

# A Manifesto For A Political Roadmap That Reinvents Technical Vocational Education And Training



2024

**The European Associations of Vocational Education and Training (VET) Providers signatories to this Manifesto are appealing new members of the European Parliament and the next European Commission to support a new era for VET.**

Together, we stand as the largest representative of the VET sector, gathering over 800 organizations, voicing up for over 1.000.000 teachers and trainers, as well as 4.000.000 students, to showcase the transformative impact of VET in shaping lives and driving the socio-economic growth of our European continent.

## **VET: key pathway to the future**

For decades, VET has been considered a secondary choice in the education sector to the extent that the first draft of the European Education Area (EEA) for Education excluded VET from its design and support.

VET is a pathway onto the labour market. Advancements in technology, challenges in the environment and digital domains, as well as the impact played worldwide by the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing number of global and local conflicts, are generating shifts in labour market demands and affecting the VET sector, highlighting the need for upskilling and reskilling the labour force. According to the Education and Training Monitor, VET graduates are more likely to be employed comparing to medium-level general education, although they are still behind the average employment rate of graduates from tertiary education.<sup>1</sup>

This notwithstanding, the persisting perception of VET as a second choice is unfortunately rooted in the culture of most of the European communities. Several initiatives at policy level have been trying to enhance its standing alongside Higher Education. This route should be pursued and empowered, by improving funding, increasing resources, and raising awareness about the practical benefits and direct employment opportunities VET offers. These changes can aim to elevate VET's profile, showcasing it as an equally prestigious and viable choice. By highlighting the successes and the tangible career pathways that VET provides, these initiatives have already shown they can help to balance the educational landscape and demonstrate the value of diverse educational routes.

In countries where VET is strong as a result of national policies and social esteem, the ecosystemic collaboration makes VET graduates more employable and their skills more in line with the needs of the socio-economic environment.<sup>2</sup> When Member States require a stronger and diverse labour force to boost its economy or to resolve an economic crisis, VET institutions should be the first to be asked to rapidly intervene and create education and training programmes to upskill and reskill the labour forces or set up new courses to encourage mobility from one economic sector to another and better opportunities for employment.

---

<sup>1</sup>Education and Training Monitor 2022

<sup>2</sup>Vocational education and training. Skills for today and for the future (2022)

## The challenges ahead

In the recent years, in the structure at the European Commission level, VET falls under the responsibility of the Commissioner in charge of Jobs and Social Rights. Despite the many reasons for this arrangement, it is important to ensure that young and older European citizens do not perceive VET as solely focused on employability. Highlighting lifelong learning as a seamless connection between education, training, and work life can help communicate a more holistic message.

Many initiatives have been promoted by the Commission to promote VET and its players: the Centre of Vocational Excellence Programme, the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, the Pact for Skills, as well as many events and opportunities under the umbrella of the Year of Skills, to mention few of them. The ambition and the aims of these activities have been relevant: as European Associations of VET Providers we have been proud to be part of them and to actively contribute, although their impact and sustainability have not been always in line with the expectations.

It is now the time to rethink and relaunch research and initiatives at European level focusing on VET, providing them with adequate funding, granting continuity under a multi-annual strategic plan. Past initiatives could also be relaunched and consolidated: among the others, the EU VET Skills Week could offer a useful gathering for the main VET stakeholders once per year; or the definition of a coordinating body for the Copenhagen Process would boost its implementation. Rather than enticing Member States to engage in the European Commission's roadmap towards high-quality VET, Member States prefers opting for national initiatives. This situation highlights the need for renewed efforts to enhance the relevance of VET for young learners, educators, trainers, and staff in higher VET institutions, as well as administrators, managers, and professionals within the sector.

**The European Associations of VET Providers are therefore calling the new members of the European Parliament and the next European Commission to consider the following recommendations in the framework of the next policies:**

# Manifesto for VET

---

**1. Establish** a stronger connection between VET in the European Commission, under the wider umbrella of the Lifelong Learning Area, where VET policies can be developed in collaboration with other areas related to industry, growth, innovation, sustainability and of course general education.

**2. Increase** considerably the funding for VET by creating a special EU fund to (i) raise awareness and good practice of vocational training in countries where the culture for VET is still developing and (ii) upgrade the infrastructure of schools, colleges and higher education institutions that promote green transitions, a pedagogy supported/enriched by digital technologies, work-based learning and continuous professional development of its staff members.

**3. Promote** the opportunities for a global internationalization of the Erasmus+ programme for VET, recognizing an adequate funding to mobility and capacity building opportunities, in line with the recent Pilot programmes.

**4. Allocate** the Copenhagen Process and the EQF Advisory Board to VET Colleges and Higher Education Institutions providing or integrating vocational qualifications at Technical, Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral levels.

**5. Ensure** that EU Associations of VET Providers are actively engaged as key stakeholders by the European Commission in the formulation of relevant policies (e.g. Annual Erasmus+ Guide). Additionally, enable these associations to be full members with voting rights on the governing Boards of EU agencies focusing on VET, as well as of the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) and other agencies where decisions impacting VET are taken.

**6. Incentivise** European SMEs in countries where VET is underdeveloped by providing funding schemes that encourage them to engage more apprentices and facilitate more job shadowing opportunities.

**7. Identify** a transparent process for the recognition of both the role of mobility providers as supporting organisations for reaching the ambitious benchmarks of VET Erasmus+ mobilities, and transparency in the quality standards of their work which they must comply with.

**8. Consolidate** the initiative of support service promoted by the European Training Foundation (ETF), including its focus on the awarding of the EU Quality Label to training institutions that excel in their modernisation of VET, increase the number of students and workers enrolled for micro credentials or full qualifications.

**9. Legislate** funding for research at EU level on VET that reflects the needs of training providers, industry, and social partners.

In championing VET, we are committed to lay the foundation for a prosperous future where every individual has the skills, opportunities, and support needed to thrive in a dynamic and evolving labour force, ensuring a more equitable and resilient society for generations to come.

# Manifesto for VET

---



**The European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB)** is a non-profit network of over 395 vocational schools, universities, and private organisations dedicated to enhancing education and training. With 30 years of experience across Germany, Europe, and globally, EVBB promotes inclusive, relevant, and high-quality education to develop an employable workforce and support professional growth. Operating through a strong network in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, EVBB is committed to advancing vocational training for the future.



**The European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET)**, founded in 1991, is a leading nonprofit association representing and advocating for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions. EfVET aims at enhancing VET provision across members through active networking activities of all key stakeholders and to generate capacity to influence policy and advocacy for VET at National, European, and International levels.



**The European Vocational Training Association – EVTA**, is a leading European network in the field of Vocational Education and Training, representing VET providers across Europe. Established in Belgium in 1998 as an International Non-Profit Association (AISBL), EVTA is the result of the cooperation between VET providers from different EU countries in the framework of the Euroqualification project.