

**A MANIFESTO FOR A POLITICAL ROADMAP THAT REINVENTS
TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

EfVET – EVBB – EVTA

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The European Training Providers signatories to this Manifesto are appealing prospective members of the European Parliament to support a new era for technical vocational education and training (VET).

For decades, VET has been considered a secondary choice in the education sector to the extent that the first draft of the European Education Area for Education excluded VET from its design and support.

In today's structure at Commission level, VET is under the responsibility of the Commissioner in charge of labour policies; notwithstanding the many reasons for that, we still recognize the risk of sending a message to young and older European citizens that this sector in education is purely functional leading learners solely to employability. Lifelong learning perspective would be more emphasized, as a common thread between education (and training) and work-life. With the exception of the Centre of Vocational Excellence Program, research and initiatives at European level focusing on VET have also been sporadic, lacking adequate funding, continuity, and no strategic plan. A case in point has been the disintegration of the Commission's Skills Week and the dysfunctional Copenhagen Process, still missing funding for coordination (although a common Secretariat as for the Bologna Process, would be crucial). Rather than enticing Member States to engage in the Commission's roadmap towards quality VET, Member States have opted for national initiatives.

This situation is a discouraging factor that is eroding the relevancy of VET among young learners, teachers, lecturing staff in VET higher education institutions as well as administrators, managers and those working in this sector. In addition, where VET is strong as a result of national policies and social esteem, unemployment is low, industry continues to offer sustainable financial and structural support resulting in a well-prepared and diverse workforce.

The persisting perception of VET as a second choice can sometimes emerge from the current policies (much more facilitating when it comes to Higher Education)

and the same decision-making process. As a result of this approach, those member states where VET held a position of prestige and recognition continued to flourish. In member states where VET has been considered as a *second* choice, the sector continues to deteriorate and suffers from lack of investment, financial support, attraction and relevancy for the overall needs of industry today.

In contrast, when countries require a stronger and diverse workforce to boost its economy or to resolve an economic crisis, VET institutions are the first to be asked to rapidly intervene and create education and training programmes to upskill and reskill its workforce or set up new courses so that they encourage mobility from one economic sector to another and better opportunities for employment.

The European Training providers are therefore recommending prospective members of the European Parliament to intervene and reverse this inertia in such an important sector of education.

European Training Providers are therefore recommending the following measures that the European Parliament can recommend to the Commission once it is reconstituted:

1. **Establish** a stronger connection between vocational education and training and education in the Commission, under a wider umbrella of Lifelong Learning Area, where VET policies can be developed in collaboration with also other areas related to industry, growth, innovation, sustainability and of course general education.
2. **Increase** considerably the funding for VET by creating a special EU fund to (i) raise awareness and good practice of vocational training in countries where the culture for VET is still developing and (ii) upgrade the infrastructure of schools, colleges and higher education institutions that promote green transitions, a pedagogy augmented by artificial intelligence, work-based learning and continuous professional development of its staff members.
3. **Promote** the opportunities for a global internationalization of the Erasmus+ program for VET, recognizing an adequate funding to mobility and capacity building opportunities, in line with the recent Pilot programs.
4. **Allocate** the Copenhagen Process and the EQF Advisory Board to VET Colleges and Higher Education Institutions providing vocational qualifications at Technical, Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral levels.

5. **Ensure** that training providers are actively engaged as stakeholders by the Commission in the formulation of relevant decision (e.g. Annual Erasmus+ Guide) as well as that they can be full members of the governing Boards including voting rights of EU agencies focusing on VET as well as the AVCT and other agencies in which decisions are taken on matters related to VET.
6. **Incentivise** European SMEs through funding schemes in countries where VET is underdeveloped so that they can engage more apprentices and more job shadowing.
7. **Identify** a transparent process for the recognition of both the role of mobility providers as supporting organisations for reaching the ambitious benchmarks of VET Erasmus+ mobilities, and transparency in the quality standards of their work which they must comply with.
8. **Consolidate** the initiative of support service promoted by the ETF Foundation, including its focus on the awarding of the **EU Quality Label for VET** for institutions that excel in their modernisation of VET, increase the number of students and workers enrolled for micro credentials or full qualifications.
9. **Legislate** funding for research at EU level on VET that reflects the needs of training providers, industry, and social partners.

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