



## INFORMATION NOTE

BRUSSELS/Nicosia, 31 October 2017

# #DiscoverYourTalent: Dr Costas Argyrides chosen as Cyprus's ambassador for European Vocational Skills Week

Dr Costas Argyrides, Senior Member of Technical Staff at Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), has been selected as Cyprus's ambassador for the 2017 European Vocational Skills Week (20-24 November).

"I am honoured to have been chosen for this role and proud to support the European Vocational Skills Week," Dr Argyrides explains. "Between the age of 14 and 17, I studied engineering at B' Technical School in Limassol, Cyprus. This provided a strong foundation for my subsequent professional career and also for my success in academia."

"Vocational Education is an opportunity for students and adults to gain solid theoretical knowledge and deepen their understanding of their field. More importantly, it provides hands-on, practical experience that will equip them with the skills and competencies they need in their industry. I sincerely hope I can inspire more people to discover the benefits of VET opportunities in Cyprus."

Organised by the European Commission, European Vocational Skills Week will involve hundreds of events across the EU to highlight the benefits that Vocational Education and Training (VET) and apprenticeships bring to people of all ages.

"Discover your Talent!" is the motto of the campaign and Dr Argyrides aims to show that VET and apprenticeships are a smart choice, leading to high-quality jobs and increased employability.

Dr Costas Argyrides is one of a group of Ambassadors from different EU Member States who have volunteered to spread the word about VET in their home countries. He was selected for the prestigious role by the Commission and the national authorities in Cyprus due to his inspiring profile.

Marianne Thyssen, the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, said: "Making vocational education and training a first option – not a second choice – is at the heart of the European Vocational Skills Week."

Jyrki Katainen, the Commission's Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, echoed this, adding: "The most competitive countries in the EU, and in the world, are those that invest most in skills."

Last year, nearly 1,000 events took place across Europe during the inaugural 2016 European Vocational Skills Week, reaching close to 800,000 stakeholders. The 2017 Week is expected to attract an even bigger turnout.

## BACKGROUND

### VET statistics: Cyprus



- Only 15.6% of upper secondary students in Cyprus participate in upper secondary VET. This is one of the lowest figure across EU Member States. (2015)
- Only 20.5% of VET graduates are female (2014)
- The employment rate of recent VET graduates<sup>[1]</sup> in the country is 72% (2016)
- The percentage of low-qualified adults<sup>[2]</sup> is 20.4% (2016)
- 6.9% of Cyprus's population participates in adult learning (2016)

Source: [Vocational Education and Training Statistics, Eurostat](#)

### **VET statistics: Europe**

- VET programmes boost your job prospects: in the EU recent vocational graduates who are no longer in education or training have an **employment rate of 73%** on average ([DG EAC, Education and Training Monitor 2016](#)).
- **Over 30 million adults** received education or training during 2016 in the 28 Member States<sup>1</sup> (Eurostat, [Lifelong learning statistics](#)).
- **One in four adults** in Europe is caught in a **low-skills trap**, unable to find employment or progress in their career. VET represents a way out and brings multiple benefits for both the employers and the individuals (OECD and EC, [The Survey of Adult Skills PIAAC 2016](#)).

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### **European Vocational Skills Week**

[Website and event map](#)

[Twitter: #EU Vocational Skills #DiscoverYourTalent](#)

[Facebook Event Page: Second European Vocational Skills Week](#)

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<sup>[1]</sup> Aged 20-34, [Eurostat](#)

<sup>[2]</sup> Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education, [Eurostat](#)

<sup>1</sup> In 2016, the proportion of persons aged 25 to 64 in the EU-28 who participated in education or training was 10.8 %. The reference period for the participation in education and training is the four weeks preceding the interview as is usual in the labour force survey.