

EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK AMBASSADORS

INTRODUCTION

The Commission is putting in place a network of European Vocational Skills Week Ambassadors. The Ambassadors' role is to promote the Skills Week and its objectives, namely the attractiveness and excellence of vocational education and training (VET) in their countries. Together these individuals could form a European network of VET Ambassadors.

The Ambassadors are also expected to mobilise for a strong participation in the Vocational Skills Week. They will be supported in their communication activities, and a section on the Vocational Skills Week webpage will be dedicated to the Ambassadors and their activities.

BACKGROUND

In the framework of the first European Vocational Skills Week in 2016, a pioneering group of eight Ambassadors¹ from seven countries contributed to promote the Week and its messages.



The 2016 European Vocational Skills Week Ambassadors together with Commissioner Marianne Thyssen

This experience will be renewed in 2017 by enlarging the pool of Ambassadors to cover all EU Member States. The Commission will build on the experience of 2016, with new elements for better results.

The Ambassadors will be working primarily in their own country, but representing a European initiative. Together they will form a European-wide network of Ambassadors benefiting from synergies by linking with each other.

There is no EU financial support for the activities of the Ambassadors, who will be invited to work on a voluntary basis, without remuneration.

¹ Morana Saračević and Martina Čičko-Karapetrić, i.e. "Boudoir Sisters", Fashion Designers, Croatia; Gun-Britt Zeller, Hairdresser, Denmark; Enzo Miccio, TV Presenter and Wedding Planner, Italy; Sebastian Dan, Chef and Journalist, Romania; Clara Bassols, Director of the Fundación Bertelsmann, Spain; Gérard Mestrallet, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ENGIE and SUEZ and President of FACE, France; Jez Brooks, Leader of the IBM Apprenticeship scheme, UK.

THE ROLE OF THE AMBASSADORS IN THE EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK

The Ambassadors are ideally role models with a VET "story to tell", either through their own education and training background, or through their contribution to develop quality and excellence in VET, be it in initial VET for the young, or continuing VET for adults.

The Ambassadors should primarily promote the European Vocational Skills Week and its objectives. Additionally, they should also highlight one or several of the sub-themes of the Skills Week. In 2017 these sub-themes will be the **mobility of learners and apprentices, sectoral skills approaches**, as well as **business-education partnerships**. At country-level, the messages and the activities of the Ambassadors should also focus on country-specific VET issues, such as career opportunities, or skills needs in the sector they represent.

The Ambassadors are also invited to raise the awareness of the events and activities taking place at national, regional and local level, and to encourage further participation, both by organising events/activities and by encouraging the public to participate in those events.

The Ambassadors should aim to reach grass-root level networks and actors, in particular young people, adults, parents, career advisers, schools, public employment services, and companies (employers and employees), in raising the awareness of opportunities offered by VET through various means of communication.

WHO ARE SUITABLE AMBASSADORS

The Commission is looking for personalities who are well known in their country and/or their circle of influence. They should be persons that can reach wide audiences whom the Commission's communication channels cannot reach, such as young people, their families, SMEs, careers advisers, and potential adult learners. In addition to addressing them directly via a range of communication channels, the Ambassadors should also use the potential of reaching these stakeholders through multipliers such as youth organisations, parents' organisations, adult learning associations, NGOs, etc.

Persons with e.g. the following profiles could be selected as Ambassadors:

- Well known inspiring persons with a VET background, who have had a inspiring career, and who have a VET "story to tell",
- Persons that successfully changed careers, with a VET pathway at some stage in their lives,
- Persons that hold visible positions in companies/organisations that promote VET and apprenticeships, or that extensively recruit persons with VET background,
- Persons who invest in the development of their and other persons' professional skills,
- Well-known persons who are role models for both young people and adults and who are widely followed by a target group (on media, social media),
- Owners of SMEs (e.g. family businesses with a widely recognised brand),
- CEOs of large companies that either have a VET background themselves, or who value and have contributed to upskilling and reskilling of adults.

TIME FRAME OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AMBASSADORS

The Ambassadors should be identified as early as possible and they should be active until the end of 2017, with the possibility of extending the agreement to act as Ambassador for a longer term.