

FLASH REPORT

Event name

Workshop on Regional VET Centres in North Macedonia, 9 July 2019, Skopje

Main objective/s:

- to present key outcomes of the ETF run assessment of VET schools and providers of adult education in the selected regions (Polog, South West and North East);
- to present the findings of the investigation into the demand and supply of skills in the selected regions, coordinated by the ETF ;

Background

In 2018, The Ministry of Education and Science in North Macedonia has approved the new Education Strategy for 2018-2025 and relevant Action Plan. The document holistically addressed education reforms covering all formal and non-formal sub-sectors. Under the VET section of the action plan, within priority II (Improving Learning Environment and Quality of Vocational Education and Training), a specific result foresees the establishment of VET Centres of Excellences.

Following discussions between the EU Delegation and the North Macedonian government it has been proposed to include this action within the new Sector Reform Performance Contract (SRPC). In the current proposal the new SRPC should support the establishment of three regional VET Centres in selected regions (Polog, South West and North East). This specific reform gained particularly significance also because it has implications on a various number of priorities of the overall VET reform; its governance aspects, including funding and schools network optimisation, as well as the quality dimension and increasing relevance of VET towards labour market needs. As it has been the case for other countries the creation of these centres would indeed open the possibility to create hubs of innovation where to pilot educational reforms and acting as multipliers for the whole VET schools' network and AE providers.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

The workshop was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science in North Macedonia, members of the Working Group for the Regional VET centres, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, ESA, International experts, EU Delegation, employers' associations, and representatives of VET schools and Municipalities from Polog, South-West and North-East Regions.

ETF presented the key findings of two analyses focused on (a) VET offer in three regions (SW, NE, Polog) and options for network optimisation and improved relevance and quality and (b) medium to longer term demand and socio-economic developments in the respective regions.

The participants discussed and put forward most feasible and fit alternative options to establish Regional VET Centres; Participants placed emphasis on the need to improve cooperation with employers, for example, by providing more work-based placements and improving the capacity of schools to provide appropriate vocational programmes for learners with Special Educational Needs.

KEY OUTCOMES/CONCLUSIONS

- Establishment of Regional VET Centres is a central objective of VET related priorities set out in the Education Strategy 2018-2025.
- Regional VET Centres may be able to play a role in delivering Adult Education and short training programmes as well as supporting other schools, for example, through sharing resources or through continuing professional development.
- EU and ETF will continue provide their expertise and financial support (IPA and other EU funding lines such as Erasmus) and help Macedonian decision makers to drive forward the reform agenda and establish the Regional VET Centers in the near future.

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