

PRESS FACTSHEET

Turkey

Skills matter for inclusive economic growth

Turkey, the EU's largest economic partner with around 40 percent of Turkish trade, is a European Union accession candidate country. Turkey has benefited significantly from deepening integration with the EU through the growing sophistication of both exports and imports and access to financing, namely through the so-called IPA II, the Instrument for Pre-Accession.

Within the accession process, **vocational education and skills are high on the policy agenda** of the Turkish Government. The European Training Foundation is supporting the EU and Turkey cooperate in this field: it helps developing education and training to boost employability, increase access to opportunity and promote social cohesion. In 2016 it has signed a strategic partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), with the aim of **increasing the role of the private sector** in supporting young people

Political context and priorities

Turkey is facing national and international challenges. The influx of more than 3 million Syrian refugees in 2015-6 created new social, economic and political demands, particularly in urban centres. Key priorities are the revitalising of private investment, boosting growth and achieving Turkey's accession to the EU.

Socio-economic situation

Although Turkey's growth prospects are reasonably robust, with an expected 4.7% growth rate for 2018 and the medium term, it faces challenges to moving into high-income status. Turkey's macroeconomic achievements are also being tested by an uncertain outlook. Domestic challenges and a deteriorating geopolitical environment have negatively impacted exports, investment, and growth. Low rates of labour market participation and employment, high informality and precarious and vulnerable employment disproportionately affect young people. Turkey continues to lag behind EU averages, and though economic growth has stimulated job creation, unemployment remains at 10.9%.

Education and labour policies

Progress has been made especially on the EU 2020 twofold target on education (i.e. reducing the early leavers and increasing tertiary attainment) and adult participation in lifelong learning (albeit from relatively low levels). To realize its underlying growth potential, Turkey needs to accelerate structural reforms in education and training and employment and improve trust in its institutions. Current focus is on better use of human capital through the pursuit of the education agenda and the deepening and widening of labour market reforms.

Targeted training will improve the qualifications of low-skilled workers and female labour force participation stimulated through flexible working conditions. In order to address these challenges, the implementation of strategies to align education and training policies with labour market needs is much needed.

EU support and the ETF

Turkey has been receiving substantial funds from the EU since 2001. EU allocations for IPA 2014-2020: €4,453.9 million (not including the allocation for Cross-border Cooperation), out of which 435.0 for education, employment and social policies¹. Human capital development remains high on the agenda of the 2014-20 programming period of EU external assistance to Turkey.

Being the only EU agency working in the EU's external relations, the ETF supports the EU's agenda by helping Turkey in developing education and training to boost employability, increase access to opportunity and promote social cohesion. More specifically, it cooperates with both public and private Turkish institutions to: promote work-based learning; make sure that vocational training is of high-quality; enhance more access to vocational education and the validation of professional competences; strengthen key competencies including entrepreneurial learning and initial and continuous professional development of teachers and trainers. Small Business Act (SBA) assessment and related initiatives are part of this cooperation.

In 2016 the ETF has signed a strategic partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), with the aim of increasing the role of the private sector in supporting young people, especially young women, to integrate into the workforce.

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.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey_en





For more info and photos, please contact us.

Contact details

Daria Santucci

Press Office - Communication Department

European Training Foundation

Villa Gualino, Viale Settimio Severo 65, 10133 Torino, Italy

+39 0116302260 - mediarelations@etf.europa.eu - www.etf.europa.eu

[@etfeuropa](https://twitter.com/etfeuropa)