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VET is Key to Europe's Future – Let's Shape It Together

As the European Commission prepares its **next European Vocational Education and Training (VET) strategy**, we must set the course for VET systems across the EU that empower learners and businesses alike. VET is not only a powerful launchpad into work – it's a cornerstone of competitiveness, social inclusion, and democratic resilience.

The **upcoming European VET Strategy** should focus on:

- Ensuring Training Readiness – Improve School Quality**
- Strengthening VET as an Equal Education Path – Unlock Everyone's Potential**
- Boost VET Mobility – Maximise Erasmus+ Opportunities**

1. Ensuring Training Readiness - Improve School Quality

Vocational excellence does not exist in isolation. Companies need learners to build on a strong general education foundation that equips all learners with the skills needed to enter and complete training successfully.

To ensure training readiness we need:

- Member states to enable Schools across Europe to **guarantee basic, digital, STEM and soft skills** for all students
- **Schools to provide individual support** for both struggling and high-performing learners
- All actors to **boost basic skills everywhere** and for everyone as laid out in the Action Plan on Basic Skills

Too many young people in Europe leave the mandatory school system without the skills they need to succeed in VET. That's not just an educational issue – it's a social and economic risk and further aggravates skills and labour shortages. Only with strong schools can we ensure that young people are ready to thrive in training and beyond.

2. Strengthening VET as an Equal Education Path – Unlock Everyone's Potential

To unlock Europe's full talent potential, **VET must be strengthened as an equal and attractive pathway** to success — on par with academic education. Europe's VET systems must be built on the principle of **dual learning** as a gold standard as it combines classroom instruction with substantial, workplace-based learning experience. A high share of learning in real work environments is the best guarantee of **employability and innovation**.

Specifically, the next European VET Strategy should:

- **Foster investments in practical and empowering career guidance** in schools to ensure students understand the full range of opportunities available through VET and make sustainable educational decisions
- Encourage Member states to take measures that **make VET more flexible and accessible** to more learners (e. g. individual support for those who need a boost before entering or during a VET program)
- **Support the expansion and promotion of higher VET**, offering clear routes for professional advancement and lifelong learning

By promoting VET as a respected and forward-looking option, we not only serve young people and employers — we strengthen Europe's competitiveness and democratic resilience. We need creative and sustainable solutions **to make VET accessible to more people** and tap into the potential of everyone. This is how we make VET inclusive, motivating, and future ready.

3. Boost VET Mobility – Maximise Erasmus+ Opportunities

Learning mobility is one of the most effective ways EU education policies support businesses. It boosts language skills, adaptability, and independence — making VET more attractive and helping to address the skilled labour shortage.

To make learning mobility more common in VET we need:

- **The co-legislators to agree on a dedicated budget** for learning mobility for the years 2028-2034, with a clear focus on VET in the next Erasmus+ programme
- **the Commission and the National Agencies to provide tailored support for VET learners and companies**, especially SMEs: simplified processes, flexible formats, and practical guidance
- **More opportunities for apprentices** to gain international experience during their training

Mobility strengthens skills and opens doors. Let's make it more common in VET Europe. Improving VET systems is a **shared responsibility and businesses stand ready to do their part**. It's about giving young people fair chances. It's about securing skilled workers for our economies. And it's about strengthening our democracies through opportunity and inclusion.



[Confederation of German Employers' Associations \(BDA\)](#)



[German Chamber of Industry and Commerce \(DIHK\)](#)



[German Confederation of Skilled Crafts and Small Businesses \(ZDH\)](#)

