

TORINO PROCESS 2018–20 IN THE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: KEY FINDINGS AND THE WAY AHEAD

WORKSHOP FLASH REPORT, 13 JULY 2021

Workshop main objectives

Organised by the European Training Foundation (ETF), the workshop was designed to present key findings from the fifth round of the Torino Process in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) countries and look ahead to future planning for continuing to address human capital development (HCD) needs in the region.

Background

The Torino Process is the ETF's flagship evidence-based analysis of HCD key issues and vocational education and training (VET) policy responses in ETF partner countries. The process, launched by the ETF in 2010, entered its fifth round of implementation in 2019 and is now being finalised with a series of national and regional reports and ETF analysis of progress. Currently, the ETF is discussing ways forward and how the Torino Process may develop or evolve to continue supporting HCD policy development implementation in partner countries.

Short description of the workshop

The workshop was a brief (three hours) but intensive look at the overall picture of the main HCD issues in the SEMED countries since 2019 and the key findings from the Torino Process regional analysis. It involved participants from the European Commission, the ETF, and representatives from education and training stakeholders in the SEMED countries – Egypt, Israel Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine¹ and Tunisia. It was streamed live to invited participants over Zoom and a recording was taken for ETF internal uses. It included presentations by European Commission's officials, reports by ETF experts, a brief overview of allied developments – such as progress in the monitoring of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Declaration on employment and labour. Contributions from attendees via video or in sidebar chat comments were provided throughout the event.

¹ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the Member States on this issue.

The fifth round Torino Process SEMED report

ETF analysis of the national reports demonstrated strengthened local ownership of the process and increased participation by stakeholders.

Stakeholder participation had risen from 280 in the fourth round to 553 in the fifth round. Although public institutions remained the key players (at 66%) and the private sector accounted for only 7% of those involved, big increases in participation by international organisations, internal and external experts, and civil society organisations were all promising developments. Across the region there was evidence that the report's analysis and findings were being used to help forge policies and implement them.

Key outcomes/conclusions

Although socio-economic conditions vary across the SEMED region, with Israel's economy and labour market in particular at a different level of development, the fifth round Torino Process regional report has identified some key challenges to human capital development in the region.

- In a region with high numbers of young people (half under the age of 24 and a third under 25) under-utilisation of the potential of this vast labour and human capital pool remains a major challenge.
- Sketchy data collection and analysis is hampering the development and implementation of policies to address other key challenges, including bringing more women into the labour market and addressing lifelong learning needs.
- Better intra-regional and peer-learning networks could be used to address issues.

The European Commission's Lluís Prats, Head of the International Affairs Unit, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, opened the workshop by noting – humorously – that he was 'president of the Torino Process fan club'. By using the best of modern participatory processes, it could have a real impact on human capital development, he said.

'The EU is committed to contributing to a "long-term vision of stability and economic development" that worked for all in the SEMED region', he said². Priorities identified by the EU include human capital development, good governance, the rule of law, resilience and prosperity, and the green transition. Key focuses included 'creating perspectives for young people, preventing a brain drain, and transition from an informal economy to the formal economy'. Targeting the employment needs of women, youth and the most vulnerable people is also top of the agenda.

Xavier Matheu de Cortada, head of the ETF's Knowledge Hub Department, listed some of the key achievements identified during the fifth round Torino Process, focusing on the reinforced principles of participation, including private sector and donors, and holistic analysis, which encompasses even more clearly both initial and continuing training, with links to general education and higher education.

The need for 'career development, guidance and support' was a key part of improving lifelong learning, which had long been identified as a priority, but post-pandemic had gained a new importance as part of regional economic recovery plans, he added.

² [A new agenda for the Mediterranean: the Council approves conclusions on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood.](#)

With increased demands now for reskilling and upskilling, there was growing attention to the need for better collection, access and analysis of data to support policy development across the SEMED region.

All stakeholders also had a role to play in supporting the transition of young people from school to work and from job to job within the labour market; the role of the private sector had room for development too.

Abdelaziz Jaouani, Senior Human Capital Development Expert at the ETF, identified further key takeaways from the fifth round of the Torino Process.

Most countries in the region were experiencing a brain drain as those with higher qualifications had lower chances of finding work, there was an influx of refugees and foreign workers, low job-creation, low skills and high rates of micro and small enterprises – more than 95% of companies have five or fewer employees.

As many as two-thirds of the working age population across the region are not involved in the labour market and a third of young people are neither in employment, education or training.

Addressing this under-utilisation of human capital – which hinders growth and job creation – was an urgent priority.

Better collection and analysis of data and a greater focus on involving the private sector in partnerships to address the challenges to better use of human capital, together with a greater emphasis on lifelong learning was needed, he said, pointing to figures that showed that continuing training in the SEMED region was under-developed, with Israel at 8.5%; Tunisia at 2.5%; and others at 1% or lower. In the EU the figure is 37% for those aged 25–64 who benefit from adult learning, and there is a target to increase that to 60% by 2030.

Looking ahead, Hugues Moussy, the ETF's Head of Systems Performance and Assessment Unit, said a new monitoring approach was now being discussed within the ETF, with a view to 'clarifying, strengthening and simplifying' the process of assisting the process of assisting HCD policy development monitoring in ETF partner countries.

Future work is likely to focus more tightly on a set of core indicators, such as lifelong learning, adult learning, and upskilling and reskilling, although no final decisions had yet been taken, he said.