



European Forum  
of Technical and Vocational  
Education and Training

## **EfVET STATEMENT OF THE RHODES ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> EfVET Annual Conference met in Rhodes, Greece from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. Over 345 training providers from Europe participated in the discussions that took place in a panel discussion, in Roundtables, in breakout sessions and in networking sessions culminating in the Marketplace where members had the opportunity to find partners for projects. The attendance in Rhodes was the highest in all EfVET annual conference since the first conference in 1992 in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

The theme of the 2023 conference was *Future Skills for Green Transitions – an agenda for VET*. In the debates that followed, it was clear that VET schools, Colleges and Higher Education Institutions in VET are systematically taking initiatives to create a culture of sustainability and protection of our natural environment. In doing so training providers, believe that as VET managers and teaching staff they must lead by example.

Students are ready to collaborate as many of them already have a mind-set conscious of the fact that we must save energy, protect the natural environment, separate waste, consume less and ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the natural rhythms of nature and the benefits derived from such rhythmic patterns.

For this purpose, participants felt the need to highlight the following points for further collaboration and participation in projects and other joint initiatives:

1. It is hard to define future skills but easy to realise that **technology will play a key role in the acquisition of key skills** in current and future generations. Notwithstanding, the basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, the use of IT and civic and social education remain pivotal for the growth and development of human beings.
2. The **challenges posed by technology** have to be met. Artificial intelligence must be seen as a support device to enable young and older

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persons to communicate better, achieve more objectives, facilitate the organisational aspects of the day-to-day assignments and a source of information unparalleled in human history.

3. The role of **digital platforms must be used to improve learning outcomes in work-based learning**. VET is increasingly becoming the platform for a work-based learning pedagogy. Training providers recognise that most young people today learn by doing. The classroom, lecture rooms set up and the possible monologues by Faculty can be the cause for dropouts. Retaining students in higher VET has become a challenge for all.
4. Training providers endorsed the **work-based learning guidelines launched during the conference**. These guidelines should enable Faculty and teachers to transform any work-based learning activity into meaningful pedagogy and an experience in the real world of employment in which dynamic change radically from those found in educational institutions.
5. **Sustaining human development** is seen by training providers as a huge challenge in today societies. Young people are easily distracted by the proliferation of knowledge, by the attractiveness of digital platform and by the new way of learning anywhere and at any time. For this purpose, it is essential that more quality time is spent with young people in formal and informal learning environments. Reducing time with young people is denying them the opportunity to learn from experience and form those whose vocation is to transmit skills and competences required for social development.
6. In obtaining a clear direction in European VET, it is **imperative that training providers lead the narrative of vocational education and training**. Being front liners implies that they are the real experts in dealing with real-time situations in VET institutions. Research is essential but this must be directed towards understanding and addressing the issues raised

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by the key clients in schools that is students. While they have the right to quality education, they also need the support to live a better quality of life and to be independent bread winners throughout their working career. Others that suffer from disabilities also require special support to integrate them more productively in a dignified environment.

7. VET institutions are ready for green transitions. It is the political level that must **lead by example** and support in every way possible the development of a green culture/s in VET institutions and at all levels of education. Without a green culture the world will continue to risk catastrophe through climate change and other natural phenomenon provoked by man's dominance over nature.
8. Finally, another conclusion derived from the debates at the conference points towards the need for a **bottom-up approach in European VET**. It is widely felt that training providers have been marginalised into roles that keep them at a distance and in a observatory status from governing and deciding European VET policies. Training providers are central to VET policies, practices, and procedures. They manage schools, colleges and higher education institutions. They are the real actors that must decide their future and the learning environments that in today's world, are conducive to attracting learners to lifelong learning.
9. Training providers participating in Rhodes endorsed the strong statement that they should be **leaders of change** and that public institutions can follow the example of private industry in spearheading change. Several targets have been identified as initiatives towards a green transition each carrying a set of green skills that can be acquired through vocational education and training. Participants also endorsed that EfvET can be an excellent platform to promote green transition through VET using the network itself to participate in projects and joint activities involving teachers and students.

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