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teleworking advised • staff allowed to come to the office in pre-defined shifts • action plan on staff wellbeing prepared by the HR service
	<p>De-escalation – Phase 3 (1 July – 6 September 2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teleworking advised • staff allowed to come to the office in pre-defined shifts • organisation of meetings allowed, as well as business-critical visits from, and business-critical missions to, areas with low COVID-19 incidence
	<p>Escalation – Phase 2 (7 September – 29 October 2020)</p>	<p>Given the evolving situation in Greece and across Europe, Cedefop decided to move back to Phase 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teleworking advised as the Agency's default working mode • staff allowed to come to the office in pre-defined shifts • mandatory use of masks in Cedefop's building • visits, meetings and missions not allowed • exceptionally, business-critical missions allowed in areas with low COVID-19 incidence
	<p>Escalation – Phase 1 (As of 30 October)</p>	<p>Given the increased level of risk for the Thessaloniki region announced by the Greek authorities on 30 October, followed by a local lockdown on 3 November and a national lockdown on 7 November, Cedefop decided to move back to Phase 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only essential staff allowed on the premises • teleworking for all other staff <p>The Agency has been operating under this regime since then.</p>

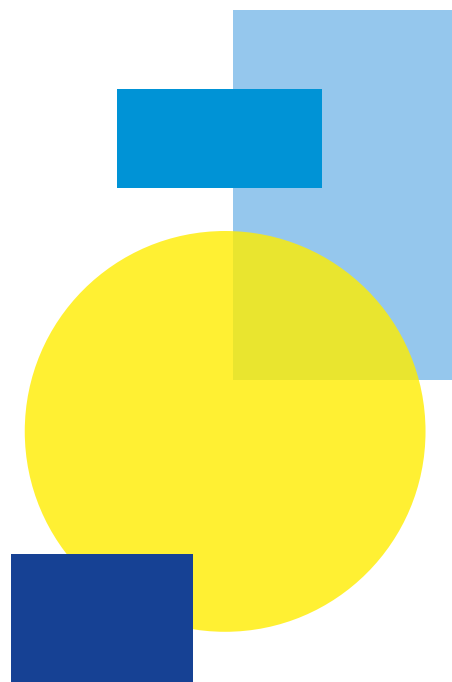
The COVID-19 crisis also necessitated adjustments in HR processes to ensure business continuity and staff protection. A health and wellbeing plan was put in place to support staff further with effective communication, virtual awareness-raising sessions and social events. The plan was designed following a staff survey aiming at identifying employees' needs and preferences. The plan also aims at strengthening the capacity of the Agency to manage remote teams and support the staff. A follow-up survey on the impact of COVID-19 was launched in November 2020. In December 2020, Cedefop offered access to

all its staff and family members to an assistance programme offering 24/7 psychological support and counselling in Greek and in English.

Cedefop finalised and adopted its first HR strategy. The strategy covers three building blocks: talent acquisition and matching; talent management; staff wellbeing. The strategy also foresees the modernisation and digitalisation of HR processes and a progressive shift of the HR team towards business partnering. Implementation of the strategy started in 2020 and will accelerate in 2021.

ICT DEVELOPMENTS

Significant efforts were deployed by Cedefop to ensure seamless remote working for all staff. This entailed equipping staff with proper home office ICT hardware, as well as ensuring the deployment of IT tools that enabled and facilitated collaboration of remote teams. During 2020, management endorsed a new ICT strategy aiming at further digitalisation of the Agency by deploying initiatives that will boost digital collaboration; deploy the next generation of corporate services; harmonise the IT landscape of the Agency with that of other EU institutions; upgrade ICT support to business; enhance cyber-security and deploy a data architecture best able to support the Agency's core business.

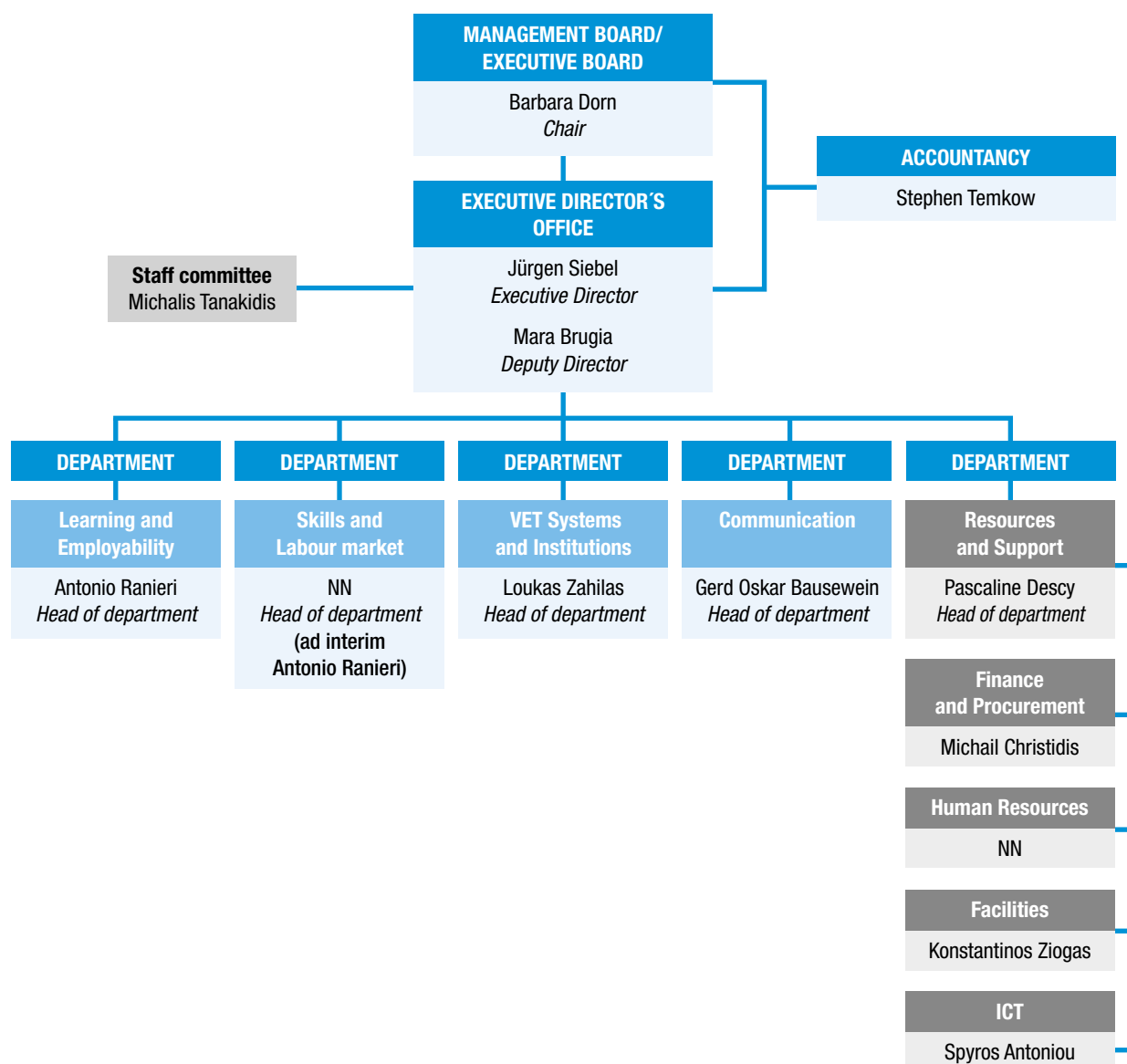


ACRONYMS

AG	advisory group
AI	artificial intelligence
ACVT	Advisory Committee on Vocational Training
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DG BUDG	European Commission's Directorate General for Budget
DG EMPL	European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DGVT	Directors General for Vocational Education and Training
EEA	European Economic Area
EAfA	European alliance for apprenticeships
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EC	European Commission
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ENISA	European Union Agency for Cybersecurity
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESCO	European skills, competences, qualifications and occupations
ETF	European Training Foundation
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
IAS	internal audit service
ICT	information and communication technology
IVET	initial vocational education and training
ILO	International Labour Organization
KPI	key performance indicator
LMI	labour market information
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NQF	national qualifications framework
PDN	performance development network
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
VET	vocational education and training

ANNEXES

I. ORGANISATION CHART SITUATION ON 31 DECEMBER 2020



II. SELECTED PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2020

Selected performance indicators for the PDs 2017-20

Type	Indicator	2020
Cedefop is a key player in attaining the EU policy objectives for VET, skills and qualifications		
	Policy documents to the preparation of which Cedefop has contributed	
	<i>of EU institutions</i>	94
	<i>of international organisations</i>	3
	Contributions to meetings that inform policies and their implementation	96
Cedefop is acknowledged and valued as a European source for evidence and information on VET and skills		
	EU policy documents citing Cedefop's work	165
	Policy documents of international organisations citing Cedefop's work	126
	Downloads of Cedefop publications	553 000
	<i>of which briefing notes</i>	88 000
	Citations of Cedefop publications/studies in the literature	956
	Active participation in conferences and events	38
	Quality and expected impact of events organised by Cedefop	97%
	Website traffic	
	<i>Visits</i>	1 103 000
	<i>Unique visitors</i>	951 000
	<i>Page views</i>	1 768 000
	Media coverage, take-up of articles and press releases	598
	Facebook followers	15 400
	Twitter followers	10 400
	Skills Panorama portal traffic	
	<i>Users</i>	142 000
	<i>Sessions</i>	168 000
Cedefop is an efficient, well-run and compliant Agency providing a nurturing environment to a qualified and motivated staff		
KPIs for the Director	Rate of implementation of commitment appropriations (budget execution)	100.00%
	Rate of outturn (payment appropriations)	99.23%
	Rate of payments completed within the legal/contractual deadlines	97.73%
	Rate of accepted audit recommendations implemented within agreed deadlines	100.00%
	Percentage of establishment plan filled (including outgoing procedures)	97%
	Cedefop's consultation with key stakeholders ⁽⁶⁾	94%
	Environmental indicator – CO2 (ton) emissions	666.81

⁽⁶⁾ The term 'key stakeholders' refers to the groups represented in Cedefop's Management Board (i.e. social partners, governments, the European Commission and an independent expert nominated by the European Parliament).

**CEDEFOP**European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Europe 123, Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE
Postal address: Cedefop service post, 57001 Thermi, GREECE
Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020, Email: info@cedefop.europa.eu

visit our portal www.cedefop.europa.eu



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