



# DIMENSIONE EUROPEA DELL'INSEGNAMENTO E PERCORSI DI EUROPROGETTAZIONE: EU Policies

Project Nr 614208-EPP-1-2019-1-IT--EPPKA3-AL-AGENDA

## Osnabrück Declaration

*on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery  
and just transitions to digital and green economies*

endorsed on 30 November 2020

Cofinanziato dal programma Erasmus+ dell'Unione europea

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# WHAT IS THE OSNABRÜCK DECLARATION

*Declaration of the Ministers in charge of vocational education and training of the Member States, the EU Candidate Countries and the EEA countries, the European social partners and the European Commission, meeting on 30 November 2020 to agree on a new set of policy actions in VET for the period of 2021-2025 to complement and operationalise the vision and strategic objectives formulated in the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience*

## GENERAL AIMS

The Ministers in charge of vocational education and training (VET) **reaffirm the commitment:**

- to contribute to the post-COVID recovery;
- to further develop the European Education and Training Area through future-oriented and innovative education and training systems,

in order:

1. to support the digital and green transition
  2. to improve employability and competitiveness
- **and thus stimulate economic growth**



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# THE OSNABRÜCK DECLARATION SIGNATORIES AND SUPPORTERS

## The Declaration is agreed by

the Ministers responsible for Vocational Education and Training of countries participating in the Copenhagen process:

- of the **EU Member States** (*Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden*);
- of the **EU Candidate Countries** (*Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey*);
- of the **EEA countries** (*Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway*);

the **European Social Partners** (*ETUC, BusinessEurope, SMEUnited, CEEP*);

the **European Commission**

## and supported by

- *the European level VET providers' associations (VET4EU2) and*
- *the learners representatives (OBESSU, European Apprentices Network)*



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# RATIONALE OF THE DECLARATION

- Excellent and inclusive European VET is more than a response to developments and challenges that individuals and organisations face;
- VET is an enabler of innovation and an essential foundation for green, digital and sustainable growth;
- Excellent and inclusive European VET is equally necessary for the competitiveness of European enterprises and a well-functioning European labour market;
- Apprenticeships and work-based learning embedded in a real-life work environment improve employability;
- VET equips our labour force with knowledge, skills and competences that are relevant for the ever-changing labour market and offers upskilling and re-skilling for inclusion and excellence;
- VET has a distinctive focus and identity, playing a key role at the interface of education and training, employment and economic policies;
- VET can only be developed effectively when policies are coherent and interconnected, underpinned by a balance between continuity and new directions.



# GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Declaration is built on **principles**, including:

- ✓ the due consideration for social dialogue and the need for a strong partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including social partners, companies, employers' organisations, chambers, branch associations, VET providers, learners' representatives, national, regional and local public administrations, employment services and social economy organisations;
- ✓ there is a shared responsibility with companies to promote the provision of skills that are needed;
- ✓ the need for sufficient investment and the involvement of all stakeholders is also key to achieving the Declaration's objectives, especially in the context of the pandemic;
- ✓ Quality and inclusive VET should provide citizens with equal training opportunities, regardless of their personal and economic background and place of residence.



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# FOUR MAIN AREAS/OBJECTIVES

The Osnabrück Declaration  
**focuses on four main areas**

1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET
2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation
3. Sustainability – a green link in VET
4. European Education and Training Area and international VET



# OBJECTIVE 1: RESILIENCE AND EXCELLENCE THROUGH QUALITY, INCLUSIVE, AND FLEXIBLE VET - SHORT TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2021-2025

## SUPPORT AT EU LEVEL

- Promote exchange of best practices and peer-learning activities on innovative policy reforms and VET excellence, also addressing sustainability and digitalisation challenges and the linkage of IVET and CVET qualification offers as attractive career pathways
- Develop and strengthen centres of vocational excellence as innovative incubators and skills ecosystems encompassing learning, training and research activities, VET, HE and research in selected sectors or socio-economic challenges, including support for entrepreneurship and digital and innovative VET resources for all



# OBJECTIVE 1: RESILIENCE AND EXCELLENCE THROUGH QUALITY, INCLUSIVE, AND FLEXIBLE VET - SHORT TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2021-2025

## ACTIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Explore the possibility of setting up a network of voluntary experts and executives, retired or on sabbatical, to support their peers in the fields of VET and apprenticeships as part of the EAfA

- Support the development of digital infrastructure for learning and teaching purposes in VET including artificial intelligence and AR/VR technologies and develop suitable institutional teaching and training arrangements underpinned by adequate infrastructure, especially in remote and rural areas thus ensuring social inclusion
- Reinforce work-based learning and apprenticeships by implementing the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and making use of the on-demand support services, and policy learning initiatives. Strengthen the use of quality and inclusive apprenticeships as a tool to support school/training-to-work transitions of vulnerable groups and to improve citizens' qualification levels.
- Support Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and improve permeability between vocational and academic pathways, including work-based learning and enhanced cooperation between VET, HE and research centres, thus establishing quality and effective VET and apprenticeship programmes at EQF level 5 and above
- Develop national and regional skills intelligence systems including skills anticipation and graduate tracking; enable social partners, decision-makers, stakeholders and providers to adapt and update VET programmes, curricula and guidelines in a timely and effective manner





# OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISHING A NEW LIFELONG LEARNING CULTURE – RELEVANCE OF CVET AND DIGITALISATION - SHORT TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2021-2025

## SUPPORT AT EU LEVEL

- Develop an inventory of strategies and actions relevant for re- and upskilling in the context of green and digital transitions and building on EU-wide surveys such as the Continuing Vocational Training Survey, the European Company Survey and other relevant evidence from the Commission and Cedefop
- Further improve strategic skills anticipation at EU level, particularly through Cedefop's work on skills intelligence in consultation with the European Commission, national governments and social partners
- Launch and support the Pact for Skills, mobilising partnerships, incentives and commitments for actions, in line with the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce and in agreement with Member States and companies
- Explore financial and non-financial incentives for IVET and CVET addressing adult learners, promotion programmes with public funding for CVET and other financial incentives, linked to collective bargaining agreements where appropriate, to encourage individual learning, taking into account the synergies between different policy areas e.g. employment, social inclusion and education policies as well as national and regional specificities
- Improve European statistics together with national statistical offices, including work on statistics on public and private investment in adult learning
- Facilitate mobility for learning and work in Europe, provide access to transparent and reliable information on skills, learning opportunities and labour market trends, facilitate the Europe-wide interconnection of digital platforms for learning and career management and enable education and training institutions to issue digital diplomas and certificates (Europass Digital Credentials), thus facilitating transparency and recognition of qualifications across Europe, through the new Europass platform



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## OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISHING A NEW LIFELONG LEARNING CULTURE – RELEVANCE OF CVET AND DIGITALISATION - SHORT TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2021-2025

### ACTIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- Develop national skills strategies for quality and inclusive lifelong learning with all relevant national, regional, sectoral stakeholders and social partners. Besides education and training provision, the national skills strategies may include guidance, incentives for improved skills provision by employers, increased participation by employees, validation of prior learning and targeted public approaches for reaching out to inactive and unemployed individuals, NEETs or individuals at risk of unemployment
- Develop targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national and regional levels addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society
- Work with respective stakeholders to develop digital learning solutions supporting access to CVET opportunities and the awarding of CVET credentials and certificates, thereby opening the possibility to obtain full qualifications without neglecting on-the-job CVET and the positive effects of learning conducive work environments
- Support linking national VET platforms or databases to the Europass in accordance with the Europass decision and the EQF Recommendation where appropriate
- Support VET teachers, trainers, guidance counsellors, adult educators and mentors by equipping them with the adequate skills and tools for and through digital technologies; in particular through systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional development in both school and work-based settings, as well as distance education and training, enabling them to progress in their careers



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# OBJECTIVE 3: SUSTAINABILITY – A GREEN LINK IN VET

## SHORT TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2021-2025

### SUPPORT AT EU LEVEL

- Promote initiatives to support cooperation and knowledge-sharing between VET institutions and providers on learning methods, curricula, guidelines, work-based learning, and quality assurance of education and training offer on green skills, by using European programmes like Erasmus+
- Promote the exchange of practices of VET teachers and trainers, specifically with regard to trends and skill needs relevant to the green economy in order to peer learn/review and to share best practices
- Call for new commitments and partnerships for quality and effective apprenticeships linked to green technologies and occupations, under the renewed European Alliance for Apprenticeships, focusing on the economic sectors that will be on the frontline of the transition to a climate-neutral Europe
- Explore opportunities to make EU VET policy cooperation climate neutral, for instance through the wider use of videoconferences, webinars and virtual conferences with all VET stakeholders and social partners



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# OBJECTIVE 3: SUSTAINABILITY – A GREEN LINK IN VET

## SHORT TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2021-2025

### ACTIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- Create incentives for greening VET programmes, including education and training in green technologies and innovation, in energy efficiency, circular economy, environmental awareness, sustainable use of learning and training material, digitalisation to reduce climate effects
- Define labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision, including basic skills across all sectors and occupations and sector-specific skills in cooperation with the social partners
- Define and support opportunities to enable teaching and training staff, managing teams in VET providers and trainers and mentors in companies to act as multipliers and mediators, in view of increasing digitalisation and sustainability within the provision and management of training programmes



## OBJECTIVE 4: EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING AREA AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF VET - SHORT TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2021-2025

### SUPPORT AT EU LEVEL

- Reinforce mobility, including long-term mobility in VET, based on common quality criteria and on the promotion of recognition of VET learning outcomes
- Explore the possibility for structured transnational exchange between VET stakeholders, VET teachers and trainers and social partner representatives; assess the potential of European tools such as EPALE, e-Twinning and Europass
- Further develop Europass in close cooperation with Member States and the European social partners by considering the specificities of national and regional VET systems;
- ensure that VET learners can access multilingual information on learning mobility, European VET programmes and qualification requirements for job offers anytime anywhere, including with mobile devices, thus supporting the European Education and Training Area
- Support the preparation and participation of national teams to the EUROSILLS Competition to raise the attractiveness and image of VET, promote VET excellence in Europe and to achieve champion status in the global WorldSkills competitions
- Cooperate with international organisations, in particular the OECD, ILO, UNESCO, Council of Europe, World Bank and other regional VET networks in the world with a focus on a common world VET agenda (common world VET conferences, promoting best practice exchange of regional VET innovations and instruments of common interest)



## OBJECTIVE 4: EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING AREA AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF VET - SHORT TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2021-2025

### ACTIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- Support and facilitate the mobility of VET and adult learners, including apprentices, for example by developing support structures and providing information on opportunities in host countries
- Increase the rate of mobility of VET learners as well as teachers and trainers, while strengthening measures to ensure the quality and recognition of learning outcomes, as well as adequate support structures. Foster longer periods of mobility for VET learners abroad and ensure that apprentice work placements are in line with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, taking into account national regulations and collective agreements, including health and safety provisions
- Develop VET internationalisation strategies, mobilising partnerships and including commitments for concrete and targeted actions, with all relevant stakeholders in accordance with national or regional regulations
- Promote intercultural knowledge, skills and competences as part of qualification and curricula requirements in VET qualifications in line with the Key Competence Framework
- Cooperate with other EU countries in preparing national teams for international competitions such as WorldSkills and EuroSkills

