

AGENDA

Building a strong international cooperation on Vocational Excellence: Final conference of the project “International dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence”

9-10 November 2023, Turin

BACKGROUND:

Implementing vocational excellence approaches features prominently in the overall EU policy agenda for skills and for Vocational Education and Training (VET). The European Skills Agenda¹, the European Education Area², the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET³, as well as the Osnabrück Declaration⁴, all include very clear references to Vocational Excellence as a driving force for reforms in the VET sector.

VET Internationalisation is a strategic orientation included in Art 166.3 of the EU Treaty

"The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of vocational training".

The Council Recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration have also set ambitious objectives and called on member states and the European Commission to strengthen the international dimension of VET.

To support the modernisation of VET in accordance with the policy priorities, in particular, as regards vocational excellence and VET internationalisation, the European Commission has launched the initiative on Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs). The CoVE initiative aims to be a driving force for reforms in the VET sector, ensuring high quality skills and competences that lead to quality employment and career-long opportunities, meeting the needs of an innovative, inclusive and sustainable economy⁵.

Inspired by these developments, the ETF has created in 2020 the ETF Network for Excellence (ENE). This initiative promotes the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE), through close international dialogue among EU and partner countries, building on evidence, fostering peer learning

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22832&langId=en>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0625>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29>

⁴ https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf

⁵ See brochure on [VET skills for today and for the future](#)

and exchanges, and development of self-assessment tools. The growing interest in the ENE is proved by the increased number of EU and partner countries CoVEs joining the network to actively seek cooperation and dialogue with each other. ENE has currently 288 members, Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), from more than 40 countries around the world: 17 ETF partner countries; 10 EU member states; 14 Sub-Saharan African countries, plus Philippines and Switzerland.

The ENE is an international platform and community of providers in VET. ENE encourages collaboration, sharing of know-how and tools, both among its members in a global environment. ENE offers a platform for mutual learning approaches focussing on 10 selected core themes.

Based on successful work and achievements of the ENE, the ETF has been entrusted by DG EMPL to implement a project “**The international Dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence: Building a strong international cooperation dimension on Vocational Excellence**”, which has four components:

- 1) **Creating an international vocational excellence quality and development tool:** to develop a self-assessment instrument that will help map the progress to vocational excellence, based on a maturity model that includes the key characteristics of excellence and key activities of the COVE initiative.
- 2) **Explore the feasibility of a Quality award on Vocational Excellence.** This aims to provide visibility and recognition of concrete achievements and commitment to pursue vocational excellence in its various dimensions.
- 3) **Building evidence to support vocational excellence for the digital and green transitions and in the field of applied research.** This includes development of international studies offering in-depth knowledge of the role of COVEs in supporting the digital and green transition. A third study looks at good practices of applied research activities in vocational education and training.
- 4) **Policy support activities and capacity building.** Consultation with relevant stakeholders to get advice and validate the project outputs and dissemination activities.

The project has been implemented since November 2021 and is completing its work in November 2023.

This conference aims to share and discuss with the participants the results of this EU-funded project “**The international Dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence**” and outcomes of the work of the ETF thematic initiatives, with a focus on Entrepreneurial CoVEs and Digitalisation of teaching and learning.

The conference has a particular focus on international sharing and collaboration – it will bring together representatives from CoVEs and policy makers from the ETF partner countries, partners from the EU and beyond.

The conference will focus on four streams of development work:

1. Tools to support development and recognition

The EC Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion tasked the ETF to develop a digital self-assessment tool that would facilitate a shared understanding of vocational excellence and would help VET providers to self-assess and to collaborate to achieve and extend their vocational excellence. This tool, ISATCOVE, has been developed and is currently being piloted. Alongside the tool, the ETF has developed a proposal for two labels that will recognise a commitment to work towards vocational excellence and the achievement of vocational excellence in a CoVE. A proposal for a Quality Award for outstanding achievements in VET excellence goes along with the two labels and is under development. The conference participants will learn about these tools and will be invited to provide their feedback to these proposals.

2. Research – Case Studies

CoVEs are acting as pathfinders for the digital and green transitions. ETF has conducted research that shows how CoVEs are leading the transition and also how through applied research they are making a bridge between training and future employment. Three case studies will be presented and participants will be able to interrogate leading CoVEs.

3. Partnerships for developing vocational excellence

Over the last 2 years international partnerships of CoVEs have been working together as part of the ENE Network to share good practices and develop new approaches to some of the key challenges confronting VET providers. The conference will hear about some of the most important and creative solutions addressed by ENE. The focus will be made on certain areas, in particular, digital transition, Entrepreneurial CoVEs and coordinating role of CoVEs.

ENE team has developed a comprehensive thematic report, in which results and lessons learnt has been reflected. The paper will be presented at the conference.

Some examples of how ENE work contributed to development of vocational excellence in the ETF partner countries will be shared, in particular, Moldova, where ETF supported strengthening leadership and coordinating role of CoVEs in skills development in respective sectors.

4. Future opportunities – becoming a CoVE, collaborating with CoVEs, learning about CoVEs

The ETF and the CoVEs and networks involved in this initiative are committed to further collaboration over the next 18 months. During this session, representatives from VET Associations, ETF, the EU will set out opportunities for VET providers to deepen and extend their engagement with CoVEs. This will include opportunities to:

- pilot the self-assessment tools and labels
- exchange examples of good practice
- participate in webinars to familiarise themselves with up-to-date solutions to challenges facing CoVEs
- network and build partnerships with like-minded VET providers to create projects, exchanges or cooperation
- participate in training as an assessor or mentor to support VET providers to self-assess or to gain recognition for excellence

Participants of the Conference will include representatives of the VET providers engaged in the above work, members of the Consultation panel which has been advising ETF team throughout the project and validating its results, EC services and departments and EU agencies working on the topic of vocational excellence.

The Conference is organised in presence but giving opportunity for wider audience to follow the streaming on YouTube.

Thursday, 9th November

Polo del '900, Via del Carmine, 14, 10122 Torino, Italy

Time	Agenda Item	Speakers
09:00 - 09:30	Official Opening	<i>Georgios Zisimos, Head of Policy Advice and EU Programming Unit, ETF</i> <i>Facilitator: Simona Rinaldi, ETF</i>
09:30 – 10.30	Presentation of the tools to support development and recognition of CoVEs International Self-Assessment Tool for CoVEs (ISATCOVE) Vocational Excellence Quality Label and Award Testimonies from VET providers: how they have used the tools?	<i>Julian Stanley, ETF</i> <i>Doriana Monteleone, ETF</i> External Speakers Adrijana Hodjak & Monica Auzinger(tbc)
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 – 12:30	Presentation of the studies: Role of CoVEs in digital and green transition Panel discussion with representatives of the Centres of Excellence which were analysed in the studies. Presentation of the International mapping study on good practices of applied research in VET	<i>Stefan Thomas, ETF</i> <i>Helena Miettinen, Development Specialist, Helsinki Business School</i> <i>Karolina Sikala, Green Academy, Denmark</i> <i>Heloise Leloup, Communications, Marketing & External Relations, Association Campus d'Excellence Industrie du futur - Sud, France</i> <i>Anass Ait Laachir, IFMERE, Morocco</i> <i>Abderrahim Arejda, IFMERE Oujda, Morocco</i> <i>Epke Vogel, CINOP</i>
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 14:30	Feedback from Consultation Panel	<i>Julian Stanley, ETF</i> <i>Doriana Monteleone, ETF</i> Members of the consultation panel (tbc)
14:30 – 15:10	ENE thematic partnerships and activities: Introduction Panel discussion with ETF experts leading thematic partnerships: GRETA – Greening Responses to Excellence through Thematic Actions; Social inclusion;	<i>Jose Manuel Galvin Arribas, Content Coordinator, Project Vocational Excellence, ETF</i> <i>Susanne Nielsen, ETF</i> <i>Lida Kita, ETF</i>

Time	Agenda Item	Speakers
	Career guidance Autonomy and Public-Private Partnership ENE publication towards internationalisation	<i>Florian Kadletz, ETF</i> <i>Manuel Galvin Arribas, ETF</i> <i>Marija Pavkov, EKOPID</i>
15:10 - 15:40	Entrepreneurial centres of Excellence Introduction Panel discussion with participants of the ENTR CoVEs partnership	<i>Mariavittoria Garlappi, ETF</i> <i>Jan Peter Ganter De Otero, ETF</i> <i>Radmil Polenakovikj, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius</i>
15:40 – 16:10	Coffee break	
16:10 - 17:20	ENE thematic partnerships and activities DIGI-ENE: Digitalisation of teaching and learning Introduction: Real digital transformation of teaching and learning – An opportunity too big to lose Panel discussion with participants of DIGI partnerships and international experts Leadership and coordinating role of CoVEs in skills development in specific sectors: example of Moldova COOP NET	<i>Filippo Del Ninno, ETF</i> <i>Fabio Nascimbeni, ETF</i> <i>Filippo Del Ninno, ETF</i> <i>Silviu Gincu, Head of Department of Vocational Education, Ministry of Education of Moldova</i>
17:20 - 17:30	Wrap up of the Day One	<i>Georgios Zisimos, Head of Policy Advice and EU Programming Unit</i>
20:00 - 22:00	Welcome dinner	

Friday, 10th November

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Time	Agenda Item	Speakers
09:00 - 09:15	Welcome and opening	<i>Georgios Zisimos, Head of Policy Advice and EU Programming Unit, ETF</i> <i>Simona Rinaldi, ETF</i>
09:15 – 10.00	Internationalising Vocational Excellence: results from needs analysis and focus groups Perspective of the EC and comments on results	<i>Jolien van Uden, ETF</i> <i>Giulia Meschino, European Vocational Training Association (EVTA)</i> <i>Sotiria Tsalamani, European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB)</i> <i>Paolo Nardi, European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EFVET)</i> <i>Ragnhild Skaalid, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission</i>
10:00 – 10:30	Forging alliances	<i>Georgios Zisimos, ETF</i> <i>Iñigo Araiztegui Arraiz, Director of Internationalisation Department, Tknika</i>
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 - 12:30	Internationalising Vocational Excellence: priorities for support services Working groups	<i>Facilitators:</i> <i>Julian Stanley, ETF</i> <i>Jolien van Uden, ETF</i>
12:30 - 13:00	Conclusions and closure of the conference	<i>Manuela Geleng, Director for Skills, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission</i> <i>Pilvi Torsti, ETF Director</i>
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch	