



The College that Works!!!!

The youth unemployment rate is close to 26% across the European Union and rising and in some member states significantly higher. There is a real danger of creating a ‘lost generation’, yet at the same time there are more than 2 million vacancies that cannot be filled.

Colleges and VET Institutions need to be more innovative; build closer partnership with Business and Industry to ensure young people and adults alike have the necessary skills to meet the demands of new jobs in a global marketplace. To meet these challenges: flexibility; work based learning; apprenticeship programmes, where business and VET providers work closely together and share jointly the skills development of the workforce, are key to the future of VET. VET institutions themselves need to become much more ‘entrepreneurial’ in this context. This poses many challenges – not just in terms of teaching and learning but in Leadership and Change Management. How can VET Institutions respond to these demands and challenges?

The conference will explore these issues in depth and provide an opportunity for delegates to learn from each other; consider different models and approaches and promote the concept of ‘the entrepreneurial College’. That is ‘The College that works!!!’

In 2012 The European Commission launched a Communique called “[Rethinking Education](#)” to encourage Member States to take immediate action to ensure that young people develop the skills and competences needed by the labour market and to achieve their targets for growth and jobs.

Europe needs a radical rethink on how education and training systems can deliver the skills needed by the labour market.

To ensure that education is more relevant to the needs of students and the labour market, assessment methods need to be adapted and modernised. The Communique also calls on Member States to strengthen links between education and employers, to bring enterprises into the classroom and to allow young people to meet employers. Moreover there is a need for younger people to gain a taste of employment through increased work-based learning, a work ethos and social contact in the workplace.

Rethinking Education in brief:

- There needs to be a much stronger focus on developing transversal skills and basic skills at all levels.

- A new benchmark on foreign language learning: by 2020, at least 50% of 15 year olds should have knowledge of a first foreign language and at least 75% should study a second foreign language.
- Investment is needed to build world-class vocational education and training systems and increase levels of work-based learning.
- Technology, in particular the internet, must be fully exploited. Schools, universities and vocational and training institutions must be supported by well-trained, motivated and entrepreneurial teachers.
- Funding needs to be targeted to maximise the return on investment. Debate at both national and EU level is needed on funding for education especially vocational education and higher education.
- A partnership approach is critical. Both public and private funding is necessary to boost innovation and increase cross-fertilisation between academia and business.

In this context Conference will explore several aspects relating to improving teaching and learning:

- The role of technology as a learning tool
- The role of coaching and mentoring in the learning process
- The inspired, motivated and entrepreneurial teacher
- The role of work experience; apprenticeships and transnational mobility in skills development
- How can VET contribute to the needs of industry and business life?
- Future labour markets in Europe – challenges for VET in the future
- ECVET in practice – creating a common European Transfer system

Key note presentations will be complemented by interactive workshops on a variety of related and key priorities facing VET institutions. These will offer delegates the opportunity to share approaches and methodologies used in institutions drawn from across Europe and sharing good practice through case studies and good examples.

Workshop topics will include the following topical issues facing VET institutions:

- 1) Work based learning and apprenticeships – meeting the skills needs of industry and commerce
- 2) The Dual system – to be or not to be? That is the question
- 3) Improving teaching and learning in VET – a new pedagogy?
- 4) Creating the Entrepreneurial College – the Leadership challenge
- 5) New generation of European projects and cross sector cooperation under Strategic Partnerships and Knowledge Alliances – dissemination and sustainability
- 6) VET and Business/Enterprise links – honeymoon, marriage or divorce

In addition, members and delegates are invited to disseminate their European partnership

project outcomes and results to a wide audience through the **Round table sessions** and promote their innovatory development initiatives.

Conference will continue to be highly interactive, providing considerable opportunity to network and find new partnerships.

Finally – the work and outcomes of the conference will be focussed toward the preparation of a conference report and findings to go to the European Commission, other stakeholders and interested parties throughout Europe.

The working document [Vocational education and training for better skills, growth and jobs](#) which accompanies the strategy can be found on the website of the European Commission DG-Education and Culture.