



**Resolution 2014 (2014)<sup>1</sup>**

Final version

## Raising the status of vocational education and training

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly regrets that, despite the benefits for individuals, enterprises and the economy as a whole, vocational education and training (VET) are faced with many challenges regarding lack of quality, social recognition, esteem and attractiveness when compared to other education pathways, in particular upper secondary and higher education.
2. VET can play a significant role in addressing the shortage of technical skills as well as in raising employability and, particularly, young people's access to employment. To this end, urgent measures are necessary to improve the quality of VET and create programmes of studies that are adequate to meet the needs of the labour market.
3. The Assembly values the significant work undertaken on quality assurance of VET, involving governments, social partners and European Union institutions. It fully supports the proposal to establish a European Area for Skills and Qualifications (EASQ), which will increase VET visibility and importance, and provide an opportunity to set an agenda for reform based on high-quality VET provision.
4. The Assembly considers that European-level guidelines and overall strategies like the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) following the European Union's Europe 2020 Strategy are the right tracks to be pursued also by Council of Europe member States outside the European Union. Initiatives and incentives encouraging transnational exchange and co-operation in VET should be strengthened at European and national levels.
5. To achieve sustainable results, it is necessary for Council of Europe member States to take specific measures to raise the status of VET. However, this would not be sufficient without strong involvement of all VET stakeholders and enhanced collaboration between them and the competent public authorities.
6. The Assembly therefore recommends that member States:
  - 6.1. ratify the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163) and accept the provisions of its Articles 9 (the right to vocational guidance) and 10 (the right to vocational training) as binding provisions;
  - 6.2. create national and local strategies and policies for VET according to national contexts as regards education and employment, while considering good practices from other countries;
  - 6.3. involve social partners, local and regional authorities, employers' federations and associations, and civil society in general, in the formulation and implementation of VET strategies;
  - 6.4. ensure equal access to education, including VET, for all, including people with disadvantaged social backgrounds, migrants, the unemployed, young people and people with disabilities;
  - 6.5. improve the permeability of educational pathways and facilitate access to other education and training opportunities, including access based on merit to higher education for VET graduates;

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1. *Assembly debate* on 30 September 2014 (31st Sitting) (see [Doc. 13590](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Piotr Wach). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 30 September 2014 (31st Sitting).



- 6.6. provide financial incentives, such as grants and scholarships for VET students and apprentices and for employers who act as trainers in VET programmes;
- 6.7. encourage, in particular, the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences in addition to the specific professional competences in each profession;
- 6.8. initiate public awareness-raising campaigns aimed at raising public awareness of the role and benefits of VET in terms of employability;
- 6.9. provide incentives for, and create partnerships with, industry to support the continuous professional development of trainers in VET;
- 6.10. develop strong and transparent national quality assurance frameworks in VET;
- 6.11. promote mutual recognition of VET in Europe and ensure proper implementation of the European Credit Transfer System for VET (ECVET), the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Area for Skills and Qualifications (EASQ);
- 6.12. develop cross-border networks and encourage co-operation and exchange of best practices with European networks such as the European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET) network.
7. The Assembly calls on public and private VET institutions to:
  - 7.1. provide programmes that focus on the learner, taking into consideration new developments and trends in the subjects studied, and encourage learning that supports personal and professional growth based on merit and talent;
  - 7.2. seek to enhance the quality of VET by attracting better qualified teachers and staff members, by using interactive methods of teaching and by providing adequate equipment for practical education;
  - 7.3. improve communication with students, providing young people and their families with transparent, exhaustive and relevant information about the importance of VET education, its benefits and the possibilities that it offers.
8. The Assembly urges the private sector to strengthen co-operation with educational centres and VET providers in order to:
  - 8.1. take an active part in the setting up of VET programmes, seeking to ensure their consistency with the changing needs of the labour market in terms of skills and competences;
  - 8.2. offer VET students more opportunities for practical experience, also with the aim of increasing employment opportunities for VET graduates;
  - 8.3. include in continuous VET specific modules allowing the acquisition of information and communications technology competences and proficiency in foreign languages, in order to foster mobility.
9. Finally, the Assembly calls on the European Committee of Social Rights to follow up and evaluate the implementation of established VET standards through the reporting system established under the European Social Charter (revised).