

# Vocational Education and Training at the heart of Europe: Launch of third European Vocational Skills Week

Under the motto “Discover your Talent”, thousands of young people all over Europe will have a chance to learn about training and career opportunities thanks to vocational education and training at more than 1,000 events taking place across Europe until December 2018. The initiative brings together education and training providers, civil society organisations, public authorities, business organisations, trade unions, and the broader public to raise awareness of the benefits of Vocational Education and Training (VET).

The Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility **Marianne Thyssen**, said: *“We are happy to be back for the third year in a row to show that VET leads to exciting and rewarding careers in all walks of life – pilots, movie makers, aircraft technicians, you name it! What’s more, VET and apprenticeships give people the right skills to match labour market needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, therefore I’m delighted that we take again the time and the opportunity, all across Europe, to showcase these benefits.”*

**Heinz Faßmann**, Austrian Federal Minister of Education, Science and Research, said: *“The Austrian Presidency is delighted to be hosting the third edition of the European Vocational Skills Week, which will take place for the first time outside Brussels. Through the choice learners have between a dual apprenticeships scheme and a full-time school-based system, VET forms a highly valued and demanded part of Austrian education and training. The European Vocational Skills Week provides a unique opportunity to further boost the attractiveness of VET.”*

*“A well-established and functioning VET system is an important factor for economic development. But VET also offers young people a stable basis for successful careers. Therefore, VET has to be promoted and the European Vocational Skills Week is a powerful tool to do this. In this sense the Austrian Presidency is proud to be the centre of European VET policy for one week!”* says **Margarete Schramböck**, Austrian Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs.

## **Vocational Education and Training: a smart choice for the future**

The aim of the Week is to show that VET is a smart choice, for young people and adults alike, leading to excellence in education, high-quality jobs and increased employability. In doing so, the Week contributes to the [Skills Agenda for Europe](#) and the roll-out of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). Through the European Vocational Skills Week, the European Commission wants to raise awareness of the wide range of opportunities available through VET, and encourage more people to participate and learn what it has to offer. This year, the future of VET is also an important focus of the Week, touching on topics such as digitalisation and the internationalisation of VET.

As part of the campaign, opening events and Employers' Days are being hosted in several Member States, 26 national and pan-EU Ambassadors have been appointed to raise awareness of the initiative, and awards to celebrate excellence in VET will be conferred during the Week.

The week has been organised with the strong involvement and support from the [European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training \(Cedefop\)](#) and the [European Training Foundation](#).

## **Background**

### **Key figures on vocational education in Europe** (source: [Eurostat](#))

- 49% of upper secondary students in Europe participate in upper secondary VET (2016)
- The employment rate of recent VET graduates [\[1\]](#) in Europe is 74.8% (2017)
- The percentage of low-qualified adults [\[2\]](#) in Europe has been reducing steadily thanks to the European Social Fund (ESF) assistance but is still too high, at 22.5% (2017)
- 10.9% of Europe's population participates in adult learning (2017)

### **About the European Vocational Skills Week:**

The first edition of the European Vocational Skills Week took place in 2016. In 2017, the second edition took place with more than 1585 activities organised across Europe reaching 1 million people. The events for the third edition per country can be found [here](#).

### **About the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2018:**

Following its presidencies in 1998 and 2006, Austria assumed its third presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 July 2018.

### **For more information**

[European Vocational Skills Week Website and event map](#)

[Facebook Event Page: European Vocational Skills Week 2018](#)

[Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2018 Website](#)

[Eurostat news item with statistics on vocational education across the EU \(available as of 5 November\)](#)

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[\[1\]](#) Aged 15-34, [Eurostat](#)

[\[2\]](#) Less than primary, primary, and lower secondary education, [Eurostat](#)