

Communication on skills: right focus, but lack of substance

Today's Commission communication on Skills for the Future rightly highlights the importance of investing in skills in order to boost Europe's growth and competitiveness, but adds little in terms of delivery and methodology.

The communication rightly prioritises the development of transversal skills as essential in addressing the mismatch between business needs and skills on offer. It also highlights the need for excellence in vocational education and training (VET). However, it contains little substance to suggest that businesses can anticipate any improvement in the situation. This must be rectified by allocating an adequate budget to the post 2014 'Erasmus for All' programme and ensuring that VET is one of its key pillars.

Arnaldo Abruzzini, EUROCHAMBRES Secretary General, commented: *"Millions of young people cannot find work across much of the EU; meanwhile, entrepreneurs complain about the lack of skilled workers available. The EU can help tackle both unemployment and the skills deficit through improving mobility and delivering more effective schemes to match supply with demand."*

At the moment, the number of NEETs (people neither in employment nor in education) is costing Europe 153,000 billion euro annually* and reduces businesses' ability to compete.

Mr Abruzzini added: *"Education policy remains a national responsibility, but EU level actions add considerable value, especially in improving workforce mobility, promoting effective measures for employability and supporting their delivery. VET must be a key element in delivering the EU's growth and jobs agenda and this must be reflected in the EU Budget negotiations."*

*Eurostat statistics

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