

# GOVERNING VET: FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN CHANGE AND STABILITY: EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING VET PROVISION

Terence Hogarth

Presentation to European Vocational Skills Week  
VET in Europe – Taking Stock and Looking Ahead

Vienna 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018



**Fondazione  
Giacomo Brodolini**

# AIMS OF THE PRESENTATION

To present some of the key findings from Cedefop's Changing Nature and Role of VET study on how external factors shape VET provision

Report available at:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5567>



The changing nature and  
role of vocational education  
and training in Europe

Volume 3: the responsiveness of European  
VET systems to external change (1995-2015)

# KEY QUESTIONS

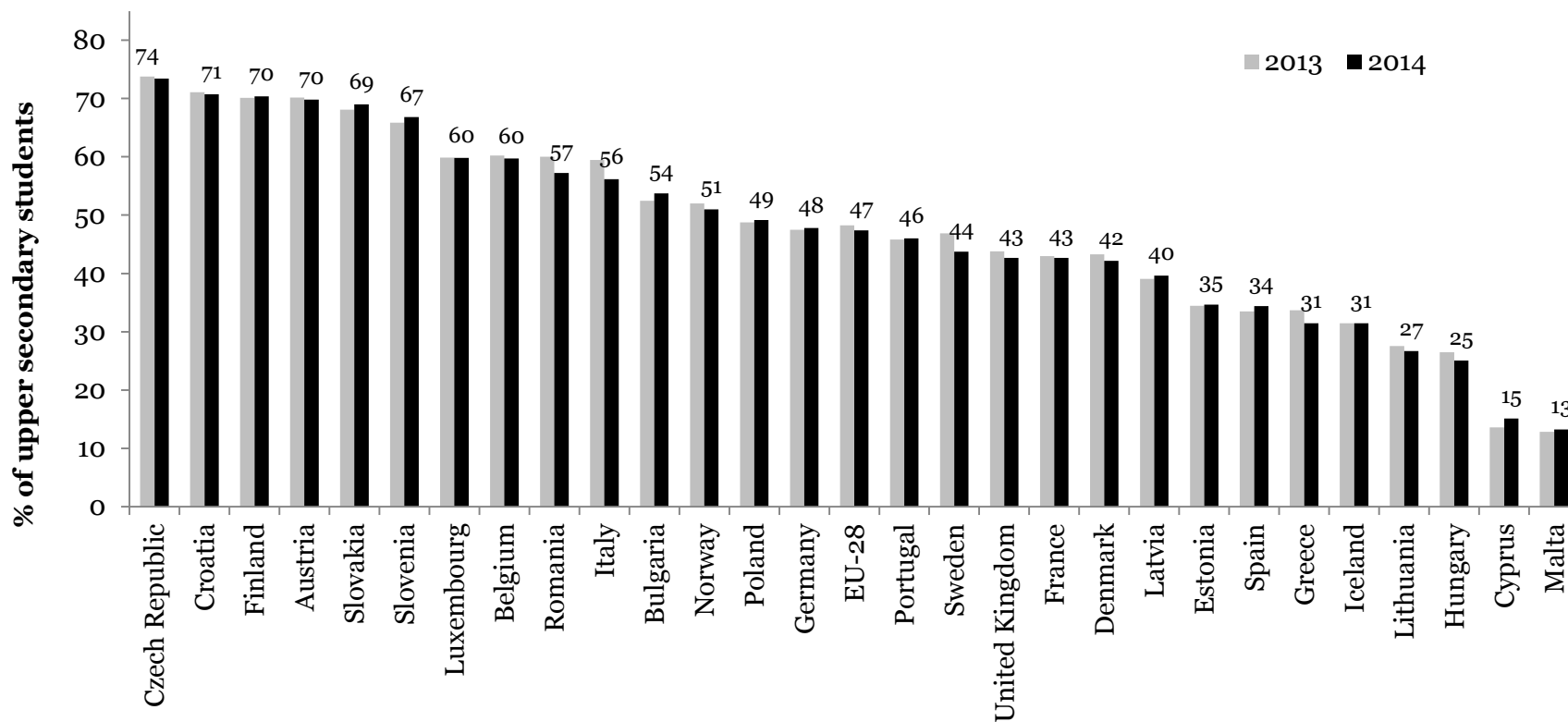
- How can VET remain relevant to the needs of the economy and society in the face of rapid technological change?
- Is relevance defined by VET systems being more demand led?
- How to balance the short-term needs of the labour market versus the longer-term needs of learners and workers?
- Are there lessons to be learnt from national experiences from within the EU?

# THE CHALLENGE

- Technological change in the guise of AI, robotics, Industry 4.0 is rapid
- Certainty about the skills of tomorrow appears to be inversely related to the pace of technological change
- Technological change is exacerbating the degree of skills mismatch in the labour market
- There is a policy preference in many countries for IVET, especially workplace based VET - to solve this problem...
- ... but unless IVET becomes more demand led will employers be willing to provide IVET opportunities, especially where the policy preference is for more workplace based learning to take place?
- And if IVET becomes more demand led, does this necessarily provide the skills individuals require over the longer-term?

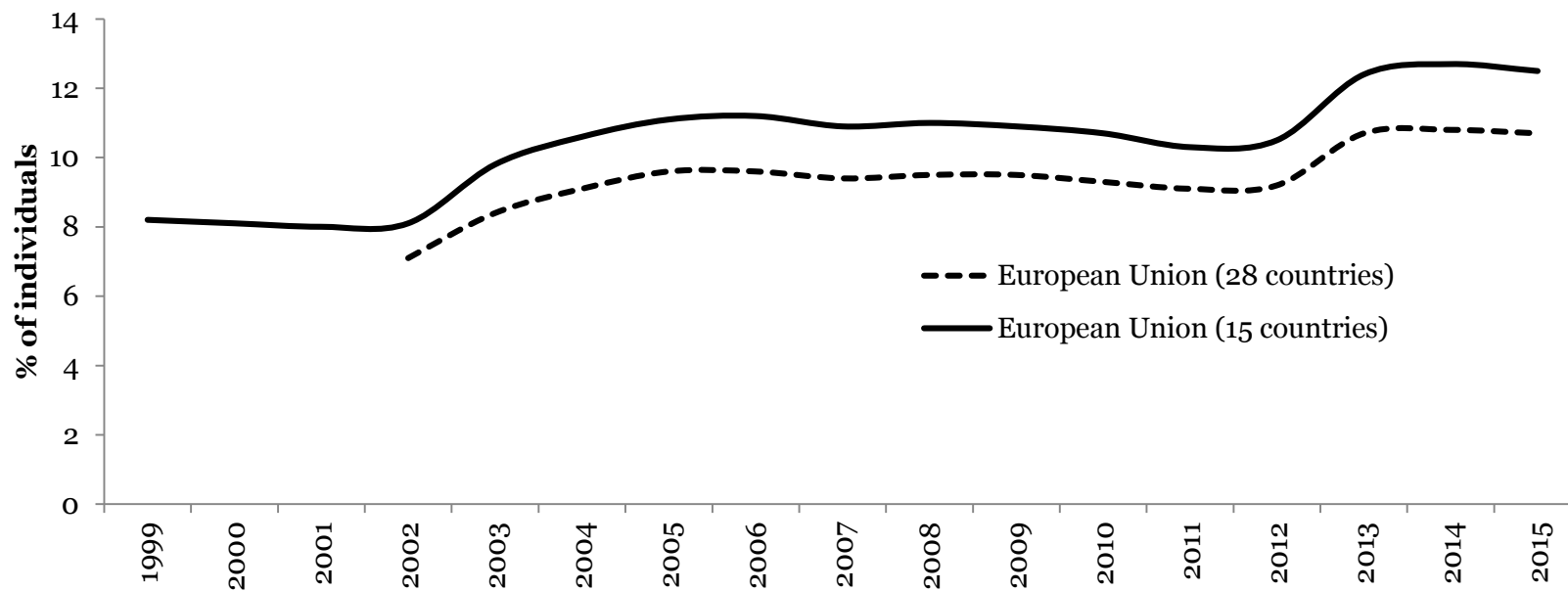
# STYLISTED FACTS I

## The share of upper secondary level pupils in vocational studies



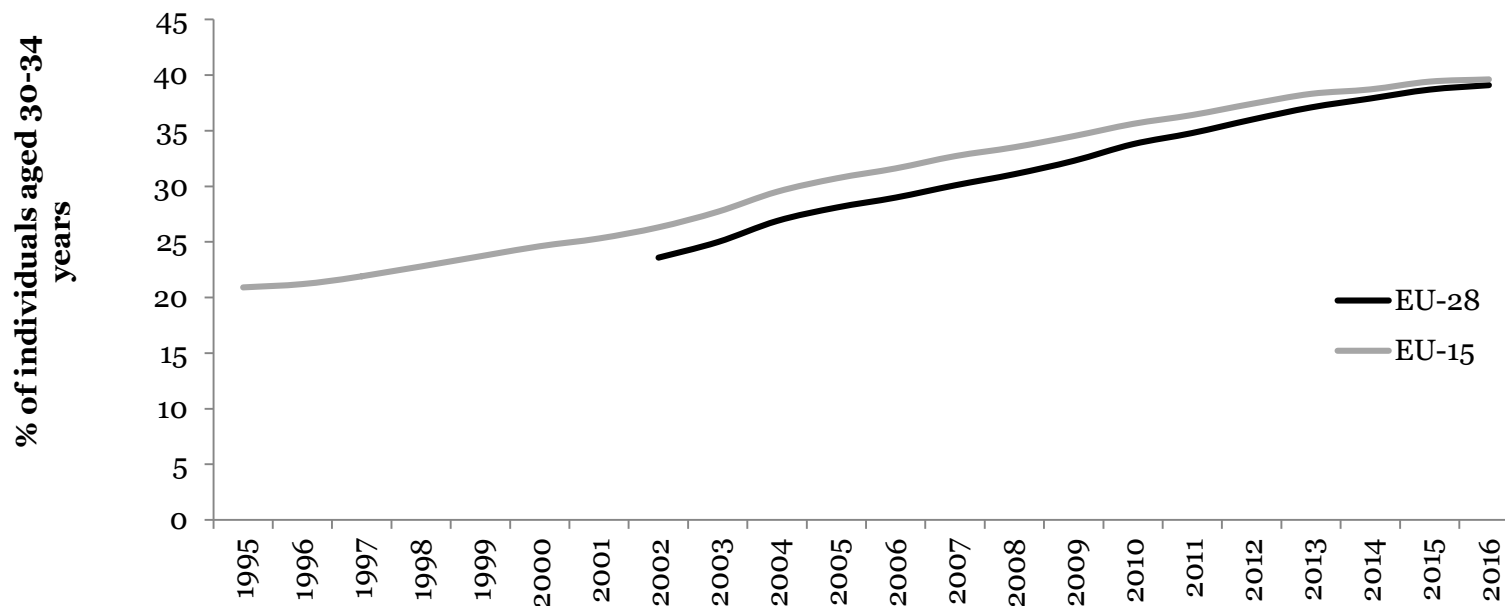
# STYLISTED FACTS II

## Percentage of people 25 -64 years of age participating in lifelong learning, 1999-2015



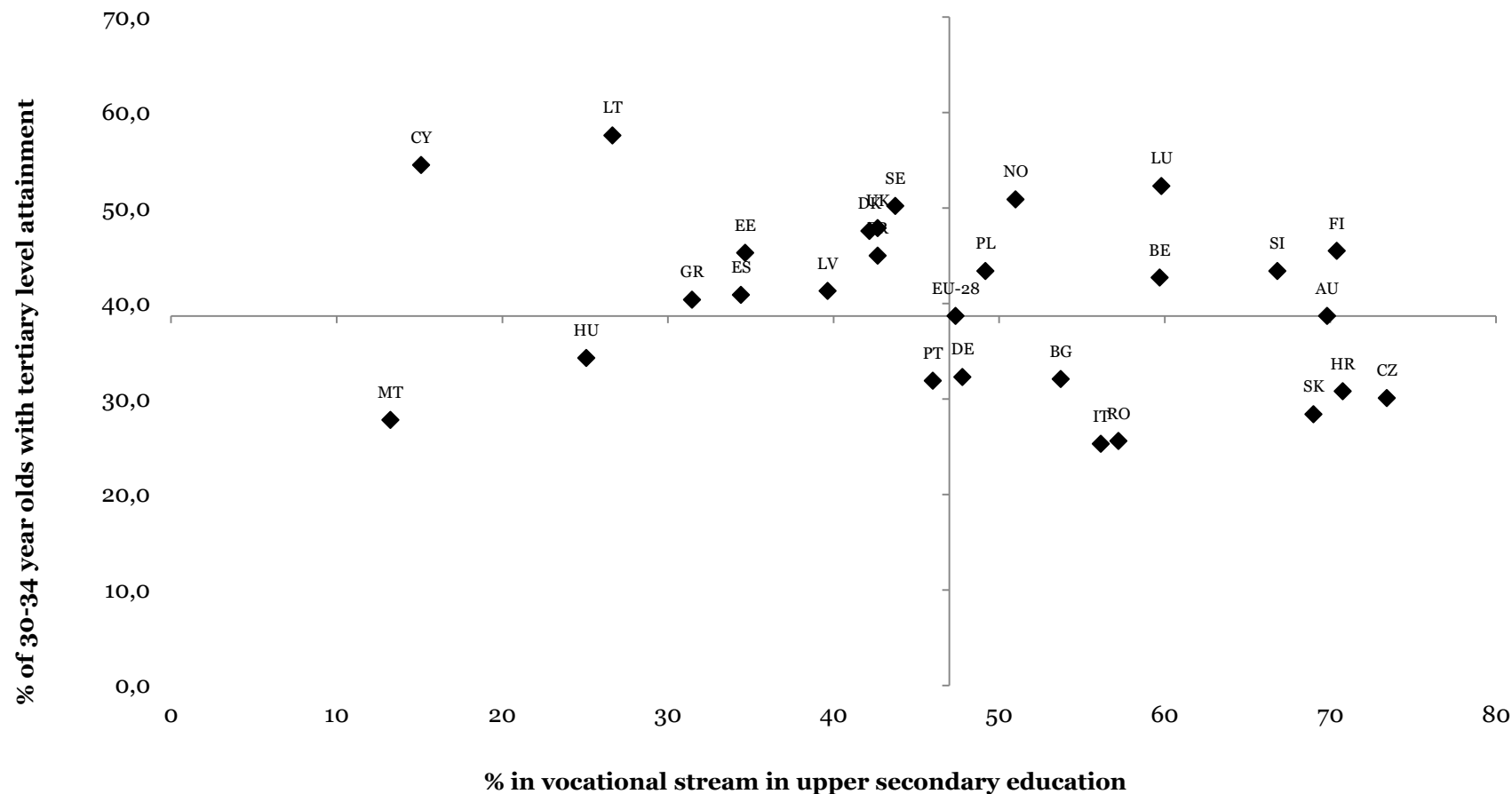
# STYLISTED FACTS III

**Tertiary educational attainment (% of the population aged 30–34 with completed tertiary education)**



# STYLISTED FACTS IV

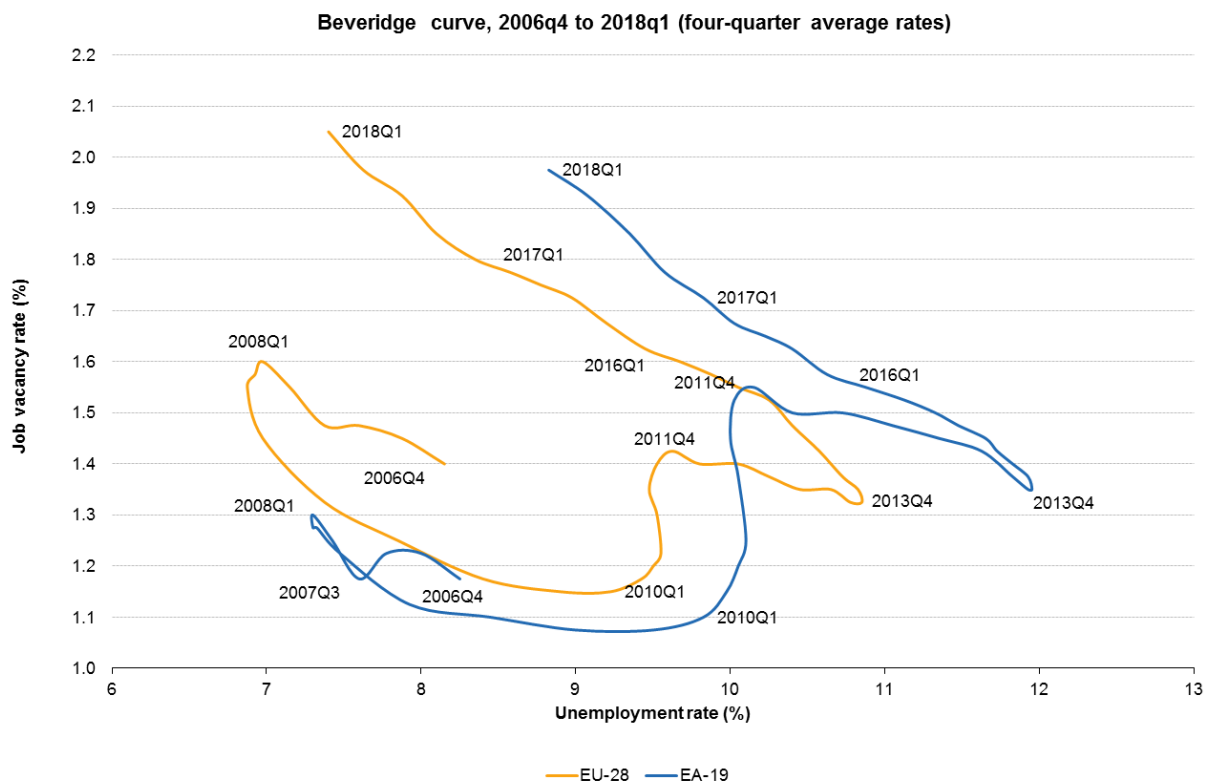
## VET and tertiary level attainment in the EU





# STYLISTED FACTS V

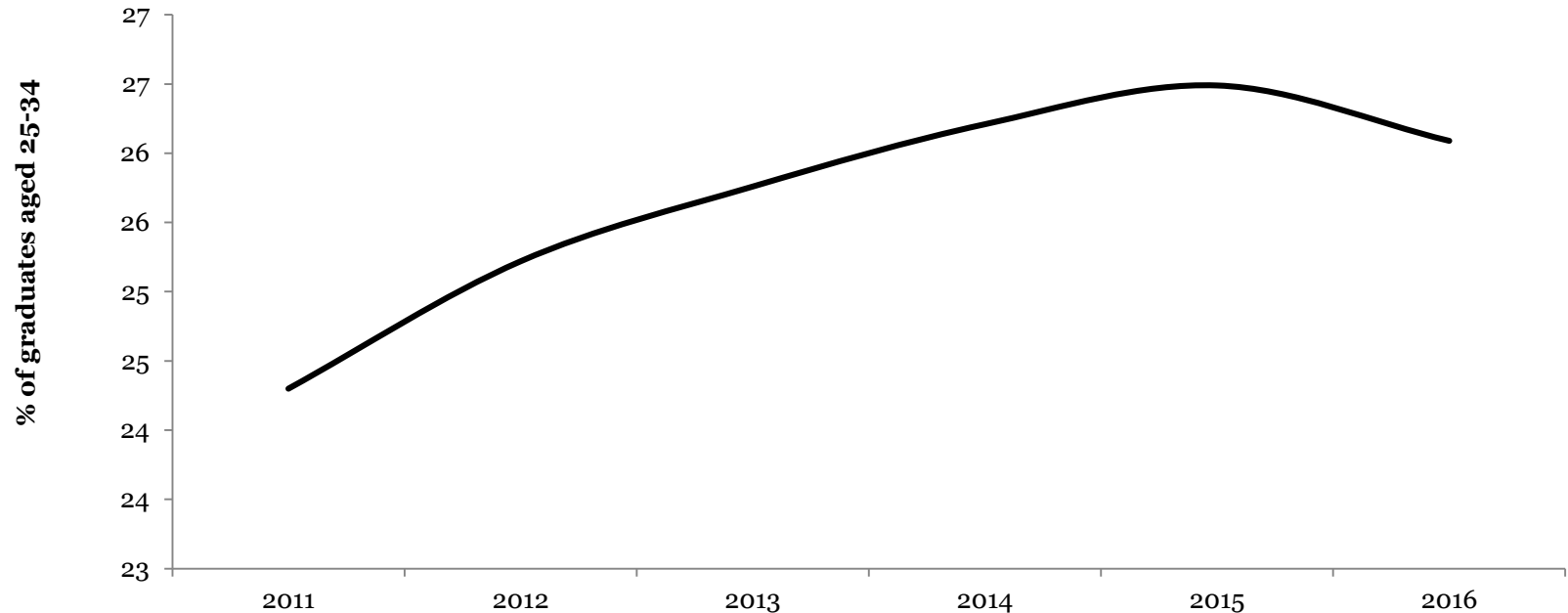
## The matching problem I



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: jvs\_q\_nace2, lfsq\_urgan)

# STYLISTED FACTS VI

## The matching problem II



### EU Skills Panorama Over-qualification Rate

The share of young (aged 25-34), tertiary education (ISCED 5 or 6) graduates employed in posts not included in categories of managers (ISCO 1), professionals (ISCO 2), or technicians and associate professionals (ISCO 3).

# HOW HAVE VET SYSTEMS RESPONDED OVER TIME?

- Making VET more attractive to young people, often by stressing the opportunity to continue with further study beyond the upper secondary level
- Ensuring that VET curricula are responsive to meeting labour market needs and relevant to the needs of sectors where there has historically been much less tradition of VET
- Changes in the structure of VET, especially with the increasing emphasis given to competence based approaches to the acquisition of a VET qualification

# CHANGE OVER TIME: Common trends across countries

- In several countries making VET provision more individualised (e.g. by allowing a degree of mix and match between various VET courses or modules)
- Placing a relative emphasis on work-based learning over that which is located solely in vocational schools
- Blurring the definition between what has traditionally been considered initial versus continuing VET
- In the former Soviet bloc countries there were a similar set of factors at play, except that their VET systems needed to be reinvented in the transition from being a centrally planned to market economy

# CHANGE OVER TIME:

## Early 1990s onwards

- Creating a mass participation VET system (where this was not extant previously) such that VET is seen as a key element of the overall education system
- Integrating VET within the wider education system and establishing parity between vocational and general qualifications
- Rationalising VET provision to create a more integrated provision (i.e. creating a national VET system out of the fragmented systems in place beforehand)
- Bringing about improved alignment between VET provision and its demand
- Thereafter one observes more incremental change (which cumulatively can result in major changes over time)

# MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN VET FROM THE 1990s ONWARDS

Timeline →

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2015
Establishing the VET system	The integration of VET in the education system as a mainstream choice upon completion of lower secondary education				
Major thrust in building participation	Increasing participation levels in VET especially where little previous history of delivering, for example, apprenticeships				
Emphasis on WBL			Increased emphasis on workplace based learning as a relatively effective means of delivering skills		
Increased emphasis on skills matching		Major developments in trying to better match skills supply to skills demand			
Developing a competence based approach		Creating a competence based systems		Introduction of qualification frameworks that recognise competence	
Focus on transversal skill needs				EQF / NQF Broadening occupational skill profiles Increased recognition of transversal skills (especially digital ones in the context of Industry 4.0) – e.g. the agreement between MS on key competences in 2006 Austerity affects VET budgets leading to some rationalisation of provision	
Consolidation of the VET market for training		Importance of finding ways to accredit skills learning outside of formal learning		Increased emphasis on CVET within the formal VET system	
Skills supply			Substantial boost to skills supply with accession of nine countries to EU		
The push to higher level VET		Further boost to skills supply with inflow of refugees to EU			
		Push toward provision of VET at higher levels			

# VET IN PERSPECTIVE

- **In and out of fashion**
- VET appears to go in and out of fashion over time. The 2010s has proved to be a period of increased public policy interest in VET. In part this is a response to increasing concerns about the degree of skill mismatch in the economy.
- **VET is adaptable**
- IVET today, in many countries, looks very different to how it looked at the beginning of the 1990s in several countries. In many countries it has matured over time into a major constituent part of the formal education system..
- **Tensions**
- The evidence suggest a broadening of course content reflects pressures to equip people with broad skill sets to meet changing labour market demands...
- ... but if there is to be more workplace based delivery, employers may want VET targeted on their needs

# CONCLUSIONS

- **Challenges, opportunities, and solutions**
- A lot is expected of VET systems.
- The pace of technological change is so fast there is a pressing issue about how vocational school stay up to date.
- There is an emphasis on the VET system becoming more responsive to the needs of the labour market and society more generally. According VET providers need to be increasingly responsive to market demand...
- ... but as noted previously there is a potential tension between being responsive to employer demand and meeting longer term needs
- A common thread is that of IVET being extended to higher levels beyond its upper secondary level heartland. This seems to be a work in progress in many countries
- CVET may be becoming less of a private investment decision. This is mainly a consequence of labour markets becoming more flexible and people being expected to spend longer in them before retiring. This seems critical to VET meeting the needs of learners and employees



# Thank you

**Terence Hogarth**

[hogarth@fondazionebrodolini.eu](mailto:hogarth@fondazionebrodolini.eu)