

Vocational Education and Training is the best springboard to employment

Written by Marianne Thyssen on 5 November 2018 in Opinion
Opinion

European Vocational Skills Week: How vocational education and training have the potential to transform professional and personal lives.



Marianne Thyssen | Photo credit: European Parliament Audiovisual

Four years ago, I began my mandate as European Commissioner with a clear task: getting more people - young and old - into employment.

Since then, almost 12 million jobs have been created. More people than ever - 239 million - are in work. While it remains too high, youth unemployment is now at its lowest level ever recorded.

It is a lot to be proud of, but there is still work to do. Digitisation and automation, along with moving

to a low carbon economy, are changing the way we live and work. It presents us with new opportunities, but also challenges.

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The European Pillar of Social Rights is our compass to navigate these challenges and sustain our social achievements in a fast-changing world. Therefore, it is no surprise that the first principle of the pillar is education, training and lifelong learning.

For this new labour market, new tasks and occupations, new skills will be essential. I am convinced that Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Europe can help provide the skills that will meet the needs of our rapidly-changing world.

Yet too often VET tends to be seen by young people and their parents as a second choice, somehow a second-best alternative to other education pathways. At the same time, for people that already work or are looking for jobs, VET is not the most obvious choice for improving skills and employment prospects.

I want to convince students, parents, job seekers and workers that VET is the best springboard to employment.

"I am convinced that Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Europe can help provide the skills that will meet the needs of our rapidly-changing world"

Around 75 percent of recent VET students find employment shortly after graduating. This success shows us that VET equips people with the skills to match the current needs of companies.

This is why the European Commission is organising, for the third time, a European Vocational Skills Week. With hundreds of events and activities taking place across Europe, this annual event meeting puts VET in the spotlight.

I call on all member states to join us in showing that vocational education and training is the golden standard in education and to make the European Vocational Skills Week an even bigger success than in previous years.

We have to show that VET is capable of positively transforming people's career paths and lives.

About the author

Marianne Thyssen is European Commissioner for employment, social affairs, skills and labour mobility

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