

## PRESS FACTSHEET

# Kosovo<sup>1</sup>

### Growing the skills base for a brighter future

Kosovo has enjoyed recent positive growth, but as Europe's poorest country many challenges remain for policy-makers and other stakeholders to boost private sector development, build up governance and the rule of law and equip Kosovan youth with the right skills to make them attractive to employers.

The European Training Foundation actively supports government reform in vocational education and training, seen as a priority area to help bridge the mismatch between skills needs and education. Increasing the level and relevance of labour force skills and qualifications is a key challenge.

### Political context and priorities

The political situation in Kosovo has seen recent volatility with opposition party protest to the government signing agreements regulating relations with Serbia in various domains. The leaders of the five main parties did however take part in a joint roundtable in May 2016 as a sign of reconciliation. Key priorities for the government are identifying new sources of growth for the economy, increasing formality and implementing the reforms which will put the country on a more stable footing and boost its development. Key to this is tackling the above-mentioned skills gap, particularly among the 20% of the population between 15 and 24 years old.

### Socio-economic situation

The levels of employment in the private sector are still very low and there is a declining trend in women's position in the labour market. Kosovo's labour market demands technical profiles, which the vocational education and training system does not yet deliver in sufficient quantity and quality. The education system does not provide a sufficient level of pre-primary level education, which would be an important contribution to boosting Kosovo's socioeconomic development in the longer term. As the skills of graduates of vocational

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

education and training programmes are not adequately meeting labour market demands this is impeding business development.

### Education and labour policies

A policy – making priority is tackling the high rates of unemployment and gender gaps in the labour market in Kosovo. The EU Delegation is currently defining a significant intervention in education with a strong vocational education and training component, covering skills anticipation and matching, the validation of prior learning and continuing professional development of teachers and trainers. This intervention will address the current high dropout rates and poor pass rates from current VET programmes, promote career guidance for pupils and strengthen support given during the transition to work phase.

### EU support and the ETF

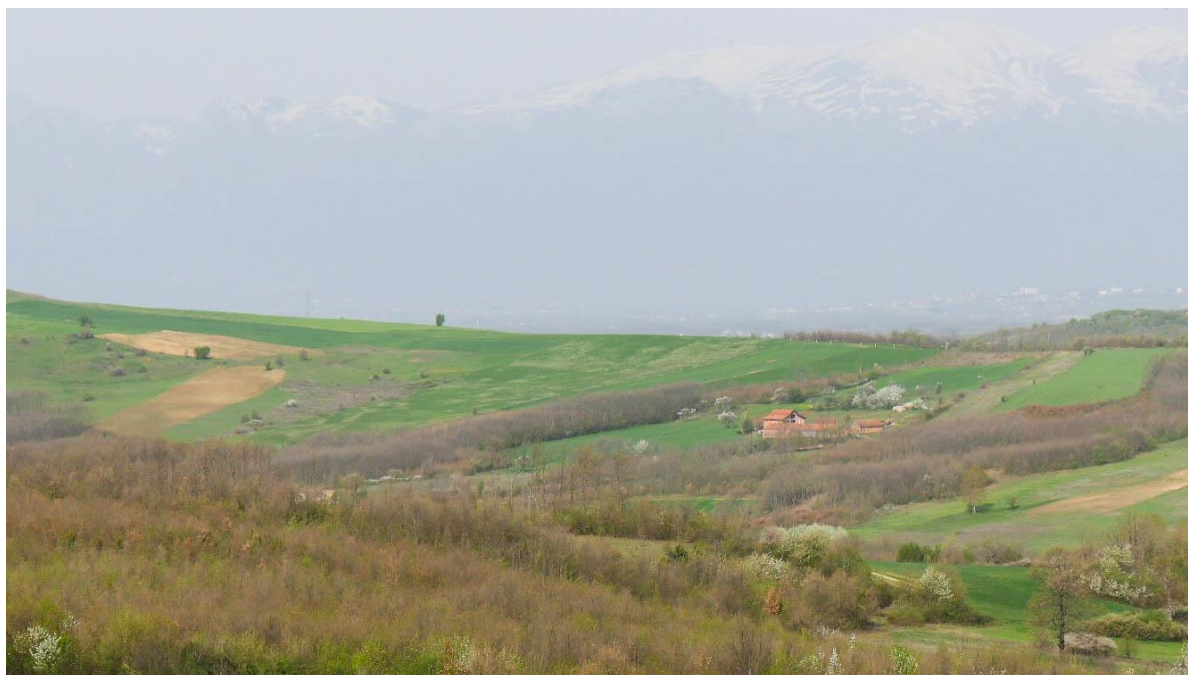
The European Union – both its member countries and its institutions, notably the European Commission – play a prominent role in the reconstruction and development of Kosovo. The EU is by far the single largest donor providing assistance to Kosovo and the Western Balkan region, and is at the forefront of the reconstruction effort. The Stabilisation and Association agreement between the EU and Kosovo entered into force in 2016. This will support the implementation of reforms and give Kosovo an opportunity to move closer to Europe.

Being the only EU agency working in foreign affairs, in 2018 the ETF is supporting the EU in Kosovo in the following areas:

- Supporting the inter-ministerial committee monitoring the Skills Visions 2020 project, including a review of human resource development and vocational education national bodies;
- Advising on the implementation of recognition of prior learning;
- Consulting on the alignment to the European Qualification Framework;
- Supporting progress monitoring in work-based learning, quality assurance, access to vocational education and qualifications, key competences and the professional development of teachers and trainers;
- Facilitating stakeholder participation in regional networks, including peer-learning activities in employability, qualifications, quality assurances and continuous professional development.

### Background

The **European Training Foundation (ETF)** is the agency of the European Union in charge of sustaining EU's candidate and neighbouring countries to reform their own education and labour market systems. By supporting human capital development, the ETF contributes to social and economic development and to long-term political stability in the EU neighbourhood. The ETF is based in Turin, Italy, and employs 130 staff.



For more info and photos, please contact us.

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