

ETF GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

16 NOVEMBER 2009

MINUTES

1. Introduction

The November 2009 meeting of the ETF Governing Board was held in Turin on 16 November and chaired by Jordi Curell Gotor, director responsible for Lifelong Learning in the European Commission's DG Education and Culture. New members of the Board for Malta (Michael Grima of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport), Romania (Lilliana Preoteasa of the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation) and Spain (Gema Cavada of the Ministry of Education) were welcomed. Furthermore, European Parliament representative members Jean François Mezières and Stamatis Paleocrassas were also present. The European Commission's DG RELEX was represented by Timo Summa. An observer from Turkey (Salih Celik) was in attendance. Commission officials Annamaria Molnar from EuropeAid, Ronan MacAongusa from DG RELEX, as well as Belén Bernaldo De Quirós and Elena Pascual Jiménez from DG Education and Culture were also present. The ETF's recently appointed staff committee was represented by Mircea Copot.

Belgium, Latvia and the United Kingdom were not represented at the meeting. Furthermore neither Croatia nor the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia sent observers.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Board was asked to consider the draft cooperation agreement with the Regional Cooperation Council under point number 7 of the agenda along with the draft agreements with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The presentation on the new website restricted area for the Governing Board, along with other communication issues, was postponed until the next meeting. The agenda was adopted.

3. Follow-up to previous meeting

i. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held in June 2009 were approved.

ii. Follow up on action points and written procedures

The following actions were carried out as a follow up to the June 2009 meeting:

- The minutes of the November 2008 meeting and the Governing Board rules of procedure were amended in line with the comments received from the Board and posted on the ETF website.
- New drafts of the Mid-term Perspective 2010-13 and the 2010 Work Programme were presented under point six of the agenda of this meeting.

- Following an exchange of letters and meetings with the Court of Auditors, the Court agreed to delete paragraph 12 of its final report on human resources issues at the ETF and the ETF sent written replies to the remaining two recommendations in September.
- Both the Annual Activity Report and the Governing Board's assessment of it were sent by the deadline to the competent bodies as stipulated in article 13.4 of the regulation.
- A working group comprising members of the Board was organised to prepare the Mid-term Perspective 2010-13 and the 2010 Work Programme.

A written procedure was carried out in August on the Memorandum of Understanding between the ETF and the UN children's fund of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the mid-year budget allocation as well as information on the return of funds from the Translation Centre in Luxembourg.

4. Oral reports

i. Progress on Commission policies and programmes that have an impact on the ETF

Jordi Curell welcomed **Madlen Serban** to her first Governing Board meeting as ETF director and confirmed the Commission's positive impressions of her work to date. He explained the two probationary procedures that she will undergo. The first is being undertaken by Timo Summa of the Commission and Swedish Governing Board member Mr Bystrøm and will be finalised by 31 December, while the second looks at management capabilities and will be completed by 31 March.

Developments at the Commission

On 16 September, the European Parliament voted in Jose Manuel Barroso for a second term as Commission president. His five-year tenure will see important changes to the EU's human capital development and external relations policies.

On 31 October, Commissioner Figel' left the Commission and was replaced by Commissioner Maros Sefcovic.

Lisbon treaty

Czech President Vaclav Klaus's signature of the Lisbon treaty on 3 November 2009 was the final step in the adoption of the Lisbon treaty, which will have a significant impact on the way the EU manages its external relations, which by definition will have an impact on the ETF's work. The new external service is expected to gradually begin its operations in the first months of 2010.

Education and training 2020

This strategic framework of European cooperation in education and training covers a wide range of external education and training activities which complement the EU's internal programmes and promote EU policies in this field. There are four international objectives: (i) supporting partner countries in their modernisation efforts; (ii) promoting common values and closer understanding; (iii) advancing the EU as a centre of excellence in the field; and, (iv) improving the quality of services and human resources in the EU through mutual learning, comparison and exchange of good practice. The ETF's expertise will make a valuable contribution to achieving these objectives.

External dimension of the European Qualifications Framework

As a follow-up to the highly successful conference organised by the ETF on the external dimension of the EQF in January, a working group comprising the European Commission, interested member states and Cedefop will be convened by the ETF to prepare and support ongoing dialogue on the EQF with the international community. A follow-up conference will be organised in 2011.

Within the EU, the EQF is progressively being implemented across Europe and is increasingly having an impact at the different national levels. When work began on the EQF in 2004, only three countries (UK, Ireland and France) had national qualification frameworks. Now, most of the 32 countries involved in

Education and Training 2010 are actively developing their own frameworks. An important conference on the topic was organised by the Commission in June.

Bruges Communiqué

A biennial report on the Copenhagen process is foreseen to be launched as part of the Belgian presidency of the EU in the second half of 2010. A new reporting process for this purpose has been organised by Cedefop. Areas to be covered include: the impact of the Copenhagen process on cooperation, emerging challenges, the role of skills competences and policies for economic recovery, strengthening links between vocational education and training and labour markets, equity issues, attractiveness of vocational education and training as well as financing in this area. The ETF's plans to accompany the process by carrying out a parallel exercise tailored to the partner countries (known as the Torino Process) was welcomed by the Commission.

New skills for new jobs

The anticipation of skills needs and adequate policy answers will be discussed at a forum dedicated to this topic organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Affairs Committee and the Committee of the Regions in Brussels on 7 and 8 December 2009. The objective is to present, promote and discuss 18 sector-based studies that investigate skills needs up to 2020.

Green paper on mobility

The Commission has launched a consultation on the Green Paper on 'Promoting the Learning Mobility of Young People', which looks in particular at transversal skills. Open until 15 December, the on-line consultation process is open to anyone interested – in particular stakeholders from national governments, local and regional authorities, organisations, association and enterprises. The overall aim is to try to make young people's mobility the rule rather than the exception, and the paper highlights areas where further efforts are necessary. After the consultation process, the Commission will prepare a proposal for practical follow-up.

Timo Summa presented the latest developments with regard to the Instrument for Pre-accession and the Enlargement policies.

The major event of the second semester 2009 was the presentation enlargement package in mid-October where clear guidance was given to the countries in the pipeline for EU membership. The key messages are that despite the global economic crisis, the unfavourable political climate in the EU Member States, and uncertainties about the Lisbon treaty, the perspective of EU membership is still a driving force for reforms. The main challenges faced by the enlargement countries include the economic crisis, the rule of law, a number of bilateral issues with certain Member States as well as regional cooperation.

New applications for membership have been received from Montenegro (in 2008), Albania and Iceland. Serbia is expected to make a request before the end of 2009. Progress has been made in a number of areas including a proposal from the European Commission to open accession negotiations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the resolution of the border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia is expected means that accession negotiations can hopefully be concluded with Croatia in 2010; Serbia is taking a more proactive stance towards EU integration; Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) is receiving additional European support for political and socio-economic developments and further reforms of the constitutional framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina is ongoing. One tangible benefit of the reforms that will come into effect on 1 January 2010 is visa-free travel from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia to the EU.

Although the global economic crisis does put the reforms in the region at risk, different donors including the EU, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development are providing substantial financial support particularly for the promotion of competitiveness in the region. The ETF has an important role to play in the support for the human capital development component of the Instrument for Pre-accession, which is a particularly important in promoting competitiveness. The ETF's memorandum of understanding with the Regional Cooperation Council is particularly appreciated in this regard. The European Commission Delegations in the region have provided positive feedback on the 2010 work programme and cooperation with the ETF in general.

Ronan MacAngosa reported on the developments in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and the Development Cooperation Instrument.

Eastern Partnership

The overall objective of the Eastern Partnership is stability, better governance and economic development in six countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. It brings an eastern dimension to the European Neighbourhood Policy and seeks to address common challenges in the region including: good governance, democracy and stability; economic stability and convergence with EU policies; energy security; and contacts between peoples. The core objectives are regularly updated and senior officials meet regularly to discuss policy issues and needs and the possible EU response to them. In addition, a series of flagship initiatives are implemented including integrated border management, a facility for SMEs, the development of integrated electricity markets, improved energy efficiency, a southern energy corridor and the prevention or preparedness for natural or manmade disasters.

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The objective of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is to promote contact between civil society organisations and facilitate dialogue with the public authorities. A consultation process with all interested parties on how the Forum should operate was completed in April 2009, with over 40 contributions having been received. A concept paper was prepared and a call for expressions of interest for participation was distributed to all interested parties (including grass roots organisations, trade unions, employers organisations, professional associations, NGOs etc.). Of the 439 applications received, 200 have been selected. A first meeting was held on 16 and 17 November 2009.

ENP strategy papers

The mid-term review of strategy papers covering the period 2007-13 has been completed. A new strategy paper for the Eastern region has been prepared to put it in line with the objectives of the Eastern Partnership. A separate paper covering the southern region is currently being discussed in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean. A revised paper on interregional cooperation including the Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programmes will be presented in December 2009.

Libya

Trade and sector cooperation were the themes of the fifth round of negotiations on the new framework agreement with Libya that took place in Tripoli in July. The next round will feature discussions on education, training and culture and will take place in December 2009.

Central Asia

The current strategy for the Central Asia region covering the period 2007-13 informs on the principles of partnership with the EU and looks mainly at primary and secondary education and vocational education and training in conjunction with the ongoing support through the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes. A mid-term review will be carried out in the first half of 2010 under the Development Cooperation Instrument. Separate chapters on each country (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) are foreseen.

ii. Trends and developments at the ETF

Madlen Serban welcomed the members of the Board including those representing the European Parliament and went on to present the ETF's latest developments.

Administration

The ETF's site agreement will soon be signed with the Italian authorities, who have provided invaluable support in its preparations.

A staff committee for the ETF has recently been elected and so social dialogue will begin again internally.

In terms of recruitment, the ETF's strategic objectives will be taken more into account in future and the skills identified as lacking in the recent mapping exercise will be sought through new staff. Recruitment procedures are being revised in accordance with the comments of the Court of Auditors and the Internal Audit Service.

The ETF is in the process of launching a new internship policy and calls will be publicised in both the EU Member States and the partner countries. Specific criteria for interns are being set out.

Monitoring and evaluation are being looked at closely. Although activity based budgeting is not new at the ETF, efforts will be put into securing more objective evidence in future. At the time of the meeting, 95% of the ETF's 2009 budget had been committed. Improvements on this for 2010 will be sought.

The ETF expects to be in a position to introduce the new financial accounting system adapted to the requirements of the EU agencies in the near future.

In terms of the ETF's premises, a lot of very welcome financial support is being provided by the local authorities in Turin to repair some serious structural problems with the building.

Content

Eva Jimeno Sicilia, Deputy head of the ETF's Operations Department reported on ETF activities in the countries covered by the Eastern Partnership in terms of four themes:

Employment linked to socio-economic development where as an example the ETF is carrying out an extensive review of employment and labour market policies linked to human capital development. A cross-country study on this highlighting common trends and differences in the countries in question will be produced.

Labour mobility is an area in which the ETF has carried out work in the past on the skills of migrants providing useful conclusions based on evidence gathered through interviews and surveys. Work on mobility partnerships in Moldova and Georgia will continue in 2010.

Entrepreneurship linked to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. In this field, amongst other activities, the ETF is carrying out a study on education and business cooperation.

Vocational education and training linked to governance is an area that the ETF is working on bilaterally with Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova. It is specifically looking into public-private partnerships as well as social partnership.

Madlen Serban went on to explain that in view of the importance attributed to this region, a new deputy head of operations had recently been appointed.

In the southern region covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy the ETF is working on a project on flexicurity as this is an important development in EU policy in employment and one of the ETF's tasks is to translate such EU policies to its partner countries.

Due to the increasing importance of social partnership, this will be one of the areas tackled in the new cross-country study on education and business cooperation that the ETF will work on in 2010, particularly in terms of identifying interventions that empower social partnership in the partner countries.

Regional qualifications is another topic that the ETF is working on in its southern partner countries. This will involve working closely with the centre established in Marseille to work on relations with these countries including in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean.

In Central Asia, the sustainability of activities is a key element of ETF's interventions. As a consequence, in order to build on the ETF project on skills for poverty alleviation, activities have now moved towards school development so that schools can better serve their local communities. Quality and equity are other issues that the ETF is addressing in this region.

Supporting evidence-based policy making is a key area for the ETF in all its partner countries. This includes helping to develop the capacity of policy makers to produce evidence and to assess the impact of the policies that they implement. The ETF is about to launch the 'Torino Process' that will help to gather information about the situation in the different countries while at the same time supporting the countries to develop evidence that can be used by many different actors. The ETF also uses its communities of practice and its innovation and learning projects to put together evidence that can be used in policy making. This is particularly important for helping some countries to alleviate the problems caused by the global economic crisis, which can also be considered as an opportunity for different countries to invest in human capital development.

The ETF is cooperating with a number of different institutions on particular activities. Contacts have recently been taken up with social partner organisations as well as the Committee of the Regions. The ETF continues to work closely with the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation, the Asian Development Bank as well as UNESCO, with a particular view to seeking complementarity with them in different contexts.

DG Education and Culture has chosen the ETF as its natural partner to work on international dimension of the ever-more important theme of education and business cooperation. A conference on the topic organised by the ETF in December 2009 will launch the activities and a study will be prepared in 2010 covering all the partner countries.

Speaking on behalf of all three European Parliament representatives Mr Paleocrassas thanked the ETF for its critical work on supporting evidence based policy making. He went on to explain that the Parliament representatives see their role as focussing on transparency and accountability issues and offered to present their function on the Governing Board at its next meeting. This is particularly relevant as the ETF is one of the first agencies to have a governance structure including European Parliament representation.

iii. Cooperation with Member States and institutional partners

Mariavittoria Garlappi presented recent ETF activities in which Governing Board members have been involved:

Working groups on the Work Programme 2010 and the Mid-term Perspective involving **Mr Mezel (F)**, **Ms Cavada (ES)**, **Ms Reimers (D)** and **Mr Mezières (European Parliament)**.

An ETF meeting on the labour market reviews on the Black Sea region in which **Ms Ali (EE)** and **Ms Sika (LV)** participated.

Mr Mezel (F) and **Ms Cavada (ES)** will also participate in an ETF meeting on regional qualifications in the Mediterranean partner countries to be held in Tunisia in December.

Mr Cutillo (I) and **Mr Cavalchini (I)** have provided invaluable support to the preparations for the signing of the ETF's site agreement with the Italian authorities and they also helped in the organisation of a series of meetings between the ETF Director in Rome, where she met Mr Frattini, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a number of high level staff at the Ministry of Education.

Mr Mezel (F) assisted in the preparations for a visit of the Director to Paris where she met with representatives of the ministries of economy and employment as well as education.

Mr Bystrøm (SW) presented the activities that took place during the Swedish presidency of the EU from July to December 2009. In terms of education and training, the main objective of the presidency was to tackle the financial and economic crisis and increased unemployment. The conferences and seminars on education and training looked in particular at supporting in-service training and mobility for teachers, migration and social inclusion within education systems, and the contribution of universities to the knowledge triangle (education-research-innovation).

The ETF participated in a number of activities during the Swedish presidency as follows:

- The knowledge triangle shaping the future of Europe (31 August - 2 September)
- Meeting of the Directors General on Vocational Education and Training (10-13 October)
- Labour Migration and its Development potential in the age of mobility (15-16 October)
- What does gender equality mean for economic growth and employment? (15-16 October)
- Conference New Skills for New Jobs (22-23 October)
- The role of vocational education and training in meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow (12-13 November)
- Conference on Gender differences in educational achievement (17-18 November).

Ms Cavada (ES) set out the activities of the upcoming Spanish presidency of the EU (January to June 2010).

A conference on vocational education and training will be held in Zaragoza on 5-6 May 2010. The main theme will be the value of competences for access and progress in vocational education and training, with a sub-theme on the role of information and guidance in the implementation of the procedure aimed at accrediting professional competences. In view of the these topics the presence of the ETF at the conference will be very important in terms of collaboration with partner countries outside the EU.

Other relevant conferences will also take place in Zaragoza during the same week including the meeting of Directors-General for Vocational Education and Training and a meeting of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network both on 3-4 May and EUROGUIDANCE on 6-7 May 2010.

Madlen Serban thanked the Member States for their active involvement in ETF activities and distributed a questionnaire on future involvement. She also encouraged the members to consider ways in which partner countries can learn from concrete EU experience such as through study visits like the ones organised by Germany and the UK to GTZ and the British Council respectively. Partner countries were invited to attend events organised under the Spanish presidency.

5. Governance of European regulatory agencies

A number of reports and evaluations on the EU agencies have been prepared in recent years. In January the European Parliament presented its report on 'Best practice in the governance of agencies – a comparative study', which analyses public organisations at different national and EU levels and looks in particular at governance structures. In 2008 the Court of Auditors published 'The EU agencies: getting results', which looked at eight regulatory agencies and examines the extent to which they plan, monitor and report their activities properly. The most recent report is a study requested by the European Parliament on 'opportunity and feasibility of establishing common support services for EU agencies' addressing the problem of the administrative burden the agencies are under due to the requirements of the EU public administration rules. It offers some interesting points for further investigation such as simplification in the fields of recruitment, procurement and legal advice.

An inter-institutional working group has been established to discuss the role of agencies in the institutional landscape, the procedures for the establishment and closure of agencies, structure and governance, management, resources, accountability, supervision and transparency. The work should conclude at the end of 2010.

In parallel the Commission has launched two studies: a meta-study of agencies and an evaluation of decentralised agencies.

In 2010, DG EAC will launch an external evaluation of the ETF covering the years 2005-08.

Madlen Serban informed the Board that the ETF management has carefully studied the drafts of the external evaluation, and prepared notes to address the errors in the report, which particularly concern a misunderstanding of the ETF's mission.

6. Work Programme and budget

Madlen Serban explained that the work programme 2010 and the mid-term perspective 2010-13 set the ETF in the context of article 150 of the Treaty which is about vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective. The ETF contributes to the economic and social agenda for sustainable development, as well as competitiveness and social cohesion. The two documents set out the ETF's activities and scope of work, and are based logically on evidence collected by the ETF and used to produce information notes on each of the countries in which it works. Stakeholders have been consulted on the contents and many ETF staff have been involved in the preparation of the documents

Xavier Matheu de Cortada presented the Mid-term Perspective in terms of the vision, the strategic objectives, the six specific objectives, the three new core themes, the functions and the strategic priorities. In the document, outputs are related to the budget titles, the functions and the core themes.

The document has undergone an extensive consultation process including the presentation of the first draft at the Governing Board meeting of 15 June 2009, internal meetings with ETF staff, written consultations with partner country and European Commission stakeholders, meetings with external stakeholders, the annual structured dialogue with the European Commission and the submission of a third draft to the Governing Board.

Peter Greenwood went on to present the ETF Work Programme for 2010. The Work Programme has been prepared on the basis of the strategic context outlined in the Mid-term Perspective. Further detail on individual countries and projects can be found in the country information notes and the country and project implementation plans. All activities are based on the geo-political priorities in four regions with a number of cross-regional activities, which include the study on education and business cooperation, the Torino Process, and corporate conferences on gender issues and social inclusion.

The operational priorities for 2010 are innovation and learning projects on women and work, human capital development reviews, vocational training for competitiveness, human capital development reform and flexicurity approaches, innovation and learning communities/dossiers, qualifications, employment,

transition from education to work, pathways from vocational training to tertiary/post secondary education, indicators and education for development. The organisational priorities for 2010 include knowledge management, corporate communication, resource management, quality assurance and control, interagency and Member State cooperation as well as a reinforced activity based budget approach.

Mr Mezel (F) stated that he felt that the two documents clarified the mission and the concrete work of the ETF better than ever before and he felt that the link between education, training and sustainable development was much more explicit, and priority themes such as governance, vocational education and training systems and institutional partners including civil society representatives could be easily identified. Decentralisation to the local level is necessary in order improve training provision in the partner countries and diversity is another issue that requires attention. These issues are taken up in the two documents. The informal economy and apprenticeships are issues that should be taken up in the course of the Mid-term Perspective.

Mr Mezières (European Parliament) referred to the fact that governance and the management of vocational training had been taken up in the documents. Furthermore, the needs of the different levels of the labour market and professional mobility are areas to be considered. The inclusion of the development of education and business cooperation as well as the public and private sectors are welcome.

Mr Paleocrassas (European Parliament) expressed his appreciation of the two documents and the Torino Process in particular, due to its concentration on evidence-based indicators, which could eventually demonstrate the need to invest in general education in some countries. National sustainability indicators could also be included in the Torino Process project.

Mr Bystrøm (SW) recounted the reflections from the formal meeting earlier in the day. These included requests for more clarity and transparency on the links between the actions planned and the budget, an explanation of the criteria used to allocate the budget to the different themes and countries, an enhancement of the activity based budgeting to facilitate evaluation as well as indicators of sustainability which would show national added value. He added a note of caution on the implementation of activities in the current economic climate, which could put some of the longer term projects in jeopardy. Furthermore, he asked for more feedback on the themes chosen as well as a definition of the term 'key stakeholders' (stakeholders is clearly explained in the Mid-term Perspective, but it is not clear what the difference is with 'key' stakeholders). Translation costs seem to have been halved according to the 2009 amending budget and some Governing Board members requested an explanation of this. He concluded by thanking the ETF for the documents, which will enhance the organisation's credibility even further, and expressed his gratitude for the ETF's efforts to include the Governing Board members in the process of finalising the documents through the working groups.

Mr Cutillo (I) expressed his appreciation with both documents, but asked to ensure that the question of environmental sustainability, particularly in the southern Mediterranean, is considered. Training that included this aspect would be a good area for the ETF to work on in the future

Ms Reimers (D) thanked the ETF for the documents and especially for the establishment of the working groups that helped to improve transparency.

Ms Soares (PT) congratulated Madlen Serban on her appointment, Mr Bystrøm (SW) for his excellent summary of the morning's discussions and the ETF on the documents, particularly in view of the way in which they put together the key areas of education, training and labour markets and cover gender issues and equal opportunities.

Madlen Serban welcomed the comments and explained that sustainable development is an area that is very relevant for the ETF particularly in view of its global dimension. Green skills are creating an agenda in the EU Member States and the ETF has a role in translating this to the partner countries. Evidence-based policies are a matter of transparency and it is part of the ETF's job to make its contribution to economic and social development in different contexts clear. Indicators are also dependent on context: different labour markets need different kinds of education. What works in a knowledge society may not be appropriate for a society in which poverty is endemic for example. It is important for the ETF to look at the context of its activities rather than what is needed in the EU Member States.

The activity based budgeting in the documents aims to set out the ETF's activities, while the themes are selected according to context. Many activities mentioned in the 2010 Work Programme are already in progress and will not start in 2010. By the end of January, project fiches will exist for each country and they will contain a lot more detail.

Alastair Macphail, the ETF's Head of Administration, presented three budget documents to the Board: the 2010 budget, the 2011 pre-draft budget and the revised 2009 budget.

Staffing costs have always represented a high proportion of the ETF's budget due to the fact that the agency is an expertise organisation. Nevertheless in 2009, it was possible to move over €1 million from the budget titles for staffing and infrastructure (title 1 and 2) to the title for operations (title 3). The plan for 2011 is to increase the operational budget to the same level as 2009, which in part will be achieved by moving mission costs to that budget title. Translation costs have been decentralised for expert publications to the different projects and hence the reduction in amount on the specific budget line for translations. Both of these measures have the advantage of increasing transparency. Further details on the breakdown of the budget in terms of projects are provided in the different project fiches that will be available in early 2010.

Mr Mezel (F) asked for more analysis on the balance between operational and administrative budget. **Madlen Serban** explained that a call for tender for a function review of the organisation was in the process of being launched.

All five documents were approved by the Board.

7. Cooperation agreements with other organisations

Three cooperation agreements were presented to the Board:

- Cooperation agreement with Cedefop which includes participation in the Advisory Group on the European Qualifications Framework and ETF support to the Bruges process.
- Cooperation agreement with the Regional Cooperation Council in the Western Balkans at both national and regional levels.
- Italian Trust Fund agreements for ETF work in Lebanon on entrepreneurial learning and a national qualifications framework.

All three agreements were approved by the Board

8. State of play of 2009 Internal Audit Service reports

Francesca Gandini informed the Board about the latest work of the Internal Audit Service. In 2009 it audited the 'building blocks' of the Director's Declaration of Assurance in the Annual Activity Report. The 'building blocks' in this context refer to the different tools and procedures that support the Director in managing, monitoring, supervising and controlling the activities of the Agency, both on a regular and ad-hoc basis and which should enable the Director to deliver an opinion on the reliability, accuracy and completeness of the information included in the Annual Activity Report. Their overall assessment was that it was satisfactory except for the fact that more detail is required in the declaration. In view of this, the ETF has established a policy to include material reservations to qualify the declaration.

In terms of following up on previous Internal Audit Service recommendations a number are in progress, including human resources management in annual planning and activity reporting, individual versus organizational objective setting, the implementation of time recording, the documentation of procedures, supervision and the continuity of operations.

The next audit will look at planning and monitoring, risk assessments, IT risk assessment, and an update of the 2009 risk assessment.

11. Any other business

Representing the current presidency of the EU, **Mr Bystrøm (SW)** thanked **Timo Summa** and **Odile Quintin**, who are both leaving the Governing Board, for their committed involvement with the ETF over the past years.

Elena Pascual of DG Education and Culture thanked those countries that had confirmed their Governing Board representatives as set out in the ETF's recast regulation.

The Brussels missions of all the partner countries will be contacted by the Director General of DG Education and Culture to ask them to propose candidates for the ETF Governing Board. The deadline for proposals is 30 January 2010. From the CVs submitted, one representative from each of the three main regions with which the ETF works will be selected.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Governing Board will be held in Turin on 14 June 2010 (to be confirmed).

Action points

- New Governing Board website restricted area to be presented at next meeting.
- New Governing Board working group to be established on monitoring and evaluation to comment on the Annual Activity Report and the Quarterly Progress Reports.
- A presentation on the ETF flexicurity project will be made at the next meeting.
- The European Parliament representatives will explain their role on the ETF Governing Board at the next meeting in June.
- Questionnaires on the involvement of Governing Board members in ETF activities to be sent electronically.
- Countries that have not yet confirmed their membership of the ETF Governing Board should do so as soon as possible.