



# VET in the post-covid era Challenges & Opportunities

Achieving excellence through Internationalisation,  
VET-Business Partnerships and Knowledge Sharing

**EVBB  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
1-2 December 2021 | Athens, Greece**



With the patronage of



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS  
GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION,  
TRAINING, LIFELONG LEARNING AND YOUTH

# agenda

## The Concept

The EU economy's outlook for the forthcoming period looks brighter than ever before.

After the improving of the health situation and the easing of virus containment measures, EU economies are back in motion with a GDP growth forecast to be put at 4.8% for 2021 and 4.5% for 2022 in both the EU and the euro area. At the same time, Next Generation EU, the new Recovery Plan for Europe, has been deployed, activating all productive drivers throughout the European Economies, promising and even brighter future.

The question that arises is whether - under these conditions - the European economy has those characteristics that are required to maintain its growth momentum in the coming years. And most importantly, how the increase of EU's GDP can be transformed also to prosperity for our societies, in an inclusive way.

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# Agenda

Times are  
all in CET  
(Greek time is  
one hour ahead)

## Day 1

14.00 - 15.00

**122<sup>nd</sup> Executive Committee Meeting of the EVBB e.V. EVBB MEMBERS ONLY**

15.00 - 17.15

**28<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the EVBB e.V. EVBB MEMBERS ONLY**  
-Each member association can appoint up to two persons to participate in the General Assembly.

17.00 - 17.30

**Elections EVBB MEMBERS ONLY**

## Day 2

### Part 1/3

09.00 - 09.30

#### Opening - Welcome Speeches

- Mr. Kostis Hatzidakis, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs
- Mr. Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights
- Mr. Thiemo Fojkar, President of EVBB
- Mr. Constantinos Rodopoulos, President of AKMI
- Mr. Stefan Moritz, Managing Director of European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME
- Mrs. Giulia Meschino, VET4EU2 Group

09.30 - 09.50

#### The Hellenic reform of Vocational Education & Training. Vision and accomplishments

- Mr. Georgios Voutsinos, Secretary General for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth

09.50 - 10.10

#### VET Challenges: Innovation and skills mismatches

- Mrs Chiara. Riondino, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG EMPL, Vocational Education and Training, CEDEFOP (EMPL.B.3)

10.10 - 10.30

#### Modernising VET Systems to adapt to modern challenges and foster Lifelong Learning

- Mr. Loukas Zahilas, Head of Department for VET and Qualifications, CEDEFOP

10.30 - 10.50

#### The Role of Excellence in promoting VET Systems

- Mr. George Zisimos, Head of Policy Advice & EU Programming Unit at European Training Foundation (ETF)

10.50 - 11.00

#### Q&A Session

11.00 - 11.20

#### Break

11.20 - 11.40

#### VET in a time of crisis: Building foundations for resilient VET systems

Mrs. Shinyoung Jeon, Policy Analyst at OECD, Centre for Skills

11.40 - 12.00

#### The potential of Erasmus

Mrs. Themis Christophidou, Director General of DG-EAC

12.00 - 12.20

#### The use of ILAs to support LLL

Mr. Theodor Grassos, Secretary General of EVBB

12.20 - 12.30

#### Q&A Session

12.30 - 13.30

#### Break

13.30 - 14.30

#### Round Table Discussion:

##### The future of VET. How can we adapt to the new challenges?

- Participants:
- Mr. Joao Santos, Senior Expert, DG Employ
- Mr. Spiros Protopsaltis, Governor and Chair of the Board of Directors at OAED
- Mrs. Ioanna Lytrivi, CEO of EOPPEP
- Mr. Loukas Zahilas, Head of Department for VET and Qualifications, CEDEFOP
- Moderator: Dr. Maria Margarida Segard, Vice-President of EVBB

14.30 - 15.00

#### World Café

Workshop 1: "Validation of prior / informal learning. The case of Austria".  
Moderator: Mr. Sebastian Frank, ÖJAB



Workshop 2: "Internationalisation Strategies to attract new employees.  
The case of Germany". Moderator: Mr. Andreas Koth, Internationaler Bund



Workshop 3: "Innovation in VET. The case of Greece:  
The Acropolis VR project".

Moderator: Dr. Emmanouil Apostolakis, iVET AKMI



Workshop 4: "Quality in VET under the emerging  
e-learning environment. The case of Sweden".

Moderator: Mrs. Vivian Welker, Folkuniversitetet



15.00 - 15.30

#### Final Remarks



# Speakers



## Mr. Georgios Voutsinos

Mr. Georgios Voutsinos is the Secretary General for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth, at Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. He holds a Ph.D. in Applied Hydrobiology and he has completed postgraduate Studies in Educational Policy Planning and Education Administration, in the Institute of Education of London University. Furthermore, during his career, he has served, inter alia, as Honorary Counselor of the Pedagogical Institute of Greece, as First President of the Vocational Education and Training Organization establishing the first Institutes of Vocational Training in Greece, and as an Expert - Evaluator of Systems and Programs of Vocational Education and Training of European Union and National Representative in Organizations, Councils and Committees for the Vocational Education of EU.



## Mrs. Chiara Riondino

Mrs. Chiara Riondino is head of unit for vocational education and training in the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission. Chiara previously worked as policy coordinator for employment policies and policy assistant to the Director for Employment. In this context, she focused mainly on employment opportunities and challenges in the changing world of work, active labour market policies and fair working conditions. She also worked more broadly on taking forward the European Pillar on Social Rights. Before joining the Commission, Chiara worked in both the private and the public sector, including as head of unit in the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance.



## Mr. Loukas Zahilas

Mr. Loukas Zahilas is Head of the Department for VET and Qualifications at Cedefop. He studied Chemistry and IT and he has a PhD in educational policies. His more than 27 years of professional experience in VET were mainly acquired at the Greek Ministry of Education, the University of Athens and Cedefop. He joined Cedefop in 2006 working on qualifications and EU tools and currently is a member of the management team. His department supports the EC, Member States and social partners in fostering policy developments; strengthening EU cooperation; and informing political discussions on the future of VET.



## Mr. George Zisimos

Georgios Zisimos is an educationist who started working at the European Training Foundation (ETF) in Turin on March 2014 as senior expert on EU Education Training Policies. Currently he is the Head of Policy Advice and EU programming Unit in ETF. On February 2010, he was appointed in Brussels member of the Cabinet of the EU Commissioner responsible for education, culture, multilingualism, youth, and sport. He oversaw the education portfolio within the cabinet. Before 2010 he served as Member of Scientific Committee on Curriculum Reform in Cyprus appointed by the Ministers Council. In 2005, he was elected Secretary General of the Cypriot Secondary Teacher's Union and became member of the Executive Committee of the ETUCE. Georgios taught in public schools both in the UK and Cyprus. He holds an MA in Curriculum Development. He has been the author of numerous publications in the field of education and training.



## Mrs. Shinyoung Jeon

Mrs. Jeon joined the OECD in 2013 and is currently working on VET Facing the Future project focusing on responsive, innovative and flexible apprenticeship system. She has extensive experience in education and skills. She is the lead author of Teachers and Leaders in VET (2021), Raising the Basic Skills of Workers in England (2020), VET in a time of crisis: Building foundations for resilient vocational education and training systems (2020), Unlocking the Potential of Migrants through VET: Cross-country Analysis (2019) and OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report: Korea (2015). She holds both a Masters and PhD in Development Economics from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, and is a graduate of the Department of Education at Seoul National University, South Korea.



## Mrs. Themis Christophidou

Themis Christophidou is the Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission, since March 2018. She is a civil engineer with 35 years of experience in private and public sector management. After having worked in the private sector for 15 years, she joined the European Commission in 2001. During the last 20 years she has held various positions, including in the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, as Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and as Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. Themis Christophidou is an alumna of the civil engineering faculty of the Metsovio Polytechnic University of Athens. Born in Famagusta, Cyprus, she is trilingual, fluent in Greek, French, English.



## Mr. Theodor Grassos

Theodor Grassos is Secretary General of the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training. He has extensive experience both at EU level and in Greece, covering a period of over 20 years. His national experience includes reorganising a number of public bodies, while he has been responsible for ex-ante and ongoing evaluation of Human Resources Development Operational Programmes, supporting the design and delivery of restructured and modernised ALMPs in different countries. At EU level he has been working in multicultural environments for the past 18 years, for different DG's and EU Programmes. Fluent in four languages, he has also collaborated with the Structural Reform Support Service (now DG Reform). So far, he has been responsible for over 100 projects of various sizes at national and EU level and is currently working with EU institutions and key umbrella organisations in the areas of employment, education and social inclusion. Finally, he is a member of two Working Groups of the European Commission: "Working Group on Vocational Education and Training and the Green Transition" and "Working Group on Adult Learning - Opening Up Opportunities for All".



## Mr. João Santos

Mr. João Santos is a Senior expert in the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion at the European Commission in Brussels. The Unit is responsible for Vocational Education and Training as well as for the policy orientation of the Erasmus+ programme in this sector. He previously worked as the coordinator of a geographical desk, and was involved in the negotiations on the EU structural policies supported by the European Social Fund. His responsibilities included Employment, Skills, Social Protection and Social inclusion. He also worked on international relations covering the employment and social affairs dimension of the EU bilateral cooperation with China, the USA, and Canada, as well as on multilateral cooperation within the United Nations framework, on issues related to the Social Dimension of Globalization and the Decent work Agenda. From 2009 to 2013 he worked at the EU Delegation to China and Mongolia as a diplomatic Counsellor dealing with bilateral trade and investment issues, as well as people-to-people dialogue.



## Dr. Spiros Protopsaltis

Dr. Spiros Protopsaltis is Governor and Chairman of the Board of Directors of OAED Manpower Employment Organization and First Vice-Chair of the European Network of Public Employment Services. Previously, he was the director of Ed Policy Forward and an Associate Professor at George Mason University. During the Obama Administration, he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education and Student Financial Aid for the US Department of Education, Senior Higher Education Advisor to the Chairman of the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, and Senior Policy Advisor to Congressman Polis of Colorado. He holds a PhD from the University of Colorado Denver, an MS from the New School University, and a BA summa cum laude from Northeastern University.

# Moderators



## **Dr. Maria Margarida Segard**

Segard is Vice President and responsible for European Affairs of the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training. She is expert and advisor in European Platform for VET Associations Vocational Education and Training. Dr. Segard has an extensive experience both at EU level and in Portugal as Director of ISQ Academy, responsible for Tailor made training solutions for companies, Corporate Academies for Big Companies International projects, European projects, Training products Design and Innovation; Innovative VET solutions and skills for the future in Digital transformation 4.0 and Green transition. So far, she coordinated project and developed work in more than 35 Countries in Europe, Africa and Asia, in capacity building and training, including CSR, for different sectors. Consultant and project leader in Projects for Development and Innovative Training Services in technological areas for "high performance work", for "employment, better jobs and more inclusion" and for youngsters.



## **Mr. Sebastian Frank**

Mr. Sebastian Frank holds a MSc in Strategic Management and a BA in Tourism and Leisure Industry. He has more than 10 years experience in project management in the fields of IT solutions, educational organisation and EU project planning and management. Mr. Frank has successfully managed a diverse range of projects in the fields of youth, geriatric care, vocational education and training, migration & immigration as well as multiple IT solution projects. He is currently head of the European project department of the Austrian Young Workers Movement ÖJAB in Vienna and a board member of the EU Youth umbrella organisation YES-Forum. Since 17 years, Mr. Frank is also a volunteer paramedic at the Austrian Red Cross.



## **Mr. Andreas Koth**

Mr. Andreas Koth is specialised in working in the field of vocational and school education, working with students with special needs in a national and international context. He is a very experienced teacher and project manager and has lead numerous international projects with partners in Europe and beyond and managed IB facilities specialised in educational pathways for learners with various backgrounds and special needs. Apart from that he's an expert for monitoring and evaluating international projects. Through working with European networks and partners he gained inside knowledge of European policies in the field of education and vocational educational training. Mr Koth is also part of IB's group of international experts.



## **Dr. Emmanouil Apostolakis**

Dr. Emmanouil Apostolakis is Director of Studies at IEK AKMI. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Physics, a Master's degree in Science Teaching and a PhD in Distance Learning and Science Education. Furthermore, he is experienced in Educational Administration and he has a 15 years history as a High School Principal. Dr. Apostolakis is skilled in Science Teaching and Writing and he is an experienced Tutor in Open Universities in Greece and Cyprus. He is a researcher in Educational Technology, Instructional Design, and Science Teaching.



## **Mrs. Vivian Welker**

Mrs. Vivian Welker is a Project Manager for international projects and cooperation. Her career in the education sector started when she first got introduced to vocational education and training in Sweden. Before becoming a project manager for international projects, she was in charge of several VET programs and she made sure that both students and stakeholders needs were met. Her current role allows her to profit from her previous experience and to further influence the development of VET in Sweden and across Europe. Several of her current projects aim to ensure a better match between vocational education and the current and future demand of the labor market.



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