

FLASH REPORT

Event name

Online Eastern Partnership (EaP) Regional Conference Torino Process 2018-2020, 16-17.09.2020

Main objective/s

The regional conference was organised by the ETF and the European Commission under Eastern Partnership Platform 4 “Mobility and People-to-People contacts”. It gathered representatives from the six Eastern Partnership countries and aimed at moving from the national analyses to the regional consultation, providing an overview of regional trends, commonalities and diversity of human capital development across the countries and progress of skills and education and training policies based on the findings of the Torino Process. To enhance the cross-fertilisation of exchange of experience, also representatives from Central Asia participated.

Background

The Torino Process is an evidence-informed analysis of Human Capital Development issues and VET policies responses in the ETF partner countries. The process, launched by the ETF for the first time in 2010, entered in its fifth round of implementation in 2019 and will be completed in 2020.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

The conference was a great success with over 100 experts, stakeholders, and representatives of the European Commission, EU Delegations, governments and social partners from Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries actively attending. The conference was streamed online on YouTube and the ETF website. It received extremely positive feedback and wide coverage on social media. The two-day conference was recorded and can be seen on:

Day 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrTWqh-7MWE>

Day 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVRibikV4nU>

KEY OUTCOMES/CONCLUSIONS

Participants of the conference agreed on the following challenges across the countries:

- Supply of skills is shrinking while the labour force is currently not well deployed
- Jobs are changing fast due to global factors. Rather than focusing on national transition processes to market economy we need to acknowledge global transformations affecting jobs
- Education and skills development systems are no longer fit and do not pay enough attention to people who have left the education system

The discussions in the conference focused on the following issues:

In the past five years there has been a significant reduction in the total number of young people entering into initial VET, post-secondary VET and higher education, but the number of adult learners participating in education and training is practically not growing at all.

In spite of the diversity between the countries, global changes (technological, formation of global markets and value chains, climate change and demographic changes) affect all countries.

All countries are looking for solutions in terms of better understanding the changes in the labour market, working more with employers, developing new profiles and programmes, looking for more recognition, improve opportunities for learning outside schools, including within companies and

support private initiatives for people who want to develop their own business. But countries cannot do this all on their own.

Countries could benefit from more sharing of solutions on how they address the challenges and they could adapt international practices or develop common solutions based on what really works in their own country context. This requires a capacity for monitoring of reforms and assessing systematically new practices on their effectiveness and collecting evidence for informed decisions.

Unfortunately very few people are employed in decent jobs and while new jobs are created for self-employed as well as micro and small companies or for small farmers they do not generate enough dynamics for economic growth or prosperity for citizens or societies. Moreover, job security has been further undermined due to the Covid crisis.

Bigger companies have more capacity to invest into their employees and adapt to changes in the economy while SMEs should be enabled to compete and export on equal footing as they are important in terms of employment creation in the countries.

Platform work and especially the ICT sector is growing, offering opportunities for people to work remotely and creating opportunities for young people to find decent work at home. Countries could explore and invest more into developing skills for platform economy.

It still seems to be difficult to shift the focus from vocational education and training to lifelong learning and human capital development and to see the VET system as part of them.

ETF proposed 4 priorities for action and regional cooperation in the framework of Eastern Partnership:

1. Addressing the changing role of providers enabling them to be stronger and more autonomous in addressing different training needs; one way forward is to help transform them into lifelong learning centres and connect them with centres of excellence.
2. Addressing the changing role of trainers and teachers making sure they can support learners of all ages to become competent for the current and future labour markets; new competences need need to take into account the growing needs for digital and green skills.
3. Increasing our focus on the private sector and enabling them to play a more influential role in skills development policies and practices; this would contribute e.g. to better WBL opportunities, developing new qualifications as well as developing labour market relevant adult learning courses including the placement of teachers in companies.
4. Understanding better how we can develop the lifelong learning provision, looking at different types of providers beyond the public education systems and emerging needs for LLL as well as providing funding for adult learning and provision online. A baseline analysis on lifelong learning could be a next step to understand how the EU could address this issue in the EaP countries.

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