

PRESS RELEASE

“Less than half of young Europeans consider themselves well prepared to enter the job market”

Preparing the New Generation for the Future of Work *A survey of European youth, employers and education actors*

Paris, France – February 21, 2019. On the occasion of WISE@Paris taking place today at the Palais de Tokyo, WISE (World Innovation Summit for Education) and its partner JobTeaser, the European leader in career guidance and the recruitment of young talent, have asked IPSOS to conduct an extensive survey about the future of work in Europe and how it will impact the future of learning. The survey was conducted in France, Germany, Spain, the United-Kingdom and Belgium.

Almost 4 out of 5 young Europeans are optimistic about the future of work (78%).

The Germans are the more enthusiastic (81%) and the French the least (72%). Recruiters (86%) and education actors (74%) share their optimism.

Technological progress (eg tools powered by AI) is what fuels young people's optimism about the future of work: 82% of those surveyed consider it a positive factor.

Despite what recruiters think, the level of salary is the main criteria for young adults when choosing a job, beyond work-life balance, equal career progression and a purpose-driven job.

Less than 1 in 2 young people considers themselves well prepared to enter the job market (48%) and the youth would like to be better supported (88%) as they define their professional choices.

The French youth are the most critical of the education system, only 37% think their education system prepares them well to enter the job market, followed by the British (43%) and the Spanish (44%).

Regarding the preparation of young people to their first job, the European Youth, consider that schools and universities are the main responsible actors (60%).

88% of the young Europeans would like to be better supported (through teachers advice or career counselling) when they define their professional choice.

Education actors are also doubtful of the performance of their respective education systems: Nearly half of the educators surveyed think that the education students receive does not prepare them to enter the job market. Furthermore, almost 4 education actors in 10 (38%) consider themselves poorly equipped to prepare students for jobs that they think will be in demand in 10 years.

Recruiters tend to largely agree with this idea: 77% of them believe that their country's education system is not preparing young people to enter the job market, and 72% that it is not preparing them well for the future of work either. In this context, it is not surprising that a large majority of recruiters (90%) considers that businesses should have an input in how higher education institutions are preparing students for the future of work.

All three populations also consider that vocational schools are the institutions that prepare young people the best for the future of work (78% of young Europeans, 77% of recruiters and 77% of education actors).

Soft skills, human qualities and adaptability are the skills that are most in demand. On the one hand, a majority of young Europeans have the feeling that employers generally give too much importance to having a diploma. On the other hand, recruiters state that they believe soft skills are what are decisive today. 96% say they pay attention to job applicants' soft skills, and 58% say they pay as much attention to their soft skills as to their hard skills or academic background. More generally, all three populations consider soft skills or human qualities (empathy, openness, ability to work with others) necessary to preparing for the working world, more so than professional training during school.

Interestingly, young Europeans consider that computing skills (including coding and the ability to interact with AI) **will be the most important skills for work in the next 10 years:** 44% cite them as the most important skill to develop, compared to 26% for recruiters and 27% for educators. It follows that they also consider computer science to be the most important subject to teach at school in the coming years, whereas recruiters attribute the most importance to foreign languages, and education actors to ethics.

Recruiters also have stronger expectations concerning two key competencies: **ability to self-train and flexibility/ adaptability**—nearly two thirds believe the latter will be the most important skill to have.

While young Europeans, education actors and recruiters all consider digital badges and certifications as good tools by which to certify certain skills, they believe these will never replace traditional degrees, especially as recruiters still consider university degrees to be more important than employer or online learning certifications. That being said, recruiters rate the likelihood that they will hire applicants with relevant work experience but no certification or degree an average 6.8 on a scale from 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely),

compared to a 5.4 for applicants with a university degree from another field than the one relevant for the job.

Traditional degrees remain a key factor for employment but the higher education system's ability to integrate job preparation in the curriculum is clearly essential to maintaining its relevance and the quality of the preparation it provides for the future of work.

Methodology Note: The study was carried out by IPSOS for WISE in collaboration with JobTeaser in January 2019 among 3 populations:

- 2,517 young Europeans aged 18-25 y.o. including a minimum of 500 people in each of the five countries surveyed (France, Germany, Spain, the UK and Belgium). In each country, a representative sample (quota method) of this population aged 18-25 was interviewed online with Ipsos panel.
- 381 recruiters from these 5 European countries, members of JobTeaser community. Online consultation based on contacts provided by JobTeaser.
- 192 education actors from the same countries (most of them working in universities / other institutions for higher education), members of WISE community or schools/universities in contact with JobTeaser. Online consultation based on contacts provided by WISE and JobTeaser.

Four education experts were also interviewed by phone on their views about the future of work and education:

- Mr Andreas Schleicher, Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills (OECD)
- Dr. Jörg Draeger, CEO of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHE) and mentor for young entrepreneurs in the non-profit Founders Foundation, a Bertelsmann Stiftung initiative
- Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility
- Mr Simon Bartley, President of WorldSkills International

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About the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE):

The World Innovation Summit for Education was established by Qatar Foundation in 2009 under the leadership of its Chairperson, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. WISE is an international, multi-sectoral platform for creative, evidence-based thinking, debate, and purposeful action in education. Through the biennial summit, collaborative research and a range of on-going programs, WISE is a global reference in new approaches to education. www.wise-qatar.org

About JobTeaser

JobTeaser is the European leader for career guidance and the recruitment of young talent. JobTeaser is a unique ecosystem that builds a powerful bridge between companies and educational institutions, offering the new generation the support they need to embrace the future with optimism and make their mark in the world. Today, JobTeaser works with 5000 companies and 500 higher education institutions, reaching 2 million students and recent graduates in Europe.

About IPSOS

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At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society. We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.

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