

MINUTES GOVERNING BOARD MEETING 14 JUNE 2013



1. Introduction

The meeting of the ETF Governing Board was held in Turin on 14 November 2013 and chaired by Jan TRUSZCZYŃSKI, Director General for Education and Culture, European Commission (EC).

New members of the Board were welcomed: Gabriele ALTANA (Italy), Saulius ZYBARTAS (member) and Aleksandra SOKOLOVA (alternate) (Lithuania), as well as Henrik SAXTORPH (alternate) (Denmark). From the EC Gerhard SCHUMANN-HITZLER (Director, DG Enlargement), Nicholas TAYLOR (Head of section, DG DEVCO), Donatella GOBBI (DG DEVCO), Dana BACHMAN (Head of Unit, DG Education and Culture), and Isabelle MAZINGANT (DG Education and Culture) were present. The ETF staff committee was represented by Mara ARNO.

Representatives from Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Malta and Romania and observers from Azerbaijan and Jordan did not attend. The independent experts nominated by the European Parliament Sara PARKIN and Jean-François MEZIÈRES did not attend either.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted by the Board without modifications.

3. Follow-up to previous meeting

i. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 November 2012 were adopted.

ii. Follow up on action points and written procedures

Xavier MATHEU, ETF, presented the actions carried out as a follow up to the November 2012 meeting:

- The 2013 general EU budget did not change the ETF budget so no written procedure was launched. The 2013 amending budget including the revenue transferred for the GEMM project was included in the agenda of the current meeting.
- A written procedure on the revised 2013 ETF Work Programme took place between 05/02/2013 and 15/02/2013 and was successfully concluded.

4. 2012 Annual Activity Report and its analysis and assessment

Madlen SERBAN and **Xavier MATHEU** presented the 2012 Annual Activity Report.

The Annual Activity Report (AAR) is a key component of the performance based management and its structure is established by the EC Secretariat General. The document is structured in five parts: i) I: Implementation of the annual work programme, ii) II: Governance, management supervision, control and internal control standards, iii) III: Building blocks towards the declaration of assurance, iv) IV: Declaration of assurance, and Annexes.

The Spotlights document made available in the Governing Board restricted area before the meeting complements the AAR with additional information on operational activities.

The assessment of the ETF's results in 2012 shows good progress in achieving the objectives for the four-year period (2010-13). Targeted outputs have been achieved and the 2012 was characterised by the second round of the Torino Process policy analysis, following the first round in 2010 and by an increased effort to support capacity building in the field of evidence-based policy making. Multi-annual

projects, thematic and regional, progressed well and country work contributed also to the EC programming.

The Torino Process is a holistic, evidence-based VET policy analysis that was carried out in 25 partner countries in 2012. In the five candidate countries, this policy analysis was integrated with the Bruges Interim Reporting exercise. Of the 25 countries, 15 directly led the process themselves, carrying out self-assessments with the active participation of stakeholders (six in 2010), while in the other 10 countries the ETF assisted the national leadership in consultation with stakeholders, to carry out the analysis. Based on the outcomes from the country reports, the ETF drafted cross-country assessments for each of the four regions and held regional peer learning meetings to share and discuss the preliminary results. The ETF also drafted a conceptual methodology for capacity building in the field of VET policy making. This methodology was subject to a consultation with international experts, including the EC in December as a prelude to testing in ETF activities in 2013. The ETF finalised a manual on the use of indicators in VET policy making which is available in French, Russian and Arabic and an on-line interactive version is under preparation.

The annual objectives for thematic expertise development were achieved in 2012. Expertise was developed in: i) qualifications and quality; ii) social inclusion; iii) entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills with a new methodology for identifying examples of good practice (12 examples of good practice in the areas of youth entrepreneurship, women's entrepreneurship, and skills for SMEs growth and internationalisation were identified, peer reviewed and showcased at the corporate conference on "Towards Excellence in Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Skills" held in November); iv) employment and employability; v) governance and lifelong learning (which provided the content for the corporate conference on "Multilevel governance in education and training: challenges and opportunities", held in Brussels on 31 May and 1 June 2012); and vi) VET and sustainable development.

In the Western Balkans and Turkey, the ETF worked closely with Cedefop on the Bruges reports for the candidate countries, and prepared country fiches and a regional report. This was published at the end of 2012 by Cedefop. The ETF embarked on the FRAME project which represents comprehensive human resources development strategies in the seven countries of the region.

In the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, two years after the Arab Spring, there is still a high degree of uncertainty in many countries and this means that the ETF has to be flexible and able to react quickly. The emphasis is on youth employability with a focus on vocational education and training. Support to skills development for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises has also moved up the political agenda, indicating the importance of micro and SMEs for job creation.

In the Eastern Partnership countries, the ETF supported the European Commission, in particular in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. In cooperation with DG EAC, in the framework of Eastern partnership Platform 4 'Contacts between people', the ETF organised a regional conference on the Torino Process on 4-5 December in Brussels back-to-back with the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Platform 4 meeting. Partner countries and several EU Member States supported the analysis of VET in the countries and the progress made in VET policy design, legislation, stakeholder engagement and NQFs.

In Central Asia, a comprehensive picture is emerging from the ETF study on the transition from school to work, which describes the troublesome reality for school leavers.

The AAR contains a detailed description of the corporate outputs achieved in 2012 with annexes outlining expenditure by theme, region and country. In particular, the Activity Based Budget tables report the use of resources according to the three dimensions of the ETF planning policy (geographical, functional and thematic). The report incorporates details on the specific requests

received from the European Commission, both those included in the work programme or requested after its adoption, and the response provided by the ETF.

From a quantitative perspective, 161 corporate outputs were achieved in 2012 (150 in 2011), which is slightly higher than the 157 targeted. Of the original 157 planned, four were deferred for completion in 2013. Overall the level of outputs completed is in line with the final budget received by the ETF and is in line with those proposed in the work programme. The AAR records increases in policy analysis outputs (30 compared to 27 planned, 22 achieved in 2011), in support to the Commission (35 against 31 planned, 31 achieved in 2011) and in dissemination and networking (27 actual, 25 planned, 25 achieved in 2011), at the expense of five fewer in capacity building outputs (69 actual, 74 targeted, 72 achieved in 2011). These changes are explained by an increase in requests from the Commission services (reflecting the diversity of DGs requesting ETF work), the increase in policy analysis in the Torino Process in 2012 (compared with 2011) and the ETF's central role in human capital development (policy analysis and dissemination and networking), as found in the External Evaluation completed in 2012.

In 2012, co-operation with stakeholders continued to be a priority area of the ETF's activities. The ETF approach was formalised in the stakeholder framework for action adopted in September, which explains why it is important to invest in stakeholder cooperation and the ways in which the ETF is strengthening its organisational capacity to manage its cooperation with stakeholders effectively both EU and international stakeholders. The stakeholders from the partner countries are not included in the framework for action but highlighted in the country information plan and the thematic projects.

In 2012, the ETF engaged in a range of communication activities from events and visits to publications and content production in order to support the overall work of the ETF and its operational activities in particular.

Part II of the report highlights the significant developments in management supervision and control of the ETF activities. The ETF's Performance-based Management Framework approved in July 2012 closes the section on performance and cost-effectiveness. Most elements of the framework are in place to improve of processes for better results. In 2012, the ETF improved its quarterly reporting system and significantly improved its operational planning to ensure project content quality and manage activities. In addition, all projects were comprehensively monitored in 2012 to identify areas for improvement using DAC criteria. The Annual Performance Report issued in March 2013 for the first time describes the availability of quality assurance tools and their use.

Part II also records resource management. Of the €20,144,530 available for commitment appropriations in 2012, the ETF achieved the following: a commitment rate for subvention funds of 99.91 % (overall title 1, 2, 3), a payment rate for subvention funds of 85.9% (both administrative and operational) and an execution of payment appropriations in title 3 of 99.92% (with an overall use of 95.39% of the total amount of payment appropriations, still to increase in 2013 with the payment of carried forward activities).

Part III of the report describes the building blocks towards the Director's Declaration of Assurance (assessment by management, results from audits, monitoring and evaluation, and follow-up of action plans for audits from previous years). This section also describes the control procedures to guarantee the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

Part IV is Director's Declaration of Assurance. The information provided in the report gives the director reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the ETF in 2012 were used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

Torben KORNBECH RASMUSSEN (Denmark) remarked that the document presented for adoption clearly and precisely reflected the discussion during the Governing Board Working Group meeting in April 2013.

Ann Mary REDMOND (Ireland) on behalf of the Board members presented the **Annual Activity Report 2012 Analysis and Assessment** to: i) welcome the achievement of the ETF's objectives for 2012; ii) appreciate that the document submitted illustrates the qualitative aspect of ETF work in the partner countries; iii) uphold the success of the second round of the Torino Process and the value of structured evidence in guiding the policy cycle; iv) emphasise thematic development work, in particular the successful activities in the area of entrepreneurship and enterprise skills, which concluded in 2012 with a conference in November; v) appreciate the ETF's work on multi-level governance in VET; vi) remarked on the external evaluations and their overall positive assessment of the effectiveness of the ETF's work; vii) appreciate the execution of activities within the resource framework adopted by the Board (the ETF committed 99.91% of commitment appropriations in 2012 and disbursed 99.92% of its Title 3 budget).

The information provided in the report gives the Governing Board reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the ETF in 2012 were used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

In the light of the above analysis and assessment, **the Governing Board adopted the ETF Annual Activity Report 2012 and the Annual Activity Report 2012 Analysis and Assessment**, which will be submitted to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Court of Auditors.

5. ETF 2012 Annual Accounts

Martine SMIT (ETF), appointed as accounting officer in 2000 by the Governing Board to report on the annual accounts, presented the 2012 accounts.

The accounts are prepared and presented in accordance with Title VII of the Financial Regulation. The standards applied are identical to those applied by the EC and all other EU bodies. The accounts were audited by the Court of Auditors (COA) and the ETF received the preliminary observations which were adopted by the Court on 7 May 2013. A copy was distributed to the Board members.

The statement of assurance indicates that the ETF's Annual Accounts present fairly, in all material respects, its financial position as of 31 December 2012 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year, in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulation. The opinion of the Court is the basis for discharge by the European Parliament. The ETF received the discharge for the financial year 2011 on 17 April 2013.

The principles that have been applied are: for the general accounts, accrual based accountancy, which is the model used by the ETF since 2005. For budget execution, the ETF uses cash-based accountancy. These principles are not selected randomly but imposed by the EC. Accrual accounting is based on transactions and other events when they are recognised and occur (and not only when cash or its equivalent is received or paid). Cash accounting is based on cash flows, i.e. transactions are recognised when cash is received or paid.

The 2012 Annual Accounts use the following terminology:

- *Economic Outturn:* The economic outturn indicates a loss, but is merely a paper result, including all possible upcoming events and is not the amount to be paid back to the EC. The result of the economic outturn will go in the balance in the next year under accumulated net assets.
- *Statement of changes in net assets:* At the ETF the only element of the changes in net assets is the economic result. This result leads to a change in the net assets in the balance sheet;
- *Balance:* There are no remarkable differences compared to 2011. The total value of the balance shows a small decrease. This is mainly due to the decrease in cash equivalents.
- *Cash flow:* The ETF continued to monitor its treasury closely and this resulted in a high percentage of payments and a continuing decrease in the cash situation. Furthermore, the bank account for the MEDA ETE convention was closed. Although the MEDA ETE convention was formally closed in 2011, the closure and reimbursement of the remaining funds only took place at the beginning of January 2012.

The ETF budget consists of commitment and payment appropriations. Commitments are legal budgetary obligations. The earmarked funds consist of: i) re-use of funds for Title 1, 2 and 3 through the recovery of expenses; ii) Italian Trust Fund – Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the ETF subvention, the level of commitment at 99.80%, is slightly higher than in 2011. In comparison with other agencies, the overall % of commitment is 95%. The level of commitment for earmarked funds is calculated on the calendar year as for the ETF subvention, but it is to be reminded that earmarked funds are of a multi-annual nature and as a result the level of commitment is not an indicator on the efficiency.

The budget outturn is based on the funds received and the execution of payment credits.

Actually received	€ 20,173,484.56
Actually paid	€ 20,613,480.23
Result before adjustments	€ 439,995.67
Adjustments	€ 565,364.33
Final result	€ 125,368.66

The adjustments represent the payment credits carried over related to earmarked funds from 2011 to 2012, cancelled payment appropriations related to carry over from 2011 and exchange rate differences. The final result represents the amount to be reimbursed to the EC and relates to the ETF subvention. The percentage paid out of the available credits is 94.85%.

In 2012, the ETF executed 2382 payments. Individual salary payments are excluded. According to the regulation, the interest gained on the ETF subvention is to be paid back to the EC. For all other earmarked funds, it depends on each convention. The interest the ETF gained in 2012 was €59,384.14, of which €48,277.59 was from the ETF subvention, €2,805.14, the Italian Ministry Foreign Affairs and €8,301.41, the MEDA ETE convention. In 2013, only €1,081.20 (Italian Ministry Foreign Affairs) will be used.

Alastair MACPHAIL (ETF) presented the Court of Auditors preliminary observations adopted on 7 May 2013. The Statement of Assurance indicates that the ETF's accounts for the year ending 31 December 2012 are legal and regular in all material respects. The only comment provided by the Court is related to the committed appropriations carried over to 2013 for title II, administrative

expenditure. The ETF has submitted an explanation for this which was accepted by the Court of Auditors.

Reinhard NOBAÜER (Austria) appreciated the presentation and the positive opinion of the Board and requested a breakdown of expenditure per region.

Figures for this are included in the 2012 Work Programme, and the budget execution including allocations per region are presented in the annexes of the Annual Activity Report 2012.

The Governing Board adopted the ETF 2012 Annual Accounts.

6. 2013 amending budget

Alastair MACPHAIL (ETF) presented an amending budget for 2013, indicating that the reason behind the amendments were to incorporate existing and new assigned revenue, which is normally undefined at the time of the adoption of the budget (November/December 2012 for the 2013 budget), and to adjust the subvention to the actual amount made available by DG EAC.

The initial 2013 subsidy was €20 144 500. There is a decrease of €1 000 in the contribution that the ETF receives from the EC which is a technical adjustment due to roundings. The amending budget will be €20 143 500.

The amending budget also integrates €52,070.17 available from previous years, assigned to the ETF by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The interest accumulated in 2012 amounts to €1 081.20 has been included as new appropriations with the agreement of the Ministry.

It also integrates €594,721.60 received from the EC (DG DEVCO) as the first instalment of funding for the Governance for Employability in the Mediterranean (GEMM) project. The amending budget integrates the amount of €1 249 800 received from the EC (DG Enlargement) as the first instalment for the Frame: Skills for the Future (FRAME) project.

Activities performed in 2013 until now are in line with the Work Programme adopted by the Board in November 2012 and subsequently revised with the written procedure on 15 February 2013. The necessary €1,000 will be released from operational missions to comply with the technical adjustment.

Budget transfers carried out in 2013 include: i) Increased support for internships and interim support (€65 000), learning and development activities (€23 000) and socio-medical support (€16 000) within Title 1; ii) Transfer from corporate events of dedicated funds for the Policy Leaders' Forum (Marseille, Oct 2013), a regional event (€60 000 within Title 3); iii) as agreed by the Governing Board on 5 February 2013, €54 642 was allocated to preparatory activities for the FRAME project from operational missions within Title 3; iv) funds to finalise the intranet project (€57 000 from Title 1 to Title 2); v) transfer of funds from specific country budget lines for additional participants for the Torino Process conference, 8-9 May (€14 000 within Title 3).

The Governing Board adopted the ETF 2013 Amending budget.

7. Draft 2014-17 mid-term perspective

Madlen SERBAN (ETF) presented the draft mid-term perspective 2014-17. An earlier draft was discussed with the Governing Board working group, on 23-24 April in Brussels and with the EC on 24 April. The recommendations made were incorporated into the text submitted for discussion.

The following elements were highlighted:

- *The ETF's vision* is to make vocational education and training in the partner countries a driver for lifelong learning and sustainable development, with a special focus on competitiveness and social cohesion. To achieve this, by 2020, the ETF will reinforce its role as a well-established centre of expertise in human capital development to deliver its four strategic goals.
- *ETF strategic goals* proposed are as follows:
 - Goal 1* - Evidence-based policy making: to support partner country intelligence and capacities at all stages of the VET policy cycle, bringing innovation and sustainable development;
 - Goal 2* - EU policy support: to support the external dimension of EU policies in human capital development;
 - Goal 3* - Partnership and communication: to strengthen cooperation and communication with key stakeholders playing an active role in human capital development ; and,
 - Goal 4* - Organisation development: to be a reliable and efficient EU organisation by maximising results and increasing efficiency.
- *ETF partner country context.* Since 2010, the ETF has carried out the biennial Torino Process as a means of identifying national policy needs. Although the Torino Process provides evidence that considerable progress in VET reform has been made by partner countries, the 2012-13 round revealed policy priorities put forward by partner countries which are the basis of ETF interventions under the 2014-17 mid-term perspective.
- *EU policy context.* The EU's external relations policies and internal approaches to education, training and employment shape the ETF's cooperation with its partner countries. EU internal approaches to education and training, as well as their external dimension, provide inspiration for partner countries to reflect on the future of their education and training systems.
- *Thematic/policy needs analysis.* Over the 2014-20 period, the transversal policy objectives to be addressed are social inclusion, competitiveness and, more generally, sustainable development. In addition, the following policy areas are considered to be of strategic importance for ETF work in the partner countries and are the subject of expertise development: qualifications and qualification systems, employment and employability, governance in education and training, quality in VET, entrepreneurship and enterprise skills, learning in different context, skills dimension of migration and mobility and innovation and VET;
- *Multi-annual approach in the partner countries.* It has been highlighted that during this mid-term perspective, the work in the majority of the partner countries will be multi-annual with duration of two years in most of the cases. A differentiated approach will be promoted based on the EU priorities as well as the implementation stage the country is in the thematic interventions.
- *Resources, governance and management.* The organisational context for 2014-17 period will be characterised by static financial resources (in real terms), and reduced human resources. At the same time, expectations as to what the ETF can deliver in terms of results and compliance with standards of accountability and control are expected to rise. For the period 2014-17 the ETF expects to receive a total of €84.74 million from the EU budget. In 2014-17, the ETF will deploy the following staff: 2014: 135 total staff; 2015: 134 total staff; 2016:133 total staff; 2017-132 total staff.

Gerhard SCHUMANN-HITZLER (DG Enlargement) welcomed the document presented by the ETF and expressed his support for a more strategic long-term approach, concentrating on the impact everybody hopes to get from the activities developed. He indicated that the section dedicated to the Enlargement countries is in line with the approach of DG ELARG on financial and technical assistance. The thematic priorities as well as the principles of action were identified as being the right ones. As regards the evidence or knowledge-based assessment, DG ELARG fully supports the

approach but attention needed to be drawn to the reliability of statistical data available in the countries and the need for proper systems to collect it. As an example, much of the data on unemployment is estimated and some is not reliable at all. Mr SCHUMANN-HITZLER suggested changes to the text on the Western Balkans and Turkey section (3.2) as follows: i) to update the socio-economic analysis based on the latest information issued by the World Bank in their socio-economic outlook, which presents an analysis of the countries of the region and shows that the countries are on the path of recovery from a double dip recession although unemployment remains high; ii) to clearly formulate the support to be provided to the countries to develop long-term strategies and implement them, while welcoming the emphasis on capacity building and the use of the Torino Process to validate targets and monitor progress; iii) He also stressed that knowing that the impact on the ground means more educated people, more people prepared to enter in the labour market or being self-employed- the European Commission and the ETF can support the development of the countries from the Western Balkans region through technical and financial assistance but the delivery is the sole responsibility of the countries, which are the ones responsible for achieving the impact; iv) to refine the key messages for this region.

Ann Mary REDMOND (Ireland) on behalf of the Presidency provided brief information on the outcomes of the discussions during the informal meeting. She stressed that Board members need to understand how the priorities are determined and how they link to EU internal policies and priorities, as well as how individual countries and regions are dealt with and react to ETF assistance.

Micheline SCHEYS (Belgium) welcomed the draft document which in offers a broad view of the years to come. She underlined that priorities should be in line with partner country needs and EU policies. The specificity of ETF interventions should be clearly described, including how they stimulate the partner countries to develop VET policies. The Torino Process could help to show what kind of interventions should be set up in accordance with the specific needs of the countries, as well as providing a means to disseminate the instruments used by the EU countries in VET. Priority should be given to the Torino Process and disseminating EU instruments.

Torben Kornbech RASMUSSEN (Denmark) thanked the ETF for taking on board all the suggestions and recommendations made during the Governing Board working group meeting held in Brussels on 23-24 April. He endorsed the comments and proposals made and stressed that EU policies should be much more in focus. The differentiated approach proposed by the ETF is important as is the effective use of resources and cooperation with other donors in the field. He asked for more information on the principles of cooperation with international donors.

Maurice MEZEL (France) proposed to considerate a differentiation in the allocation of resources based on the relationship that region/ partner country has with the EU like enlargement area, and in the neighbourhood policy for eg those with “status avancée”.

Ingrid MÜLLER-ROOSEN (Germany) supported the comments particularly in terms of relating to EU policies. Working with other donors active in the partner countries is important as a means of avoiding duplication and ensuring effectiveness. She encouraged the involvement of the private sector and social partners in ETF activities.

Nicholas TAYLOR (DG DEVCO) endorsed the comments and observations made, stressing the importance of impact of VET reforms on socio-economic context. For DG DEVCO, capacity building is very important and an essential part of DG DEVCO work.. He encouraged the setting of quantified targets to monitor and evaluate progress not only in terms of immediate results of TA and services provided, but also in terms of impact on the labour market and livelihood conditions.

Stefania WILKIEL (Poland) highlighted the fact that the new programme for education and training is not mentioned. She also pointed out that countries from the Eastern Partnership are of high priority for Poland and she missed reference in the text to activities developed under Platforms 2 and 4.

Jan ANDERSON (independent expert nominated by the European Parliament) endorsed the comments from DG ELARG and DG DEVCO, also stressing the importance of being in line with the EU policies. It is important to show the added value for the resources spent, to follow-up and have systems in place to do this. He expressed an interest in further information on donor cooperation.

JAN TRUSZCZYŃSKI (DG EAC) welcomed the ETF presentation and proposed that the same clarity should be transferred in the text of the document. He welcomed the comments and recommendations made by the Board, particularly those focusing on impact. The ETF proposal **feeds** well into the strategy developed by the EU, but there could be more links to past achievements or non-achievements and the tasks still to be addressed since actions are not measured through impact indicators but through outputs. He recommended looking again at impact more intensively. The thematic areas for intervention are much appreciated and demonstrate the ETF's strengths. Objectives 1 and 2 show the ETF's commitment to continue its work in defining reform strategies in VET. A lot of attention should be paid to objective 3 on communication and cooperation with stakeholders. For international organisations active in the field, the purpose should be to avoid overlapping and ensure synergies with ETF activities; for stakeholders from the partner countries a sharper focus should be made; and for the Member States, the ETF should try to benefit for the experience and expertise these countries have in the area of VET.

The ETF vision and mission should be more sharply focused as the ETF does not work on early childhood education or higher education and nor it can support economic recovery in countries like Turkey or Kazakhstan since they already register growth. As regards its contribution to social cohesion through civic participation, this is not reflected in the rest of the text. At the same time, the ETF should show how consultancy and advocacy in VET could help partner country government to develop effective social and territorial cohesion.

Tarja RIIHIMÄKI (Finland) remarked that both the 2014-17 mid-term perspective and the 2014 draft work programme are very ambitious. She questioned whether the objectives were realistic in the context of the current economic situation and the discussions on the financing of the EU.

Madlen SERBAN (ETF) provided additional information and clarifications. She stated that indeed the ETF is seeking to make its activities more impact-oriented. The ETF programming exercise takes into consideration the results of the policy analysis, which indicates the priorities for intervention and assesses the readiness and willingness of each country to move ahead. Ownership and involvement are key elements for the success of the interventions.

As regards the evidence based policy approach, the ETF has observed that in many of its partner countries the availability of data is very low and sometimes data are not reliable. One of the ETF's priorities is in fact to support the development of capacity to generate evidence, communicate it and use it in policy making and actions. The data creation is not exclusively the ETF tasks but in cooperation with the existing initiatives like multi-beneficiaries programme on statistics, World Bank data created for employment as well as SABER.

In the next Torino Process exercise in 2014, a differentiation will be made among the partner countries, as some will carry out self-assessments while others might not have the capacity to do so. Also for 2014, the ETF will add to its approach work on ex-ante impact evaluation, ensuring reasonable guarantees that the chosen policy is well documented.

The ETF will continue to act as a non-commercial institution, promoting EU policies depending on the region in which it is working. The interest in the partner countries on the EU instruments remains high and the ETF tries to ensure that they are applied in a quality-driven environment.

The ETF cooperates closely with international organisations, especially under the umbrella of the inter-agency working group on TVET led by UNESCO and which includes the OECD, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Commission. There are several examples of the results of this cooperation including a list of indicators for policy analysis, knowledge sharing on methodological approaches, etc.

To support ETF activities linked to promoting EU policies and instruments, the ETF and Cedefop agreed to develop common projects, such as on qualifications and the Copenhagen-Bruges reporting for the candidate countries.

The ETF is involving social partners in majority of its activities. However capacity building for social partners is needed in order them to better understand the importance of their involvement in human capital development and to become reliable partners in the policy analysis and policy making process.

The ETF also works with the private sector as for e.g. activities linked to the sector skills, governance at the regional level as well as school level. The role of private sector in developing human capital will also be the main topic of the meeting to be hosted by the ETF on 21-22 October with the other donors active in the Southern Mediterranean region.

The ETF will further consider the differentiation of its approach as recommended. However it should be mentioned that the EU developments are of interest for the countries outside of the Enlargement region for eg benchmarking VET progress against the EU targets is requested by Georgia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

Civic participation is realised mainly through the involvement of the social partners and other civil society organisations. We have emphasised in particular the territorial cohesion due to the need to better address the existing disparities in the countries as for e.g. in the Arab countries we are working in other regions than the coastal territory as well as in the territories along the coast to ensure the diversification of the economic development through relevant skills provision. Territorial cohesion is equal relevant for the countries where due to the desertification the whole economic and social development is concentrated in less than 10% of the territory (see Egypt). Subsequently the skills development strategies and VET reforms should assist a model of country development that is addressing the above mentioned issues. Ensuring participation of the stakeholders is crucial.

The ETF is also considering a civic participation when addressing the social cohesion linked to risks of marginalisation of youth and women from the policy making process. The participation of this group representatives is ensured by the ETF through initiatives such as Young Mediterranean Leaders.

The mid-term perspective will be updated based on the suggestions, observations and recommendations of the Board and will be submitted to the EC for their opinion, as requested by the mandate. On 2 October, the Governing Board working group will meet in Brussels to exchange views and opinions on a more consolidated version. With the current allocation of staff and financial resources, the ETF can implement the objectives proposed. If further cuts are applied adjustment will have to be made with the approval of the Board.

8. 2014 Draft work programme

Xavier MATHEU and **Madlen SERBAN** (ETF) presented the draft Work Programme for 2014. After presenting the vision, mission and principles of action, the 2014 Work Programme objectives were presented accompanied by indicators and targets:

- Annual objective 1.1: to reinforce partner country policy analysis capacity in the field of human capital development through the Torino Process
- Annual objective 1.2: to build partner country capacity for policy making
- Annual objective 2: to support the programming and implementation of the EU multiannual indicative programmes for partner countries in the field of human capital development.
- Annual objective 3: to strengthen networking and policy learning platforms for stakeholders.
- Annual objective 4: to develop a more efficient and results-oriented organisation.

The ETF delivers its work on human capital development through projects that use the European Commission's project cycle management methodology and therefore it already uses logical frameworks for all its projects. From 2012, the ETF has also used one nested logical framework for the entire four-year period (2010-13) to illustrate its longer-term intervention logic and impact. The ETF applies results-based management, and for the past two years has successfully recorded its work in a 'dashboard' that covers the planning, monitoring and reporting stages of the project cycle.

As regards financial resources, for 2014 the ETF expects to receive a total of €20.144 million from the EU budget. Of this subsidy, 76% corresponds to Titles 1 and 2 (staff expenditure and building, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure), while 24% corresponds to Title 3 (expenses relating to performance of specific missions). This reflects the ETF's profile as a centre of expertise, whose main asset is the expertise of its staff.

The performance-based management framework, audit and risks and goals for communication are: i) to support knowledge-sharing and capacity building on human capital development in ETF partner countries; ii) to enhance two-way communication and debate on human capital development issues between the EU and partner countries; iii) to facilitate and work together with European and national authorities, decision makers and organisations to share knowledge, expertise and support in the field of human capital development, and iv) to raise the profile of the ETF as a centre of expertise by providing authoritative information and contribute actively to international debate on human capital in transition and developing countries.

Ann Mary REDMOND (Ireland) as the Presidency representative repriting from the informal meeting explained that the Board members appreciated the fact that there are not so many details at this stage and that members will have another opportunity to comment on consolidated version of the text at the working group meeting on 2 October in Brussels.

The chairman signalled that many of the observations and recommendations made on the 2014-17 draft mid-term perspective also apply to the draft 2014 work programme.

9. European Commission roadmap for the implementation of the common approach towards the EU agencies

Jan TRUSZCZYŃSKI (DG EAC) informed the Board members that more efficiency, more accountability and better governance is required in the EU decentralised bodies. The roadmap includes 90 activities and the key words are efficiency and effectiveness.

He underlined the following issues:

- One of the proposed measures includes the role of the Governing Board as appointing authorities for all staff, not only the director although this measure is not endorsed by the agencies and discussions continue;

- In many decentralised bodies or agencies, two-tiers of governance are in place, with a small executive. In the ETF he remarked that there is a functional troika and the Board should consider i) continuing with the current set-up; ii) entrusting troika with more responsibilities; or iii) establishing an executive body;
- As regards rationalisation and sharing of resources, following requests from the European Parliament, the EC is looking at synergies and functional integration between the ETF, Cedefop, Eurofound and OSHA. The EC, with the support of the ETF and Cedefop, is looking at possible synergies between the two agencies and a comparative assessment will be made as part of the external evaluation of Cedefop;

Ann Mary REDMOND (Ireland) indicated that through the 2008 recast, many of the issues presented in the roadmap have been solved in the case of the ETF and during the next Governing Board meeting the members of the Board will continue their discussions on synergies between the ETF and Cedefop as well as the issue of resources.

Micheline SCHEYS (Belgium) asked about the timetable for the merger of the agencies. The chair explained that the term “merger” is not used by the Commission and it does not appear in the final report on budgetary discharge. The discharge report invites the Commission together with the Foundation, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work to further explore the synergies that exist between those agencies and to report to the discharge authority on the possible deeper integration of those four agencies; invites those agencies and the Commission to evaluate whether closer cooperation could lead to economies of scale and optimisation of their performance. To respond to this report the EC analysis might be ready by the end of this year or by the beginning of next. Firstly, the EC is looking at the integration of different functions or clustering them based on geographic proximity, although this would not be applicable in the case of the four agencies in question due to their current locations.

10. Report on progress in the implementation of the action plan following the ETF external evaluation

Xavier MATHEU (ETF) presented the progress in implementing the Action Plan following the ETF external evaluation.

Only two actions are not yet completed and require more time and are related to the work with the ETF partner country stakeholders aiming to improve capacity and increase partner country ownership over the policy process. The ETF is completing the draft paper on capacity building by adding a guide on policy networks to support capacity building at regional and cross-national level.

Micheline SCHEYS (Belgium) remarked that in recommendation 2, there is a reference to NGOs, which is not reflected in ETF actions. However, the Torino Process includes NGOs in its different working groups and they participate actively. The situation might not be the same in all countries, especially due to the development of civil society organisations but the ETF intends to increasingly involve NGOs in partner country activities.

11. Any other business

Madlen SERBAN (ETF) presented ETF stakeholder cooperation: general approach and actions in 2013.

According to its Regulation, the ETF cooperates with European stakeholders such as the European Commission, Council, and European Parliament – those who ensure ETF governance, as well as with other EU bodies. At the same time, the ETF encourages networking and the exchange of experience

and good practice between EU Member states and partner countries and amongst partner countries on human capital development issues. The representatives of the social partners at European level, which are already active in the work of EU institutions and international organisations active in the training field, are invited, where appropriate, to participate in the work of the ETF. The ETF may establish co-operation agreements with other relevant bodies active in the human capital development field in the EU and worldwide.

The ETF coordinates its activities with the diversity of development co-operation actors active in the partner countries and, in view of contributing to effective human capital development. The ETF creates conditions for both support to human capital development policies in the partner countries and effective aid development that EU institutions and Member States can later build upon, including national authorities and other donors, following the principles agreed in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

The ETF has identified two categories of stakeholder: primary stakeholders, which include the EU institutions, EU Member State institutions, ETF partner countries, and secondary stakeholders, which include international organisations, international development banks, networks, NGO's, etc. However the stakeholders in the partner countries are not included in the framework for actions. The cooperation with the stakeholders is addressed in the country implementation plans and projects at the regional and country level.

Maurice MEZEL (France) suggested replacing the term EU Member State Governing Board representatives with EU Member State institutions.

Reinhard NÖBAUER (Austria) requested an electronic version of the document. It was informed that the electronic version of the document is available on the Governing Board area of the ETF website.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Governing Board will be held in Turin on 21-22 November 2013. For 2014, it is proposed that the first meeting takes place on 9-10 June.

Follow up actions:

- To update and revise the draft ETF mid-term perspective in line with the observations and recommendations formulated;
- To update and revise the 2014 draft Work Programme in line with the observations and recommendations formulated;
- To continue the discussions on the implementation of the European Commission roadmap for the implementation of the common approach towards the EU agencies;
- To make the changes in the framework for actions on stakeholder cooperation as regarding the title used for the stakeholders from the EU Member states.

ANNEX

4. Oral reports

Progress on Commission policies and programmes that have an impact on ETF

Jan TRUSZCZYŃSKI (DG EAC) presented the latest European Commission policies and programmes. He indicated that the country specific recommendations issued by the EC were well received by the member states and are considered as useful advice for the further development of national policy reforms and as a useful support for the education and training programmes financed under the ESF.

The Irish Presidency successfully managed to move the issue of the open method of cooperation forward by ensuring an agreement on streamlining to six thematic groups and giving more responsibility for guidance, monitoring and output control to directors general for higher education, VET or schools.

Since the **Rethinking education** report was adopted in November 2012 it has been used as a reference for reflection to support investments in skills for better socio-economic outcomes. It focuses on the basic and transversal skills for the 21st century, with a special focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and entrepreneurship and vocational skills with a focus on work-based learning and excellence. It also promotes open and flexible learning through learning outcomes, transparency and recognition of qualifications (EQF, ECVET), the use of ICT and open education resources (OER) and support for teachers. Implementation will require a collaborative effort and includes maintaining investment in education and training, ensuring efficient funding, cost-sharing in higher education and initial and continuing VET and promoting partnerships.

The EC is working to finalise and publish policy guidance on **entrepreneurship education** by November 2013. It is a guidance framework for entrepreneurial education institutions and aims to support the development of tools to monitor progress and the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences.

By September 2013, the EC will propose a new communication on **Opening up the Education Initiative** based on a three pillars: i) modernising teaching and learning with use of ICT, ii) creating digital content, including OER and iii) improving the ICT infrastructure in education and training. It aims to investigate how education systems can stay on top and to adapt to the new opportunities and challenges offered by constantly developing ICT tools.

The paper on **recognition and validation of informal and non-formal learning**, which was adopted last year requires new approaches to validate learning experiences (i.e. identify, document, assess and/or certify), to make them usable in further studies or moving on in the labour market. The EC proposal aims to increase job opportunities in particular for young unemployed people and those with few formal qualifications such as older and low-skilled workers. It also seeks to increase access to higher education, especially for mature students.

On the topic of the **internationalisation of VET and higher education**, the EC is promoting cooperation with candidate and potential candidate countries through the Western Balkan Platform on education and training (WBPET). This cooperation is mainly in higher education. Policy dialogue is also being promoted with Eastern European and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. The programmes are financed from the EU neighbourhood policy budget. In Russia, the new minister of education is interested in the EU education developments so there may be developments on policy exchanges in the future. With China and India, the EC is developing tuning projects for aligning and making better use of higher education curricula.

There have been several recent developments in the **Erasmus for All** programme. Towards the end of June the last session of the triologue between the Council, the European Parliament and the EC will be held to discuss issues such as the Erasmus Master Mobility Loan Guarantee, the name of the programme, budget etc. Meanwhile, DG EAC is continuing the preparatory work, organising consultations with national agencies, supervisory bodies and high level groups. If all goes well in July the programme budget will be agreed, and in September the European Parliament will vote on it.

Dana BACHMANN (DG EAC) presented the latest developments in the area of VET and adult learning.

- **Rethinking Education Communication and the Staff Working Document on VET** contain strong policy messages regarding work based learning, VET excellence and CVT. The Member States have identified the first priority as excellence in VET. The key actions proposed are: i) developing high-quality dual VET systems according to national circumstances; ii) aligning VET policies with regional/local economic development strategies namely for smart specialisation; iii) enabling permeability with other educational offers, developing short-cycle (2-year) tertiary qualifications focused on areas of skills shortages especially where there is growth potential e.g. ICT, healthcare and green skills, and iv) strengthening local, national and international partnerships and networks between companies, especially SMEs and VET providers.

Vocational training and its target outcomes have an important role in this Communication. One of the Staff Working Documents that accompanies it is dedicated to VET. It discusses how to get the best out of vocational training systems, and concentrates on excellence as well as on financing continuing VET. The Staff Working Document on VET for better skills, growth and jobs focuses on three thematic areas: work-based learning, VET excellence and CVT financing. It also contains a chapter which describes the current reform situation of VET in Europe. It is based on Cedefop's monitoring of progress made by the Member States since the adoption of the Bruges Communiqué in December 2010.

- The EC has also made progress in relation to apprenticeships and will be ready to launch the new European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) shortly. The EAfA will bring together the efforts of EU Member States, social partners, business, other relevant actors and the EC to develop high-quality apprenticeship-type training and excellence in work-based learning in VET. The Alliance is not a new governance structure but a "commitment" gathering all relevant initiatives, promoting mutual learning and information sharing. The Alliance aims to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU and change mind-sets towards apprenticeship-type training. The Commission has prepared a Non-paper: A Roadmap towards the EAfA, in which the Alliance concept and future activities are described. The paper was presented at the last DGVT meeting in Dublin;

The European Alliance for Apprentices will work on three themes: i) a federation of efforts for targeted knowledge transfer in order to improve apprenticeship-type systems across Europe; ii) a spotlight on the benefits of high quality apprenticeships: changing mind-sets and raising awareness; and iii) a smart use of EU programme resources, in particular the European Social Fund (and the Youth Employment) and Lifelong Learning Programme / Erasmus for All.

- On 17 April the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) agreed to a recommendation establishing **"youth guarantee" schemes**. The recommendation will be formally adopted by the Council at a later stage. Although not a legally binding act, it reflects a strong political commitment by the member states. It aims to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 who lose their job or do not find work after leaving education will quickly receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship. They should receive it within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The "youth guarantee" is intended to smooth the transition from school to work, support labour market integration and make sure that no young person is left out. This measure comes in response to the worsening youth employment situation across Europe, with an increasing number of young people who are not in employment, education or training. The investment required for such guarantee schemes should be set against the high social and economic costs which wide-spread youth unemployment would entail in the longer term.

The recommendation sets out guidelines for the implementation of youth guarantee schemes, focusing on a number of key strands of action, in particular: diversity and other overarching issues; targeted support and partnerships between public and private employment services, employers, social partners and youth representatives; use of available EU funds to support the schemes. Member States are called upon to implement the schemes as soon as possible, preferably from 2014. In Member States with the most severe budgetary difficulties and higher rates of youth unemployment, gradual implementation will be considered. The financial resources available under existing EU funds, such as the European Social Fund and other cohesion policy funding instruments, will be reinforced by a new youth employment initiative decided by the European Council at its meeting on 7-8 February. This new initiative will make €6 billion available for 2014-20 to help regions with youth unemployment rates above 25% to implement measures that favour youth employment, such as the youth guarantee.

Half of the amount will come from the European Social Fund and the other half from a dedicated youth employment budget line.

- The **Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning** defines the focus for European cooperation in adult learning policies for 2012-20. It identifies five priorities for adult learning in Europe: i) Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; ii) Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; iii) Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning; iv) Enhancing the creativity and innovation of adults and their learning environments; v) Improving the knowledge base on adult learning and monitoring the adult learning sector. The renewed European Agenda builds on the 2006 Communication on Adult Learning, the subsequent Action Plan on Adult Learning 2008-10, the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training, and ET2020 from an adult learning perspective. It should be seen in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and the targets for reducing the numbers of early school leavers and increasing tertiary education graduates.
- By the end of May 2013, 19 Member States and one candidate country (Croatia) had presented their national report on **referencing their national qualifications levels** to the EQF. Seven countries intend to complete their referencing process by the end of this year, five in 2014. Six countries have started indicating the relevant EQF level in their new certificates, diplomas, Europass supplements (the diploma or the certificate supplements) and/or national qualifications databases. The evaluation of the EQF is on-going. The Commission report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the EQF is likely to be adopted in summer 2013. The report is based on several inputs and various technical studies carried out by the EC, Cedefop and the ETF. The external study commissioned by the EC and carried out in 2012-13 will be published in summer 2013.
- The recommendation on the **EQAVET external evaluation** invites the EC to ensure a follow-up by presenting a report every four years to the European Parliament and the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review of the recommendation conducted in cooperation with the Member States and involving the various stakeholders. The main findings of the report include the following: i) EQAVET framework is still politically relevant – even more so since the Bruges Communiqué; ii) the choice of the Recommendation as the legal basis was a good one; iii) EQAVET is consistent and complementary to the other tools (ECVET, EQF) but does not cover certain aspects dealt with by ECVET and EQF (e.g. qualification design, certification process); iv) the material developed at European level is user-friendly and useful but difficult to disseminate at national level due to the language issue; v) projects have a real impact when they are targeted at the authorities dealing with the implementation of the national approach for quality assurance in VET; vi) stakeholder involvement varies from country to country. The lowest involvement is from students, the higher education sector as well as companies/industries, in fact those who would have a major interest in transparency. The report recommends continuing cooperation at European level, strengthening qualification design, assessment and award, translating the material developed, increasing cooperation with higher education, etc.
- The **Bruges Communiqué** foresees that a new list of short-term deliverables will be drawn up in 2014 based on its strategies objectives. The full report on the implementation of the short-term deliverables will be produced by Cedefop in June 2014. The 2014 review will focus on the definition of new short-term deliverables only, but the basis remains the strategic objectives defined in the Bruges Communiqué and the progress Member States have made in the period 2011-14, considered in the context of the economic crisis with high youth unemployment. The Council Conclusions and the Communiqué (involving the non-EU countries participating in the Copenhagen process, European Social Partners and the Commission) are likely to be put forward for re-adoption probably in early 2015. The EC will build on the recent policy documents and initiatives (for instance those mentioned above), country specific recommendations issued to the Member States, as well as thematic objectives defined within the new Structural Funds. The results of the thematic working groups and work related to the implementation of the EU tools (EQF, Europass, ECVET, and EQAVET) will also be used. DGVT will be used for orientation debates and brainstorming around the main areas for the new short-term deliverables. This will start under the Greek Presidency.

Reinhard NÖBAUER (Austria) expressed his appreciation for the EC papers on the Alliance for Apprenticeship and Youth Guarantee and asked if the details on the financial disbursement had been

agreed. The EC representatives explained that the issue is still under discussion. The initial EC proposal was for €6 billion to top-up current ESF funds, targeted at people under 25 years old and regions with high levels of youth unemployment.

In response to a question from **Torben Kornbech RAMUSSEN** (Denmark), the chair explained that the policy document to be launched in July is about European Higher Education in the World, which details how universities and national authorities have initiated or developed strategies on higher education in relation to cooperation with universities from all over the world.

Gerhard SCHUMANN-HITZLER (DG ELARG) presented the latest developments in the area of enlargement.

There are positive and negative developments in the region. The positive ones are related to the accession of Croatia to EU from 1 July, which demonstrates that the enlargement process is progressing. Negotiations with Montenegro are advancing well. However, unfortunately the same cannot be said for Turkey, given recent events and the government's reaction. The situation with Iceland is also less positive following the recent election of a government opposed to EU accession, which has put negotiations on hold for now.

In April, the EC published the Spring Reports which list the positive developments in Serbia, Kosovo¹, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The relationship between Serbia and Kosovo has improved. Serbia does not recognise Kosovo as an independent State but they are working on establishing a practical co-existence of the two entities. By the end of June, the European Council may decide to start accession negotiations with Serbia. For the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the issue of the name of the country is still pending, there has been a recent internal political crisis and tensions with Bulgaria. In Albania, the situation is characterised by a polarisation of the political parties and political stalemate. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to focus on changing its constitution since the political leaders are unable to agree on the implementation rules related to minority rights.

At regional level, there are several areas that can be addressed by strengthening **regional cooperation** in the context of a more active role of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The ETF and RCC cooperate closely and this will be further strengthened in the near future.

The discussions between the Parliament and the Council on **the new Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance** (IPA II) are on-going. The European Parliament asks for a say in the use of the financial allocations for all external action instruments. The discussions will continue under the Lithuanian Presidency.

The new IPA II instrument will be more strategic, more coherent, and have a long-term approach. Country Strategy Papers – which will outline the priorities for assistance in all policy areas – are under preparation.

Ünal AKYÜZ (observer from Turkey) expressed his disagreement on the statements made regarding the political situation in Turkey. **Gerhard SCHUMANN-HITZLER** (DG ELARG) explained that the developments in Turkey had a negative impact not only on the discussions with the EU but also on the economy since they might deter foreign investment and reduce the inflow of capital. The EU cannot tell Turkey how to handle the situation, but it does expect Turkey to respect the fundamental rights of the citizens and to subscribe to EU principles.

Nicholas TAYLOR (DG DEVCO) presented the latest developments in the area of development policy. The context is set by the post-Millennium Development Goals discussion on new goals for sustainable development and the EC Communication on Decent Life for All.

DG DEVCO is also working on preparing new programmes under the new financial instrument, one of which will be a thematic programme for global public goods. Geographic programming for the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Development Funds is also being carried out.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

In the area of VET and its associated themes, major developments will address the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, with a programme financed under ENPI. African countries, especially Sub-Saharan ones, are also targeted since they are facing severe youth unemployment due to a lack of new jobs for the young urban generation.

The quality of VET is a major issue in the context of contributing to growth and better lives, focusing primarily on better opportunities for young people from the Southern Mediterranean countries. Innovation and anticipation of skills needs will be another area of work.

DG DEVCO considers the ETF-led Torino Process as being in line with the G20 agenda, where a holistic approach to education and training, the link between training, entrepreneurial skills and local communities, and the use of evidence and foresight methodologies are key areas of cooperation.

DG DEVCO thanked the ETF for its support in organising a mission to Morocco for gathering information on ENPI opportunities.

Trends and developments at the ETF

Madlen SERBAN presented the latest developments at the ETF. Detailed information can be found in the Spotlights publication distributed to Governing Board members.

Among the main recent activities, the second round of the Torino Process was concluded. The Torino Process is a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of VET policies in a given country, in which the country actors develop common understanding of VET vision, priorities and strategy. The analysis is the basis for home-grown VET policies and an instrument to monitor progress. At the same time, it offers opportunities for policy learning within/among partner countries, and with EU countries. The outcomes inform EU external assistance and ETF projects and countries are empowered to coordinate donor contributions.

The four principles that govern the process are:

- Ownership of both process and results by partner country stakeholders;
- Broad participation in the process as a basis for reflections and consensus building/policy learning;
- Holistic approach, using a broad concept of VET for both young people and adults and adhering to a system approach, including links to economic and social demands;
- Evidence or knowledge-based assessment

The analytical framework includes a policy vision, VET in relation to economic competitiveness, VET in relation to social demand and social inclusion, internal quality and efficiency and governance and financing.

Key facts about the current Torino Process exercise are:

- 25 partner countries took part. Iceland and Syria were ineligible, Algeria and Turkmenistan opted out, Egypt and Libya rescheduled to 2013-14;
- 15 partner country-led assessments compared with 7 in 2010-11;
- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia were in both Bruges and the Torino Process;
- Four regional reports were prepared, a cross country analysis and a key indicators publication;
- The results were discussed at regional level in four regional meetings organised in Jordan, Brussels, Astana, Torino;

On 8-9 May, the ETF organised, the conference on *Moving Skills Forward*, under the framework of the Irish Presidency. The final declaration sets out the main priorities for the countries:

- A shared, long-term vision for better jobs for young people and adults;

- Innovation and forward-looking policy making for employability, entrepreneurship and successful transition from education and training to work;
- The closer integration of learning and work;
- Social inclusion as a key transversal principal in VET policy and practice;
- More attractive initial and continuing VET through frameworks for quality enhancement, national qualification systems and pathways for progression and participation that lead to employment;
- Higher quality teachers and trainers;
- Effectively shared responsibilities in the governance of education and training policies;

The participants also identified the areas for joint actions, as follows:

- Prioritise areas and prepare implementation plans based on analysis, scenarios and foresight;
- Monitor progress on the basis of indicators, including EU benchmarks;
- Identify and disseminate good practice in policy making according to national contexts;
- Broaden participation in policy analysis and policy making to all relevant stakeholders, including youth, making use of social media for increased transparency and participation;
- Develop methodological tools in priority policy areas;
- Ensure VET is labour market-oriented, serves entrepreneurial communities involving business;
- Launch the 2014 Torino Process.

The Irish Presidency and the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency

Irish Presidency

Ann REDMOND (Ireland) presented the achievements of the Irish Presidency. The overall theme of the Presidency was Quality and Equity. The Presidency managed to get the Youth Guarantee approved - a €4 million preparatory action to help EU countries get young people into employment, further education or (re)training within four months of leaving school. The new programme Erasmus + has been negotiated but the approval process will happen under the Lithuanian Presidency. Recognition of professional qualifications progressed well and is in its first reading, but less progress is reported on the debates on the social and globalisation funds. The Council Conclusions of May approached the issue of how to ensure better quality education by supporting the teaching profession. The ETF Torino Process Conference "Moving Skills Forward", 8-9 May, was organised under the framework of the Presidency.

Lithuanian Presidency

Saulius ZYBARTAS (Lithuania) presented the main priorities in the area of education and training in the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency:

- Enhancement of energy security;
- Effective implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and enhanced regional cooperation;
- Bringing the countries of Eastern Europe closer to the EU by implementing reforms and concluding planned agreements; and
- Effective protection of the EU's external borders.

In the area of education and training, the Lithuanian Presidency will focus on quality and efficiency: i) to adopt the Council Conclusions on Leadership in Education; ii) Efficiency in financing higher education; iii) Globalisation of higher education; iv) Inclusive VET: tackling early school leaving and access to CVT.

The calendar of the events is as follows:

- High Level Group meeting: 6-7 June 2013;
- Education Committee: 15-16 July 2013;
- Meeting of the DG higher education : 23-24 September 2013;
- Meeting of the DG VET: 11-12 November 2013;
- Meeting of the DG General Education: 2-3 December 2013;
- Meeting of the ELGPN: 12-13 December 2013;
- Conference on Higher Education: 5-6 September 2013;
- Conference on General Education: 9-10 September 2013;
- Comenius conference (together with the CION): 11-12 October 2013;
- Conference on VET: 12-13 November 2013;
- European Adult Learning Conference (together with the CION): 9-10 December 2013

During the DG VET meeting, the objectives are to better understand and share successful VET policy strategies for inclusive VET, reaching the Bruges Communiqué short term deliverables and addressing country specific recommendations. Part of the meeting may be dedicated to the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) as well as the OECD Skills Outlook.

The Conference on the contribution of VET to making education systems more inclusive will tackle the progress and challenges of member state VET policies referring to the Conclusions of the Council of the EU on the social dimension of education and training (2010) and the Spanish EU presidency conference on “Inclusive Education: a way to promote social cohesion” (2010). Presenting the findings of projects for inclusive IVET and CVT and sharing good practice from member states and countries outside the EU will be among the objectives.

A peer-review exercise on work-based learning and apprenticeship will be organised to share practice and lessons learnt in implementation, particularly in terms of what works and specific country cases.