

EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION

Engaging the



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Preface

Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,
Vice President of the European Commission



One of the great challenges of our times is to make sure that our young people can find their place in our societies, and no one is left behind. We have a collective duty to invest in their energy, their talent and creativity. So we have a responsibility to invest in quality education and vocational training, and to remove all sorts of obstacles that prevent our young people from entering the jobs market.

This is true both inside the European Union and in our region. It is true in the Middle East and North Africa, where over half of the population is under the age of 30. It is true in the Balkans, as they progress on their path towards membership of the European Union. It is true in our Eastern Partners, where young people are asking for reforms that deliver on their aspirations.

Investing in young people all around our region is a clear interest of the European Union. In an incredibly connected world, our neighbours' strength is our strength, their development is our development, their resilience is our resilience. The work of the European Training Foundation – investing in skills, training and good jobs in our neighbourhood – addresses a core goal of the European Union's foreign policy.

When young people feel that they do not stand a fair chance to succeed, the whole of society is worse off. Working on education and improving labour markets is not only good for the economy. It is a powerful antidote against the feeling of exclusion and against radicalisation. It is good for democracy as well as for security. And it helps young people get the opportunities they deserve within their own country, instead of forcing them to look for a better future abroad. For our friends in the Western Balkans, working with us on education and labour market reform is also a way to get closer to the European Union, while improving the daily life of their citizens.

Our work on education becomes even more relevant in those parts of our neighbourhood hit by war and instability. There are Syrian children who are as old as the war in their country. Children in refugee camps, or in a conflict zone, need to know that they can be anything they want in life. For them, going to school is what keeps hope alive. This is something the ETF has been contributing to for over 20 years, engaging with countries in difficult circumstances and helping them give hope to their people. Investing in human development and in inclusive democracies stems from our European values. But it also contributes to our core interests, making our region more stable and resilient. This is the European way to build peace, security and economic growth in our troubled world.

Federica Mogherini, Brussels, June 2018

Foreword

Cesare Onestini

Director, European Training Foundation



Skills have never been more prominent on the political agenda of the European Union. With jobs and growth at the heart of the priorities of the Juncker Commission, skills have emerged as an issue of the highest importance. Commissioner Thyssen is leading the way with the adoption of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Skills Agenda, European Vocational Skills Week, and the range of actions accompanying these major initiatives. Skills development and labour market participation are cross-cutting concerns; there is no doubting their vital importance to economic growth, social cohesion, and regional stability. Yet, while employment rates have been improving, youth employment is not where it should be – in the EU Member States or in neighbouring countries. The same is true of retraining and upskilling for mid-career workers, gender equality in pay and entrepreneurship, and making the most of legal migration as a potential driver of economic growth in both sending and receiving countries.

Nor are these issues confined to the EU and its neighbourhood. Driven by rapid developments in automation, new and disruptive business models, digitalisation, offshoring, and demographic and migratory pressures, anyone who is engaged with labour market systems and with education and training policy, anywhere

in the world, is having to rethink old certainties and search more broadly for new ideas. This period is in many ways reminiscent of the transformation that followed the historic changes of 1990, which led directly to the birth of the European Training Foundation (ETF). Since its creation, the ETF has bridged dynamics at EU and global level. That's why our work with the Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training is so important, because we can bring thinking from the European to the global perspective, and vice versa. Our task is to implement the best of that thinking in our partner countries, a diverse array of nations with whom the European Union sees a mutual benefit in building closer ties, ranging from a future perspective of membership to different degrees of partnership, association and cooperation.

Federica Mogherini has spoken of the direct contribution that our work at the ETF makes to improving stability and resilience in the partner countries surrounding the European Union. I am convinced that our deep knowledge of vocational education and training and labour market issues, combined with a quarter of a century's experience of working hand-in-hand with key players in over 40 countries, puts us in an ideal position to help promote European values among our neighbours.

We will be deepening our work with them in the years to come, as well as offering to be of service to whoever faces challenges that our experience and expertise can help address. It is my privilege and honour to lead this endeavour as Director of the ETF, confident in our mission and our capability, determined to play our part in a global Europe, and optimistic for our partner countries' success.

Cesare Onestini, Turin, June 2018

Introduction

The European Training Foundation

The European Training Foundation is a decentralised, specialist agency of the European Union. We work in the context of the EU's external relations policies helping transition and developing countries modernise their vocational education and training, and employment systems. We currently work with 29 partner countries, supporting them in analysing skills demand and provision, learning from international best practice, and applying innovative approaches to policy making and implementation. In turn, this fosters social cohesion and sustainable economic growth, benefiting EU Member States and their citizens through improved economic relations.

We frequently operate in uncertain or unstable contexts. Because of our reputation for independent, high-quality work and positive engagement, we are able to work with successive governments, despite changing policy priorities.

Our staff of 130 is led by the Director, who reports to a Governing Board made up of representatives from the EU Member States, the European Commission, and the European Parliament, along with observers from our partner countries.



European Training Foundation

News in brief

Making systems work for everyone

Changing skills for a changing world

The Torino Process is a periodic review of progress in vocational education system and policy reform in all our partner countries. In June 2017, the 'Changing skills for a changing world' conference brought together more than 300 delegates from partner countries, EU Member States, EU institutions, international organisations, social partners, enterprises, and experts in the field of vocational education and training in Turin to close the fourth round of the Torino Process. Another 5,000 or so followed the conference online. The conference highlighted efforts to establish participatory models of governance, modernise qualification systems, and improve skills matching. There are plenty of challenges still to address of course, and a set of future priorities have been identified, including making policies more relevant for system impact; improving access to training and skills development opportunities; building on innovation; making competences work for the future; building trust to increase efficiency and effectiveness; and lastly – but certainly not least – a relentless focus on people. The Torino Process reports can be found at www.torinoprocess.eu

News in brief
Promoting employability

Mainstreaming employment

Development assistance is increasingly linked to employment, both in terms of job creation, and helping people to be more employable. Perhaps surprisingly, there is little conceptual background on how to integrate employability within development programmes, so we are starting a conversation with the Commission and with our partner countries on how to mainstream employment in development assistance. The objective is to make sure that development assistance planning includes impact on employment and employability from the outset. The desired spillover effects on employability don't happen by themselves!

Our work has four main strands.

Improving skills

We help countries develop 21st century skills, from digital and online learning to adult learning and continuing vocational education and training. We explore vocational teaching and learning, and issues around assuring quality. We develop tools and provide advice on practical applications, and help get everyone around the table to make things happen.

Promoting employability

Employability gives people a chance to enjoy the benefits of fair work and contribute to the economy. Promoting employability can involve streamlining young people's transition to work, or unleashing their potential for entrepreneurship. It can mean working with employers to create high-quality apprenticeships and work-based learning, or improving access to career guidance for young people making choices, or adults changing career.



Making systems work for everyone

Any strong and inclusive system needs good governance and adequate financing. Labour markets, industry sectors, and vocational education and training provision are no different. This involves building skills intelligence, taking a holistic approach to labour market policies, and making better qualifications and qualification systems.

Working for a global Europe

We support the EU global Europe strategy by building the capacity of neighbourhood countries to design and implement good training and skills policy. Among other things, we provide tools and expertise for policy analysis and progress monitoring. We contribute to sustainability and social inclusion, and help tackle the root causes of migration by strengthening the links between migration, employment, and skills.

"We contribute to sustainability and social inclusion, and help tackle the root causes of migration by strengthening the links between migration, employment, and skills."



News in brief

Working for a global Europe

Working with the EU Delegations

Our work to assist the EU Delegations in our partner countries creates valuable opportunities to promote education and training system reform as part of larger-scale interventions. This combines well with our own activities and other partner-based work in the countries, creating a framework that doesn't only rely on ETF activities, but also draws on wider EU interventions. Through our work with the Delegations, we help to shape large-scale investment in improving the life chances of people in our partner countries. For example, in 2017 we assisted the EU Delegations in designing a new budget support programme for skills development in Georgia, and in organising policy dialogue on human capital development in Albania and Jordan.



News in brief

Promoting employability

Skills for the future

We are launching a thematic workstream on the future of work, which will explore the impact of global trends in all our partner countries. We want to investigate the scope and pace of this impact, which will vary from country to country. We are taking a broader, more cross-project approach in this area. We don't know exactly what the future will look like – nobody can predict what will happen – but we do know that policy makers and institutions in our partner countries have to act now to manage the changes that these global trends are creating. To that end, we are increasing cross-disciplinary work inside the ETF, and looking more broadly outside the ETF too. 'Skills for the future' is the title of a major conference that we are organising in Turin in November 2018: www.skills4future.eu

Our work in the partner countries

We currently work with 29 partner countries, mostly in the context of the EU's enlargement and neighbourhood policies. They are:

Western Balkans and Turkey

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey.

Eastern Partnership

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine.

Russia

Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine**, Syria, Tunisia.

Central Asia

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

*** This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.*



News in brief

Working for a global Europe

Thinking ahead

As we plan for the next round of the Torino Process we're reflecting on its growing role within EU policy dialogue, and looking closely at how it fits in the wider context of EU external relations in each of the neighbourhood regions. One thing we're keen to understand is how far partner countries are moving towards more structured monitoring of policy objectives. This will help us determine how the Torino Process can better support their development goals, and become a more flexible tool for addressing the specific monitoring and evaluation needs of each country. For example, the Commission has identified the Torino Process as a key tool for its policy dialogue work in the Eastern Partnership region. The Torino Process has a specific mandate to make sure there is regional policy dialogue focusing on important topics like youth employment and employability.

Deepening our work with partner countries

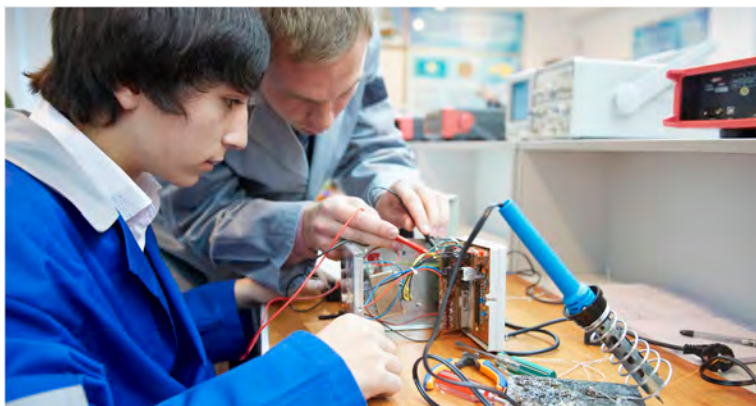
There are three areas in particular where our unique combination of knowledge, contacts, and experience enables us to strengthen our support to partner countries: EU policies and programmes; the deep understanding of the context in each partner country; and the range of themes in vocational education and training.



1. EU policies and programmes

2017 saw the launch of the European Pillar of Social Rights, through which the European Union has reaffirmed its social commitment to citizens. Significantly, the first of the Pillar's 20 principles is "the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market."

As Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills, and Labour Mobility, told the G7 event on the Future of Work in Europe in September 2017, implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights "can soften the social impact of the digital revolution [...] and] help us make the most out of its economic impact."



News in brief Improving skills

Learning in the workplace takes off

Interest in work-based learning has grown worldwide in recent years, not least because of the fast-changing demands on global workforces and the equally fast-changing impact of digital technologies. Work-based learning has long been a priority area for the ETF, and our recent work has focused, among other things, on affiliating those of our partner countries who are candidates for membership of the EU to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. In 2017 we worked with the Alliance and the Commission's Directorate General for Employment on a capacity-building event to facilitate the inclusion of candidate countries. Candidate country governments made commitments for the immediate future of apprenticeships, and have either brought, or plan to bring major employers' associations on board. This year, for the first time, we've also received pledges of support from individual employers within candidate countries.



News in brief

Making systems work for everyone

Analysing skills needs in Serbia

We've been working with a leading information and communication technology cluster in Novi Sad, to understand the region's skills needs. It's a centre of excellence for the country, with around a dozen government and education institutions along with some 4,000 people employed in a range of related businesses. The cluster is a good example of multi-level governance, and is helping to drive Serbia's economic, digital, and educational development. Findings from the research conducted by the ETF and its partners show the coordination of roles and responsibilities among the different parts of the vocational education and training system in the country, and offer useful transferable insights for other sectors and regions. It's a great demonstration of the benefits of partnership in action.

Innovative, well-governed vocational education and training systems are central to that ambition, in EU Member States as much as in ETF partner countries. Yet in much of Europe, vocational education and training remains stuck with a less appealing reputation than the academic alternative. Higher education has been widely viewed as an enabler of social mobility: while university graduates are not spared unemployment, historically their potential career earnings have been greater.

However, perceptions are changing, as concern grows about the number of university graduates and the evolving needs of employers. At the same time, the vocational world is developing alternative pathways which can unlock a wide array of skills, making its graduates both more attractive to industry and better equipped to set up their own businesses.

"The vocational world is developing alternative pathways which can unlock a wide array of skills, making its graduates both more attractive to industry and better equipped to set up their own businesses."

2. Partner country context

Understanding the diversity of priorities, needs and aims among our partner countries has always been key to the success of our work. This is increasingly apparent through the growing engagement of partner countries in the Torino Process, both at national and regional levels. While the Torino Process provides tools, templates, and best practices to draw on, it is clear that one size cannot fit all who come under its umbrella.

In the EU candidate and potential candidate countries, we are working on improving the interaction of the Torino Process with the range of other monitoring actions they are involved in. We also support the deployment of EU financial assistance. For example, in Georgia, Belarus, and Ukraine, the Torino Process reports formed the basis for major EU programming. In Tunisia and Morocco, with the IRADA programme, the Torino Process is seen as an important reference point for supporting larger interventions, both in terms of the network that it has gathered around it and the reports themselves. We are also exploring the ways in which the Torino Process can support countries moving towards more structured monitoring of policy objectives.

"In Georgia, Belarus and Ukraine, the Torino Process reports formed the basis for major EU programming."



News in brief

Working for a global Europe

Taking it to the regions

Following the 2016–17 cycle of the Torino Process, new insights are emerging on how partner countries are putting their participation to good use. For example, in Kazakhstan the government decided to move ahead with the Torino Process across the whole country. After running successful pilot projects in five regions, the benefits of monitoring vocational education and skills development will be extended to cover all 16 regions. The work will also be used at local level to define priorities for improving skills and employment prospects for citizens. In Georgia, the data and associated insight gathered for the Torino Process has been used in the planning of a large EU support programme for vocational education and skills. Similarly, in Belarus and Ukraine, Torino Process reports inform EU programming. And in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, Torino Process data has been used to support major EU interventions.

News in brief

Making systems work for everyone

Governance in Ukraine

In April 2017 Ukraine's Prime Minister, Volodymyr Groysman, attended a meeting in Kyiv where ETF staff presented a Green Paper on vocational education system reform developed with the Ministry of Education and Science. Deputy Prime Minister Stepan Kubiv, Education Minister Liliya Hrynevych, and EU Ambassador Hugues Mingarelli were joined by 200 delegates, demonstrating the strong connection between central government and the regions. Regional delegates left knowing that they have the support of their government, and a clear endorsement for their daily work on vocational education governance. The event made the headlines on Ukraine's main TV station, raising the profile of vocational education among citizens.

As partner countries move from analysis to implementation, there is a growing need to look deeper into the financing of vocational education and training. We are exploring possibilities, asking if it is solely a question of funds, or if there are holistic ways of looking at it. We are developing a framework to better analyse what different types of funding, and funding mechanisms, mean for the provision of vocational education and training, and how they link to strategic thinking on system reforms. This requires detailed analysis as well as conceptual methodologies, overlapping with our work in other areas such as quality assurance, and decentralisation or regionalisation of policy and provision.

The EU Member States and the European Commission are playing their part in raising the profile and appeal of vocational skills by showcasing success stories, notably through the creation of Vocational Skills Week. The work of WorldSkills and the opening of the ErasmusPRO mobility schemes to long-term mobility for apprenticeships are boosting the idea of a tertiary dimension to vocational education at a global level. This appeals to learners and their prospective employers, as well as to their families and communities.

Our work in the partner countries

"The network enables quality assurance bodies to connect with each other so that countries within and across regions can compare their experience, find out what others are doing."

3. Themes in the field of vocational education and training

There are always new dimensions and priorities emerging in the complex fields that comprise our world of skills and employment, even if they often emerge from old questions. For instance, what is the best form of governance for delivering quality vocational education? How can changing demographics in the population be both reflected and supported by vocational education and training systems? And what will the future of skills look like?

In each case, we have a clear contribution to make. On the question of governance, quality assurance is one of the 'bellwether' issues that is frequently raised by stakeholders. We have launched a new network to support partner countries in the development of quality assurance processes. The network enables quality assurance bodies to connect with each other so that countries within and across regions can compare their experience, find out what others are doing, look at different ways to measure the quality of training systems, and see how others measure the quality of their trainers and teachers.

News in brief
Improving skills

A quality experience

The launch of the Quality Assurance Forum was an important milestone in 2017. Sixteen partner countries are participating, and our goal is to get all, or almost all, involved by 2020. Those already taking part are committed players, with national reference points appointed at ministerial level. The commitment is long-term, which will present many future opportunities to promote this vital area of vocational education and training system development in line with the needs and interests of each country. After initial meetings in Turin and in Antalya, Turkey, hosted by the ETF and the Turkish Ministry of National Education, attention has turned to reviewing the progress, planning the next phase of activities, and deepening Forum members' knowledge and networking through peer visits and peer reflection.

News in brief
Promoting employability

Refugees in mind

In 2017, we published two important reports on migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective in Jordan and Lebanon. Inevitably, this touches on the issue of refugees, and the specific implications in some countries for their education and training systems. For example, with Lebanon currently hosting two million Syrian refugees, any education and training institution there has to take into account both the challenges and the potential opportunities that arise. We conducted research on existing support measures for refugees and migrants from an employment and skills perspective, and held two events in Lebanon. There was a great deal of interest in our perspective, despite the funds already being allocated by international donors. The research was well received, attracting interest from EU Delegations seeking advice on what types of measures to support.



Population changes are driven by organic as well as external factors, and our work on migrant support from an employment and skills perspective is helping to make the case for a rational approach. The issues here are complex, not least because migration is linked to the refugee crisis. However, approaches based on an employment and skills perspective can have a positive impact in both categories, in terms of helping societies to integrate people arriving with different skill sets, recognising and utilising those skills, and deciding to what extent they can be part of the receiving country's education and training, and labour market systems. That's an issue for Europe, and for the countries we work with.

The ETF conference in November 2018 forms part of our response to the question of understanding the future of skills. We all know that there are going to be very different jobs in 20 to 30 years, thanks to data-driven innovation, artificial intelligence, and automation. It has become a truism to point out that we are still preparing young people to do jobs that won't exist by the time they join the workforce. But we also recognise that young people can't second guess the future, and that they need jobs now, and tomorrow, and next year – not only in 30 years' time. Our conference, with its focus on skills anticipation, strikes a balance between following the trends as labour markets evolve and finding the solutions for those graduating, or just about to graduate, from vocational education and training. We also stress the importance of upskilling for the existing workforce, who have already witnessed tremendous change in technology, business structures, resourcing, and employment contracts. They too will have to adapt more often, and more quickly, than ever before.

“We all know that there are going to be very different jobs in 20 to 30 years, thanks to data-driven innovation, artificial intelligence and automation.”

For us, the question of skills anticipation puts the emphasis on how our consideration of future needs is applied to reform current education and training. We want to see what is needed today to support system reforms, and teaching and training practice, in order to be of the greatest possible service to our partner countries.



News in brief
Promoting employability

Looking forward to 2020

We expect to see greater recognition of entrepreneurship and digital competences in policy dialogue across our partner countries, with road-testing and piloting to support eventual policy or legislative decisions on ways to move forward. We're always looking to capture examples of excellence, figure out what it looks like, and what makes it excellent. Understanding and sharing good practice is important in helping us to shape our own policy recommendations, and we know how valuable it is for our partner countries too. Meanwhile, as partner countries move from policy recommendations to implementation, good practice cases can help that process. For example, in 2017 we ran a good practice call looking at how small businesses internationalise – how they move out of their national market, particularly to trade with the European single market. We received an impressive set of responses, in equal numbers from Member States and partner countries, that went through a tough peer review process. They're being presented at a special forum in May 2018 in Turin.



News in brief

Working for a global Europe

Specialist and strategist

The nature of our work with EU Delegations is changing, as our strategic insight is increasingly sought after, alongside our technical and specialist input. This has emerged partly from the growing interaction between EU Delegations in different countries. Many have had experience of our ability to help with problems shared across regions, as well as specific issues in each country. In turn, this has led to Delegations sparking ideas with each other, and a greater recognition of the ETF's place in the EU family, along with its common purpose and protocols. In a series of interviews, the ETF is capturing examples of how it has worked successfully with the EU Delegations:

<https://youtu.be/eLJ3STiUqak>

Our work with partner organisations

We support the EU Delegations and Commission services in the programming and delivery of EU external assistance and related policy dialogue. Skills development is a high priority in the 2014–20 external assistance programming period in the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, the European Neighbourhood Instrument, and the Development Cooperation Instrument. We receive requests from EU Delegations, and coordinate our thematic and country-based expertise and resources to allocate support accordingly. Requests from other Commission services are similarly coordinated, although through a different internal route. Our efforts are focused on delivering timely, high-level expertise and quality products to support EU requests, and on building our own expertise in EU external assistance delivery methods and tools.

"Our efforts are focused on delivering timely, high-level expertise and quality products to support EU requests."

Partnership working and collaboration are at the core of everything we do.



News in brief
Improving skills

Training trainers in the Balkans

Innovation in the area of continuing professional development for teachers and trainers is a key strategy for improving the performance of education and training systems in all countries. The ETF demonstration projects that started in 2015 concluded in 2017, and received a positive evaluation, revealing that there was an impact on quality in most of the participating countries. For example, a pilot project in Montenegro introduced industry placements for teachers for the first time. Despite being only a small-scale project, it was so successful and had such an immediate impact that the overseeing ministry is now working on a plan to extend it. And in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we worked with the national statistics agency to bring all the relevant political and communal groups together to develop a national standard for accreditation of teacher training providers. Implementation is already underway in some cantons, and we will be following up on progress over the next two to three years.

Our work with partner organisations

The work we do in areas such as quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation, and assessing the potential of pilot projects, is directly linked with our role in supporting the capacity of the EU as a donor, bringing important funds to partner country vocational education and training reforms. The EU remains the world's leading development assistance donor, contributing EUR 75.7 billion worldwide in 2017.

We are increasingly involved in the definition, monitoring, and evaluation of the use of such European funds, making sure that, as a result of our donor coordination efforts, development assistance is not applied in isolation. This highlights the importance of our partnership work with other agencies, whether inter-governmental, bilateral or non-governmental.

There are three specific attributes of the ETF as an agency that underpin the value we add to the support provided by EU Delegations and other Commission services. The first is our impartiality. We take inspiration from solutions to vocational education and training challenges from Europe and around the world to assist our partner countries in their reform efforts. The second is continuity, since we have provided ongoing support over many years in most of our partner countries. That means we can focus on a long-term view.

Our work with partner organisations

Third is the unrivalled depth of our expertise, which builds on the experience of vocational education and training development in EU Member States, and incorporates perspectives from developing countries, which are often more relevant to the context of partner countries. While the single perspective of Member State bilateral donors is often valuable, it is not necessarily applicable to local contexts or to different stakeholders' specific needs.

We work with stakeholders at all levels, from the whole gamut of European institutions to the business community, social partners and other civil society organisations, in Member States and in our partner countries. We coordinate actions with our sister agencies Eurofound and Cedefop to ensure that the experience of Member States in developing and implementing lifelong learning policies is shared beyond the EU. We have close relations with other EU agencies, taking a proactive role in the EU Agencies Network where we lead on a range of projects, including developing staff engagement surveys and analysing the use of enterprise social networking tools.



News in brief

Making systems work for everyone

Decentralisation in Ukraine

Our work on governance in Ukraine is linked to the decentralisation of the national vocational education system across 24 regions. We have secured involvement at the highest level nationally, including the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister – who is also Minister of Regional Development – and we work closely with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Policy, which is responsible for labour relations. We explored with them how new governance responsibilities would shift from the centre to the regions, focusing on improving and increasing the scope of work at regional level. We helped articulate the mandate for the regions to take responsibility for specific vocational education functions. This includes discussions on how to set up regional vocational education councils, which are being established as part of new legislation, and we are providing advice on the functions and membership of the councils.

News in brief

Making systems work for everyone

Money talks

All public policy depends on the availability of monetary resources, and its effective and efficient delivery is structurally determined by the financing system in place. Getting funding and financing right is part of good governance, but with so many stakeholders in the vocational education and training policy arena, there is no simple route that partner countries can take to a holistic, strategic approach. We have developed a methodology to support the policy dialogue on financing. Our overarching aim is to help partner countries change the way they address financing in vocational education and training, moving from a technical view focused on monetary and resourcing aspects to a more holistic, policy-oriented vision.

We enjoy good working relationships with leading international and regional organisations, as well as civil society organisations working in human capital development. We invite representatives from numerous platforms and networks to exchange their expertise or experience with us, as part of our project work and in activities at regional or corporate level.

International organisations and donors are important partners within the framework of the European Consensus on Development, and the human capital dimension of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. The Sustainable Development Agenda includes two specific goals on education and employment, and drives the strategy and activities of the Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG-TVET), in which we are active participants.

UNESCO convened the IAG-TVET network in 2008, to coordinate the delivery of policy advice, programmes, and research. It leverages the input of different organisations working with partner countries to design and implement more effective policies. The IAG-TVET has proven effective at strengthening international and regional cooperation by facilitating consultations, reviewing global trends, organising conferences, and promoting vocational education and skills within international policy agreements.

“We invite representatives from numerous platforms and networks to exchange their expertise or experience with us.”



News in brief

Working for a global Europe

A growing family

2017 saw two newcomers join the Torino Process family, as Libya and Algeria participated for the first time. Meanwhile, the IRADA project, which contributes to achieving sustainable and inclusive economic development and improving job prospects in Tunisia, is drawing on the Torino Process as a reference, both for the network it has established and for the project report, to support larger interventions in the country.

Looking forward: Is the future already here?



The notion that the future has somehow 'arrived' is based on the widespread development and use of artificial intelligence, robotics, and other advanced technologies that were once deemed 'futuristic'. As we learn to harness these capabilities in a realistic manner, their impact on how we develop and utilise human capital will increase. This means a greater demand for people with the skills to manage artificial intelligence and related digital technologies; and an increase in the value of soft skills – human-focused, creative, and generalist capabilities that are least likely to be replaced by automation.

In a post-industrial society, where more and more workers find themselves – by choice or otherwise – in the so-called gig economy, resilience becomes a core attribute. As High Representative Mogherini points out in her preface, resilience is a vital function of countries and economies. And it depends for its vitality on the individual resilience of citizens, which in turn depends on a broad approach to training and skills. What does this mean for education and training systems? It means we need more and more young people coming into the labour market with an array of competences, having gained experience of different types of industries and services, having explored the wider applications of entrepreneurship, and having the confidence to present themselves and their skills effectively.

Looking forward:
Is the future already here?

The demand for this combination of high-tech and soft skills contributes to the blurring of systems – academic and vocational, formal and informal, analogue and digital – as pathways multiply in some parts and converge in others. For example, technology and engineering institutes in China have recently begun working with liberal arts colleges in the United States, because they recognise the value of critical thinking, communication, creativity and leadership in the 21st century labour market – skills that are traditionally associated with a liberal arts education. In the EU, the EU-funded STARTS project is successfully encouraging collaboration in research and innovation between science and technology, and the arts.

“Creativity in particular cuts across sectors and drives innovation and entrepreneurship. Its economic value is beyond question, and the focus is increasingly on ways to generate and develop creativity as a capacity.”

Creativity in particular cuts across sectors and drives innovation and entrepreneurship. Its economic value is beyond question, and the focus is increasingly on ways to generate and develop creativity as a capacity. Real life experience seems to be key, gained through precisely the kind of portfolio that vocational education and training and work-based learning can offer.

News in brief
Promoting employability

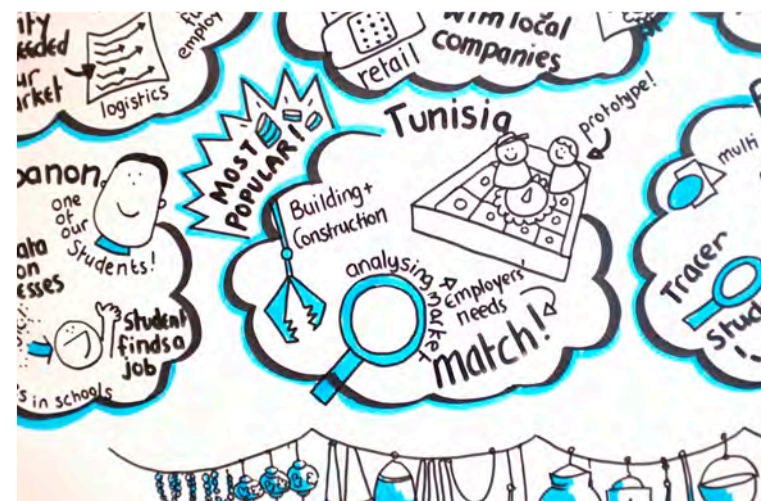
Work-based learning goes East

In 2017 we held a conference in Chisinau, Moldova, to mark the end of the first phase of the three-year Skills Connexion project. The project is aimed at helping countries in Eastern Europe, plus Kazakhstan, to embed work-based learning in their vocational education systems. Delegates visited Nisporeni Vocational School, which trains some 400 young people in agriculture, winemaking, information and communication technology, catering, and industrial trades. The school works with local companies, offering one-year programmes in which students split their time between class-based activities and supervised on-the-job learning. The programme is part of the country's efforts to improve the employability of its young people and provide businesses with the skilled employees they need. We are helping partner countries assess work-based learning opportunities, from apprenticeships to internships and in-school workplace simulation, with a view to defining options for expansion.



Looking forward:
Is the future already here?

Building flexibility into the vocational education and training route gives it an advantage over 'monolithic' higher education courses. Policy makers in Singapore have also shifted their focus from academic courses to work-based learning, as they strive to break up monolithic pathways and promote the sense of innovative spirit their economy needs. It is not a spirit that can be summoned on demand, nor is it encouraged in rigid systems. The paradox is that to maintain the system, they need to completely rethink the system. Finland has taken bold steps to break away from the dichotomy of academic versus vocational education and training altogether. The emphasis there is just on learning, and everyone learns different things at different rates, and will graduate with a different mix of skills.



ETF: Engaging the future



Ultimately, none of this happens in a vacuum, and each country must construct a system for its own needs, based on its own communities and structures. Identifying the related competitive advantages is a good starting point. At a regional level, what type of investments are being attracted, or could potentially be attracted. Decisions can then be made about how to steer the creation of skills in order to capitalise on those investments. That's where the ETF is aiming to help, either through projects on entrepreneurial communities, governance, quality assurance, teacher training, and so on, or at the macro level, through system reforms, legislation, and policy development. But we need to work out how all of this gets translated into initiatives at a regional and local level, and to bring in the relevant actors. In fact, we are increasingly complementing what we do with support to implementation, as well.

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Being enterprising in Tunisia

We partnered with the Tunisian Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment to host 'Envie d'entreprendre Forum 3.0', an event focused on developing the entrepreneurial spirit. Tunisian vocational education students, teachers, and entrepreneurs, as well as representatives of the Government and the EU, took part in discussions centred on what it means to have an entrepreneurial spirit. During the event, Tunisian Secretary of State for Training and Entrepreneurship, Saida Ounissi, signed a Charter for developing the entrepreneurial spirit, as part of wider vocational education reforms in the country. The 21st century workforce needs both the right skills and an entrepreneurial mindset, and Tunisia is keen to build entrepreneurship into its vocational training as a key competence.

News in brief

Making systems work for everyone

Employers on board

The growing focus on vocational education financing is evidence that ideas for reform are being put into practice, not just kept in a drawer. Drafting a strategy is only the first stage. Organising the funding for changes and new initiatives means progress is being made. Part of this story is the growing role of employers in vocational education reforms, particularly in the context of public-private partnerships. We are identifying possible case studies of public-private partnerships that are, or show the potential to become, sustainable. We are looking at countries with an established tradition of such partnerships, both in EU Member States and in partner countries such as Israel, Morocco and Turkey, and comparing their experience with other partner countries to see what makes them successful.

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The Torino Process is a well-established vehicle for the kind of complex analysis necessary to inform large-scale systemic change, and we have seen progress in participating countries. The first question now is how to go from a shared assessment, whether for each country’s stage of development or between different countries, to the necessary implementation. The answers will include looking at the quality of the analysis, reviewing the self-assessment at the heart of the Torino Process, and making sure there is sufficient rigour throughout. The second question is how to move from assessment to reform, through pilot projects and other methods, accepting that pilot projects can’t guarantee to produce positive results. We want to focus in each country on what we can take from the pilots we are running there, to become the seeds of transformation. The third area is having credible programmes for capacity building. This is where we can add value to our role of support to countries, in identifying sources of funding and approaches to help with capacity building at country level, primarily vis-à-vis European Union programmes.

Therefore, we see increased importance in our work with EU Delegations in the countries, and with institutions in Brussels. Our goal is to align the quality of assessment and reform potential with the capacity of the EU as a donor. We should be as fully involved as possible in the definition, monitoring, and evaluation of how European funds get used, drawing on our reputation for donor coordination to ensure programmes don't work in isolation. As an organisation, we remain committed to being both vocational education experts and negotiators who can facilitate policy learning and the implementation of reform. We have established and shared our expertise, we have created the Torino Process, we have developed and explained our methodologies. Our role is unique, because of our mandate to work hand-in-hand with government and social partners in our partner countries, and to support them in their own reform processes. And our reputation rests on the fact that we have no other agenda.



News in brief Improving skills

Teachers in focus in Turkey

In 2017 Çetin Altan Vocational School in Izmir Province hosted two week-long workshops for some 130 vocational teachers from the surrounding province, gaining a reputation as a leading centre for teachers' professional development. Attendees worked on the theory and practice of digital teaching methods, using the Sakai learning management system. Turkey has prioritised up-skilling teachers in the realm of new learning technologies, and the workshops represented a model for good practice in professional development. We're supporting Çetin Altan Vocational School's efforts as one of 14 demonstration projects across South Eastern Europe and Turkey. The projects aim to show how professional development can directly address teachers' needs, and support them at local level in putting new skills into practice.

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Improving skills

Many pathways

The view that validation of prior learning doesn't work still persists, even among some EU donors. According to this view, the only way to obtain proper vocational training is to follow a specific course and gain a certificate. This rules out the possibility of following an alternative path, such as informal or non-formal on-the-job learning. Yet our experience shows that such routes can be very effective, and we help partner countries to advance their systems for the recognition of prior learning. This is consistent with the ETF position of encouraging lifelong learning, certification of adults, and certification of alternative routes, and relates to the advice we give on assessment and learning outcomes. It suits countries such as Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where many citizens who go abroad come back with new skills and a partial qualification. With an effective validation system in place, they can complete that qualification on their return, bringing new skills and experience to their home labour market.

Italian philosopher Gloria Origgi writes that the defining elements of reputation are competence and character. The ETF has demonstrated its competence for nearly 25 years, helping to shape the conversation on skills that is now going on in the EU, and in our partner countries. And we are being contacted by more and more countries outside our current remit. Our character shows in every action we take. Despite being a relatively small player in a complex field, we are often the catalyst in bringing about reform, and we empower those with a reform mindset. Our challenge is to continue to develop and grow as an organisation. Expectations are changing faster than ever, whether it's the expectations of young people going into training, or of employers and industries, or society at large.

They all expect us to keep up with these changes, to open up more, perhaps become a little better known. In so doing, our only goal is to put our competence and our character at the service of others, sharing what we have learned, and offering what we can do in the hope that it may provide inspiration.





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LinkedIn

linkedin.com/company/european-training-foundation

E-mail

info@etf.europa.eu



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