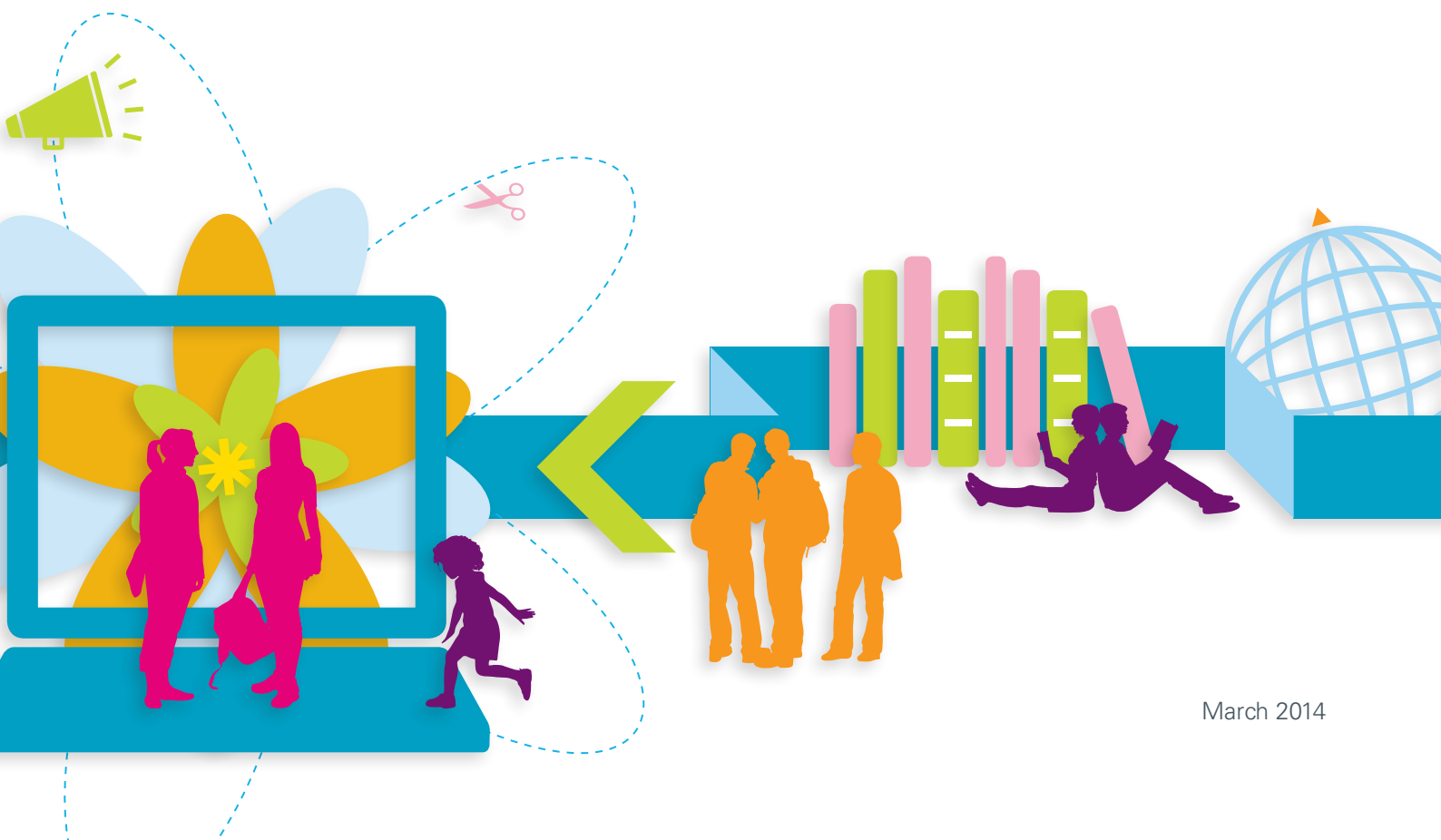


# YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING IN THE EU NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNTRIES





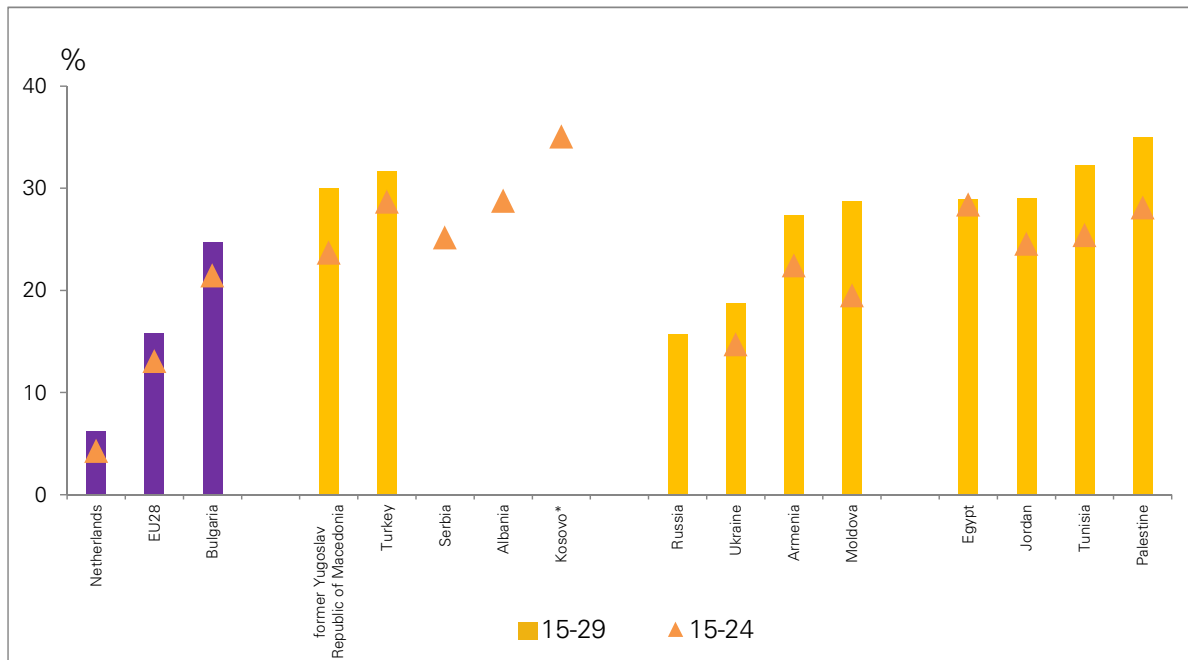
# THE CONCEPT OF YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING – SO-CALLED NEETS

The concept of NEETs refers to young people (15-29 or 15-24 years old) who currently do not have a job, do not participate in training or are not students. These young people are considered ‘at risk’ as they are jobless and/or inactive and lack access to learning opportunities. They also risk disengagement from the labour market and often from society in general.

Many ETF partner countries have paid little attention to the NEET phenomenon so far, focusing mainly on the problem of unemployed youth. However, as preliminary ETF analyses demonstrate, the focus on unemployed youth underestimates the extent of their potential vulnerability. Expanding the focus from unemployed youth to those not in employment, education or training can provide a better insight into the challenges that young people face and inform the development of policies that contribute to a better future for them and for their countries.

Many partner countries are characterised by poor economic performance which includes low net job creation, high impact of the global financial crisis and slow economic restructuring. In this context, many young people are exposed to joblessness, a lack of (attractive) training opportunities, and a lack of conditions that support them in becoming active in the labour market. Young people need the right skills and knowledge to prepare them to deal with transition and policy makers must modernise their education and training systems to align them better with present and future labour market demands. The current momentum for action must aim towards effective and sustainable measures allowing time for systemic adaptation.

NEET RATE 2012 (15-24 AND 15-29)



NB The European Training Foundation (ETF) is a specialised EU agency that supports 30 partner countries and territories to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU’s external relations policy. The ETF’s vision is to make vocational education and training (VET) in the partner countries a driver for lifelong learning and sustainable development, with a special focus on competitiveness and social cohesion.

Data sources included in the analysis (graphs) are: Netherlands, EU28, Bulgaria, Turkey: Eurostat; Albania, Kosovo: National Statistical Offices; Serbia: World Bank Development Report 2013; Armenia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, Armenia, Moldova, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Palestine: ETF calculations based on ILO School to Work Transition Surveys. Year 2010: Serbia; 2011: Kosovo; 2013: Moldova, Palestine, Tunisia, Ukraine.

# KEY FINDINGS ON NEETS IN THE ETF PARTNER COUNTRIES

Initial ETF analyses point to high numbers of youth who are jobless and/or inactive with limited access to learning opportunities.

The percentage of NEETs in all partner countries is almost double the EU average –accounting for around 30% of the youth population aged 15 - 29.

There are diverse sub-groups within NEETs. As in the EU Member States, unemployed young people account for the largest subgroup. Other highly vulnerable subgroups, such as the inactive, family carers, discouraged workers and disabled people, are often not considered in analysis based on traditional labour market indicators. As such, they are almost “invisible” in statistics, and subsequently receive less attention from policy makers.

Ensuring that NEETs become more visible in the political agenda of ETF partner countries, can encourage governments to develop new policy interventions targeting youth who have been excluded from education, training and employment.

The risk of becoming a NEET increases significantly with age, and so young people aged 25-29 have a much higher probability of being NEET than younger groups. Once again, the phenomenon is more prominent than in the EU, where the gap is smaller.

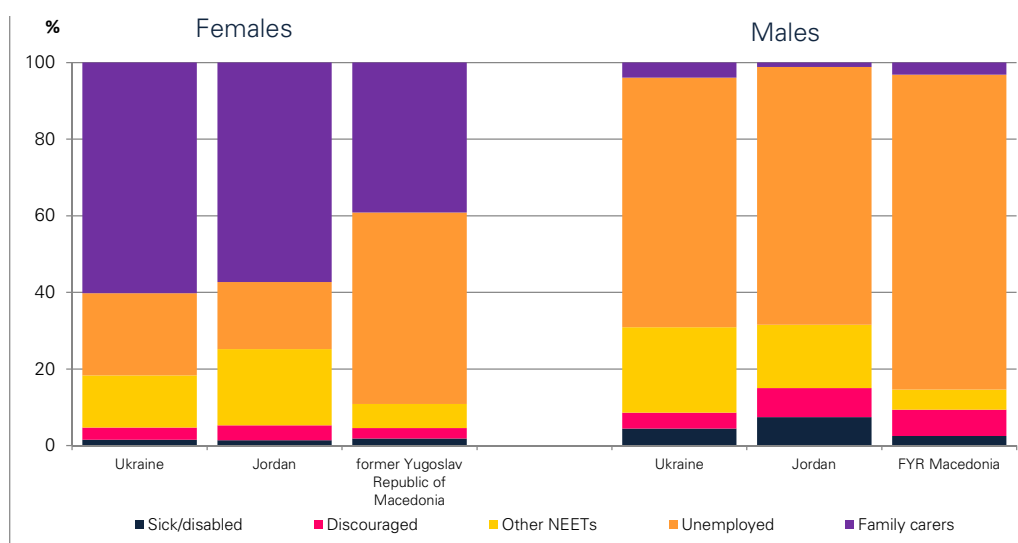
Women are more likely to be NEET in all countries analysed (except Serbia). This is linked to several factors such as socio cultural norms, unfriendly working environments and family duties. This is most evident in the Southern Mediterranean countries where the rate of female NEETs is double the rate of males.

Education plays an important role in mitigating the NEET rate: in fact, highly educated youth – although still exposed to exclusion - are comparatively less likely to become NEET than those with lower educational attainment.

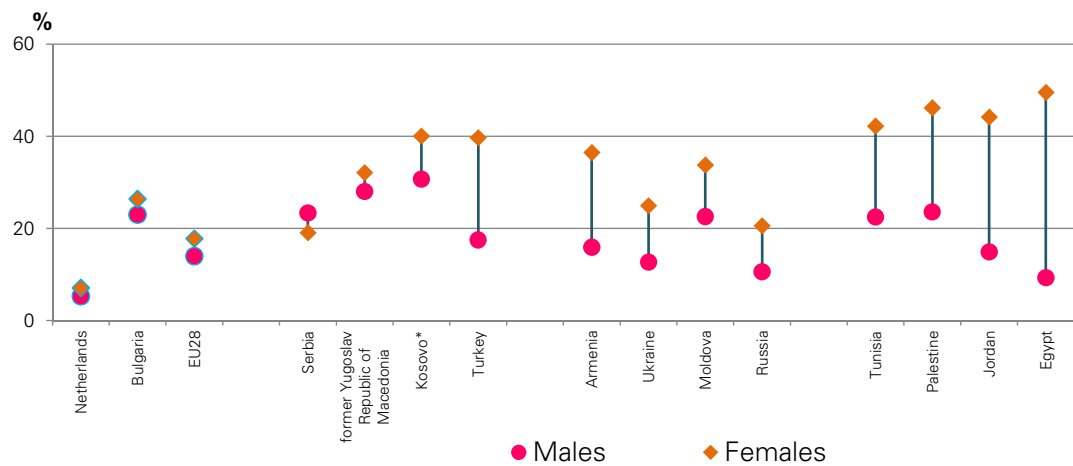
Early school leavers are the most consistently dominant NEET sub-group. The likelihood of these young people becoming NEET is increased if combined with other factors which could reinforce their vulnerability (e.g. gender). Prevention policies aimed at monitoring dropouts and at bringing young people back into school are of paramount importance to avoid the social and economic exclusion of young people.

Data also show that in many partner countries secondary education makes little difference in preventing young people to from becoming NEET. This implies that modernising secondary education is an important element in mitigating exclusion. National education and training systems provide society with the best means to redress social inequity but general education systems often fail some children who have dropped out from the school system and have difficulties in entering the labour market. Within this context, high quality VET systems can help reduce the percentage of NEETs by providing support to early school leavers, compensating for the failure of general education and providing second chance opportunities to young adults.

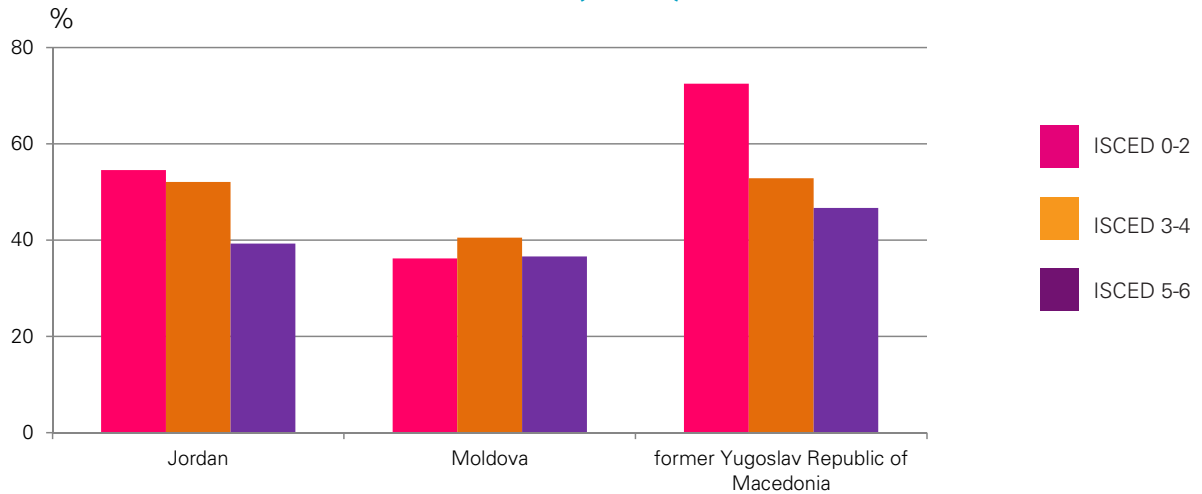
## NEET RATE BY VULNERABLE GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE 2012



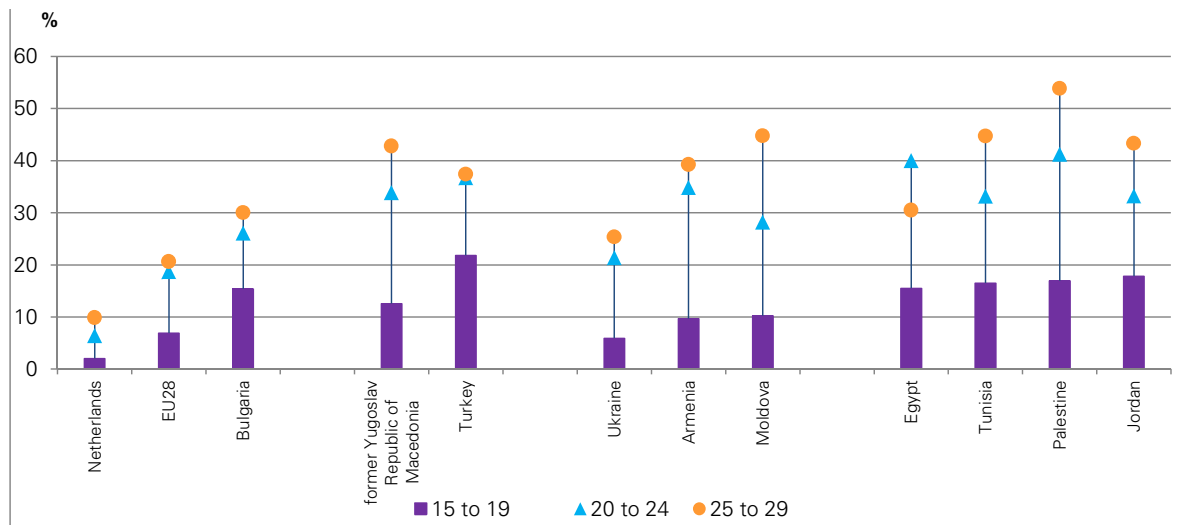
### NEET RATE BY GENDER 2012 (15-29)



### NEET RATE BY EDUCATION LEVEL 2012 (15-29)



### NEET RATE BY AGE GROUP 2012



# POLICY RESPONSES AND GOOD PRACTICE FOR NEETS

Designing comprehensive policies and specific measures to address the NEET phenomenon in ETF partner countries must be based on sound evidence and a good understanding of the underlying context.

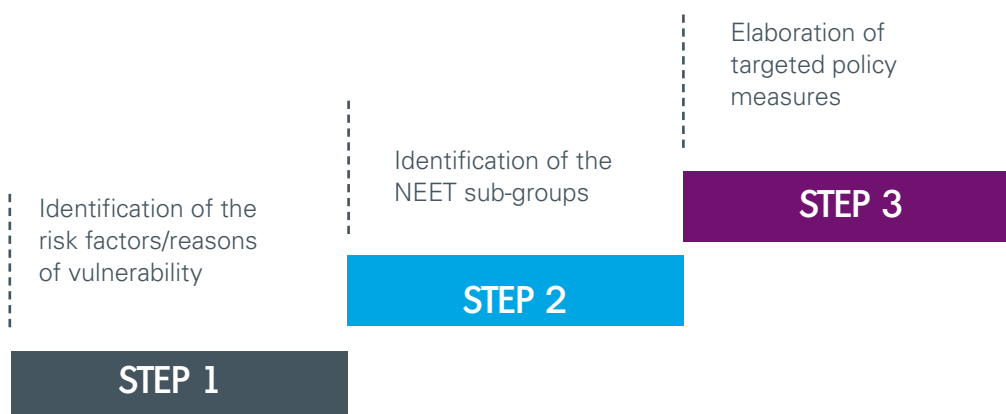
Identifying why a young person is out of school and work is the first step that enables the identification and categorisation of the different NEET subgroups which in turn can lead to targeted policy interventions. This can also help in the prevention of the NEET phenomenon all together.

The preliminary results of the ETF's analysis show that the most notable risk factors that contributing to the prevalence of NEETs in the ETF partner countries are the following:

- Low educational attainment (early school leavers, dropouts)
- Gender (being female is a risk factor itself)
- Low employability / lack of necessary skills (limited value of general secondary education)
- Institutional, logistical and transitional barriers to employment
- Poor socio-economic family background
- Health status / disability problems
- Immigration / ethnic / religious background

Typically, policy interventions include prevention (mostly through education policies), reintegration (general employability policies, such as information, advice and guidance or job opportunities), and compensation policies (to tackle the most extreme situations when reintegration seems to be more difficult). International evidence points to the important role of early intervention in favour of those young people most at risk, both with respect to activation at an early stage of unemployment and, crucially at an early life stage, i.e. before leaving school. Preventive measures appear to be one of the variables that most strongly affect the probability of becoming NEET.

## STEPS TO IDENTIFY POLICY MEASURES TO ADDRESS NEETS



## TYPES OF POLICY MEASURES TO ADDRESS NEET SUBGROUPS

**Preventive measures** are usually aimed at discouraging early school leaving (for instance raising the school leaving age), at providing alternative and innovative teaching methods and at improving the quality and relevance of education (in particular VET) systems. As such, preventive measures are mostly targeted towards young pupils in secondary education (15-18 years old). In many cases, countries provide incentives such as free meals, text books and school transport (Turkey), while less attention is given to detecting potential early school leavers and follow up (very few data exist on this). Some countries nonetheless show positive attempts in this regard (e.g. Montenegro).

**Reintegration measures** include all measures aimed at providing young people with the possibility to re-enter the education system (often combined with practical training) or at facilitating their entry into the labour market. Measures such as tracking services to identify, support and monitor inactive young people, second chance opportunities, distance learning opportunities and validating informal learning are not very widespread in partner countries, and mostly focus on particularly vulnerable and excluded groups. Under the latter approach, most countries are making efforts to improve vocational guidance and enhance skills matching: some countries have increased the number of staff in public employment services - job counsellors in particular (Moldova and Azerbaijan), while others are trying to better target active labour market policies to benefit also more marginalised groups (Morocco). Reintegration measures in tend to be directed towards the unemployed, while interventions targeting other sub-groups are more likely to remain peripheral measures.

**Measures targeting NEET women** in the ETF partner countries remain very limited and ad hoc. The lack of affordable child and elderly care, social norms (particularly in the South Mediterranean region) and the limited existence of flexible work arrangements make it very difficult for women to work.

**Compensation measures** are often categorised under “social protection and inclusion measures” and target the most disadvantaged groups, which are considered the hardest to reintegrate. They include direct financial support to workers, allowances to cover the cost of living while participating in certain learning opportunities, financial benefits to employers for the recruitment of particularly disadvantaged categories and other similar initiatives. The real effectiveness of the measures is often relatively limited, also due to budget restrictions.

## MAIN CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Partnerships among actors at all levels and coordinated action are critical for addressing the NEET challenge. National policies are needed for a strategic and integrated approach to mitigate the NEET phenomenon, while implementation at local level promises more possibilities of success.

In the near future, partner countries can enormously improve their policies on NEETs by:

tackling information gaps, including better analysis (its nature and extent) and better identification of the profile of young people out of work and education, to develop appropriate and targeted policy interventions; and,

- prioritising policy actions to elaborate and implement measures specifically focused on preventing early school leaving and modernising secondary education, as well as reintegration and compensation measures.

Vocational schools are 'at the front-line' when it comes to preventing young people from leaving school early and placing themselves 'at risk of becoming a NEET'. By providing high quality VET programmes and an environment that is conducive to learning, schools support young people to acquire skills that enable them to compete for jobs in the labour market and thereby break the cycle of disadvantage.

## POLICY MEASURES IN THE ETF PARTNER COUNTRIES

WHY EXCLUSION	WHAT MEASURES	EXAMPLES FROM ETF PCS
Risk factor 1. Low education attainment (Early school leaving)	Monitoring and early warning system	Establishment of a monitoring and counselling system for students at risk of leaving school early (Montenegro)
		Introduction of the "social card": including information about students to help schools to better monitor students during their education (Montenegro).
		A study on preventing leaving vocational school prior to attaining qualifications (Montenegro)
		Address-based population register that can help education authorities track children not in education (Turkey)
<i>Losing interest in school for various reasons</i>	Alternative learning and innovative teaching methods	Increasing the education offer and developing programmes of varying duration within the formal system (Serbia).
<i>Household poverty</i>		Introduction of a part-time VET system in Albania with no limits to the number of new entrants.
<i>Poor academic achievement</i>		Social inclusion included in teacher training as a topic (Albania).
<i>Dropping out during transition periods</i>		Curriculum modernisation (Moldova).
<i>VET is seen as a second level option</i>		Complementary transitional training programme for 10-14 years-olds not in education (Turkey)
	Raising ceiling of compulsory education	Increase length of compulsory education from 8 to 12 years (Turkey)
		Extension of compulsory education to include upper-secondary education (ISCED 3) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



WHY EXCLUSION	WHAT MEASURES	EXAMPLES FROM ETF PCS
<p>Risk factor 1. Low education attainment (Early school leaving)</p> <p><i>Losing interest in school for various reasons</i></p> <p><i>Household poverty</i></p> <p><i>Poor academic achievement</i></p> <p><i>Dropping out during transition periods</i></p> <p><i>VET is seen as a second level option</i></p>	Career guidance	Guidance booklets to prevent dropouts (Turkey).
		Placement of counselling teachers in vocational schools (Turkey).
		Teacher coach for high risk students (Turkey).
	Subsidies and parental engagement	Allowances for poor families in remote areas in Serbia
		Legal sanctions on the parents of dropouts from compulsory education (Bosnia and Herzegovina).
	Improve VET and make it more attractive (quality, relevance, image, status) to facilitate access to employment and/or further learning	Marketing campaign to improve the image of VET (especially in some selected sectors – agriculture and tourism) (Montenegro).
		Improving VET through better teacher quality, modular curricula, quality assurance, etc. (Turkey)
	Opportunities for second chance education and training	Increase the number of vocational training places offered and creating new VET programmes (Tunisia)
		Education and training in prisons to complete compulsory education (Albania).
		National qualifications framework including flexible lifelong learning opportunities for all (Kosovo, still to be fully implemented).
Financial incentives	Free education for over 17 year olds to acquire their first qualifications (Serbia)	
<p>Risk factor 2. Low employability (lack of necessary skills)</p>	Training	Amal programme in Tunisia, which foresees training and financial allowances for trainees;
		Lack of skills/ competences
		Skills mismatch
	Emergence of new skills needs	Well-established apprenticeship programmes in Algeria, Morocco (alternance and apprenticeship programmes), Tunisia (alternance programmes) and Turkey
		Low adaptability of skills taught by the education system
	No previous work experience	Internship programmes with employment subsidies paid to employers (Jordan)
		Obligatory summer work in Jordanian vocational schools
		Higher education internships in Lebanon
	Work experience opportunities	Idmaj programme in Morocco, aimed at inserting first-time job seekers into the labour market (only for registered unemployed).

WHY EXCLUSION	WHAT MEASURES	EXAMPLES FROM ETF PCS
Risk factor 3. Gender socio-economic conditions <i>Cultural norms</i> <i>Restrictive legislation toward women's rights</i>	Work-family reconciliation measures	Legal rights to flexible or part-time work for employees with young children (Armenia, Montenegro, and Russia)
	Targeted training and employment programmes	Promotion of female employment through selected VET programmes (mostly donor-funded) (Albania).
		Employment programme in Jordan replacing foreign workers with Jordanian women.
	Media campaign on working women	Project for increasing enrolment rates especially among girls (Turkey).
	Legislation against gender discrimination and prevention of sexual harassment	Pilot to certify private firms for gender equity in human resources
Risk factor 4. Institutional, practical and logistical barriers to employment	Information guidance and counselling	Anapec website and local offices (limited capacity and HR) (Morocco)
		Increase in the number of staff in public employment services (Morocco, Moldova, Azerbaijan)
	No clear information about possibilities on the labour market	National Programme for Training for employment in Egypt, aiming at providing training and qualifications and matching job seekers to decent jobs.
		Not sufficient job creation (by the economy)
		Living in remote areas
	Incentives to employers	Subsidised jobs in Morocco and Tunisia (contrat d'insertion social)
	Entrepreneurship support	Moukalawati programme in Morocco, to provide financial support and counselling to young entrepreneurs
		Support to entrepreneurship and micro enterprises by providing business advice, training, credit, tax exemption and business monitoring (Algeria)
		Establishment of training firms in Bosnia and Herzegovina (creating the conditions for successful enterprise management)
	Support to mobility	Expansion of higher education through decentralised universities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Education with transport support for students who cannot get to school (Turkey)		

WHY EXCLUSION	WHAT MEASURES	EXAMPLES FROM ETF PCS
<p>Risk factor 5.. Poor socio economic conditions</p> <p><i>Poverty</i></p> <p><i>Living in degraded areas</i></p> <p><i>Poor family conditions</i></p>	<p>Financial allowances for poorest families</p> <p>Financial support for children</p>	<p>Employability improvement cheque in Tunisia</p> <p>Plan to develop a referral system between employment and social services (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Action Plan on Youth Employment)</p> <p>Special VET programmes for disadvantaged groups (children without parental care, drug abusers, victims of HIV, etc.) (donor-supported) (Albania).</p> <p>Reduced cost meals, free extra-curricula activities for low income students (Turkey)</p> <p>Public works (Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria)</p>
<p>Risk factor 6. Health status / disability</p>	<p>Removing barriers to employment for young people with special needs</p>	<p>Reintegration of demobilised fighters in Libya through specific vocational training, sponsored higher education abroad, support for self-employment</p> <p>Social and cultural discrimination against disabled people</p> <p>Inadequate working environment</p> <p>Pilot schools to develop social inclusion strategies, responsive to returned migrants and people with disabilities (Albania)</p>
<p>Risk factor 7. Immigration background / ethnic considerations</p> <p><i>Social and cultural norms</i></p> <p><i>Language barrier</i></p> <p><i>Lack of social nets and networks</i></p>	<p>Inclusion measures</p>	<p>Adoption of measures to support Roma financially and through lighter formalities (such as ID cards) to enrol in all levels of education, including higher education (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).</p>

Further information on all ETF activities can be found on the website:

[www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu)

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