What Future for European VET systems? Cedefop‘s Scenarios 2035

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Central Europe: running out of steam

After 20 years of growth, labour shortages threaten to shake up the region’s economic model

**Even to talk of labour** shortages in central Europe will come as a surprise to many in the rest of the EU, which has seen an **influx of migrants** from the region in the past decade and has watched many central European leaders strenuously oppose plans to house **more refugees**. The large number of workers in the UK from countries such as Poland was one of the key underlying issues in the Brexit referendum.
Unemployment is lower in central Europe than in most of the EU

The region's population is shrinking

Sources: Thomson Reuters Datastream, Eurostat
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Source: UN population projections
© FT
Enrolment in IVET: National differences


- Remarkable growth in some from a low base (e.g. Spain, Portugal)
- Moderate growth in some from a moderate base (e.g. the Netherlands, Austria)
- Significant decline in a limited number from a high base (e.g. Germany, Poland)
Selected Trends in VET 1995 - 2015

1995

- Dead-end programmes with little progression to higher levels
- Much school based IVET ‘input driven’ and weakly linked to labour market
- VET and general education conceptually distinct
- Programmes and qualifications narrowly defined and specific
- VET narrowly defined as IVET and at medium skill levels
- Limited goals; preparing for job entry and securing skilled labour

2015

- Increased permeability and fewer dead-ends
- Reorientation to learning outcomes and competences
- Crossing boundaries (school-workplace; general-vocational)
- Fewer qualifications and broadened profiles
- Diversification of target groups, including adults and higher VET
- Broader goals: social as well as economic; excellence AND integration
How to define VET & describe VET systems? Combining three perspectives...

Source: Cedefop, 2017c

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How to describe changes in VET?

Source: Cedefop 2020

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## Vocational vs. Academic drift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistemological/pedagogical perspective</th>
<th>Vocational drift</th>
<th>Academic drift</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increasing work-based elements in school-based VET or HE</td>
<td>Increasing esteem of academic / disciplinary knowledge</td>
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<td>Increasing esteem of professional knowledge</td>
<td>Accentuation of theoretical and abstract knowledge</td>
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<td>Increasing emphasis on employing teachers with comprehensive work experience</td>
<td>Increasing emphasis on the academic qualifications of teachers</td>
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<th>Education system perspective</th>
<th>Vocational drift</th>
<th>Academic drift</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increasing relative enrolment in vocational education at upper-secondary level</td>
<td>Increasing relative enrolment in general education at upper-secondary level</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increasing relative enrolment in professional HE and higher VET</td>
<td>Increasing relative enrolment in universities</td>
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<th>Labour market perspective</th>
<th>Vocational drift</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fostering employer engagement</td>
<td>Increasing attractiveness of general and academic</td>
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<td>Strengthening role of social partners</td>
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<td>Increasing attractiveness of vocational education</td>
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## Pluralisation vs. Distinctiveness

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<th>Epistemological / pedagogical perspective</th>
<th>More distinctive / strengthening</th>
<th>More pluralistic / diversification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duality dominates/ increases</td>
<td>Increasing diversity of forms of VET (dual, trial, school-based) and learning approaches</td>
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<td>Vocation as key organising principle and constitutive for self-identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning in real-life work environment</td>
<td>Diverse identities</td>
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<td>Increased blurring of boundaries in terms of knowledge/ content</td>
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<th>Education system perspective</th>
<th>Re-emphasis on apprenticeship</th>
<th>An ambiguous sector of higher VET and professional HE</th>
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<td>A distinct higher VET sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET at all levels clearly separated</td>
<td>Increased crossing of boundaries in terms of education sectors</td>
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<td>Diversification of providers, programmes and target groups</td>
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<th>Labour market perspective</th>
<th>VET as preparation for particular occupations/jobs</th>
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<td>Focus on job entry and business/economic growth</td>
<td>Various new and additional purposes of VET (e.g. equity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET as preparation for occupations/jobs AND/OR further education</td>
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Strong school-based VET in Visegrad countries has lost ground

Academic oriented school systems in Baltic countries have seen some vocational drift
Trajectories for Nordic Countries 1995-2015

- Comparable Welfare systems
- Quite different VET systems in 1990ies
- Different trajectories
- FI with strongest vocational drift in Europe

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Selected country trajectories 1995-2015

Both academic and vocational drift
Still large variety
Some convergence towards balance of VET and GE
Pluralisation as common trend
No fundamental system change
Reflecting on the future: European VET scenarios 2035
European VET in 2035 – Six Scenarios

- **Learning à la carte**
  - No concept of VET; ‘vocational’ simply signifies more employability

- **Cottage gardens**
  - VET is understood as ‘vocationally oriented learning’ across sectors

- **Firefighter VET**
  - General education
  - VET is understood as specific skills training for specific target groups

- **Professional champions**
  - Distinctive VET
  - VET is understood as advanced ‘professional learning and education’

- **VET for all**
  - Vocational education
  - VET as apprenticeship for a majority of young people

- **Renaissance of VET**
  - VET is understood as comprehensive education and prerequisite for any job

Source: Cedefop.
Volume 1:
Definitions and conceptions of VET

Volume 2:
VET developments 1995-2015

Volume 3:
External factors influencing VET

Volume 4:
Enrolment patterns in IVET

Volume 5:
Education and labour market outcomes of VET

Volume 6:
VET at higher education levels

Volume 7:
VET from a lifelong learning perspective

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