



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

ETUCE Policy Paper on Vocational Education and Training in Europe

*submitted for adoption by the ETUCE Committee
to the ETUCE Conference meeting in Budapest from 26 to 28 November 2012,
adopted on 27 November 2012*

The purpose of this policy paper is to update previous ETUCE policies on vocational education and training (VET)¹ and establish guidelines for teachers' trade unions on VET policy, extending the scope to the whole Europe.

European countries are greatly influenced by the VET policies of the European Union (EU). VET has gained greater focus at European level since the establishment of the EU, but mainly from an economic perspective. Following the establishment of the Copenhagen Process (2002), the Education Ministers of the EU and candidate countries agreed in the Bruges Communiqué to enhance cooperation to develop VET during 2011-2020. There will also be a stronger focus from the EU on improvement of the knowledge and competences of the European VET teachers. Over the next decade, the aim of the EU is to build up modernised and attractive VET systems. Involvement of teachers' trade unions in the design, implementation, development, and improvement of the EU and national VET policy is imperative and still requires further progress.

I. TRADE UNIONS' PERCEPTION OF VET

Approach to VET

1. Education is a human right and a public good; therefore, it should be available to all. It is extremely important to understand that **the objective** of vocational education and training (VET) is to give a solid base to students to enable them to become active citizens in democratic societies and professionals in the workforce. Vocational education and training is not only a matter of producing results in terms of the economy and the labour market, but also of providing good education and training to students while enhancing citizenship.
2. VET is significant for young people moving from schools/institutions to employment, and moving from compulsory education to further education. Initial vocational education and

¹ For the purposes of this policy statement, vocational education and training refers to aspects of the educational process that involve, in addition to general education and the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of skills, knowledge and qualifications related to occupations in various sectors. VET learning experiences may occur in a variety of learning contexts, including secondary and tertiary educational institutions and workplaces. In addition, VET encompasses lifelong learning and adult education. Alternative terms used internationally include technical and vocational education and training (TVET), vocational and technical education and training (VTET), technical and vocational education (TVE), vocational and technical education (VTE), and further education and training (FET).



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

training (IVET) is the basis for **social cohesion, active citizenship, employability, and entrepreneurship.**

3. VET provides education and training throughout the working life of individuals. VET should also be concerned with re-skilling people, widening and upgrading their skills, as well delivering new skills. Therefore, VET is essential **for adults**, both the employed and the unemployed.
4. It is evident that some countries with highly developed VET systems have higher employment rate, especially for young people. They also cope better with the economic crisis. Despite its successful outcomes and advantages, VET still does not enjoy the **same status as general education** in some countries. IVET should be considered equally as attractive as general education, and VET should be further developed to be the first choice for more young people.
5. VET systems in Europe are very diverse: IVET can start during or after the compulsory phase of education, in full-time colleges, schools/institutions and in enterprises. It can be based in apprenticeships with part-time learning in VET schools/institutions. Some countries combine these systems. However, as far as ETUCE is concerned, a **high quality well organised VET system** does not depend on the different teaching methods and period of studies, but on the equilibrium between these different elements: (a), Professional theoretical education; (b), Professional practical training; (c), General education. These factors should form a **holistic system**, which can be the basis for a successful career, lifelong learning, and lead on to higher education.
6. The different educational traditions of Europe call for the establishment of common rules to guarantee recognition of competences. There should be opportunities for the **validation of non-formal and informal learning** so that people can integrate and reintegrate into society as well as into the labour market. Public institutions should be in charge of validating non-formal and informal learning.

Recommendations

The European teachers' trade unions should

1. promote the view that VET has the dual purpose of preparation for employment and providing an important route to further and higher education, as well as being recognised as an education in its own right.
2. advocate a high status for the VET sector, and campaign for recognition of the higher status of teachers, especially of VET teachers, in society and among politicians.
3. be active participants in, and initiators of, the debate on providing high quality, attractive VET, which is a solid base for professional careers for the students and their role as active citizens in a democratic society.



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

Lifelong learning in VET

1. The VET sector should be an educational system where teachers and learners are enabled to **enhance their competencies** for as long as individually desired and is economically necessary. Employers and wider society have to be active stakeholders. Social partners, including the teachers' trade unions, should share this interest in organising the appropriate infrastructure and resources for high quality VET.
2. It is no longer possible to gain all competences for an entire life or working life before actually entering the workforce. Therefore, VET should prepare students to acquire the **key competences**,² and to be aware of the need for continuous up-skilling and reskilling during a lifetime.
3. Progression through general compulsory schooling and IVET has to be completed through continuing vocational training as a **public responsibility**.
4. Educational institutions have to be organised to allow **easy access** for individuals. Public VET institutions must become a priority for delivering state funded **continuing vocational education and training** (CVET). Therefore, public VET institutions have to be improved as competence centres of CVET.
5. **Foreign language competences** have to be a top priority in IVET so that its graduates can succeed in an international and mobile labour market. Foreign language learning should be organized as core provision in a holistic way.
6. VET and **adult learning** should make the maximum contribution to the fulfilment of lifelong learning needs. The emphasis must be on articulation, accreditation, and recognition of prior learning to enhance opportunities for lifelong learning. Adult training should embrace all types of learning, including in-company training, work-based learning, as well as continuing education and self-fulfilment, and should be equally accessible to both women and men.

The European teachers' trade unions should

4. urge governments to facilitate the improvement of VET schools/institutions to be lifelong learning environments for young and adult students, teachers, trainers and school/institutional leaders.
5. urge governments and schools/institutions to improve adult learning provision in the VET sector.

²When key competences are involved, we refer to the "European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, 2006": http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

Quality

1. High quality VET systems are essential to the progress of social, **environmental and economic development**, and form the basis of a global society based on welfare and peace.
2. VET is a public good and **public responsibility**. Governments must ensure a comprehensive and high quality vocational education system that is widely accessible through proper funding and regulating the VET system.
3. VET should be **attractive** for all. A well-developed, coherent and transparent high quality VET system makes a positive contribution to high employment rates, especially of young people, and is the basis of sustainable economic development.
4. The culture of institutional self-evaluation should be an integral part of **quality measurement**. It is essential that trade unions be involved in the design and implementation of EU and national quality assurance and transparency frameworks and tools, such as the European and National Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF and NQF)³, European Credit System for VET (ECVET)⁴ and the European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET)⁵.
5. There is an increasing emphasis on teaching to gain higher scores in different international and national **tests**. This weakens the true aims of education.
6. On-line training programs and **e-learning** can complement VET teaching, but should not be a substitute for in-class instruction and direct contact with a teacher.
7. Increased **awareness** among all students and teachers of the importance of VET is necessary. Engagement with VET should be made more attractive and should involve highly qualified teachers. Governments should ensure high quality initial and continuous education and training for VET teachers.
8. In order to make lifelong learning a reality, VET should be a route to **higher education**. It is essential to maintain and improve closer links between VET and HE institutions, which can provide updated knowledge and research for VET students, teachers, and trainers.

³ EQF: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm

⁴ European Credit System for VET: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc50_en.htm

⁵ European Quality Assurance in VET http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1134_en.htm

Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

9. **Staff:student ratios** must be lower than in conventional classroom teaching because of the requirements of equipment, work practices, didactical reasons, and because of health and safety requirements.
10. Research is important for professional development, both in teacher education and teaching profession.

The European teachers' trade unions should

6. be actively involved in the design, implementation and further development of EU and national quality assurance and transparency frameworks and tools, such as European and National Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF and NQF), European Credit System for VET (ECVET) and the European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET), in accordance with national diplomas.
7. urge governments to ensure that comprehensive and high quality vocational education systems are widely accessible through public funding and regulation.
8. counteract the increasing emphasis on teaching for higher scores in different international and national testing which weakens and subverts educational aims.
9. take steps to lower the student:teacher ratios in VET classes to secure the health and safety of students, raise the quality of teaching and contribute to a better working environment for teachers.
10. contribute to the initiation of more research on VET, and to work actively for use of research by both policy makers and others in VET.

Funding and supply

1. Education is a human right; therefore, it should be publicly funded and available for all. As a public good, VET for both young people and adults should be supported by **public funding** from public authorities and implemented as a priority by the public service.
2. Education needs long-term development; it is not an immediate remedy for **the economic crisis**. Thus, companies' short-term financial perspectives and education policy should be kept separated.
3. Where VET assists particular economic and **employment sectors** and individual employers and organisations, ETUCE would expect that those sectors and employers should also contribute to the funding of VET. However, this funding must not give employers an undue influence over the content of VET programmes. Employers' interests should always be balanced by the views of the relevant trade unions representatives.



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

4. **Social partners** should play an essential role in the formation of funding strategies for VET, and must be consulted. Trade unions are crucial in ensuring that personal finances are not a barrier to access to quality VET.
5. As the global economic crisis has continued and deepened, governments have resorted to severe **austerity measures** and drastic cuts to public spending leading to significant reduction of teaching posts. These have negatively affected some VET programmes. Although some employers in some countries have maintained their workplace VET programmes during the crisis, the length of the crisis may mean that even these employers may cut back on their VET expenditure. This puts our education systems at risk.
6. Investment in VET must be sufficient to support high quality VET. Maintaining high **investment in VET, across all subjects and vocations** is essential. Initial skills development, upgrading skills, widening skills and re-skilling can mean higher expenditure by public authorities and by employers than at present. However, this must be seen in the context of **financial and economic sustainability** as well as medium and long-term economic and social returns to the state, employers, and individuals.
7. Funding must be sufficient to recruit and retain the best VET teachers to all sectors and vocations. The **salaries** offered have to be rewarding. Competition in the labour market between trades and the recruitment of teaching personnel has to be taken into account.
8. VET also requires additional and qualified staff such as technicians and instructors to supplement VET teachers. This is a sound investment on a long-term basis.
9. Resources for VET should be sufficient so that VET is delivered with plant and with **equipment** comparable to that found in the sector for which VET is developing skills. This can mean that at first sight, it can be expensive in terms of plant and equipment. This can be expensive but would be worth the additional investment as it would produce people who were trained on the kind of equipment and methods that are in use in industry.
10. There should also be funding for initial pedagogic **training** and regular professional updating for VET teachers.
11. Private suppliers should be controlled by **official public accreditation boards** at the national and European level to guarantee the quality of their teaching irrelative to the tuition fees charged and to maintain high quality of VET courses.
12. Where VET is delivered **across national borders** (VET programmes delivered by multi or trans-national organisations and employers), it must respect local curricula, regulation, cultural and linguistic specificities.
13. It is essential to aim at securing the reduction of fees and finally go for the elimination of all fees in perspective of the development of society and of learners in VET.



*ETUCE- European Region of Education International
2012 Regional Conference*



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

The European teachers' trade unions should

11. urge governments to ensure high standards in VET and to maintain high investment in VET schools/institutions, equipment and infrastructure.
12. promote better cooperation between schools/institutions and employers regarding apprenticeships to raise the quality of training of students, ensure the working conditions of the trainees and to provide up-skilling for teachers.
13. urge governments to secure the maintenance of high public funding for VET, but with proportionate financial contributions from relevant employment sectors and individual employers and organisations.
14. play an essential role in the formation of funding strategies for VET and make sure that trade unions are consulted.
15. monitor the increase of private sector initiatives in VET, especially in the areas of the design of curricula and funding, at the local, national and European levels, and counteract the emergence of VET as a commodity.
16. initiate and maintain tripartite social dialogue in VET.
17. encourage official public accreditation boards at the national and European level to control the private suppliers of VET courses, maintain high quality and to guarantee high outcomes.
18. aim at securing the reduction of fees and finally go for the elimination of all fees in the perspective of the development of society and of learners in VET.

Links to the labour market and trades

1. There is a growing threat posed to education, particularly to VET as a result of **economic globalisation and trade liberalisation**. Negotiations taking place (under GATS⁶ and in regional and bilateral treaties) could affect the intensity of the commercialisation and privatisation of VET in Europe. This could potentially undermine the quality and accessibility of education.
2. Concerning the **design of VET programmes in Europe** it is an increasing trend that they are based around large-scale economic analyses of skills needs and focusing **forecasting** around too often short term based future skills needs. Very often the projections arising from this forecasting are based on wrong assumptions of economic behaviour. Forecasting can neglect the fact that individuals will often go through a number of careers and jobs over the course of

⁶General Agreement on Trade in Services

Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

a working life and they need regular skills development and re-skilling. There also is the danger that VET can focus excessively on the adaptation of VET to the labour market rather than supporting the individual to get the best education in life and the basis for lifelong learning.

3. Therefore, it is vital that, whilst employers should have an involvement in **the content of VET** programmes, this should be **proportionate** and should not lead to a focus only on the immediate needs of the employers.
4. **Apprenticeships** play an important role in most European VET systems. Some of these may not always fulfil the needs of the students. As they are primarily located in the workplace, employers are more concerned with productivity gains and too much on company-specific skills than in providing the best learning experience.
5. IVET should have proper and good **links with the employers and companies** to ensure that young people have experience of good working conditions, high level training in the workplace, and become acquainted with opportunities for employment.
6. **Smooth transition** of young people and adults from VET and to higher education and employment is essential. All career information, advice and guidance should be free at the point of access and through public service provision.

The European teachers' trade unions should

19. be active participants in the design of training provisions, especially in the creation of curricula. VET should be shaped with the equal involvement of the national and regional ministries, trade unions, and employers.
20. raise the issue of the negative impacts of forecasting and trade liberalisation at European and national levels.

Guidance and counselling

1. The **aim** of guidance and counselling is two-fold: to serve as **personal life guidance** for the students and to help with their **future employability**. A well-functioning guidance service is an indicator of a well-functioning educational and VET system. Lifelong learning guidance can be assisted through information, advice, counselling, assessment, teaching, and advocacy.
2. The culture of guidance and counselling should be an **integral part** of the education systems. Guidance and counselling should provide information and advice on VET and at the same time, make it more attractive to the young and to adults. Lifelong learning guidance must be **improved and established** in all institutions, especially in initial and continuous VET

Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

institutions where it is not already available. All education systems should include a public vocational guidance and career service

3. It is imperative to establish **strategic objectives** for guidance and counselling at all levels (European, national, regional, local, institutional) involving all actors and social partners. Guidance and counselling must serve the interest of young people and be **free of charge**. This should not only serve employment, but should be able to enlist specialised professionals, including guidance counsellors, for youths as well as for adults.
4. Lifelong learning guidance can also promote **equity**, social cohesion and active citizenship, and enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training. More effective forms of educational and vocational guidance and counselling must be provided along with **gender sensitive guidance** and counselling materials.
5. It is desirable to integrate a real European dimension in the professional guidance and counselling services in each country in order to enable easy access to academic information and professional and employment opportunities for all European countries and their citizens.
6. To make lifelong learning a reality, VET students should be encouraged to lifelong **acquisition of career management skills**. Access for all citizens to guidance services has to be facilitated in order to assist this process.
7. It is also necessary to develop reliable **quality assurance** of guidance and counselling provision, and to encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional, and local stakeholders and social partners.

The European teachers' trade unions should

- 21.** campaign for appropriate and free lifelong learning guidance and counselling to be established and improved in all VET school/institutions.
- 22.** encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local stakeholders to develop a reliable quality assurance of the provision of guidance.
- 23.** take steps to ensure that guidance and counselling attract more people to VET and to provide relevant information about learning, training and working opportunities in the European Union and in all of Europe to enhance European citizenship.



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

Equality issues

1. VET has an essential role in combating **social exclusion** and marginalisation. It is vital that equality issues are addressed in VET programmes in order not to reproduce the inequalities that exist in the labour market in respect of age, gender, racism and discrimination against minority groups, class, discrimination against those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
2. It is important that **VET programmes** be proactive and positive means for combating such discrimination and being a force for social inclusion. VET programmes, including the content, must be sensitive to the requirements of the **minority communities**.
3. The pace of **technological change** in the workplace and increasing of the age of retirement mean that more people will need to engage in VET as part of lifelong learning and for a longer period. At the same time, there is a tendency in many VET systems to discriminate against **older learners by only targeting young people** entering the labour market and those at the early stage of their working lives. With retirement ages being raised and people having to work longer in many European countries, and with the increasing pace of technological change in the workplace, adults may need to replace and improve their skills several times over the course of their working life.
4. Some VET systems discriminate against those with **previously acquired skills levels** and qualifications by viewing those that have been acquired many years before as no longer relevant or appropriate. Sometimes access to free provision of VET is denied to those with previous skills and qualifications.
5. **Sex discrimination** is common in employment. It is present in terms of stereotyping around certain occupations as well as in persistent pay differentials in many countries. High quality careers advice, information, and guidance are important to demonstrate the range of opportunities for women in employment.
6. Opening up **access to young men and women** to a full range of apprenticeships is also a key issue. Young women in particular should be encouraged and supported in undertaking VET programmes for vocations that are not traditional for women. Young men should be also encouraged and supported in undertaking VET programmes and jobs in non-traditionally male occupations. VET programmes can be crucial in this, not only for having women as role model in non-traditionally female occupations, and men as role models in non-traditionally male work, but also for breaking down gender stereotyping in mixed VET programmes.
7. VET must be a tool for inclusion of individuals regardless of their community of origin, **(race/colour, social and national origin, language or religion and belief)**. Minority communities, immigrants, (especially the Roma students) should not be excluded as the

Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

result of informal networks around family connections to certain enterprises, where these are present. Full access to VET programmes is crucial in preventing these communities being marginalised in employment as well as in society.

8. Those with **learning difficulties/disabilities** should have access to the full range of VET programmes. Where this involves special equipment or adaptations to equipment, funding should be available for this. Similarly, some students may need to be supported by additional staffing to help them overcome some of the barriers to participation.

The European teachers' trade unions should

24. take a strong position in the design of VET courses to ensure that socio-economically disadvantaged groups, both men and women, are able to access VET programmes that lead to a full range of employment opportunities and careers.
25. be involved in the development of flexible training arrangements (e-learning, evening courses, training during working hours, etc.) especially, for socially and economically disadvantaged groups, women and discriminated groups of all ages in order to promote access to training in different life situations and to adapt to different needs.

II. THE ROLE OF THE VET TEACHERS

1. **Future European VET teachers** should be global, mobile, and be qualified to operate in diverse cultures and according to a wide range of curricula and syllabus requirement. Curricula have to be a tool rather than a rule.
2. European countries are faced with a severe **lack of well-trained teachers** as a result of aging populations, insufficient esteem for the teaching profession and often a lack of support from the media and society.
3. Well-trained teachers must be provided with **rewarding salaries, appropriate working conditions, career, and professional development** to raise the quality of VET and to make VET more attractive for VET teachers and students. It is an increasing trend that the best VET teachers can often find better working conditions and higher payment in their trade, industry and in the social sector, rather than in the education sector.
4. Priorities have to be established for the **recruitment** of teachers. It is essential to make this **career attractive** in order to recruit a sufficient number of qualified people, and to ensure that the best of them are recruited.



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

5. Future teachers have to acquire the necessary competences to a high level in **pedagogy, subject related knowledge and didactics** in both their initial teacher education and subsequent continuous professional development. .
6. It is necessary to establish and improve the process of **professional induction** between initial education and the completion of teacher training and taking a role as a fully qualified teacher. This induction has to be organised as a working and a learning phase.
7. In addition to pedagogic requirements, teachers in VET have to be **highly skilled in their craft/skills** after receiving full training in their respective fields and gaining good practical experiences in the trade, industry, and social sector.
8. The pedagogic and theoretical **professional education** of VET teachers has to be of the highest quality.
9. The teaching profession in VET requires sustained **lifelong learning** over the whole teaching career in all areas of a teacher's competences. As the pace of **technological change** quickens and workplace practice constantly changes, VET teachers need access **to continuous up-skilling** throughout their careers and need to spend time in their sector workplaces to keep up with changing skills needs and workplace practices. Continuous personal and professional development courses should be available **free** to the teachers.
10. It is also the responsibility of **VET institutions to finance and organise further training** for VET teachers to ensure they are able to keep up-to-date with the innovations of technology, science and the economy.
11. In order to ensure the highest quality of the initial and professional education and training of the teachers and trainers, **teacher education** and skills and competences of **teacher educators** should also be improved.
12. The demands from society on teachers are often excessive. Better **working conditions** and a better balance between work and family life must be ensured for teachers. Teachers should be offered sabbatical **leave** to avoid burnout and to up-date their skills.
13. Cooperative working practices and **collegiality** between classroom teachers has to be developed: teachers must be facilitated to cooperate closely with each other at the institutional and local level.
14. Participation in transnational mobility programmes must be integrated in the initial education and continuous training of the teachers. **Learning and apprenticeship mobility programmes** of the EU contribute to exchange of experiences, increase the quality of

Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

education, widening the horizons of teachers and students, which can positively influence the institutional and social environment. However, those teachers willing to participate in mobility programmes should be supported by the institutional leaders and other teachers, and should be informed about the opportunities for mobility.

15. It is essential that the content of VET programmes is built around promoting and integrating **equality** and diversity. Part of development programmes for VET teachers should aim at improvement of intercultural knowledge.
16. VET teachers should enjoy **professional autonomy**, including exercising the primary role over the selection of teaching materials, pedagogical techniques and evaluation methods. Teachers and teacher trade unions should be effectively involved in the development and assessment of new programmes, courses, curricula, validation and educational resources.
17. **Adult learning** in VET sector is often undervalued. Greater attention should be paid by the politicians to competence development of teachers and trainers in adult education, developing the professional profile and training of adult learning professionals.

The European teachers' trade unions should

26. attract highly educated future teachers to work in VET and secure the availability of high quality professional and pedagogical training at the highest level for VET teachers.
27. Seek a high standard of initial education and continuous teacher training for all VET teachers and trainers, and advocate for the necessity of training in pedagogy.
28. be involved in the training of trainers and career practitioners and developing competences for teaching service delivery and service design.
29. pay special attention to the recruitment of teachers for VET, which must be based on a high professional and academic level which is equivalent to that for theoretical, practical and general subjects.
30. be involved in the provision and implementation of high standard professional induction of young teachers.
31. promote participation of students, teachers and trainers in transnational mobility programmes and raise the issue of the recognition of the training period of teachers abroad, especially in European countries, as qualification for professional career.
32. provide relevant information to teachers, future teachers and VET students (as future workers) on their working rights and of the importance of the membership of trade unions.
33. demand appropriate working conditions and rewarding pay for VET teachers and trainers to keep and attract more high qualified teachers to the sector.

Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

34. seek improved opportunities for continuous personal and professional development of teachers and trainers, including intercultural dialogue training, which must be a public responsibility.
35. seek better career opportunities for VET teachers and trainers.
36. advocate the need for autonomy of teachers, the democratisation of VET institutions and collegiality between teachers.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The European teachers' trade unions should

1. Promote the view that VET has the **dual purpose** of preparation for employment and providing an important route to further and higher education, as well as being recognised as an education in its own right.
2. Advocate a **high status for the VET sector**, and campaign for recognition of the **higher status of teachers**, especially of VET teachers, in society and among politicians.
3. Be active participants in, and initiators of, the debate on providing **high quality, attractive VET**, which is a solid base for professional careers for the students and their role as active citizens in a democratic society.
4. urge governments to facilitate the improvement of VET schools/institutions to be **lifelong learning environments** for young and adult students, teachers, trainers and school/institutional leaders.
5. urge governments and schools/institutions to improve **adult learning** provision in the VET sector.
6. be actively involved in the design, implementation and further development of **EU and national quality assurance and transparency frameworks and tools**, such as European and National Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF and NQF), European Credit System for VET (ECVET) and the European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET), in accordance with national diplomas.
7. urge governments to ensure that comprehensive and high quality vocational education systems are **widely accessible through public funding and regulation**.
8. counteract the increasing emphasis on teaching for higher scores in different **international and national testing** which weakens and subverts educational aims.
9. take steps to lower the **student:teacher ratios** in VET classes to secure the health and safety of students, raise the quality of teaching and contribute to a **better working environment** for teachers.



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

10. contribute to the initiation of **more research** on VET, and to work actively for use of research by both policy makers and others in VET.
11. urge governments to ensure high standards in VET and to **maintain high investment in VET** schools/institutions, equipment and infrastructure.
12. promote better **cooperation** between schools/institutions and employers regarding **apprenticeships** to raise the quality of training of students, ensure the working conditions of the trainees and to provide up-skilling for teachers.
13. urge governments to secure the maintenance of **high public funding for VET**, but with proportionate financial contributions from relevant employment sectors and individual employers and organisations.
14. play an essential role in the formation of **funding strategies** for VET and make sure that trade unions are consulted.
15. monitor the increase of **private sector initiatives** in VET, especially in the areas of the design of curricula and funding, at the local, national and European levels, and counteract the emergence of VET as a commodity.
16. initiate and maintain **tripartite social dialogue** in VET.
17. encourage official accreditation boards at the national and European level to **control the private suppliers** of VET courses, maintain high quality and to guarantee high outcomes.
18. aim at securing the reduction of fees and finally go for the elimination of all fees in the perspective of the development of society and of learners in VET.
19. be active participants in the **design of training provisions**, especially in the creation of curricula. VET should be shaped with the equal involvement of the national and regional ministries, trade unions, and employers.
20. raise the issue of the negative impacts of **forecasting and trade liberalisation** at European and national levels.
21. campaign for **appropriate and free lifelong learning guidance** and counselling to be established and improved in all VET school/institutions.
22. encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local stakeholders to develop a reliable **quality assurance** of the provision of guidance.
23. take steps to ensure that guidance and counselling **attract more people to VET** and to provide relevant information about learning, training and working opportunities in the European Union and in all of Europe to enhance **European citizenship**.
24. take a strong position in the design of VET courses to ensure that **socio-economically disadvantaged groups**, both men and women, are able to access VET programmes that lead to a full range of employment opportunities and careers.



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

25. be involved in the development of **flexible training arrangements** (e-learning, evening courses, training during working hours, etc.) not only, but especially, for socially and economically disadvantaged groups, women and discriminated groups of all ages in order to promote access to training in different life situations and to adapt to different needs.
26. attract highly educated future teachers to work in VET and secure the availability of **high quality professional and pedagogical training** at the highest level for VET teachers.
27. Seek a **high standard of initial education and continuous teacher training** for all VET teachers and trainers, and advocate for the necessity of training in pedagogy.
28. be involved in the **training of trainers** and career practitioners and developing competences for teaching service delivery and service design.
29. pay special attention to the **recruitment of teachers for VET**, which must be based on a high professional and academic level which is equivalent to that for theoretical, practical and general subjects.
30. be involved in the provision and implementation of high standard **professional induction of young teachers**.
31. promote participation of students, teachers and trainers in **transnational mobility programmes** and raise the issue of the recognition of the training period of teachers abroad, especially in European countries, as qualification for professional career.
32. provide relevant information to teachers, future teachers and VET students (as future workers) on their **working rights** and of the importance of the membership of trade unions.
33. demand **appropriate working conditions and rewarding pay** for VET teachers and trainers to keep and attract more high qualified teachers to the sector.
34. seek improved opportunities for **continuous personal and professional development** of teachers and trainers, including intercultural dialogue training, which must be a public responsibility.
35. seek better **career opportunities** for VET teachers and trainers.
36. advocate the need for **autonomy of teachers**, the democratisation of VET institutions and **collegiality** between teachers.