

# EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK



## EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK 2020

a brief summary of the European Commission's Event  
by the City Council of Alzira

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## Introduction

The present report is a general summary of the different events that occurred during the European Vocational Skills Week 2020 organised from 9th to 13th November 2020 by the European Commission. It has been gathered in the framework of the European Vocational Skills Week developed by the City Council of Alzira that works in the project "VET UP for the excellence in Vocational Education in Europe" co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

The information written in this report was collected thanks to the numerous presentations of the different speakers (see list).

The goal of this report is not only to underline the general aspects of the different conferences, but also to highlight the different tools and elements that can be implemented in the future, in order to support and encourage Vocational Education and Training. Moreover, the fact of gathering all the events in one document makes the information more accessible in order to focus on the events of interest. Therefore, those interested in a specific topic can access easily to the conference through the link provided. Finally, we have considered that it is a good tool to reach our stakeholders and disseminate the EVSW 2020.

However, the readers have to take into account that all the events of EVSW 2020 do not figure in this report. The City Council of Alzira does not own the content of this report.



## European Vocational Skills Week 2020

### What is it?

European Vocational Skills Week is an annual event where local, regional or national organisations showcase the very best of vocational education and training (VET). VET is a path to a more fulfilling personal and professional life. European Vocational Skills Week is a platform to make VET's potential more widely known, and an opportunity to exchange information and good practice across Europe and beyond.

The fifth edition of the Week is a 100% online event organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union. A series of partner activities will take place digitally across the EU. Anyone anywhere can join in these activities.

This year's theme is VET for Green and Digital Transitions, in line with the Commission priorities of a "European Green Deal" and a "Europe fit for the digital age".

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/>

### Programme (non exhaustive list):

#### Monday 9 Nov

- 10.00-11.20: Official National Opening of the 5th European Vocational Skills Week Luxembourg
- 14.00-16.30: European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA)

#### Tuesday 10 Nov

- 14.00-17.00: European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) – High-level event
- 17.30-19.05: Launch of Pact for Skills

#### Wednesday 11 Nov

- 10.00-12.35: EU funding and support opportunities for education and training

#### Thursday 12 Nov

- 9.00-12.30: Higher up! VET Excellence for Green and Digital Transitions - Part 2, Parallel sessions, Session 1/2
- 14.15-16.30: VET Internationalisation

#### Friday 13 Nov

- 10.30-12.30: 2020 VET Excellence Award Nominees Celebration and Closing Ceremony



## Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) –

### High-level event

#### The renewed EAfA, Action plan 2020-2021:

##### Recent policy developments:

- Youth employment and skills: Youth Employment Support, a bridge to jobs for the next generation. Proposal for a Council Recommendation on reinforcing the Youth Guarantee.
- Upskilling/reskilling of adults: European skills agenda.
- Proposal for a Council Recommendation on VET.

##### EAfA's priorities:

- Support SMEs;
- Mobilising local/regional authorities as catalysts for apprenticeships within the local business environment;
- Strengthen social dialogue through the involvement of national social partner organizations;
- Encouraging commitments among Member State and companies to quality and effective apprenticeships;
- Proactively engaging European social dialogue committees on apprenticeships, with a goal to obtain agreement on joint sectoral pledges;
- Supporting the representation of apprentices in the Member States by relaunching the European Apprentice Network.

##### Activities for end 2021:

- 11 events
- 7 live discussions
- 8 webinars
- 5 online training modules

**OBJECTIVES** are to increase the supply, image and quality of Apprenticeships, but also to boost the European mobility of Apprentices. Importance of commitment on digital/green aspects.

*Summary of live discussion:*

Digital skills are opening new opportunities for learning in VET but with some key limitations.

##### CHALLENGES:

- Digital skills needs vary per sector and region;
- Investment in IT infrastructure is needed;
- SMEs may lack appropriate support and funding;
- Advanced digital skills as important as basic ones – how to identify key skills for your sector?
- Training apprentices for both the digital and the real world – digital skills as a tool, not a means to an end.

##### OPPORTUNITIES:

- There is a lot of learning by doing happening in digital contexts;
- Digital learning and practical learning are complementary – striking a balance is important;
- Cooperation between apprentice, employer and education provider is key – development of regional tandems;
- Investment in digital skills development can be a solution for (youth) employment;
- We need more digital apprenticeships - make them available to everyone.

Resources 1: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ytsvfqoekpugd06/AAB7JY2HgUQ55r8UkEo0a3D0a?dl=0>

Resources 2: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hldmgitrba0ao7/AACF9-6NW-kHIJIZKucan11Za?dl=0>



## Launch of Pact for Skills

It constitutes a response for Europe's companies and workers!

It is guided by a document, more precisely, the Charter, which is commonly signed by all the partners (companies, public and private bodies etc.). Through this they agree to uphold all the regulations written in it, and to work from now on forward for the successful completion of the objectives of the Pact.

##### Important:

- Aims to support all workers, regardless of the background, ethnicity, geographical impediments, social status, demographics etc.
- Aims to ensure job security for all workers;
- Aims to enhance theoretical, social and soft skills in workers;
- Aims to resolve conflict through social dialogue;
- Aims to increase the link between labour market and education.

Overall, it is an instrument which is looking at the interplay between skills policies and industry policies.

Two Hubs were created for easier access of everyone for networking and knowledge, two key aspects for the subject at hand.

Conference: <https://beyond-events.eu/index.php?eventid=23&roomid=91>

Pact for Skills: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1517&langId=en>



## EU funding and support opportunities for education and training

### EU Funding opportunities, part I: Erasmus+ Programme (supporting VET and adult learners and staff mobility)

#### New programme KA1:

- Access to short-term projects: occasional small-scale participation (not open to accredited organizations).
- Erasmus accreditation (membership): its purpose is to build a community of organizations that regularly exchange staff and learners; and to foster organisational learning and gradual capacity development. Administrative level: fast-track assessment process, apply for higher amounts and number of participants.

In both: staff mobility (job shadowing/teaching or training assignments/courses and training), learner mobility for VET only (short-term learning mobility, Erasmus Pro, participation in skills competition), blended activities (combined with virtual components), other supported activities (invited experts, preparatory visits, hosting teachers and educators in training).

Must meet **Erasmus quality standards** (good management of mobility activities, inclusion, digital dimension, environmental sustainability, providing quality and support to the participants, sharing results and knowledge about the programme).

#### International mobility for VET learners and staff (from 2021 call onwards):

- Applicants are located in Erasmus Programme Countries;
- Must be Erasmus accredited VET Organizations;
- Will integrate international mobility flows in their annual budget requests in parallel to intra-European mobilities with budget-ceiling;
- Managed by Erasmus National Agencies;
- Mobilities within Europe but also with other partner countries.

#### Future Erasmus programme KA2 (improving European-wide cooperation between VET and adult education providers):

- Not many changes except for small-scale partnerships (easier access).
- Use of online platforms: eTwinning, SEG, EPALE.
- Focus on innovative aspects of partnerships (Excellence and Innovation).
- Partnerships for Cooperation (general features): quality and internationalisation of activities and practices of organisations and institutions involved/Promotion of cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level/ Support and promote the development, transfer and implementation of innovative practices.

#### Support opportunities:

Erasmus Teacher Academies: improvement of teacher education policies and practices in Europe, re-inforced European dimension and internationalisation of teacher education, sustainable collaboration between teacher education providers.

Forward Looking Projects: biennial basis of the call, foster innovation, creativity and participation,

large-scale projects that aim to identify, develop and test innovative (policy) approaches.

Alliances: coherent and comprehensive set of sectoral or cross-sectoral activities, innovative and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, sense of initiative and entrepreneurial attitudes, mind-sets and skills.

Centres of Vocational Excellence: high-quality skills and competences in a view of quality employment and career-long opportunities, to contribute to innovative, inclusive and sustainable economy. The Erasmus+ funds can – where appropriate – be complemented by investments needed into infrastructure with the support of the future Cohesion Funds – Invest EU, and other Funding instruments.

### Synergies between vocational education and training and adult education sectors, how organisations can cooperate?

Vocational education and training organisations (provide opportunities for vocational skills development to a diverse group of learners and contribute to development and rolling out training programmes focusing on entrepreneurship, problem solving, and critical thinking and process/product innovation).

Adult education organisations (provide opportunities for different settings of education for adults – key competences –, provide education in a view of professional and personal fulfilment, and contribute to learning through life).

The future Erasmus programme and the European Social Fund+ have for common policy objectives to reduce inequalities and improve access to and completion of quality and inclusive education and training via the following tools:

- Regular cooperation of National Authorities in charge of the programmes;
- Guidance training, peer-learning and sharing of good practices;
- Identifying opportunities for cooperation amongst the organisations active in both programmes;
- Seal of Excellence;
- Link between the European, national and also regional levels.

### EU funding opportunities Part II: The European Social Fund+ and other funding and support instruments for skills in vocational education and training and adult education areas post-2020

**1. European Social Fund + (2021-2027):** budget of 87.9bln and 1/3 for education and training. Its mission is to improve opportunities for workers in the Union and contribute to raising the standard of living and also to contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion. Objectives in education and training:

- Improving education and training systems;
- Equal access to and completion of quality and inclusive education and training (green and digital);
- Life Long Learning (upskilling/reskilling) and skills anticipation, career transitions and mobility;
- The fund will promote innovative approaches.

**2. European Regional Development Fund 2021-2027:** investments in infrastructure, equipments, access to services, training and education activities for the development of skills for smart specialisation (modernised VET infrastructure or equipment aimed at up/reskilling people).

Between 2021/2023, the **ESF** and **ERDF** will have to face a new objective which is to foster the crisis repair in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare a green, digital and resilient recovery of

the economy (47.5 bln additional resources).

**3. Recovery and Resilience Facility 2021-2026:** total budget of 672.5bln. The Commission proposed in May in response to the Coronavirus pandemic as the centrepiece of the Next Generation EU recovery instrument. Focus on: promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion/strengthening economic and social resilience/mitigating the socio-economic impact of the crisis/supporting the green and digital transitions.

**4. Invest-EU, unlocking private investments 2021-2027:** provide budgetary guarantee to back investment projects of concerned financial institutions. The point is to stimulate relevant financial institutions to undertake operations that otherwise they wouldn't undertake.

• The InvestEU Fund has an overall budget of 8.4bln. Demand-driven. Dedicated to social investments (infrastructure) and skills (stronger public and private sector investment in skills and skills management, though easier access to finance). Recipients targeted can be both organisations and individuals...

**5. Technical Support Instrument:** offer technical support/expertise to improve Member States' administrative capacity to design, develop and implement reforms (767 million for 7 years). Available for all Member States base on requests, tailor-made support, NO co-financing requirement.

Conference: <https://beyond-events.eu/index.php?eventid=23&roomid=94>

Resources: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gcrg5nnc4cr23wj/AABOBq4Jm9JB8hno73Eu2Tdba?dl=0>



## Session 1: Inclusive Excellence

**Solity project, a project developed by VET providers for VET providers (www.solityproject.eu):**

Solity project (VET social utility monitor) has for objective to offer a self-assessment tool to VET providers, on the idea that they do have a social vocation and impact that can be expressed in terms of social utility performance. The actors of the project created an online form composed of a set of indicators divided into 5 categories: activities and support to return to employment, activities and support to human development, actions against exclusion and social inequalities, territorial and regional development, and last not least, internal practices. After completing the online form, the VET provider will obtain a social utility score as well as the performance obtained in the previous 5 categories.

Social utility definition: a 'social utility' actor or activity is any organisation or action that participates in the economic dynamics of a territory and contributes to the sustainable social integration and development of people by increasing their ability to act and interact with their environment. Social utility takes into account vulnerable groups, contributes to social cohesion by finding exclusion and inequalities and strengthens people's economy.

**VET providers will be able to:**

- Understand the state of the art of their work;
- Highlight the areas of excellence and room for improvements;
- Compare with other European VET providers and start a dialogue to create ecosystems of excellence.

**The Solity framework:**

- Activities in favour of return to employment axis 1: to provide people far from employment, for whatever reason, or in precarious situations, with skills to access the labour market and opportunities for professional development. Solity helps VET providers reflect on how to increase individuals' employability, effectively address the supply-demand mismatch in Europe and provide adequate support to enterprises to allow them to cost-effectively recruit and select new candidates.
- Activities in favour of social inclusion axis 3: to be part of a community whose members are linked by a common identity and share common values, 'better living together conditions, equity and social cohesion'. Fosters the active engagement of people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, NEETs, youth, seniors and women.
- Enhancing diversity: Solity supports the valorisation of diversity as an asset for the development of our societies by highlighting the participation in the local communities (external) and the internal practices of VET institutions.
- Excellence: Solity fosters excellence giving VET providers the opportunity to analyse and valorise the duality of their VET offers in teaching and learning, cooperation and partnership and governance and funding.

**Goals of Solity:**

- Valorisation and promotion of the social impact of VET;
- Establishment of a common framework of terms, tools, methodologies and goals for VET;
- Creation of a common data management system for the social impact of VET;
- Engagement and support of VET providers in regular monitoring of their social impact.

Conference: <https://beyond-events.eu/index.php?eventid=23&roomid=97>

Resources: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xp13mrxrcapfcjff/AADEZ1hT3f26K2gvmwFQcRoUa?dl=0>



## Session 2: Pathways for VET excellence, higher VET as valuable chance for all

The role of higher vocational education and training in Europe (Jens Bjornavold):

A majority of European countries operate with differentiated higher education systems, a minority of countries have developed 'unified' higher education sectors with strong links to the traditional university sector and a number of countries have, the last decade, strengthened their vocationally oriented higher education.

The European higher education is characterised by a fundamental tension:

- An academic drift, where traditionally vocational programmes and areas are influenced by and gravitate towards traditional universities and their quality and relevance criteria.
- A vocational drift, where the characteristics of vocational education and training influence higher education and where the focus is increasingly on practise-based learning developed in cooperation with working life.

Conference: <https://beyond-events.eu/index.php?eventid=23&roomid=98>

Resources: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kbvljwp74bi85mo/AAAGVJ3wceyEKhUDhQVZULtVa?dl=0>



## VET Internationalisation

This event will focus on the role of VET internationalisation in two sessions.

Session 1 will look at international cooperation, the future of work and the implications for skills provision, mobility of learners and staff, international networks, skills competitions, international and sectoral qualifications and international VET organisations.

Session 2 turns the spotlight on the benefits and challenges of internationalisation in VET and how to strengthen international partnerships.

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/>

Introduction of VET internationalisation models:

### VET internationalisation in Germany:

- German companies established models of work based learning in foreign countries to ensure the supply of qualified workforce (international competencies) for their branches abroad.
- Germany set up a national mobility programme "Training Abroad", covering all countries not eligible by Erasmus+, 60% of funded projects are company driven.
- Germany also developed a competence kit called BIBB (reuniting languages and intercultural skills as well as international professional competences (depending on the fields).

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### VET internationalisation in Latvia:

- "Wordskills Europe": biggest VET event that takes place every year. Support young VET learners, learning and training mobility, demonstrates transnational influence, and fastens green/digital mind-set application.
- "Eurosills": promotion of profession for young people, introduces the European Youth to a variety of careers

### UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical Education and Vocational Training (Soo-Hyang Choi):

- Covid-19 increased the urgency for the digitalisation in education and training, but digitalisation can also bring new challenges for all of us, because it risks increasing the gap between the countries who have access to good digital tools and infrastructure and the others, who don't

### VET internationalisation and the European Training Foundation (ETF-Cesare Onestini):

Internationalisation is not a choice but a reality, but how to implement it.

- Clarity of goals (differentiate between political, quality and content goals). The objectives can be to promote stability and economic growth, support development towards a greener and more sustainable planet and strengthen solidarity and inclusion. ETF disposes of major donor programs, budget support initiatives, policy dialogues, mechanisms to agree on policy recommendations. Internationalisation can be a goal to improve the quality of teaching and learning, ETF support best practice exchanges, work based learning, apprenticeship schemes. Network of practitioners; provide methodologies to promote education and training...
- Understand differences. Internationalisation means cooperating with different systems and mentalities > ETF works with a bridging approach in order to connect the needs and expectations of partner countries.
- Unleash energy by motivating individuals. Mobility is not the key element, sufficient autonomy is also important as well as resources, creating opportunities, opening communication channels and giving space to initiatives.

### VET internationalisation In Georgia (Tamar Kitiashvili):

Fundamental changes were made in the Georgian system in order to make qualifications comparable and up-to-date with the international standards. Georgia revised qualifications framework, introduced competence based programs and teaching. Georgia targets European quality benchmarks (by implementing ecoVET indicators for instance) > in order to ensure a quality development for the country.

Conference: <https://beyond-events.eu/index.php?eventid=23&roomid=47>

Resources: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tult3dm73h3cy5a/AACFJk7PtXPZbPqOn9AD3nJGa?dl=0>

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## SPEAKERS:

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a brief summary by the City Council of Alzira



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