

Chapter 7

VET Teachers and Trainers' Competence in Creating Inclusion and Excellence: European Policy Agenda, Approaches and Challenges



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Abstract Building on the work of Cedefop, this article presents the EU policy agenda and central activities related to VET teachers and trainers as well as linkages to the European strategies for vocational education and training (VET), approaches and models of VET teacher and trainer professional development in the member states (MS). The main challenges for VET teachers and trainers are outlined with an emphasis on the challenges which arise from their evolving role, from the greater autonomy they have been given and from their involvement in curriculum and assessment reform especially when it is based on learning outcomes approaches. High-quality professional development is essential for teachers and trainers to be able to keep pace with the rapidly developing demands of their job as well as technological advancements in their specific field, digital tools for teaching and learning, helping learners develop key competences and providing more individualised support to evermore heterogeneous groups of learners. Teachers and trainers also need to design and/or apply new curricula, respond quickly to emerging individual and labour market needs and ensure close links between the different learning venues in VET. They are also expected to use the European tools that help make people's skills more visible. The article concludes with reflections on the shaping of future policies.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Cedefop.

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7.1 Introduction

The foundation for cooperation between vocational education and training policies in Europe was laid down in the Treaty of Rome and further strengthened with the Copenhagen process and declaration on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (VET). This and all subsequent declarations, communiqués and conclusions (see Sect. 7.2.1) acknowledge the central role of VET in equipping people with knowledge, skills and competences for the labour market, further learning and active citizenship. The Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (Council of the European Union, 2020a, b) is further embedded in the wider context of the ongoing implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights strengthening principle 1 on education, training and lifelong learning and the new European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience as well as other policy initiatives.

In these times of unpredictable changes and challenges caused by the ageing of the population, transitions to the green and digital economies and the crisis caused by COVID-19, Europe is aiming to modernise the Union policy on VET, further confirming the central role of VET in the lifelong learning continuum, supporting youth employability as well as adults in need of continuous up- and reskilling. Well-trained and motivated teachers and trainers, who will constantly be supported in the acquisition of new skills and competences needed to master new challenges, are key agents who help make this vision a reality.

Against this background, and building on the work of Cedefop, the article presents, in Sect. 7.2, the EU policy agenda and main activities related to VET teachers and trainers, including the role and activities carried out by Cedefop; Sections 7.3 and 7.4 elaborate on the evolving roles of VET teachers and trainers and discusses some challenges arising from them; Section 7.5 brings in some evidence from Cedefop's policy monitoring on countries' policy responses to overcome such challenges. The article concludes with the authors' reflections for shaping future policies.

7.2 VET Teachers and Trainers in the EU Policy Agenda

7.2.1 *EU Policy Background*

The central role of VET teachers and trainers/mentors in companies/firms¹ and the need for investment and for a systematic and holistic approach to their professional

¹For the purpose of this article, the working definition of a teacher working in an institution offering initial vocational education and training (ISCED level 3—UNESCO-UIS, 2012) is a person who is acknowledged as having the status of a teacher (or equivalent) according to national legislation and

development has been recognised in the policy discourse and policy documents since the very beginning of the increased cooperation on VET in 2002.

The Copenhagen declaration (Council of the European Union and European Commission, 2002) referred to giving attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers within all forms of vocational education and training and the Maastricht communiqué (Council of the European Union and European Commission, 2004) emphasised promoting VET teachers' and trainers' continuous competence development. Next, the Helsinki communiqué (Council of the European Union and European Commission, 2006) pointed to highly qualified teachers and trainers who undertake continuous professional development in improving the attractiveness and quality of VET, and the Bordeaux communiqué (Council of the European Union and European Commission, 2008) referred to increasing investment in the initial and continuing training of those involved in vocational education and training: teachers, trainers, tutors, guidance officers and teachers' mobility from one system to another and from one country to another. Later, the Bruges communiqué (Council of the European Union and European Commission, 2010) invited member states to invest in and improve initial and continuing training for VET teachers and trainers by offering flexible training provision which enables them to acquire the right set of competences, deal with the increasing heterogeneity of learners, use new learning methods and make the most of new technologies. Subsequently, the Riga conclusions (European Commission; Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and Ministry of Education and Science Republic of Latvia, 2015) called for systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of VET teachers and trainers/mentors in both school and work-based settings, in order for them to fulfil their role. This includes digital skills and innovative teaching methods. Cooperation and partnerships among stakeholders are seen as a way to support this development. Finally, the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships (Council of the European Union, 2018) stressed that teachers and trainers should be supported in updating their skills, knowledge and competences so that they can train learners using the latest teaching and training methods as well as in line with labour market needs.

In 2020, when education and training institutions faced extended closures due to the global pandemic, the new Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future (Council of the European Union, 2020a) recognise teachers and trainers at all levels and in all types of education and training as an indispensable driving force for education and training and also acknowledge their commitment during the still ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Their subject-related and pedagogical expertise, as well as their commitment, enthusiasm, job satisfaction and self-confidence, have an impact on learners' learning outcomes, progress and well-being. Teachers and trainers "have a crucial role in preparing individuals of all backgrounds and ages to live, learn and work in the world of today, as well as in

practice, while an in-company trainer/mentor is anyone who fulfils one or more activities linked to the (theoretical or practical) training function at the workplace.

creating and leading future changes. In the context of constant social, demographic, cultural, economic, scientific, environmental and technological changes, the world of education and training is changing, and so is the occupation of teachers and trainers, with increasing demands, responsibilities and expectations put before them. Continuous innovations and challenges have an effect not only on the competences required, but also on teachers and trainers' well-being and the attractiveness of the teaching profession" (Council of the European Union, 2020a, p. 1).

The new Council recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (Council of the European Union, 2020b) calls for more investments in the skills and competences of teachers and trainers. Further, the Council recommendation emphasises that increased quality of VET will only be possible with well-trained and motivated teachers and trainers. Staff in VET needs to be supported in developing skills and provided with tools to master new technologies, to work in multicultural environments and to understand changing labour market needs. Motivation, career progression and well-being of teachers and trainers in VET are key to increase attractiveness of their profession. The so-called hybrid teachers—a type of personnel who are working part-time in a company and part-time as a teacher in a vocational school—have a potential to contribute to stronger cooperation arrangements between VET schools and companies in a more structured and frequent manner. Hybrid teachers can bring the necessary innovation to school-based environment and can address the growing shortage and ageing population of vocational teachers. The concept provides interesting career perspectives for individuals and provides benefits to both schools and companies, among others by sharing the salary costs (*ibid*).

Finally, the recent Osnabrück declaration on VET (European Commission and German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2020) as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies highlights the vital need to empower VET teaching and training staff to be proactive lifelong learners in a context of rapidly changing technology and skill requirements.

The abovementioned policy documents emphasise that good quality VET also contributes to the inclusion of vulnerable groups and thus highlight the key role teachers and trainers play in preventing premature departure from VET and provide opportunities for dropouts to re-enter VET. Moreover, the current crisis caused by COVID-19 has reinforced these ideas by putting an unprecedented challenge before teachers and trainers at all levels and in all types of education and training. They have been required to rapidly move from face-to-face to predominantly distance learning and, to a large extent, exclusively virtual teaching. In such exceptional circumstances, teachers and trainers have shown impressive commitment, creativity and peer collaboration and made significant efforts to ensure that both learning and learners' progress continue, including by providing support for their well-being. Undoubtedly, this pandemic has put greater emphasis on the role of VET teachers and trainers in the policy discourse at the global level.

7.2.2 *Cedefop's Role*

Within this policy context and European policy cooperation programmes in education and training (Council of the European Union, 2009) and in particular with regard to enhanced cooperation in VET, Cedefop has played an important role in supporting the European Commission, member states and social partners in designing and implementing the EU policy agenda through evidence-based policy-making for VET teachers and trainers' continuous professional development and European cooperation in this area. The work of Cedefop in this area can be summarised by the following functions:

- Monitoring developments in the member states and providing evidence and data, such as related publications and thematic country reports.
- Providing technical papers and guiding principles, such as the report “Guiding principles for professional development of trainers in VET”, and contributing to the report “High-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning: 20 guiding principles²” (European Commission, 2016).
- Organising conferences and policy learning fora on the professional development of teachers and trainers in VET; for example, the second policy learning forum focused on how to build stronger bridges between school and workplace so that teachers and trainers benefit in their professional development and can better support learners in innovative and effective ways.
- Collaborating in other EU instances and processes, such as the ET2020 Working Groups on VET Innovation and Digitalisation, which produced the report “Teachers and Trainers Matter - How to support them in high-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning: 12 Policy pointers” (European Commission, 2018). These policy pointers, summarised in Fig. 7.1, were developed to inspire the member states to further improve and, more importantly, to monitor professional development for teachers and trainers.
- Developing tools and tips for supporting VET teachers and trainers to timely reach dropouts and early leavers from education and training and help them reintegrate back into it and to more effectively support at-risk learners so that they remain in education and training. A reflection tool for VET providers proposes concrete steps to help them understand the current patterns of early leaving from education and training (ELET), to analyse the action needed to tackle this problem and to develop an action plan to improve the institutional approach. It proposes questions for reflection, a screening tool to assess the current institutional approach needed to prevent ELET and a template for developing an action plan, which can be used as part of an individual or group exercise. Further, VET practitioners may use Cedefop's evaluation plan for the monitoring and

²Twenty principles are grouped in four clusters: national governance and social partners' involvement; support for companies, in particular SMEs, offering apprenticeships; attractiveness of apprenticeships and improved career guidance; and quality assurance in work-based learning.

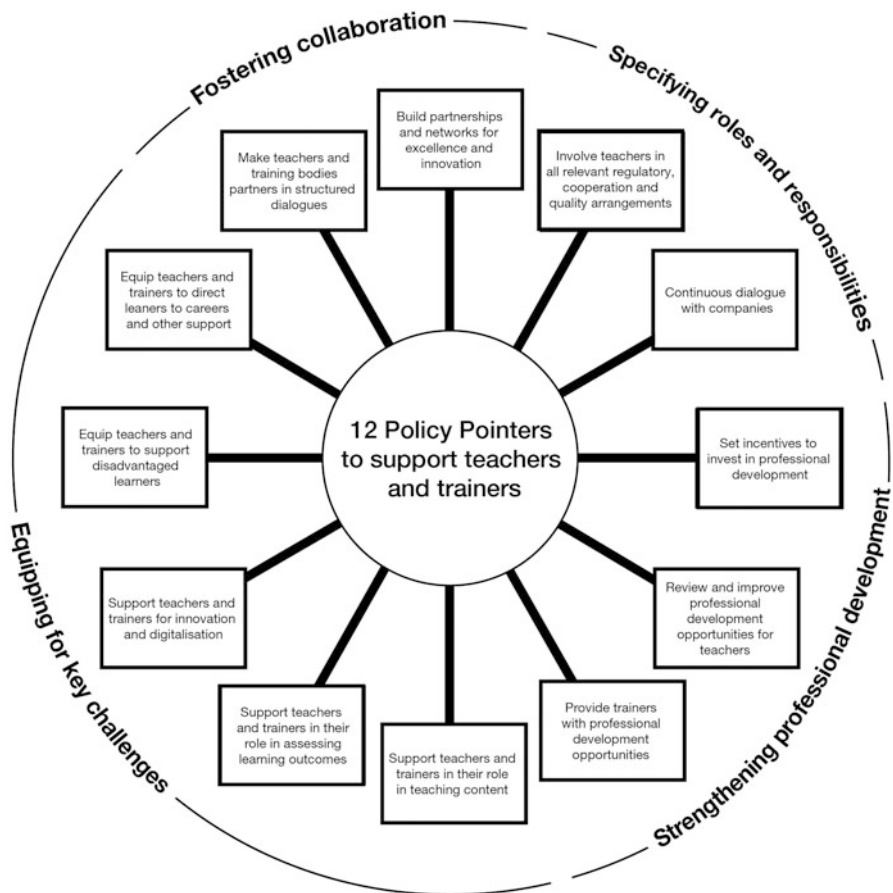


Fig. 7.1 12 Policy pointers to support teachers and trainers. Source: European Commission (2018)

evaluation of specific policies and measures to be used by learning providers who are not experts in the field of evaluation. They can use the plan when developing their monitoring and evaluation approach (see Box 7.1).

Box 7.1 Cedefop’s VET Toolkit for Tackling Early Leaving

In 2017, Cedefop launched the VET toolkit for tackling early leaving from education and training, with a view to providing practitioners and policy-makers with practical support in designing, implementing and evaluating effective policies and practices. This phenomenon is a pressing issue in Europe, resulting in considerable costs for individuals and society, and a constant preoccupation for VET teachers and trainers. Students who drop out are at greater risk of becoming NEETs (young people not in education,

(continued)

Box 7.1 (continued)

employment or training) and socially excluded. Despite success in reducing the numbers of people who leave education and training institutions with, at most, a lower secondary education certificate, early leaving still affects one in ten young adults in the EU; in some countries and different regions within the same country, the figure is much higher. Cedefop has been leading research work since 2010 in order to support the European Commission, EU member states and social partners to reach the EU strategic objective of lowering the rates of early leavers to less than 10% by 2020.

In 2019, a new enriched version of this toolkit was launched in Cedefop's Brussels-based policy forum, organised jointly with the Lifelong Learning Platform under the Romanian Presidency. Currently the VET toolkit counts more than 250 resources including good practices, quick wins, effective intervention approaches inspired by VET practices, data, reflection and evaluation tools helping thousands of VET practitioners and policy-makers in Europe tackle early leaving at every stage, from identifying timely learners at risk to successfully reintegrating early leavers back to education and training.

Source: www.cedefop.europa.eu/TEL-toolkit

Cedefop continues developing online tools and expanding their focus to other vulnerable groups. In 2021, the VET toolkit for empowering NEETs was launched (<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/neets>). Through such resources, Cedefop will offer additional support to VET teachers and trainers in preventing early leaving, increasing youth employment and implementing pathways for upskilling.

In light of further support for policy developments in the field of VET teachers and trainers' professional development and well-being, Cedefop is also working on a feasibility study for launching a pan-European survey of VET principals, teachers, in-company trainers and learners in initial VET (ISCED level 3), which will bring more insights and fill important research gaps. This will then support evidence-based policy-making in Europe with a focus on four main areas of interest including:

- VET schools' principals, teachers and in-company trainers' evolving role and challenges (including challenges raised during COVID-19)
- Their skill needs and qualifications including access to quality continuous professional development
- Their career progression, well-being and job satisfaction
- Pedagogies and learning environments used in school-based and work-based IVET

Based on the outcomes of the feasibility study, Cedefop will assess the feasibility and practicability of launching a pan-European survey.³

³See Cedefop webinar: Making excellence inclusive: towards a new Cedefop survey of VET teachers and trainers at <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/events/making-excellence-inclusive-towards-new-cedefop-survey-vet-teachers-and-trainers>.

7.3 The Evolving Role of VET Teachers and Trainers

It is well known that teachers and trainers in VET work in the context of innovation and significant technological and societal changes challenging education and training systems across Europe and the globe. They are often required to respond to new developments and changing labour market needs and to consider technological evolution across enterprises. They must be flexible and innovative in order to keep up with technological advancement in their fields and to promote learning that can simulate or take place in real working environments.

Working in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms and learning environments, with learners from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and with different needs, including special education needs, teachers and trainers need to safeguard good educational outcomes and inclusiveness, prevent dropouts and support early leavers to qualify in upper secondary education through VET.⁴

In the face of an ageing population and with lifelong learning becoming an imperative for all, and especially for low-skilled adults, VET teachers and trainers have an important role in empowering individuals to undertake learning for upskilling and reskilling. This requires teachers and trainers to work with flexible programme structures and apply learner-centred approaches which are adjusted to the needs of adults.

In the context of changing and emerging jobs and great uncertainty about current social, political and environmental developments, VET teachers and trainers have the responsibility of teaching not only professional skills to prepare learners to successfully perform future jobs but also the key competences⁵ needed to foster their social responsibility and civic engagement, as well as to support their personal growth and human values.

In all these learning contexts (initial VET, continuous VET and adult learning more broadly), teachers and trainers can be agents for innovation and for ensuring greater quality in VET. But in order to fulfil their multiple roles, arrangements must be in place to help them become familiar with modern pedagogical and adult learning approaches, as well as to equip them with the right mix of skills and experience they need to deal with current and emerging needs.

⁴One of EU targets for 2020 in education and training is to decrease the share of 18- to 24-year-olds having attained ISCED level 0–2 and not receiving any formal or non-formal education or training in the 4 weeks preceding the survey below 10%.

⁵As defined in the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning.

7.3.1 Dynamic Working Context and Increased Diversity of Students

With the advancement of digitalisation, methods and means of teaching and learning are changing fast. This was particularly the case due to COVID-19. In many countries, school closures seem to have functioned as catalysts for the digitalisation of the schools and the educational sector in general, including the administrative procedures. This crisis makes it clear that digital learning formats do have their limits and thus cannot replace or bring the same social benefits as the physical space of schools and workplaces, especially for learners at risk (Cedefop, 2020a; Psifidou, 2020a).

However, new digital technologies provide new ways of organising and carrying out learning and teaching processes that allow for greater learning flexibility, including open, online and blended learning. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) (e.g. “intelligent tutoring systems”) and virtual reality (VR) in the learning process potentially offers greater personalised and inclusive learning approaches which are tailored to the needs of individual learners. However, the actual effectiveness of such tools on the quality of learning and teaching is not known yet. While using AI in education could generate new insights into how learning happens, it also implies new roles for VET teachers and trainers and poses important ethical questions for education and training institutions.

Further, as a result of more migration and international mobility, learning environments are composed by evermore heterogeneous groups of learners. This greater diversity of learners originates, among other factors, from their diverse ages, abilities, different socio-economic backgrounds, special (education) needs and cultural, ethnic and language backgrounds. Thus, adopting learner-centred approaches is increasing in importance in classrooms with heterogeneous levels of ability and other learning environments (Cedefop, 2015a; Psifidou, 2020b).

7.3.2 Changing Skills Needs and Requirements

Over the next few years, VET teachers and trainers will be required to help shape quick and flexible responses to emerging needs, related to changing demands requirements of the labour market and technological developments and to the need to develop basic, digital and entrepreneurial skills for new target groups, such as adults with reskilling and upskilling needs, migrants and refugees. Additionally, new political priorities and cultural changes must be considered.

According to Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey (Cedefop, 2015b, 2018), the work of teaching professionals is significantly comprised of non-routine and autonomous tasks and requires a continual need for learning. Thirty-five percent of teaching professionals said that their job “always requires learning new things”, compared to 28% for other professional occupational groups and 21% for the entire

adult workforce of the EU. Teaching professionals' jobs also has significantly higher skill needs compared to other EU adult workers. About 51% of teaching professionals said that they experienced changing technologies at their workplaces in recent years, a number which is significantly higher compared to other adult EU workers (43% EU average for all adult workers). The survey also shows that the jobs of teaching professionals require a higher level of digital skills, something that has become essential during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant school closures and distanced online learning. About 23% of teaching professionals think that when they started their job, their skills were lower than their jobs required, showing the importance of CPD. Indeed, teaching professionals are more likely than other EU adult workers to say that they enjoy learning for its own sake.

Following the expansion of work-based learning and apprenticeships in companies of different sizes, including SMEs, new flexible learning pathways are created. There may be an increase in the need for hybrid professionals—teachers and trainers who work in both VET institutions and companies. There is also a need for closer collaboration between VET teachers and trainers, particularly for in-company trainers and mentors and career counsellors who are supporting and guiding learners towards multiple learning pathways (Psifidou, 2020c).

Additionally, Cedefop estimates that there are around 128 million adults with a potential need for upskilling or reskilling across the EU.⁶ Integrated and well-tailored pathways which would permit these people to acquire or upgrade basic skills at different points in life are increasingly used to prevent skill gaps and skill shortages. Besides occupational skills training, teachers and trainers should help them to improve basic as well as career management skills that allow them to make appropriate learning and working choices throughout their lives.

In the EU, teaching generally requires a tertiary qualification. The most common minimum requirement for teaching at the primary level is a bachelor's degree. In order to teach at the lower secondary level, half of the EU systems have set the minimum qualification as a master's degree, while in upper secondary schools, a master's degree minimum qualification is required in most EU countries. Completing higher levels of education and training can provide prospective teachers and trainers with a more comprehensive set of competences, including those needed to develop professional autonomy in their teaching practices. This can in turn contribute to greater job satisfaction, as well as to a greater perception of value of and respect for the profession (European Commission, 2019).

While the pedagogical competences of VET school teachers are generally considered adequate, although they do require constant updating according to Cedefop evidence (Cedefop, 2016a), evidence from most countries points to a growing need for VET teachers to be better able to keep up with the realities of changing needs of industry and the labour market. This includes countries with well-established

⁶Cedefop's calculation is based on Eurostat's labour force survey 2016, CSIS 2015 and OECD PIAAC 2012 and 2015. More information is included in Cedefop (2020b); see also Cedefop and ETF (2020b).

apprenticeship systems. To achieve this, cooperation and partnerships between VET institutions and labour market actors are important in ensuring the quality and relevance of learning (see Sect. 7.5.2). Members of the Thematic Working Group on VET coordinated by the European Commission with the support of Cedefop concluded in their 12 policy pointers that teachers and trainers need support including specifying roles and responsibilities, strengthening professional capacity, being equipped for key challenges and fostering collaboration (see Fig. 7.1). In particular, members of this group identified the need for more support for teachers and trainers in the following areas (European Commission, 2018)⁷:

- Developing the content of teaching and learning for students of diverse abilities and applying new curricula
- Assessment of learning outcomes and key competences
- Innovation and digitalisation
- Supporting disadvantaged learners
- Career guidance and other professional support

VET school principals and teachers, as well as in-company trainers, should thus have access to varied and flexible training which is suited to VET and their own needs, as well as professional development opportunities which are embedded in real work contexts and tasks. Further, the role of leadership in schools and companies is crucial for providing the necessary support to and enhancing the motivation of teachers and trainers to take part in professional development. School leaders, apart from often having the responsibility for the CPD of their staff, also play an essential role in creating collaborative cultures and practices that stimulate cooperation and peer learning: among teachers in the school, with other schools and learning providers, with companies that provide work-based learning and with local communities.⁸

7.3.3 Greater Autonomy and Involvement in Education and Training Reforms

As a result of the increased autonomy of VET teachers and schools which was observed over the past decade, teachers and trainers are increasingly autonomous in selecting teaching approaches, methods, techniques, contents and forms of work. With the implementation of learning outcomes and (national) standards for knowledge, skills and competences (Cedefop, 2016b, 2017), VET teachers and trainers have greater involvement in the development and implementation of education and

⁷These areas are part of the third group of policy pointers “equipping teachers and trainers for key challenges” (policy pointers 6–10).

⁸European Vocational Skills Week 2019: VET for All – Skills for Life Conference, Concept note of Session 5. “Changing role of teachers and trainers”, Helsinki, 17 October 2019.

training reforms, especially in relation to curriculum design and when deciding on appropriate vocational pedagogies (Psifidou, 2011; Cedefop, 2012, 2015a).

Assessment criteria and methods should be also aligned with the intended learning outcomes in order to provide learners with quality feedback which can guide and improve further learning and close any potential gaps between intended and achieved learning outcomes (Psifidou, 2012). Classroom-based formative assessment (assessment for learning) is increasingly gaining ground in European classrooms. There is more and more emphasis towards individualistic and constructivist learning approaches (Cedefop, 2015a, 2016b).

Cedefop's research shows that translating learning outcome-related policies and frameworks into classroom reality and pedagogical practices requires appropriate tools and capacities to be developed at the national and institutional levels. Although practices at the institutional level can be encouraged by national policies and strategies, their establishment depends on many other factors, such as strategical priorities of institutions, the commitment of headmasters to improving the quality of teaching and learning collaboration among teachers and with industry and the capacity to manage complex institutional change. The educational outcomes are not only results of teaching, but the active learning, engagement and experience of students and teachers is a crucial aspect. In order to apply such learning and assessment methods, teachers and trainers/mentors need to be well trained and equipped with appropriate skills and methodologies. All relevant Cedefop research emphasises the importance of education and training reforms needing to be coordinated with changes in initial (and in-service) teacher education programmes (Cedefop, 2012, 2015a, 2016b).

7.4 Challenges for VET Teachers and Trainers' Profession and Their Well-Being

7.4.1 Ageing VET Teachers and Attractiveness of the Profession

As the roles of VET teachers and trainers are becoming increasingly complex and the teaching populations are ageing, teacher shortages remain a persistent problem in many EU countries. Thus, making their profession more attractive is vital.

In some countries, teacher salaries are generally low, but evidence shows that wages are not the only key factor in reducing the attractiveness of the teaching profession. According to TALIS (OECD, 2019), teachers in the EU generally have high intrinsic motivation and are highly committed to their profession. Most of them chose the profession out of a desire to contribute to students' development and society and are generally satisfied with their job. On the other hand, EU teachers in some European countries are less satisfied with their social status and working conditions. This can apply to those VET teachers who lack societal recognition

and equal employment opportunities compared to general education teachers. This can impact their satisfaction and well-being (Misra, 2011). Teachers face an increasing workload, often bearing increasing administrative tasks, and are not able to devote enough time to teaching and to supporting students. High student/teacher ratios add further pressure to their daily work.

Even in countries where the teaching profession is highly esteemed, attracting teachers to certain occupationally oriented subject areas is still problematic. Attracting professionals with higher education to teach professional subjects or attracting in-company trainers from enterprises to the teaching profession in VET schools, while it is expected to help improve VET's relevance, raises challenges in many countries. In the latter case, these challenges mainly concern (Cedefop & ETF, 2020a):

- Quality assurance: ensuring that the certification and quality of training of in-company trainers, for example, is equivalent to that of teaching professionals
- Incentives: ensuring that in-company trainers focus on the acquisition of key competences of learners, as opposed to predominantly firm-specific skills
- Accountability: resolving the whom are in-company trainers accountable to: the parents, the schools or the company

Misra (2011) points out that many European member states lack attractive recruitment and training policies in order to attract and encourage workers from industry to become VET school teaching professionals. For instance, Slovakia demonstrates the need to rethink measures to attract people in their middle years who have a relevant history in business to work in VET schools. Not only competitive wages but also flexibility in terms of their engagement are urgently needed (Vantuch & Jelínková, 2016). Countries are now addressing this challenge (see Sect. 7.5).

Many countries have moved towards more extrinsic performance assessment measures by linking teachers' assessment and, in some cases, even their pay, with indicators of learners' performance outcomes. As a result, teachers' dissatisfaction has risen because this undermines their primary motivation to do their job, which tends to be intrinsic motivation (Cedefop, 2015b, 2018).

7.4.2 Teachers and Trainers' Well-Being and Job Satisfaction

Evidence shows that competent and motivated VET teachers and trainers can embrace new challenges and reforms and ensure quality and effective learning experiences for both young and adult learners. Understanding teachers and trainers' well-being is central not only to supporting their professionalism and retention but, equally, impacts teaching quality, classroom environment, student performance and well-being and teachers' and trainers' capacity to embrace and introduce change.

However, well-being and job satisfaction are difficult to measure, or even to detect. A major challenge is the lack of VET-specific data as the main data sources tend to refer to the general teacher population. Factors influencing well-being and job satisfaction include both structural career elements, such as salaries and career advancement opportunities, and personal factors, including age and work experience, education level and aspirations and gender. Professional attitudes, teaching practices, quality and the coherence of initial education, induction and CPD of teachers and trainers are also crucial for their well-being. The balance between teaching and other types of responsibilities and demands (e.g. administrative tasks, projects) should also be considered (Psifidou, 2020c).⁹

According to Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey, teaching professionals are generally more likely to be satisfied with their job and have less job insecurity than other comparably skilled adult workers (Cedefop, 2015b, 2018). The teaching profession, as a result of its heavy dependence on strong interpersonal communication and social interaction, is also generally one with a lower potential risk of being replaced by digital machines. Teachers are self-motivated to follow this profession since they have intrinsic incentives such as their passion to teach and educate; they are less likely to choose their job because of the wage, but they are more likely than other workers to select it because of the higher job security and flexible work hours. Hence, when the intrinsic elements and satisfaction of their job are compromised, the job satisfaction of teachers can be negatively affected (Cedefop, 2015b, 2018).

7.5 Countries' Policy Responses to Overcoming Challenges

7.5.1 *Improving Recruitment Procedures and Ensuring Continuous Professional Development*¹⁰

In the light of the abovementioned challenges and according to Cedefop's monitoring data on Riga medium-term deliverables (MTD) in 2015–2019 and more specifically to MTD 5—Initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors (cf. Cedefop and ETF, 2020a, pp. 70–75), countries are taking actions to tackle challenges and provide opportunities for VET teachers, trainers and mentors. This is one of the five Riga MTDs¹¹ where reform implementation has been

⁹Drawing from round-table discussion on “VET Teacher well-being and job satisfaction” during Cedefop-ReferNet Plenary meeting, 6 February 2020.

¹⁰The current chapter draws from the monitoring of Riga conclusions published at a joint Cedefop-ETF publication (2020a). The authors of these articles use the same wording found in the publication on purpose while reporting on country developments and examples as this wording has been approved by all parties.

¹¹These are: MTD 1—Promoting work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships; MTD 2—Developing quality assurance mechanisms in VET and continuous information and feedback loops; MTD 3—Access to VET and qualifications for all; MTD 4—

	Actions on access	Actions on CPD
Teaching professionals in VET schools	(a) (re)defining entry requirements and/or entry procedures (Czechia, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, UK-Wales)	(a) introducing/updating requirements (as in Belgium (fr), Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Cyprus), programmes and courses (Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Slovenia, UK-England); developing innovative learning approaches (Spain, Portugal) and support measures (Belgium (de), the Netherlands, Norway)
	(b) upgrading/updating pre-service and/or initial in-service teacher training programmes (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, UK)	(b) introducing opportunities for teacher visit/traineeship/working in company and for cooperation with in-company mentors (Czechia; Denmark, Norway, Slovenia) (c) introducing career development opportunities for teachers, including in terms of reaching leadership positions (e.g. Czechia, Spain)
	(c) introducing/upgrading measures to attract new teachers, including attracting experts from the world of work (e.g. UK-Scotland)	(d) supporting VET school leaders and their professional development (Estonia, Cyprus, UK-England)
Mentors and trainers in companies	(a) re/defining the requirements to become a mentor/trainer, including developing standards/profiles (as in Belgium (fr), France, Luxembourg, Hungary, Poland)	(a) setting up plans or framework guidelines for the continuing training of in-company mentors and trainers (Belgium (fr), Greece)
	(b) introducing/updating training programmes (whether optional or compulsory) to become an in-company trainer (Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Slovenia, Finland)	(b) developing programmes and courses (Czechia, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania)
	(c) introducing/updating measures to increase the availability of qualified mentors/trainers in companies (France)	(c) opening up learning opportunities through school visiting schemes (Norway, Slovenia).

Fig. 7.2 Actions on MTD 5—Initial and continuous professional developments of VET teachers, trainers and mentors. Source: Authors drawn from Cedefop and ETF (2020a, pp. 70–75)

the most advanced. By September 2019, 81% of the actions taken in the reporting period had reached the full-scale implementation stage. Another 5% were still in the pilot phase, and 9% were undergoing legislative processes.

As presented in Fig. 7.2, the actions on MTD 5 can be divided first by profession, where it has been noted that measures supporting the development of VET teaching and training professions have addressed VET school teachers and trainers more (69%) than in-company trainers and mentors (28%). Secondly, these actions are also classified in two main categories: measures regarding access to each profession (39% of actions) and measures on continuing professional development (CPD) for each profession (58% of actions) (Cedefop and ETF, 2020a, p. 70).

Strengthening key competences; and MTD 5—Initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors.

In regard to actions on access, countries are redefining VET teachers, trainers and mentors' entry requirements, including developing competence standards/profiles and updating pre-service and/or initial in-service training to address new needs with regard to new challenges they face. Countries report that teacher training programmes do not always take sufficient account of the characteristics and demands of VET. The evidence showed, in particular, the need to update pedagogical/didactical competences and to better link theory and practice. Some countries looked for ways to address teacher shortages and make teaching more attractive by increasing salaries (as, for instance, in Iceland, Latvia and Slovakia), developing career opportunities and attracting professionals from industry. Despite the work done in this respect, further attention is required on this area in the future.

In regard to actions on CPD, most countries have introduced programmes and courses, built career development opportunities and promoted work placements in companies to keep teachers updated on the industry, labour market and technological developments. A relatively limited number of countries have introduced specialised programmes to prepare VET school leaders and principals for their role, which often includes making decisions about teacher professional development. With the development of apprenticeships and work-based learning, in most of the countries, there is a growing need for more employees from companies who can act as trainers/mentors. Few developments which focused on their training were reported.

Attracting people to the teaching/training profession is only one side of the coin. Providing the conditions and supporting them to remain committed and competent throughout their teaching/training life is another challenge. Growth, development and recognition are essential.

According to TALIS (OECD, 2019), teachers who said that continuing professional development (CPD) had a positive impact on their teaching also displayed higher levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy. Moreover, CPD can increase student achievement, reduce achievement gaps among students and even counter professional burnout. Mentorship programmes also strengthen teacher competences and professional identity and enhance peer cooperation, which all contribute to teacher well-being. Opportunities for career development is an important factor in helping teachers remain motivated and not feel locked into one position.¹²

Several countries are systematically monitoring and evaluating the CPD processes of teachers (e.g. Denmark, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia and the UK) (Cedefop & ETF, 2020a, p. 74). However, many of the initiatives that address professional development for teachers and in-company trainers are carried out through EU-funded projects. It is important that successful practices derived from these programmes be mainstreamed in the future, in order to form systematic and holistic policies for VET staff professional development.

Finally, policies which seek to structure access to mentoring and training roles in companies as well as to ensuring the continuing professional development of

¹²Drawing from: ET2020 Working Group Schools (2020 forthcoming). Supporting teacher and school leader careers.

trainers/mentors in enterprises continue to be developed. This trend is mainly linked to the need to complement the reform of apprenticeship and other forms of workplace-based learning.

During the current pandemic, digital delivery, which allows for the offering of professional learning opportunities online for teachers and trainers, has become the norm. Although this approach offers flexibility in terms of time and place and although during the health crisis it has been the only possibility to teach, it is still a novelty with unknown effects. In the current circumstances, online modules for equipping VET teachers and trainers with digital skills are necessary. Some countries are training teachers, trainers, coaches and mentors to develop teaching and training material (European Commission, 2020), to acquire knowledge on effective e-learning methodologies, and to carry out virtual evaluation. Some platforms offer demonstrations and online training to users. Information and guidance about organising distance learning has been made available for teachers, trainers, learners, enterprises and parents in several EU countries, including guidance in how to support learners at risk (Cedefop, 2020a).

7.5.2 Fostering School-Business Cooperation

VET teachers and trainers can play a pivotal role in building trust between the worlds of education and work, which is essential in learning settings involving different environments. To achieve this, they must collaborate closely together primarily at local level. Strong partnerships and networks and co-creation of knowledge and expertise can be effective ways for teachers and trainers to address new tasks and challenges and develop new learning pathways, environments and formats.

Cedefop's evidence¹³ shows that stakeholders referred to several benefits that a school-business partnership can offer. It enables the pooling of resources for better and more cost-effective continuous professional development. VET teachers from schools and centres may keep their technical knowledge relevant and up-to-date, while company-based trainers may develop their pedagogical skills (e.g. by spending time teaching in schools). Such a collaboration widens the curriculum, promotes excellence, fosters innovation and helps to mitigate any persisting negative images of apprenticeships and VET.

School-business cooperation can be organised through a variety of methods, including the creation of special centres or through tandem trainings, where VET teachers and trainers are trained together (European Commission, 2018). However, there are some requirements for the successful implementation of school-business

¹³Drawing from Cedefop's Second policy learning forum: Unlocking the potential of learning at the workplace by, and for, teachers and trainers in VET, 9–10 April 2019, Thessaloniki, Greece.

partnerships, such as the need for structural changes and financial and non-financial incentives to be present. Several countries, such as Slovenia, have made structural changes in their curriculum documents to support innovations at providers' levels and cooperation between schools and companies. According to the current guidelines for VET programmes, less prescriptive national VET framework curricula are introduced and further operationalised at the provider level including opening up the 20% of the curriculum to be adapted to the needs of local environment and employers. Schools in close cooperation with local employers may plan the learning objectives, content and teaching process for this 20% of the curriculum entirely independently (Knava & Šlander, 2019, p. 24).

7.6 Conclusion and Reflections for the Future

Well-trained and motivated teachers and trainers/mentors are key agents in implementing complex reforms in vocational education and training in order to deliver tangible results for learners of all ages and equip them with the relevant knowledge, skills and competences for work, further learning and personal fulfilment. The new Council recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (Council of the European Union, 2020b) sets a vision for VET to address the challenges Europe will be facing in the coming years.

As discussed in this article, teachers' and trainers' challenges and roles are changing quickly. Policy-makers need to understand these changes to be able to support them. At the time of this writing (January 2021), only fragmented evidence is available at the European level. Cedefop aims to fill these research gaps by launching a pan-European survey on VET teachers, in-company trainers and learners in initial VET (ISCED level 3), which will bring more insights to support evidence-based policy-making in this field in Europe. The survey will also address the changing roles and emerging needs of VET principals and headmasters and examine their preparedness for managing complex changes at institutional level. These changes can only occur if change and management capacities are developed at the institutional level. According to the latest Cedefop-ETF monitoring of the Riga conclusions, a relatively limited number of countries have introduced specialised programmes to prepare VET school leaders for their role, which often includes making decisions about managing and ongoing support of teacher professional development (Cedefop & ETF, 2020a).

In the coming years, further research and support to trainers in light of the developing upskilling pathways across Europe and focus on continuous VET (CVET) and lifelong learning is needed. The main policy focus so far has been mainly on IVET and trainers in apprenticeship-type schemes. Due to changes in society and in the labour market, CVET (and consequently, those who implement it) is going to be an important player in increasing growth, company innovation and productivity as well as in supporting the European social agenda. The next decade might see more reflection about and work on trainers in CVET, as well as employees

in companies who support learning at the workplace of other employees. The need to upskill the low-skilled and older employees increases the proportions of on-the-job training and leads to a situation where more employees in companies will take on the responsibility for training as part of their everyday duties.

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