

European Vocational Skills Week 2019: almost 1,500 events across the EU promoting the benefits of vocational education

Today, the European Vocational Skills Week 2019 taking place in Helsinki comes to an end. This year, 1,407 associated events and activities have been held across Europe so far and have helped the European Vocational Skills Week campaign to reach 2.5 million people, which is the highest number ever since the first edition in 2016.

"I am incredibly impressed by the VET projects I have seen, and more convinced than ever that VET really is a 'First Choice', leading to rewarding and exciting careers", said Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. *"I am therefore very pleased that we have reached more people than ever before during this fourth edition of our Vocational Skills Week, and hope that they too will spread the word about the quality of vocational education."*

"The best way to increase Europe's wellbeing and create employment is to help everyone learn the skills they need and increase the competence level of the whole population. High quality vocational education and training plays a key role in achieving this goal. The vocational Skills Week and its impressive number of high quality events plays a vital role in highlighting the importance of vocational education and training", said Li Andersson, Minister of Education of Finland. *"We have listened carefully to the ideas and insights expressed during the Vocational Skills Week and will take them into account when shaping national and European education and training policies for the next decade."*

Awards for VET Excellence 2019

Each year, as part of the European Vocational Skills Week, the EU recognises individuals, organisations and initiatives for their efforts in promoting and offering quality vocational education and training, through the "Awards for VET Excellence". The awards are designed to highlight the quality in VET, provide visibility to the winners, motivate those taking part and support the development of networks and new career opportunities.

Announced during the Week's Awards Nominees Celebration, the 2019 winners are:

Companies and learners:

European Alliance for Apprenticeships Awards (EAfA):

Large companies:

- Hidromek A.Ş. – Hayri Akgus, Turkey

Small companies:

- Strand Hotel, Tom Flavin, Ireland

Apprentices:

- Samuel Gilmore – Company Mark Pollock Joinery, Kilrea, Co Londonderry, Northern Ireland UK

Training at Work Award:

- Hot & Cold Therm Kft. – Benkő Zoltán & István Győre, Hungary

VET innovators:

Innovative VET Provider Award:

- Akademie Deutsches Bäckerhandwerk Weinheim – Bernd Kuetscher, Germany

Teacher and Trainer Awards:

- Markku Vengasaho – Edusampo, Finland

VET Researchers' Award:

- Prof. Fernando Marhuenda, University of Valencia, Spain

The Entrepreneurial School Awards – TES / JA Europe:

- Gradia Vocational Institute – Pirjo Kauhanen, Finland

European funding for excellence:

European Social Fund Award (focus on digitalisation and technological change):

- Empleado digital – Belén Sánchez-Rubio & Carmen Cárdenas, Spain

Erasmus+ Awards:

VET and skills for the future:

- Developing Work Based Learning Model for VET – John Hurley, Ireland

Social inclusion:

- New didactical models for initial VET training of young disadvantaged persons to reduce drop out – Maria-Luise Leitner, Austria

European Agencies Awards:

#CedefopPhotoAward:

- Ortweinschule – College of engineering, art and design and Institute for research and technology Graz, Austria

European Training Foundation (ETF) Entrepreneurship Award:

- University of Alexandria – Essam A. Elkordi, Egypt

International Awards (Guests of Honour):

- International Skills Competitions Awards-WorldSkills 2019: Stefan Planitzer, Austria
- UNESCO-UNEVOC Skills in Action Photo Competition: Ruth Pemisola Oluniyi

Background

The European events of the fourth edition of the European Vocational Skills Week took place in Helsinki from 14-18 October 2019. Organised by the European Commission – this year in cooperation with the Finnish Presidency – the Week aims to promote vocational education and training (VET) and spread the message that VET can be a successful choice for young and adults alike. The Week has mobilised thousands of people from across Europe to promote VET and highlight the concrete opportunities that this educational pathway offers.

The specific focus for 2019 was 'VET for All – Skills for Life', while the overarching theme of the Week remained 'Discover your talent'. The 2019 focus emphasised the fact that lifelong learning is a path to new opportunities and greater career prospects, and that VET is a great option for anyone at any stage of their life.

The Week in Finland

With the support of the Finnish Presidency, the Week brought 1,211 stakeholders to Helsinki. The events varied from an informal exchange with young people to an inclusive and future-oriented main conference on 'VET for All – Skills for Life'. An expo showcased also the best of vocational education and training in Finland. 89 events and activities have been taking place in the whole country, such as contact day sessions for vocational teaching students, an open day at a VET centre, a VET fair and a virtual reality truck tour built up by VET and higher education students. 57,272 people have participated to-date, demonstrating strong support for VET at a local level.

2019 campaign ambassadors

This year, 27 ambassadors representing 24 countries are supporting the European Vocational Skills Week campaign. In addition there are two EU-level Ambassadors. They are all role models in their respective fields, champions of VET and examples of how VET can lead to successful careers. They come from all walks of life and illustrate the breadth and depth of VET. They are teachers and trainers, successful entrepreneurs, footballers, IT specialists, managers, and CEOs – to name just a few. Throughout the year, they have been promoting the attractiveness and excellence of VET, and inspiring learners to

pursue upskilling, reskilling and learning opportunities at any stage of their life.

For more information

[European Vocational Skills Week 2019 website](#)

[European Vocational Skills Week 2019 events map](#)

[Facebook Event Page: European Vocational Skills Week 2019](#)

[Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2019 website](#)

[European Training Foundation: Award on entrepreneurial skills development](#)

Follow Marianne Thyssen on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Twitter: [#EUVocationalSkills](#), [#DiscoverYourTalent](#)