AGENDA

TITLE:

CoVE Actually

SUBJECT:

Making vocational excellence happen through people, partnerships and policies across borders.

15TH DECEMBER 2026 – 12:00-13:30 CET – ONLINE EVENT

Registration link: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/qdYSeF4iSx-yzPRCv0_lwg

SUMMARY:

What makes a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) actually excellent? What makes it more than a name or a designation? And how does vocational excellence translate into better skills, stronger institutions and tangible benefits for people, businesses and regions?

Vocational excellence does not happen simply by establishing a centre. It requires strong institutions, committed people and meaningful partnerships with employers, public authorities and other stakeholders, working together to respond to changing skills needs and drive innovation.

The European Commission's new European VET Strategy, launched on 5 November 2026, provides an important context. Its ambitions for higher-quality and more flexible VET, stronger links with business and strategic sectors, and a stronger international dimension are closely connected to the potential of CoVEs. The proposed European Vocational Excellence Network, building on existing CoVEs, further reinforces this connection between institutional development, national reforms and international cooperation.

This ENE webinar will explore how CoVEs can turn these ambitions into practice. Drawing on ETF expertise and experiences from Türkiye and Africa, it will examine their contribution to regional development and smart specialisation, national VET systems and international cooperation.

Ultimately, the question is not simply what a CoVE is, but what makes it work – and how vocational excellence can actually happen through people, partnerships and cooperation across borders.

Time	Agenda Item	Owner
12:00 - 12:05	**Welcome and introduction**	Susanne M. Nielsen, ETF
12:05 – 12:20	**Vocational excellence in the new European VET Strategy: Ambitions and opportunities for CoVEs** • The main ambitions of the new European VET Strategy, including quality, flexibility, stronger business partnerships and responsiveness to skills needs. • The role of vocational excellence and CoVEs in supporting the modernisation and development of VET systems. • The proposed European Vocational Excellence Network and its potential to connect institutional development with national reforms.	Georgios Zisimos, Head of Unit, ETF
12:20 - 12.40	**Taking vocational excellence beyond borders: Linking skills to regional innovation priorities** • What the new European VET Strategy's explicit link between vocational excellence and Smart Specialisation means for how CoVEs identify and respond to skills needs. • How CoVEs bring partners together to turn regional economic and innovation priorities into choices about training, equipment and partnerships. • How international peer learning and ETF networks help partners adapt CoVE practices and use them to inform wider VET reforms.	Nikola Radovanovic, ETF
12:40 - 13.00	**Making the CoVE approach work: The experience from Türkiye** • The CoVE approach and its relevance within Türkiye's national education and training ecosystem. • The perspective of the Ministry of National Education on the value and potential of CoVEs. • Strengthening cooperation between VET institutions, employers and public authorities to support quality, innovation and responsiveness to skills needs.	Merve Sule Kansiz, National Expert
13:00- 13:15	**Centres of Vocational Excellence in Africa: Opportunities and perspectives**	Stefan Thomas, ETF

Time	Agenda Item	Owner
	• Emerging experiences and developments in vocational excellence in Africa. • The potential of CoVEs to respond to skills needs and support economic and sectoral development. • Opportunities for future ETF engagement and international cooperation on vocational excellence in Africa.	
13:15 - 13:20	**Key messages and closing**	Susanne M. Nielsen, ETF