

DEVELOPMENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY IN TURKEY

**Progress towards the medium-term deliverables
of the Riga Conclusions in the period 2015–19**

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PREFACE

This report presents vocational education and training (VET) policy developments in Turkey between 2015 and 2017. It covers all five Europe-wide priority areas or medium-term deliverables (MTDs) agreed at Riga in June 2015. The report has been drafted within the terms of the mandate given to the European Training Foundation (ETF) by the Riga Conclusions to monitor and analyse progress made by the EU candidate countries towards the MTDs. This document is based on the annual monitoring reports submitted by Turkey to the ETF.

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ASPECTS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXT AND POLICIES IN 2015–19

In 1987, Turkey applied to join what was then the European Economic Community. In 1997, it was declared eligible to join the EU. Accession negotiations started in 2005.

At the beginning of the reporting period, the population of Turkey was some 80.8 million (see Annex for key country statistics), with one in five people aged between 15 and 24 years. The country had a service-oriented economy, with this sector accounting for 55% of gross domestic product (GDP) and industry accounting for 30%. The structure of employment followed the same pattern: the majority of the country's workforce was employed in services (55% in 2018) while the agriculture sector employed nearly 27% of the workforce. In 2018, the economy grew at an annual rate of 2.6%, down from 7.4% in 2017.

The labour market was characterised by low participation and sizeable gender gaps. The employment rate in Turkey continued to grow in the years prior to 2018 and stood at 55.6% in 2018 for those aged between 20 and 64. However, it still remained significantly below the EU average (70.1% in 2015). This is partly due to the low share of women in employment (35.2%). Despite recent improvements, this remained the lowest among all candidate countries, representing half the EU average (67.4%). Unemployment in Turkey was stable at some 11% in the past three years. One in five young people was unemployed and one in four was not in education, training or employment (NEET) in Turkey in 2018. The rate of young people aged 15 to 24 years who were not in employment, education or training had been following a downward trend since 2015 but was still well above the EU average of 10.5% and was characterised by a prominent overrepresentation of women. Half the country's workforce is low skilled, although there has been some progress in recent years and the proportion of the population aged 30 to 34 that had completed tertiary education had increased to some 30% in 2018.

Turkey's performance with regard to the Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) benchmarks has been mixed. The country progressed in terms of two education-related headlines – increasing tertiary attainment (from 23.6% in 2015 to 28.8% in 2018) and reducing the rate of early leavers from education and training (from 36.4% in 2015 to 31% in 2018). The rate of early leavers remained high, however, despite the fact that compulsory education in Turkey had been increased from 8 to 12 years since the 2012/13 school year. The high rates of early leavers and NEETs accounted for Turkey having one of the lowest educational attainment rates for young adults (25 to 34-year-olds), with more than one in two of them not attaining upper secondary education. Adult participation in lifelong learning has improved slightly in recent years, increasing from 5.5% in 2015 to 6.2% in 2018, but remained low compared to the EU average of 11%. Underachievement in reading, mathematics and science remains an issue in Turkey: between 40% and 51% of 15-year-olds in the country were functionally illiterate in each tested subject area, far above EU averages and increasing compared to PISA 2012 results, thus raising concerns regarding the quality of education in the country.

In the Turkish education system, VET programmes are available to students in secondary education and higher education (Özer, 2018; Özer, 2019). At secondary education level, VET is structured as a four-year education and training programme. In terms of secondary VET education, students can

choose from two types of VET institution: vocational and technical Anatolian high schools¹ and Vocational Training Centres (VTCs).

Initial VET (IVET) in Turkey was provided in two major forms: through vocational school programmes comprising internships and through apprenticeship schemes implemented by VTCs in cooperation with enterprises. Approximately 49% of the country's upper secondary students were enrolled in VET in 2015 (2 788 000 students in total)².

Opportunities for continuing and lifelong learning education and training for all (workers, jobseekers, disadvantaged persons) are jointly designed and implemented with stakeholders. Formal and non-formal ISCED 3 provision for adults took place in a wide range of institutions, including public education centres, vocational education centres, tourism education centres, open education institutions and vocational and technical education centres. VET schools provide VET courses funded by the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) as part of the active labour market policies that were implemented. The private sector was also involved based on protocols signed with the Ministry of National Education.

The Ministry of National Education's Strategic Plan (2015–19), the Vocational and Technical Education Strategy Paper and Action Plan (2014–18), the National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014–18) and the National Employment Strategy of Turkey (2014–23) comprise the framework within which Turkey has committed to implement and monitor the Riga MTDs. Turkey agreed to work on the implementation and monitoring of all five MTDs, while prioritising and conducting – with the support of the ETF – an ex-ante assessment of two of them: (1) promoting work-based learning in all its forms (MTD1); and (2) introducing systematic approaches and opportunities for initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school and work-based settings (MTD5).

In the period 2018–19, national and international studies and surveys confirmed that acquiring the right skills remained a challenge in Turkey. This was strongly corroborated by evidence provided by employers' organisations. Findings from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC, 2015) indicated that, compared with adults in the other participating OECD countries, adults in Turkey showed below-average proficiency in all three domains assessed (literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments). The low average proficiency in literacy and numeracy reflected the relatively low levels of educational

¹ Vocational and technical Anatolian high schools provide students with both academic and vocational skills, and it is expected that graduates from these types of schools can choose whether to participate in the workforce directly and/or continue to higher education. In the first year (9th grade), the common curriculum, which is academically weighted and valid for all high school types in Turkey, is implemented. In 10th grade, students can select their vocational fields based on their interests and level of academic achievement. After choosing a vocational field, students in the 11th grade can select branches and, once they have completed all courses successfully, they are awarded diplomas in the 12th grade. VET is provided in 54 fields and 199 branches in vocational and technical Anatolian high schools (Ministry of National Education, 2018). Programme types in the vocational and technical Anatolian high schools can be grouped into Anatolian technical programmes and Anatolian vocational programmes. The technical programmes include an intensely theoretical education programme while the vocational programmes provide mainly applied training to students. Over four years of education and training, students in Anatolian technical programmes engage in internships for 40 days, while students in Anatolian vocational programmes engage in internships for three days a week in the final year of their programme. The Anatolian technical programmes and some of the project-based Anatolian vocational programmes, which are selected by the Ministry of National Education, accept students on the basis of their central examination scores.

² The share of VET enrolments had been constantly increasing in the previous decade.

attainment among adults in Turkey: nearly 80% of 55 to 65-year-olds and over 50% of 25 to 34-year-olds had not completed upper secondary education. Ongoing education and training reforms in the country focused on enhancing the educational attainment and skills of the workforce to contribute to the goal of moving towards a value-added, innovation- and technology-based economy.

Turkey	2017	2018	2019
Education and skills			
Early leavers from education and training (% aged 18–24)	32.5	31	m
Youth not in employment, education/training (% aged 15–24)	24.2	24.4	m
Participation rates in centre-based ECEC of children under age 3	m	m	m
Individuals who have basic/above basic overall digital skills (% of population aged 16–74)	34	m	36
Employment			
Employment rate (% of population aged 20–64)	55.3	55.6	m
Unemployment rate (% of population aged 15–74)	10.9	10.9	m
Gender employment gap (percentage points)	41.6	40.8	m
Gross disposable household income (GDHI) per capita growth	m	m	m

Sources: Eurostat, Eurydice

m: missing

Turkey faces challenges in making productive use of its human capital (European Commission, 2018). While higher labour force participation is associated with lower levels of productivity (as those with lower productivity enter the labour market), the unemployment rate remains persistently high among more highly educated people. Enhancing competitiveness through a more inclusive and better-skilled labour force will be key to achieving sustainable and inclusive growth. Turkey should give a higher priority to enacting active labour market policies to introduce structural reforms and improving synergy among its social, education and labour market policies. Informality in the labour market remains high despite an increase in monitoring and soft measures: in 2017, the proportion of unregistered workers increased by 0.5 percentage points to 34.0% (29.2% for men and 44.6% for women) and 22.1% in the non-agricultural sector. The number of unregistered Syrian workers is estimated at between 700 000 and 800 000³.

The Eleventh Development Plan (2019–23) includes education and employment policies for the transformation and improvement of human capital. Turkey's Education Vision 2023 (launched in October 2018) aims to contribute to these goals and has set new priorities in all areas of education, including VET. The Ministry of National Education aims to reorganise the VET system in a variety of ways (e.g. centres of VET excellence, a smart specialisation strategy). Some of the targeted areas are the national qualifications framework (NQF), work-based learning development, CPD for teachers, skills for inclusive growth sectors, monitoring of labour market developments and evidence of skills relevance. The country strategy paper sets out the priorities for the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) in selected sectors in Turkey for the years 2014 to 2020. According to this paper, actions that are directed at improving the quality of schools in line with the quality assurance principles of European Quality Assurance for VET (EQAVET) and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF), the modernisation of vocational and technical education and lifelong learning

³ OECD, ETF, EU, EBRD, *SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2019*, 2019.

systems will be supported. The Education Vision 2023 document encompasses all these developments and their future implementation. Furthermore, it is committed to strengthening the relationship between education, employment and production in vocational and technical education. The CPD of VET teachers has become one of the key policy areas of Education Vision 2023, as it aims to improve and update vocational teachers' teaching performance. The vision also includes infrastructure reform, a focus on particular priority areas (such as educational function, teachers and administrators, the school environment and governance) and sets concrete three-year targets. It includes concrete actions on the five Riga MTDs in the technical and vocational education sub-sector.

As per Ministry of National Education reporting in 2020, 25 centres of vocational excellence are expected to be established by various business sectors. Fifteen sectoral centres of vocational excellence are going to be established by the ministry to improve the specific field competences of teachers working in VET institutions. On-the-job training and distance learning methodologies will be used at these centres. Fourteen of the centres will cover 25 professional fields; one of them will focus on foreign languages, mathematics and science for VET.

The Turkish Economic Reform Programme 2020–2022 is very welcome – many of its measures are focused on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) policy and implementation related to the Riga MTDs:

Reform measures

Measure 18: Preparing digital content and skill-based programmes according to curriculum

Measure 19: Updating curricula in vocational and technical education

Measure 20: Supporting applications for inventions, patents and utility models useful in vocational and technical education

Measure 23: Establishing a private sector cooperation protocol for vocational training and skills development SVET (MEGEP) Strengthening the VET system in Turkey project

1. MTD 1 – Work-based learning with special focus on apprenticeships

1.1. Baseline situation in 2015

Turkey became a member of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships in June 2015.

The legal basis for work-based learning in Turkey was provided by the Vocational Training Act and the Law on Apprenticeships (1977). Practical training was compulsory in all formal VET programmes.

The social partners were actively involved in the implementation and governance of work-based learning schemes. Employers were obliged by law to offer internship places to students from VET schools. According to the Vocational Training Act, companies that employed more than 10 employees had to provide skills training to secondary school students.

Internships formed an integral part of the four-year secondary school programmes. In these programmes, students would usually spend two days a week at school and three days with the company.

Apprenticeship schemes were outside of formal education. They combined periods of practical training in enterprises with periods of theoretical instruction provided in VTCs (usually one day per week). The length of apprenticeships varied from two to four years, depending on the profession. The number of apprentices was nearly 200 000 (annual figure) but had been steadily decreasing in the previous 10 years.

Both apprentices and students were entitled to an apprenticeship wage or training pay, respectively.

Although apprenticeships in Turkey were well established and had a long tradition, they faced the challenge of becoming less attractive to young people, especially in the crafts and trades and in small businesses. The main concerns regarding internships for VET students related to their quality and effective implementation. Awareness of these challenges prompted Turkish policy makers to prioritise work-based learning in the context of the follow-up to the Riga Conclusions in 2015. The policy options considered in that regard related to improving the supply of and access to apprenticeships in Turkey, improving the quality of internships for VET students and improving data collection and analysis for work-based learning.

The Statistical Institute launched the Official Statistical Programme to integrate VET work-based learning data in 2016.

1.2. Policy developments between 2015 and 2019

Between 2015 and 2017, Turkey adopted amendments in its work-based learning legislation. The aim was to make existing apprenticeships more attractive and to promote entrepreneurship through apprenticeships. The new legislation provided for more apprenticeship places, fewer financial burdens for employers who were engaged in these schemes and incentives for start-ups established by apprenticeship scheme graduates.

An amendment to the existing Active Labour Market Services Regulation was enacted in February 2016. This increased the duration of and access to publicly funded work-based learning. The amendment also allowed students from vocational and technical secondary schools to benefit from work-based learning programmes funded and implemented by ISKUR.

Within the reporting period, the recent amendments to the Apprenticeship Law (passed on 2 December 2016), the implementation of which began in the 2017/18 school year, include the following:

- Apprenticeships are included in compulsory formal education, serving as an alternative pathway to school-based vocational education. The new legal provisions give more young people the opportunity to participate in apprenticeship schemes in VET, while helping crafts, trades and small businesses to find more apprentices.
- State support is ensured to eliminate wage differences among apprentices in companies of different sizes and to reduce the burden on enterprises: the wages received by students in all enterprises (small and large) are not less than 30% of the minimum wage in Turkey, while interns can claim at least 15 to 30% of the minimum wage (depending on the number of employees in the company providing the training). Candidate apprentices⁴ are exempt from revenue stamps,

⁴ Candidate apprentices are below 14 and they attend one day a week in the workplace. They receive theoretical training one day a week at the VTC.

income tax, tax refunds, severance payments and similar financial requirements, while their social insurance contributions are paid by the state. Two-thirds of the skills training and internship fees paid to apprentices and vocational secondary school students by employers are covered by the state. All payments made by the companies to students and (candidate) apprentices are exempt from tax.

- Students who successfully complete apprenticeship training are given the opportunity to set up their own business by receiving a master craftsperson certificate and a business-opening certificate. Turkey's SME development agency (KOSGEB) provides a grant worth TL 50 000 and an interest-free loan of TL 100 000 to graduates who open their own business. In this way, it promotes entrepreneurship through apprenticeships.

In recent years, two other interlinked phenomena, which are exerting a negative impact on human capital development and use in Turkey, can be observed. The first is the shrinking pool of skills available to the economy, as evidenced by the decreasing VET participation rate, including apprenticeships. The second is the persistence of skills mismatches (both vertical and horizontal) that undermine the potential of human capital in the country. Paradoxically, VET is also affected by skills mismatch, indicating the need for more effective VET provision and career guidance.

The administrative structure of the Ministry of National Education was changed with the introduction of Presidential Decree No 1 on 10 July 2018. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, the Business Council of Turkey, the Vocational Qualification Institute, KOSGEB, the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB), trade unions and employers, trades and craftsmen associations, education unions and sector representatives are the primary stakeholders in vocational and technical education. The policies related to vocational and technical education are determined in cooperation with these stakeholders. These policies are implemented via action plans and are monitored and evaluated at semi-annual intervals.

Vocational and technical education programmes are developed with a view to ensuring national and international comparability in a manner that will guarantee the acquisition of wide-ranging, area- and branch-specific skills by taking into consideration international standards and classifications (e.g. ISCED F, ISCO, and STCW). In the 2018/19 school year, education programmes were updated and implemented in 54 fields and 199 branches in vocational and technical secondary education institutions. In the Vocational Training Centres, educational activities have been implemented in 27 fields and 142 branches since the 2017/18 school year.

The various assessment reports produced by Turkey's Ministry of National Education between 2018 and early 2020, including a number of labour market research reports, indicate that a significant proportion of employers have difficulties in filling vacant positions or finding employees in certain professions. One of the main reasons is a lack of staff with sufficient work experience; a lack of qualified professional skills is also often mentioned.

One of the key milestones in Education Vision 2023 is the restructuring of vocational and technical education so that it responds to industry's demand for evolving technologies and allows for the efficient involvement of the public and private sector in planning and decision-making processes. One of the ultimate aims is to increase on-the-job training opportunities and to engage industry more actively in vocational and technical education processes. Other aims include enhancing the possibilities for cooperation with industry leaders; implementing projects that are supported by sectoral cooperation protocols and good practices at national and international levels; and allowing graduates to transition into higher education in their respective fields.

Apprenticeships, widely recognised as a type of VET that is closest to the labour market and thus providing the skills that companies need, are on the rise in Turkey. In 2018, however, the number of apprenticeships dropped by 10%, which may indicate problems in the sustainability of the recent reform. Moreover, current numbers (around 100 000) are still far below the number that existed 10 to 15 years ago (around 200 000 apprentices per year). The potential of the steadily growing Turkish economy to offer such training places is definitely much higher.

An analysis of the national reports revealed a certain paradox: VET funding has increased in recent years (including generous funding for work-based learning) and the number of VET teachers has also increased. At the same time, however, VET participation is decreasing (the cost per student nearly doubled between 2013 and 2018). The financial incentives offered to companies for work-based learning (traineeships) introduced in 2017 seem to be having an effect but will need to be reviewed if they are not generous enough, have negative side effects or compete with apprenticeships.

There is a strong belief in Turkey that the most straightforward way of improving the professional skills of VET students is to increase the weighting of applied education, including on-the-job training and internships. Measures are being taken to change regulations for VET schools to increase their 'revolving funds' (revolving funds that support the 'business-type activities'). In the first 10 months of 2019, the revolving funds made available to VET institutions increased by 40% compared to the same period in the previous year, reaching TL 217 million. This remarkable increase in the availability of revolving funds in 2019 is also emphasised in an analysis conducted by Eğitim-Bir-Sen (Yurdakul, 2019). It is envisaged that the gains from production will increase even more by encouraging the production made within the scope of revolving funds in VET institutions.

In 2019, assessments were conducted in relation to graduates of VTCs who could not receive a high school diploma even after four years of education. This limitation reduced students' preferences for VTCs. The Ministry of National Education revised the process and a regulation was enacted to enable them to obtain a high school diploma. In the new model, students who successfully complete particular courses in VTCs will be entitled to receive a high school diploma. With this new model, it is envisaged that demand by students who aim to be apprentices, journeymen or masters will increase. This application is being evaluated as an important opportunity for VTC students in Eğitim-Bir-Sen's analysis report (Yurdakul, 2019).

Finally, the number of exams held to allow VTC students to obtain their apprenticeship and mastery certificates was increased from two to six per year. This means that students who have apprenticeship or mastery skills no longer need to wait for exams, which previously were held only twice a year. In addition, exams can be held every month in provincial or vocational training centres, the location of which can be determined as needed. Within the framework of the regulation, it was decided that theoretical exams for apprenticeship and mastery certificates will be conducted as computer-based exams and the first application was conducted successfully. The e-exam centres in all 81 provinces are now available for theoretical exams for apprenticeship and mastery certificates.

The above developments point to issues relating to the attractiveness of VET and the efficiency of VET funding and VET provision. Analysing the real potential and setting clear targets for apprenticeships could help policy makers to achieve a better balance in VET provision and in making related decisions on VET financing. Current processes that monitor the quality of VET (including self-assessment, quality audits and quality indexes of schools) do not yet fully include work-based learning, and specifically apprenticeships, taking place in companies. The Ministry of National

Education is aware of this and more efforts are needed to close the gap in quality assurance through innovative projects and other initiatives.

Recent government measures to increase demand for VET (e.g. awarding the title of technician to all graduates of vocational and technical education institutions) and the body of initiatives announced in the Education Vision 2023 to raise the attractiveness of VET are promising. Policies aimed at improving VET access and participation need to pay special attention to career guidance at an early stage of education (career education in the curriculum, better synergies with ISKUR services). Policies also need to provide better support for VET students in their transition from school to work as a relatively high and increasing share of students aim to continue in higher education and not join the labour market.

Efforts made in relation to school-based VET with in-school work-based learning in school labs, workshops, kitchens, restaurants, junior or practice firms and simulated or real business projects or assignments are commended.

Although centres of VET excellence are a relatively new concept in the Turkish education system, efforts have been accelerated by the sector in this area due to the potential benefits of such centres. Currently, one such centre of excellence is under construction in the plastic sector. The Turkish Plastic Industrialists Research and Development Foundation (PAGEV) is constructing the centre in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and it is expected to be functional in 2021.

The ETF has been working closely with the Ministry of National Education in implementing the Riga MTD on work-based learning. Following joint actions by the ministry and the ETF in 2018 and 2019 on traineeships in IVET and the preparation of a quality improvement plan for traineeships in Turkey, it was agreed to work jointly in 2019 and 2020 on a cost-benefit analysis of apprenticeships as a tool to stimulate the supply of vocational training places by companies. This aims to support Turkey's MTD on work-based learning along the lines of policy option 2, indicated in the ex-ante impact assessment for work-based learning, which was previously conducted.

2. MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to initial and continuing VET

2.1. Baseline situation in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the development of a national approach to quality assurance was well advanced and a quality assurance National Reference Point was established. The Ministry of National Education, the Turkish Quality Association, the Board of Inspection, the Internal Audit Unit and provincial and district organisations had a mandate in relation to quality assurance in IVET. The Vocational Qualifications Authority had the mandate for continuing VET (CVET) and adult education, and the Council for Higher Education was responsible for post-secondary VET. The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) funded a project entitled Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Turkey in 2012. This represented an important attempt to finalise the development of a national quality assurance approach, including the establishment of a National Quality Assurance Centre for VET, which steered the various groups involved in quality assurance (Ministry of National Education, related institutions, NGOs, training providers and social partners) and the development of a quality assurance framework using the EQAVET Reference Framework as a reference standard.

The E-graduate system was introduced by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey in 2007. It had become a web-based data management system that continued to track TVET graduates by storing data on their employment status, as well as data on student enrolment, attendance, examination entries, grades, report cards and information related to work-based learning. The E-graduate system monitored transitions from VET to work and included data on graduates' school types, their transition to higher education, the sectors they worked in and the remuneration they received.

2.2. Policy developments between 2015 and 2019

Turkey devised a national quality assurance approach using the EQAVET framework. It adopted a National Education Quality Framework, a far broader document, in 2015. Compared to the other candidate countries, Turkey reported that it had consulted and shared decision making with the highest number of stakeholders when developing the quality assurance approach. The national quality assurance approach is applicable to both IVET and CVET but does not address work-based learning associated with either IVET or CVET. The approach has been formally agreed and its partial implementation began in 2016. All EQAVET indicators are used (occasionally, not yet on a regular basis) to assess the quality of IVET, while two indicators (1A and 1B) are used systematically to assess CVET. Turkey developed plans to finalise the piloting of the quality monitoring and evaluation system with a view to mainstreaming it in the near future.

One of the key pillars of Education Strategy 2023 is to increase the spread of digital skills by further increasing cooperation with stakeholders, including the private sector. The Ministry of National Education has established integrated online e-platforms, e.g. the Turkish VET Map, which was launched for all provinces in Turkey in 2019 (<http://meslekiegitimharitasi.meb.gov.tr/>), and the My Job My Life platform (<https://meslegimhayatim.meb.gov.tr/>). These platforms, among many others, aim at bringing all stakeholders together, including students, teachers, graduates, public institutions and the private sector (and other interested parties). In the Ministry of National Education's 2019 Annual Monitoring and Assessment Report, it is clearly stated that all the above platforms have had a huge impact on the usage of digital skills at all levels of the system. They have been very beneficial to the ministry in supporting policy actions, skills governance and the attractiveness of TVET in Turkey.

In terms of developing a new ICT curriculum, together with the e-training of teachers, the Fatih project, a national long-term project aimed at effectively integrating technology into all schools in the country, was launched. Turkey has a well-developed system for collecting labour market data, including skills. The E-graduate system (<https://emezun.meb.gov.tr/>), which is managed by the Ministry of National Education, monitors the transition from VET to work and includes data on the school types attended by VET graduates, their year of graduation, whether they went on to higher education, their work sectors, the relationship between the subject they studied and the field they work in, and remuneration. It tracks students' achievements in grades and subjects; is used to compare regions, schools and programmes; and inform policy development and international surveys. In 2016–2017, the Turkish Statistical Institute launched the Official Statistical Programme to integrate VET work-based learning data for monitoring purposes.

Using its own funding, Turkey has made SELFIE (a tool designed to help schools embed digital technologies into teaching, learning and student assessment) available for primary, secondary and vocational schools throughout the country. It is used by thousands of schools – not just those with advanced levels of infrastructure, equipment and technology use. The Ministry of National Education has a designated department working on digital skills in education: the Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies.

3. MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible and permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

3.1. Baseline situation in 2015

Upper secondary education (of which VET is a part) became compulsory in the country in the 2012/13 school year. VET students accounted for almost half of upper secondary enrolments (49%) and the figure was constantly rising over the previous decade.

Regular promotional activities, such as vocational and technical education fairs, career fairs and skills competitions were conducted to attract learners to VET. Companies received tax incentives to establish private vocational schools.

Psychological and educational guidance was offered in formal education. Guidance and career planning lessons, which included the opportunity to visit VET schools, were offered in grade 8 of compulsory education (the last year of lower secondary education).

A comprehensive national qualifications framework (the Turkish Qualifications Framework: TQF) was established and was awaiting legislation.

Turkey already had some procedures and practices in place for validating non-formal and informal learning. The country had adopted relevant legislation based on which it had developed procedures and identified institutions to validate non-formal and informal learning for qualification levels 1–5.

The Ministry of National Education undertook pilot projects focused on the validation of non-formal and informal learning ((VNFIL) and their number was increasing. VNFIL was one of the six priorities of the Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014–18). The Ministry of National Education adopted a national framework and operational guidelines for the recognition of prior learning.

In 2018, a number of actions were taken: the Regulation on Quality Assurance came into force; the TQF Communication Strategy and Quality Assurance Handbook were prepared; qualification type descriptors were drafted; the Qualifications Database of Turkey was enriched; the TQF website was improved; conferences were held and awareness-raising activities were carried out.

Following the efficient implementation of the TQF within the reporting period, the focus was on quality assurance structures and practices, which are comparable, transparent and compatible with international approaches. In 2019, for the first time, a systematic structure and an integrated quality assurance approach were implemented at national level. The Quality Assurance Paper for the qualifications provided by the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) was prepared and approved by the TQF Council at the end of 2019.

3.2. Policy developments between 2015 and 2019

The actions taken by Turkey during the reporting period concerned VET provision, outreach and permeability, and TQF development. Turkey continued to implement measures to improve access to VET. Legal provisions were adopted to enhance private VET provision: a new regulation that came into effect in March 2016 gave the private sector the right to set up private VET upper secondary schools not only in the Organised Industrial Zones, but also in other areas where necessary. MEGEP,

the vocational skills development project, which started in 2013 as a pilot initiative to meet the specific needs of vulnerable learners, was rolled out countrywide (81 provinces) in 2017.

Turkey has made considerable progress in developing its qualifications system, while implementing systems for VNFIL has been a priority. Since 2006, the country has had a VNFIL system for vocational qualifications. The VQA, a powerful platform that brings together the state, employees and employers in the country, runs this system. The ultimate aim of the system is to equip the labour force with up-to-date qualifications and recognise learning in the workplace.

The TQF supports the validation of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal contexts. The TQF Regulation (2015) refers to the recognition of prior learning and includes a specific article that envisages the preparation of specific principles and procedures for the recognition and quality assurance of prior learning. Following the adoption of the TQF in 2015, the framework was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and self-certified to the framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) in 2017. EQF referencing criterion 3 refers specifically to the relation of national qualifications frameworks to arrangements for validating non-formal and informal learning.

The infrastructure for validation is in place, and the current agenda is to improve communication, collaboration and coordination with respect to all relevant stakeholders. The assessment and certification as defined in the 2012 Council Recommendation on VNFIL are in place. However, more progress needs to be made in relation to identification and documentation using tools and other self-assessment approaches. VNFIL for newly developed vocational and professional qualifications was initiated by the VQA, leading to the establishment of Authorised Certification Bodies (ACBs)/VOC-Test Centres, which are accredited by the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK) and are authorised by the VQA. These centres are mainly public and non-governmental stakeholders such as chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions, employers' associations and unions for craftspeople. The system had the potential to validate refugees' and migrants' skills but methodologies and infrastructure needed to be adapted to the needs of these groups.

As of May 2019, there were 199 Authorised Certification Bodies in total, and they carry out assessment and certification activities in 287 NQs. Significant progress has been made. As of May 2019, 608 000 VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates were awarded in 287 NQs by 199 Authorised Certification Bodies. Employers, education providers and others can check the VQA web portal to ensure that people truly have the qualifications that they claim to have. Additionally, Europass Certificate Supplements for VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates are prepared and published on the VQA website (https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning-90_en).

This system is also open to migrants and refugees. Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Turkey has provided an effective emergency response and declared a temporary protection regime for Syrian refugees. This has been supplemented by a resilience-based development approach, as expressed in the innovative Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection, enacted in January 2016. This regulation allows officially registered Syrian refugees under temporary protection to apply for formal work permits. However, with a take-up of around 31 185 work permits as of March 2019, this work permit regulation on its own was not sufficient to create formal employment for the refugees who were entitled to it. It is clear that additional measures and incentives are needed to promote work permit applications and formal employment.

Throughout the period 2018–19, Turkish stakeholders were already using the EU Skills Profile Tool. It is very useful for both institutions and refugees. During this period, the VQA and other public and private stakeholders discussed in detail the correlation between validation and employment for Turkish citizens and refugees. The ultimate aim was and continues to be how to use and further adapt the Turkish validation system to accommodate the needs of its own citizens and the hosting/refugee population. Legislation was adopted in favour of better VET permeability. Following the amendments to work-based learning legislation (December 2016) in Turkey, apprenticeships were no longer excluded from formal education, nor were they a dead-end pathway: apprentices now have the right to continue to higher education by completing various courses in the relevant subject area.

Apprenticeships and work-based learning are key policy areas for discussion and decision making by the partnership cooperation that has been solidly established between the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the ETF. In-depth engagement has also been demonstrated in Turkey by the Turkish public-private sector steering group, a high-level public-private policy platform that promotes skills for economic inclusion and cohesion. The steering group, which meets annually (2017, 2018, 2019), brings together policy makers, business representatives and civil society representatives. The steering group is the main discussion platform to assess progress, exchange ideas and experience, determine future challenges and develop the vocational skills environment through a partnership between the private sector and education and training authorities. The EBRD facilitates the meetings in cooperation with the ETF and supports the steering group through in-depth analyses of key areas such as VNFIL, work-based learning models, school-to-work transition and measures to support jobs for young people, including refugees. In the period 2017–19, the following activities were conducted.

- A peer learning platform was created among all the VOC-Test Centres for the different economic sectors supported by the EBRD in Turkey (old and new economic sectors) in close cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the VQA.
- Joint studies were conducted on the subject of skills mapping/skills for the future of work, focusing also on the education and training and labour market integration of refugees from Syria.
- The formal and non-formal prior learning of Syrian refugees was validated.
- More effective work-based learning models were developed to meet the commitments and support Turkey's priority commitments in relation to the Riga MTD on work-based learning.
- Private and public institutions cooperate on the Small Business Act for Europe with regard to the skills needed for the future of work (from the private sector's point of view).

The following milestones for the TQF were reached in 2019.

- The Quality Assurance Paper for the qualifications provided by the VQA was prepared and approved by the TQF Council.
- The Quality Assurance Paper for the qualifications provided by the Ministry of National Education was prepared and presented to the TQF Council.
- The Quality Assurance Paper for higher education qualifications was prepared and presented to the TQF Council.
- The legislative arrangements for the implementation of the TQF were prepared.
- The TQF Council approved the principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in the TQF.
- The content of the Turkish Qualifications Database was supplemented to include almost 18 000 qualifications provided in Turkey.

- Awareness-raising documents about the TQF and the EQF were prepared and disseminated to the stakeholders. The TQF Consultation Council meeting was held – more than 1 000 people from 70 different institutions participated in the meeting.

In November 2019, the VQA began to implement the EU-supported project Implementation of Turkish Qualifications System and Framework Operation (TUYEP) (2020–23). The overall objective of the operation is to establish a flexible, transparent, innovative and quality-based education system that supports social and economic development and equips individuals with the qualifications necessary for employment, where all segments of society have the opportunity to learn according to their own needs. The project was launched with a kick-off meeting on 25 November 2019.

4. MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1. Baseline situation in 2015

All eight key competences have been included in the national curriculum as the basis for general education and VET since 2004.

Entrepreneurship was included as a basic skill in all education programmes in Turkey starting from primary education. It was also included in the new modular VET curricula as a transversal key competence.

Opportunities to acquire previously underdeveloped key competences in CVET were provided primarily through active labour market policies for unemployed people and vulnerable groups. Such policies helped them to catch up with functional literacy, ICT skills and foreign languages.

4.2. Policy developments between 2015 and 2019

Entrepreneurial learning is an integral part of Turkish government policy, promoting a strong entrepreneurship culture, steering the entrepreneurship ecosystem and contributing to the competitive power of the economy. Both the Tenth Development Plan and the Turkish Entrepreneurship Strategy and Action Plan 2015–18 provide an overarching policy framework for specific regulations and support measures for lifelong entrepreneurial learning in formal education and non-formal learning. Turkey's recently launched Education Vision 2023 structures the government's actions around equipping both the new generation of young people and adults with scientific and critical thinking skills; developing a culture of questioning and research; and promoting key competences that comprise knowledge, skills and universal values essential for the competitive economy, a democratic information society and sustainable development (Ministry of National Education, Education Strategy 2023).

These government actions are coordinated by the Entrepreneurship Council, which includes ministries, public organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The council provides and supports a formal platform for the national policy partnership, which is also in charge of policy monitoring and evaluation. The Entrepreneurship Strategy and Action Plan 2015–18 has 10 actions for entrepreneurial learning; these are implemented by the Ministry of National Education, KOSGEB, the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and other organisations, and form part of the annual progress reporting. The Entrepreneurship Council's provision of strong, formal policy coordination and an oversight structure at policy level is an asset; however, given its size and the fact that it meets annually, it is important to establish a more flexible coordination mechanism below this top level. That would allow the main stakeholders with a specific interest in promoting entrepreneurial learning or women's entrepreneurship to collaborate in the interim.

At national level, entrepreneurship is widely promoted through the media and a variety of contests and awards. Entrepreneurship as a key competence is addressed at system level in different forms and throughout the formal education system. Entrepreneurial learning is now guided by Education Vision 2023 and is governed by a whole range of strategy and implementation documents. It is supported by cross-sectoral agreements such as the Applied Entrepreneurship Training Cooperation Protocol between KOSGEB and the Ministry of National Education's Directorate General of Vocational Technical Training. The adoption of Education Vision 2023 is an important policy development, reflecting the most up-to-date strategic thinking. It aims to equip Turkey's young people with modern competences. It helps to motivate them to find solutions to community problems by providing support for social entrepreneurship. Support for social entrepreneurship programmes began in 2018 and will run until 2023. These programmes include preparing small-scale pilots, large-scale pilots, economy-wide pilots, monitoring, evaluation and improving.

At system level, the entrepreneurship key competence is embedded in the main philosophy of education programmes and constitutes a cross-curricular element in primary and lower secondary education curricula. Entrepreneurship is also offered as an optional subject at upper secondary level, and is a compulsory subject in vocational and technical education. The cross-curricular concept is based on the integrated learning outcomes approach and is also applied to developing students' digital key competence, for instance in the Information Technology and Software Curriculum (grades 1–4 of primary school) in the 2018/19 school year. Higher education follows a cross-curricular model promoted through the KOSGEB Practical Entrepreneurship Course, which has been implemented successfully across the university system for many years.

The new Education Vision 2023 sets high targets for teacher orientation. It recognises the importance of the role played by teachers in preparing their students for the competitive world and offers them more power and support. The vision entails a paradigm shift: changing teachers' mindsets and equipping them to facilitate a competence-based education process, to act as learning guides and to apply innovative active teaching and learning methods (Çengel, 2018).

Support for teachers' development of the entrepreneurship key competence is now widely offered through in-service teacher training programmes, organised both at system level and as demand-based training. These programmes benefit from support provided by different stakeholders, including a cooperation protocol between the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Industry and Technology and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) to train a group of teachers in innovation and entrepreneurship. Some university education faculties offer an entrepreneurship course in pre-service teacher training, following an agreement between individual universities and KOSGEB. However, preparing Turkey's large teaching workforce to meet the challenges of establishing a competence-based learning environment remains a major objective for the near future⁵.

Following the implementation of the Entrepreneurship Strategy and Action Plan 2015–18 and the Vocational and Technical Education Strategy (2014–18), Education Strategy 2023 provides incentives to the private sector to engage with VET schools, including private schools, within and beyond Organised Industrial Zones. Moreover, practical entrepreneurship experience is now featured in VET internships in companies, and the Ministry of National Education cooperates with the provinces to

⁵ OECD, ETF, EU, EBRD, 'Turkey: Small Business Act Profile', *SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2019*, 2019.

promote both entrepreneurial initiatives and access to start-up funding for students who have successfully completed apprenticeship training.

This cross-sectoral policy approach to entrepreneurial learning is demonstrated in the National Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2017–19, supporting project-based innovation and entrepreneurship through education system actions and active labour market policies.

The Turkish government closely monitors the actions that support entrepreneurial learning but evaluating the impact of its policies on the career satisfaction of those leaving education remains a system-level challenge in Turkey. This has led to the newly established Initial Vocational and Technical Education E-graduate tracking system, which looks at, among other things, links between education system learning outcomes and the skills applied by VET graduates in both waged employment and self-employment or entrepreneurship careers.

Turkey is very active in using ERASMUS for international mobility; it uses peer learning and knowledge hub platforms for innovative education policy and practices. Through the determined efforts of the Ministry of National Education and the financial resources and active participation of EU programmes, there has been impressive mobilisation and content input from researchers, universities, employers and other international platforms. Digital education is part of the national strategic document (e.g. Education Strategy 2023) and digital platforms are used widely for stakeholders' consultation and activation.

5. MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors

5.1. Baseline situation in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the in-service development of teachers and managers was planned and implemented at central and local level. The in-service training of teachers in vocational schools was also carried out within the scope of national and international projects, and within the scope of protocols signed with businesses.

The share of VET teachers participating in CPD activities on business premises was relatively high (49% in 2015).

There were no structured requirements for becoming a trainer or mentor in a company. Nor was there training for the trainers or mentors working with apprentices or VET students in enterprises.

Teachers' salaries remained below the OECD average.

5.2. Policy developments between 2015 and 2019

In 2017, Turkey approved a Teacher Strategy Paper (2017–23). It sets out specific goals and priorities in relation to the professional development of teachers. A competency-based and integrated system for needs assessment, monitoring, orientation and evaluation was recommended at the provincial and sub-provincial level. Expansion of the school-based professional development model was also recommended. A competence-based career progression and reward system was envisaged.

Plans for the implementation of the latest strategy, Education Vision 2023, are emerging. Significant progress has been made with the introduction of a six-month structured induction and performance

evaluation programme for all newly appointed teachers: 74% of principals say that there is an induction programme operating in their schools. Early evaluation suggests that the operation of the induction programme could be improved. Research suggests that there are issues in relation to the selection of mentors, bureaucracy, workload and usefulness of seminars for new teachers.

Turkish policy documents highlight the importance of CPD for teachers and managers as a tool for improving the quality of VET and helping to achieve the overall strategic goals for VET in Turkey.

In the period 2018–19, the ETF and the Ministry of National Education jointly conducted a survey, together with an analysis of CPD for VET teachers in Turkey. According to the analysis, 60% of Turkish vocational teachers are male and the average age is 40; 82% of vocational school principals are male and the average age of a VET school principal is 47. More than 95% of teaching staff and 90% of principals in vocational schools have a bachelor's or higher degree and more than 95% have completed an initial education or training programme. Almost all (98%) teaching staff are formally qualified as teachers, instructors or practice coordinators⁶. According to the same report and based on the surveyed principals, decision making in almost all school matters is largely the responsibility of government (local, provincial or national). Teacher performance is appraised mainly on the basis of observation by principals, at least once a year. There is relatively little follow-up after appraisal beyond the provision of feedback and sometimes a training plan. Mentoring, promotion or disciplinary actions are rare. Most key stakeholders are represented in school management and in the governing body.

Inadequate school budget and resources, government regulations and policies and teachers' absence are seen as key factors limiting the effectiveness of school management. Around 50% of principals consider that quality instruction is hindered by a shortage of qualified and/or high-performing teachers and teachers with the competence to teach students with special educational needs.

There are a number of Directorate Generals that come together at ministry level to shape policy, plan, implement, monitor, research and engage stakeholders in the issue of professional development for vocational teachers. In addition, there is an assigned role for provincial and sub-provincial authorities and schools. Employers' associations, teachers' unions and professional associations as well as educational NGOs are able and willing to engage in policy making with respect to professional development for teachers.

Education Vision 2023 emphasises formal post-graduate continuing education for teachers, professional development in collaboration with industry and the role of teachers themselves in self-evaluation. Developing and implementing action plans will involve cooperation and coordination between various actors not only in the Ministry of National Education but also among employers, universities and schools. The challenge facing Turkey is to determine how these actors will come together to determine specific goals and implement them in accordance with Education Vision 2023.

In 2019, the Ministry of National Education's Directorate General for TVET (Department of Social Partners and Projects) reported the existence of 92 work-based training activities for teachers, involving some 3 400 vocational teachers. These training activities have become more practical and smaller in size – workshops for a maximum of 20 teachers rather than lectures for 300.

Turkey reported placing a greater focus on distant and online training for VET teachers and on coupling state funds with the opportunities offered by Erasmus+ and other EU projects for diversifying

⁶ ETF, Continuing professional development for vocational teachers and trainers in Turkey 2018–19, draft report

and enriching CPD for VET teachers. Distance learning is planned to reach 4 000 vocational teachers in 2019. In the 12 months prior to the 2018 survey, 61.5% of vocational teachers participated in CPD compared to 63% in 2015. There was also a decline in participation in conferences and seminars but an increase in teachers who were able to visit other schools. Training on business premises was up in 2018. Slightly more than a quarter of vocational teachers said that they had participated in online learning or video tutorials, which is perhaps fewer than might be expected given that Turkey has invested in online learning for teachers. A total of 57% of vocational teachers who obtained some CPD participated in at least 30 hours of CPD (either within their schools or outside of it) (2015: 47%). However, only 16.9% of all vocational teachers had more than 30 hours of training. The CPD that 33% of vocational teachers received addressed their VET specialisation.

The Ministry of National Education's Directorate General for Teacher Training Department (TTD) operates a large-scale national needs analysis survey. The Directorate General for VET commissions CPD for vocational teachers from independent training providers with whom it enters into protocols and agrees to provide training with donors and NGOs. It is not clear what mechanisms are used to consult with teachers and with employers in order to understand the needs to be prioritised. The number of VET teacher who apply for CPD greatly exceeds the number of training places – so the Directorate General for TTD has to ration places.

The general training offered to all teachers is informed by the national needs analysis. However, it is not clear whether the training offered to vocational teachers by the Directorate General for TVET can be informed by the national needs analysis, which focuses on the general development needs of teachers. Feedback is collected after training events. In the case of poor scores, training can be discontinued. However, very low budgets for some residential training events combined with restrictions on fees for trainers may constrain quality. A third of teachers participated in school-based CPD. Modern methods of CPD – active learning, training with colleagues, use of ICT – feature heavily in about one-third of CPD activities and are entirely absent from a similar percentage of activities. Most school principals participated in some kind of course, visit or conference for five days or more.

The Ministry of National Education increased the delivery of in-service training and/or the training and professional development of VET teachers almost six fold in the period between 2015 and 2019. In 2019 alone, approximately 35% of all VET subject teachers participated in in-service training. Teachers' training programmes are supported by protocols with the private sector. The Ministry of National Education's Strategic Plan 2015–19 formally obliges all its staff (including teachers) to participate in CPD: three hours in 2019. The ministry also states that, in practice, it sets a standard of 30 hours per week – in line with international benchmarks. However, the ETF study suggests that this benchmark is not achieved for most vocational teachers.

In 2019, following the joint Ministry of National Education/ETF work on CPD for VET teachers (2018–19), the Ministry of National Education launched the work to be supported by the EU's IPA Programme. The aim is to develop a systematic and sustainable approach by establishing sectoral centres for VET competence development. The objectives of the grant scheme are also directly in line with the targets defined by the Education Vision 2023 document, which include improving quality, providing on-the-job training and increasing sector education cooperation. Training planned within the framework of this grant scheme is aimed at increasing the skills of VET teachers in line with sectoral needs. Representatives of the various sectors will establish sectoral centres for VET competence development and they will act as vocational teacher training centres. These sectoral centres will work in close coordination and cooperation with sectoral centres of excellence, which are to be established under the programme Technical Assistance for Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and

Training through Establishment of Sectoral Centres of Excellence. These centres will work together on issues such as knowledge transfer, training needs assessment, programme development and planning of training both during and after finalisation of the grant project.

Strengthening cooperation with stakeholders, developing the professional and pedagogical skills of teachers, supporting diversity in VET, increasing the positive perception of VET, establishing a quality assurance system for VET, improving applied training and qualifications and ensuring social integration through VET are issues related to the improvement of VET.

CONCLUSIONS

Since 2015, Turkey has further reformed its VET system. The Eleventh Development Plan (2019–23) and Education Vision 2023 (launched at the end of October 2018) supported the efforts initiated in 2015 on all five MTDs⁷. The Ministry of National Education launched a number of assessment reports on the key milestones of Education Strategy 2023. The first two reports published were focused on the TVET system and were discussed widely with employers and all the relevant actors. The developments, challenges and forward-looking policy actions are reported also in the national Torino Process report⁸ published by the Ministry of National Education and the ETF's assessment report on the Torino Process in Turkey. The purpose of these assessments, coupled also with thematic research, is to provide more insight into the steps taken by the Ministry of National Education to restructure the VET system in Turkey. The assessment reports provide information about the progress made with regard to all the Riga MTDs. Some of this progress is outlined below.

- In the area of work-based learning, the country took action to improve the attractiveness of apprenticeships and to modernise them by linking them more closely to entrepreneurship and business initiatives. In order to increase the attractiveness of VTCs, access to high school diplomas was made easier. In addition, the Ministry of National Education increased the frequency of apprenticeship and mastery exams and provided theoretical exams to be structured as computer-based tests.
- An EQAVET-compatible NQF (the TQF) was adopted. The E-graduate system continued to be the main tool used to systematically collect data to monitor and improve the quality of IVET provision. Legislation was adopted in favour of better VET permeability (allowing apprentices to continue to higher education).
- The TQF was enacted in law (2015) and referenced to the EQF (March 2017). The country has a functioning VNFIL system in place. Priority is given to work related to building the capacity of the VQA and its stakeholders; enhancing the quality assurance of the national qualifications system; implementing and managing the quality-assured TQF; enhancing the capacity of the VQA portal; and raising awareness about reaching end users.
- Ongoing efforts are being made in the following areas: to ensure the recognition and certification of the learning outcomes gained by individuals without having a formal or non-formal education; to support candidates who are willing to take examinations set by certification bodies authorised by the VQA; to provide a qualified labour force in line with the needs of the labour market; to

⁷ Ministry of National Education's national Torino Process report: <https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/trp/torino-process-2018-2020-turkey-national-report>

⁸ See <https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/trp/torino-process-2018-2020-turkey-national-report>

contribute to a reduction in labour costs; to pave the way for career development and mobility, showing career paths to individuals.

- The area of key competences remains important. A number of developments were reported in this area, most of them related to their promotion in CVET through the qualifications standards.
- A new Teacher Strategy Paper (2017–23) was adopted and greater focus was placed on distant and online training for VET teachers. The Ministry of National Education increased its delivery of in-service training and/or the training and professional development of VET teachers almost six-fold in the period between 2015 and 2019. In 2019 alone, approximately 35% of all VET field teachers participated in in-service training. Teacher training programmes are supported by protocols with the private sector.
- In 2019, the Ministry of National Education initiated ambitious actions to collaborate more effectively with selected, leading economic sectors to strengthen VET in all vocational fields. On-the-job and internship training in real work environments, the professional development of trainers, the updating of curricula in current vocational fields and the development of curricula in new fields, scholarships and employment priorities for graduates and the facilitating of policies for teaching sector delegates in VET institutions are considered criteria in these collaborations.
- To improve diversity in VET, prestigious vocational and technical Anatolian high schools were established with universities and leading private sectors bodies. The ASELSAN⁹ vocational and technical Anatolian high school and the Istanbul Technical University vocational and technical Anatolian high school are schools that received students from the top 1% of primary students. Ministries, associations such as the Istanbul Chamber of Industry (ISO), Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ITO) and the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) are effective partners that are assisting the Ministry of National Education in the construction of centres of VET excellence throughout Turkey.
- The Ministry of National Education conducted projects to enhance the positive perception of VET and to make it more familiar. For this purpose, the Vocational Training Map and the My Job My Life platform were launched and made available for use in 2019. The Vocational Training Map presents information about the distribution of students in fields and employment areas at province level. The My Job My Life platform also presents updated information about VET processes, employment and internship opportunities to all VET stakeholders.
- The establishment of a VET quality assurance system is also important for improving and sustaining the quality of VET. In this regard, the external quality assessment of all vocational and technical Anatolian high schools is undertaken and the results are reported. Standards in fields and branches are harmonised with national vocational standards. Data-driven reports based on analyses and evaluations of the Turkish VET system are published in various series.
- The Ministry of National Education made important progress to improve applied training and qualifications in VET. Reducing the treasury deduction in the VET production and services from 15% to 1% resulted in an increase of 40% in an aggregate production capacity. Students, teachers and institutions benefited by increasing production and public services via applied training.
- The Ministry of National Education initiated projects and established cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the EU Delegation and KfW to promote social inclusion and integration. The participation of socio-economically marginalised young people in VET is encouraged; projects to

⁹ ASELAN is a Turkish corporation that produces tactical military radios and defence electronic systems for the Turkish Armed Forces.

support disadvantaged Syrian and Turkish students via VET are being implemented. In addition, VET students support 54 000 families according to their needs.

- Solid steps to strengthen VET are being considered and taken on board by education authorities in Turkey. Improvements made to VET by the Ministry of National Education are evaluated and responded to positively in educational analysis reports published by independent civil society organisations such as the Initiative of Education Reform (ERG, 2019), TEDMEM (2018), SETA (2018; 2019), the Eğitim-Bir-Sen Centre for Strategic Research (Yurdakul, 2019) and İlke (Bozgeyikli, 2019). In these analysis reports, steps to restructure the VET system are reviewed as valuable actions that are consistent with global trends in VET systems. The positive reactions of education authorities towards VET improvements show that steps are promising, even in the short term.
- The Ministry of National Education, supported by all its partners, is being very active in communicating and raising awareness on the developments and issues by facilitating discussion platforms, electronic platforms, social media, TV, fairs and other means of communication. Numerous enhancements and improvements have been noticed in one year, a comparatively short period. Feedback from field, private sector and provincial managers also show that improvements have had a tangible effect on perceptions and expectations of VET. It is important to note that maintaining and increasing this level of positivity regarding VET depends on continued support for improvements at all levels. Continuing to promote the culture improvement, without making any sudden or radical changes, will be beneficial to a more qualified and contemporary VET system.

Even if Turkey has been addressing the main themes of the Riga Conclusions, work is still ongoing and challenges remain. The country could make further progress along these lines if – in the remaining period up to 2020 and beyond – it takes into consideration the following issues and acts on them.

- Implement the newly adopted legal provisions and design further actions for enhancing the quality of work-based learning.
- Upgrade quality assurance mechanisms to address the work-based learning associated with both IVET and CVET and ensure that the EQAVET indicators are regularly applied to monitor VET quality.
- Improve teacher training, including peer learning and networking on a national scale, and develop a structured approach towards trainers and mentors in companies. Please refer to the ETF draft report entitled CPD for vocational teachers and trainers in Turkey 2018–19 for more detailed conclusions please look at the full report¹⁰.
- Apply the EU competence frameworks (EntreComp and DigComp) at system level to align key competence developments in education across levels and parts of the education system. At the operational level, create institutional platforms (expert or practitioner networks and groups) and take action to achieve specific policy objectives. For instance, key competence learning outcomes should be integrated in all subject areas; learners should experience a smooth transition between different levels of education and parts of the learning system linked to the progression model of the EU key competence frameworks; the teaching methodology and design of the learning process in primary, general secondary, VET and higher education and in non-formal learning

¹⁰www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/CA7155C1B6FEA545C125829D005082D6_CPD_Western%20Balkans%20and%20Turkey.pdf

should be aligned; and a multi-stakeholder system should be set up to consolidate data sources and actions so as to anticipate skills needs, including entrepreneurial skills and competences.

- Scale up the well-functioning E-graduate system in VET to support impact evaluation across all parts of the learning system (e.g. higher education, SME training). As noted in the previous assessment, it will be important to consolidate the available statistical data for evidence-based policy making.
- Establish system-level, compulsory provision of practical entrepreneurship experience in upper secondary, VET and higher education. To do this, Turkey should provide the regulatory conditions to encourage cooperation between schools and the private sector, and set up system-level measures to support cooperation between schools and companies to provide practical entrepreneurship experience for all students at upper secondary, VET and higher education levels.
- Target measures at groups facing barriers to VET and labour market entry, such as NEETs, and prevent early leaving from education and training in a more efficient way. At the same time, continue to implement the TQF and VNFIL.
- Continue to promote key competences in VET curricula, with a particular focus on opportunities to acquire and develop those skills through CVET; reinforce monitoring of the acquisition of key competences.

Concluding remarks

While commending the progress made in relation to all the MTDs, albeit at varying speeds, Turkey's education and training policy makers are encouraged to look at VET and its contribution to enhanced human capital development in Turkey. All the above-mentioned developments and ways forward were also reported in the Ministry of National Education's national Torino Process report (<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/trp/torino-process-2018-2020-turkey-national-report>). In the period 2019–20, the ETF conducted the Torino Process assessment on human capital development in Turkey. This assessment provides an external, forward-looking analysis of the country's human capital development issues and VET policy responses from a lifelong learning perspective. The full ETF assessment of the Torino Process, a short executive summary and a visual infographic are available on our website (www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/policies-human-capital-development-turkey-etf-torino).

This assessment starts with a brief description of Turkey's strategic plans and national policy priorities (Chapter 1). It then presents an overview of issues related to the development and use of human capital in the country (Chapter 2), before moving on to provide an in-depth discussion of the problems in this area, which, in the view of the ETF, require immediate attention (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 offers overall conclusions resulting from the analysis. The annexes provide additional information: a summary of the recommendations in the report (Annex 1) and an overview of Turkey's education and training system (Annex 2).

Two interlinked phenomena, which are exerting a negative impact on human capital development and use in Turkey, can be observed. The first is the shrinking pool of skills available to the economy, as evidenced by the decreasing VET participation rate, including apprenticeships. The second is the persistence of skills mismatches (both vertical and horizontal) that undermine the potential of human capital in the country. Paradoxically, VET is also affected by skills mismatch, indicating the need for more effective VET provision and career guidance. Stagnating and comparatively limited opportunities for adult learning combined with decreasing VET participation and a high level of skills mismatch are

serious concerns for human capital development and constrain growth and employability in the country.

Improving the quality of the current and future labour force is a crucial objective for enabling Turkey to address the current challenge of a persistently large proportion of the working age population having a low level of education and the pressing need to transition from low value-added activities towards an innovative, technology-driven economy. The main obstacle to tapping into demographic and growth opportunities in the area of employment remains the capacity of institutions (e.g. employment, social assistance, education institutions) to secure transitions from inactivity and unemployment to employment, in particular in the case of women and disadvantaged groups. Turkey needs to invest heavily in the upskilling and reskilling of its current (employed) workers to help companies embrace digitalisation and a technology-driven transformation and increase their global competitiveness. The various reform measures reflect the obstacles and challenges, although their limited nature and coverage of target groups might not secure a large-scale change and the removal of such obstacles, at least not in the short term.

While initial education and training remains important, adult learning is crucial, as there is a need for reskilling and upskilling for the new jobs emerging in the Turkish economy. While another source of increased demand for adult learning may come from the relatively low educational attainment of the population, there is strong evidence that the level of participation in learning and training provision in Turkey remains comparatively weak. The ETF suggests that these areas should become an immediate policy priority. In particular, the working age population in Turkey needs to be empowered to cope with the economic transformation that is already happening and is likely to accelerate in the near future.

Recommendations for action: (a) improve links between IVET and CVET/adult learning; (b) tackle skills mismatch in VET as a key priority; (c) expand adult learning opportunities; and (d) develop a system of career guidance¹¹.

¹¹ www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/policies-human-capital-development-turkey-etf-torino

ANNEX: TURKEY – LABOUR MARKET, EDUCATION AND CONTEXTUAL INDICATORS, 2018 OR MOST RECENT YEAR AVAILABLE

Total population		80 810 525
Relative size of youth population (15–24) [%]		20.3
Activity rate (20–64) [%]		62.3
Employment rate (20–64) [%]		55.6
Employment rate of recent graduates from ISCED 3–8 levels (20–34) [%]		61.5
Employment rate of recent graduates from ISCED 3–4 levels (20–34) [%]	Total	53.1
	General	51
	Vocational	54.8
Unemployment rate (15–74) [%]		10.9
Unemployment rate (15+) by education [%]	Low	9.9
	Medium	12.1
	High	12.2
Youth unemployment rate (15–24) [%]		20.2
Expenditure on education as share of GDP [%]		5.7
Students in VET programmes in upper secondary [%]		49
Students in VET programmes in upper secondary		2 713 530
Participation in lifelong learning (25–64) [%]		6.2
Tertiary educational attainment (30–34) [%]		28.8
Underachievement (15 years) [%]	Reading	40
	Mathematics	51.4
	Science	44.5
Early leavers from education (18–24) [%]		31
Persons not in employment, education or training (NEET) (15–24) [%]		24.4
Educational attainment of economically active population (15–74) [%]	Low	55
	Medium	21.2
	High	23.8

Sources: Eurostat, OECD, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Note: Low: ISCED 0–2; Medium: ISCED 3–4; High: ISCED 5–8

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