



# Press Release

## **Bussemaker: 'Education is more than preparation for the labour market'**

**16 February 2016**

The discussion on skills for the future should focus not only on the changing labour market, but also on citizenship and full participation in society, where people treat each other with respect.

This was the message of the Minister for Education, Culture and Science, Jet Bussemaker, at the conference on vocational education and training – 'Skills for a Lifetime: towards a futureproof VET.'

'A good education is more than preparing young people for the labour market. It's also about enabling them to participate fully in society: a democratic society that increasingly respects the differences between people. These differences were emphasised after the attack on Charlie Hebdo and the more recent attacks in Paris, and the events in Cologne during the New Year celebrations,' Ms Bussemaker said.

'This puts a great deal of pressure on education, where young people mix with others on a daily basis. So we need to develop a broad skills agenda that pairs sound knowledge with 21st-century skills and citizenship; forming your own opinion; understanding other people's opinions, thoughts and feelings; entering into dialogue; and learning to think and reflect critically.'

Ms Bussemaker spoke at the opening of the 'Skills for a Lifetime' conference, at which some 200 experts, teachers, entrepreneurs and policymakers from across the EU discussed the challenges facing the European knowledge society. The conference is focusing on secondary vocational education in particular.

Technology, science and society are undergoing rapid changes and new jobs are emerging, while existing jobs change or disappear. According to the World Economic Forum, seven million jobs in trade and industry will disappear globally in the next five years alone.



Education plays a crucial role in our response to these developments. Educational institutions need to train students for jobs that do not yet exist. It is no longer enough for workers and professionals to train at the start of their career; now the emphasis is on lifelong learning.



Conference participants will be exchanging positive experiences and generating new ideas for the Skills Agenda, which will be launched by the European Commission later this year.

