

COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2019 UPDATE

TURKEY



1. A brief summary of key developments in VET and skills and EU and donor cooperation during 2017–18

Despite robust growth in recent years, Turkey has been fighting double-digit inflation and a falling currency. The influx of over three million Syrian refugees has intensified the strain on education and training reform.

Strong progress against the EU 2020 targets for education and adult participation in lifelong learning can be observed in improved access to VET and tertiary education, better links between educational levels and the labour market and updated qualifications for better transitions in secondary education. Though policies support students from an array of disadvantaged groups, large gaps remain against EU and OECD benchmarks. Providing educational facilities and services to Syrians under temporary protection is another key goal. Despite rising activity and employment rates in the 20–64 age group, Turkey lags behind EU averages.

To achieve a competitive, inclusive economy, there is increasing demand to reform VET delivery in the formal system. The current workforce's skills profile and a growing demand for more highly skilled workers are central concerns.

The ETF works closely with the Directorates-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, and for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, as well as the EU Delegation to Turkey, to address the education, employment and social policy sectors, which receive support through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II 2014–20) and Facility for Refugees.

The ETF signed a strategic partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) involving a high-level public-private steering group that focuses on skills for young people, especially young women and refugees. International/donor institutions include the European Investment Fund, European Investment Bank, World Bank, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Agence française de développement and GIZ.

2. An assessment of mid-term progress towards the ETF's 2020 objectives

Since 2005, the ETF has worked with Turkey on education and training to boost employability, opportunity and social cohesion. The ETF provides input to EU/EU Delegation-funded instruments and programmes that support national reforms in human resource development. The ETF also cooperates with public and private VET institutions on reforms in education, training and skills. In 2018, the ETF worked on top priorities such as implementation of the Riga medium-term deliverables, Riga reporting, Torino Process bi-annual monitoring/reporting and skills intelligence. Other priorities are: the National Qualifications Framework, development of work-based learning (WBL), continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers, skills for inclusive growth sectors, monitoring of labour-market developments and evidence of skills relevance.

The ETF collaborated closely with public/private institutions to assess the future of skills. In tandem with the EBRD, the ETF worked with public and private sectors on a nationwide WBL study and produced a review that shows rising apprenticeship figures. However, challenges remain and WBL analysis and assessment will continue in 2019.

The data point to continued growth in CPD, but implementation will require review as policy advances.

The ETF works with public and private authorities to integrate refugees into the labour market. The lead counterpart is the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA). ETF reports, expertise and input were discussed at a national conference of authorised certification bodies (ACBs) in 2018, leading to an agreed action plan. An EU-funded IPA II project will support ACBs from 2019 onwards.

National and international reports show progress in building labour-market information systems, including short to long-term skills projection, continuously refined and expanded ALMPs and refugee inclusion. Career guidance services are offered in schools/universities and to jobseekers and other target groups.

Entrepreneurship is a key competency in national education policies. Small and medium enterprise skills policies continue to target private-sector growth and internationalisation. The Small Business Act assessment for 2018 shows good progress.

Turkey has made major efforts to overcome the school-industry mismatch, tackling the failure of schools to provide the complex competencies needed to be employable in Turkey's high-knowledge, high-tech economy. Employers are very involved as key actors in shaping skills policies for the future.

3. Actions planned for 2019

The ETF's comprehensive portfolio of activities features implementation of the Riga medium-term deliverables, Riga reporting, Torino Process bi-annual monitoring/reporting, skills intelligence and employability. Priorities include: the National Qualifications Framework, WBL development, CPD for teachers, skills for inclusive growth sectors, monitoring of labour-market developments and evidence of skills relevance.

The ETF responds to requests involving annual and multi-annual action plans and provides input through discussion platforms in Turkey, at ETF headquarters in Turin or in ETF partner countries. In October 2018 the Turkish government presented its Education Vision 2023, providing for a comprehensive roadmap that covers the whole Turkish education system. The EV 2023 aims to guide a holistic reform process that responds to the changes Turkey and the world are undergoing. It should bring the education system in line with international standards so that learners can be equipped with the skills they need in the 21st century. Against this background and with the European Union's, ETF, other EU Member States' support, the Ministry of National Education in Turkey is looking at EU Education and Training 2020 and beyond to gather and share knowledge, and seeks to implement and advance educational policy reforms at national level.

The ETF's work is complemented by the ETF/EBRD/Turkish authorities' action plan 2017–20, which contains three priorities from the Riga medium-term deliverables: developing technical and vocational education, training skills standards and geographically expanded facilities; increasing the availability of high-quality WBL including apprenticeships, and supporting youth employment through career guidance and the youth guarantee.

With regard to the Torino Process, the ETF launched the fifth edition in 2018–19 and Turkey responded positively, confirming a national coordinator. Emerging agenda topics include future VET skills, innovation and technology in education and training and CPD for teachers and trainers. The ETF monitors labour-market developments and evidence of skills relevance to assess the progress of reforms.

The ETF cooperates with key ministries in human resource development: the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Family, ISKUR Employment Agency, VQA, VocTest Centres, employer and employee federations, civil society, think tanks, research institutions etc. The ETF's three key interinstitutional structures are:

- A high-level public-private steering group of public and private institutional representatives, MoNE, EBRD, ETF, NGOs, academics and skills providers;
- Operational-strategic national coordination structures, involving the MoNE, DGVT/ACVT/ET Working Groups 2020, Skills Expert Working Group under the Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Family, KOSGEB and employers' organisations to focus on the five Riga medium-term deliverables;



- Technical working groups, enlisting public/private stakeholders, civil society, academia and the EU Delegation to work on measures in Turkish and EU frameworks.

The ETF cooperates closely with the EU Delegation to Turkey on all the above.