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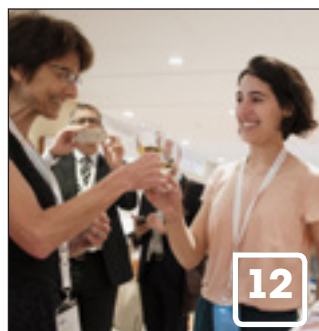
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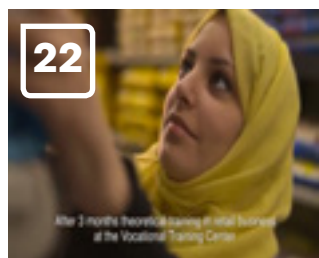
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EDITORIAL

CATCHING THE WIND IN OUR SAILS

'The wind is back in Europe's sails. But we will go nowhere unless we catch that wind. We should chart the direction for the future. As Mark Twain wrote, years from now we will be more disappointed by the things we did not do, than by the ones we did. Now is the time to build a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe for 2025,' said European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in his 2017 State of the Union address.

President Juncker flagged trade, industry, climate change and digital security as immediate areas of action. Managed migration, innovation, digitalisation and labour mobility, were also covered in his address to the European Parliament. Speaking about Europe's response to the influx of refugees, he stressed that 'legal migration is a necessity for Europe as an aging continent,' and highlighted the European Commission's Blue Card proposal to make it easier for skilled migrants to come to Europe. He paid tribute to the young people volunteering to give language courses to Syrian refugees and those serving in the European Solidarity Corps – the new EU initiative giving opportunities to young people to volunteer or work in occupational projects, traineeships and apprenticeships, in their own country or abroad. 'They are bringing European solidarity to life!' On the topic of EU neighbourhood relations, President Juncker said: if 'we want more stability we must maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans.'

These priority areas are all part of the European Training Foundation's (ETF) mandate to support partner countries bordering Europe. As covered in this issue's **News&Views**, ETF partner countries Albania, Serbia, Kosovo*, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro are strengthening regional economic cooperation to the benefit of some 20 million citizens. Plans for the Regional Economic Area were endorsed by leaders of the six countries at the Western Balkans Summit in July. The ETF hosted a workshop as part of the summit's Youth Forum.

Opening new trade markets, reducing red tape and boosting the overall business environment is at the heart of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) – the EU's overarching framework to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). To help track progress against the requirements of the act, the ETF assists with carrying out SBA assessments in three regions: South Eastern Europe and Turkey, the Eastern Partnership and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. The latest round of assessments, which focus on entrepreneurial learning, women's entrepreneurship and training to help SMEs internationalise, are underway in 15 partner countries. Find out how these countries are advancing in the **Project Update**.

Supporting the business environment and entrepreneurship skills helps create jobs, growth and stability in the partner countries. But the reality is that Europe, and many ETF partner countries, are struggling to deal with the influx of refugees, caused by instability. In Turkey, for example, there are now 3.4 million Syrian refugees, and 300,000 Syrian children have been born in Turkey since the conflict began. The ETF is part of the response, working together with the Turkish government and other key players, to support the early identification of qualifications and skills of refugees and migrants. The ETF's Qualifications team has developed a flowchart that visualises routes towards labour market integration and complements the EU's Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals. Live&Learn sat down with ETF expert Mirjam de Jong for a special **Q&A** to find out how this tool can be used to better coordinate activities in the field.

The skills dimension of migration has long been an important driver of the ETF's work. The ETF has published new research mapping the skills policy and support measures for emigrants, foreign immigrant workers and refugees in Jordan. The first research of its kind, this work builds upon the global inventory of migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective (MISMES). The Jordanian government welcomed the findings that support a more strategic approach. Live&Learn joined the high-level meeting in Amman when the findings were presented and discussed amongst key stakeholders working in the field.

President Juncker concluded his State of the Union address with a clear call to action: 'I want our Union to become a stronger global actor. Now is the time to chart the direction of our future. Now is the time to move from reflection to action.'

The ETF's flagship programme – the Torino Process – is a catalyst for partner countries to reflect, act and improve their vocational education and training systems. The 'Changing Skills for a Changing World' conference in June marked the end of the 2016–17 round of the Torino Process. Hundreds of stakeholders from ETF partner countries, Europe and beyond travelled to the ETF's headquarter city Turin for the two-day action-packed programme. Tens of thousands more tuned in online. Live&Learn brings you **In Depth** coverage from the event, and explores how the fifth round of the Torino Process is already setting concepts for future action. As Georgia's Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandre Jejelava told stakeholders at the 'Public Policies that Work' session: 'We have to be braver about changing things – we still treat education like a factory system.'

And now is the time to catch the wind in our sails.

* 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 – hereinafter 'Kosovo'.



INTERVIEW

CESARE ONESTINI

ETF DIRECTOR

Cesare Onestini brings a wealth of experience to the ETF's top job, building on a distinguished EU career that combines education and training policy, external relations and various management roles. Live&Learn sat down with Cesare during his first week at the ETF's headquarter in Turin to discover more about him.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker outlined his vision for a more united, stronger and democratic Union in the annual State of the Union address. What implications does this have for the ETF?

President Juncker's State of the Union speech outlines a vision for a stronger and more confident EU, and presents ambitious initiatives to build on and consolidate the positive momentum we start to see in terms of growth and employment. A strong EU is an asset for partner countries as well: the ETF, as part of the external action of the Union, should ensure that we strengthen our cooperation with neighbouring countries, in particular in the areas of skills and employment that feature prominently in Juncker's vision.

In response to the fast-changing world of work, countries around the world are focusing on skills development, labour mobility and lifelong learning. The new Skills Agenda for Europe is the EU's response to the challenge. What can the ETF do to support this?

With the new Skills Agenda proposed by Commissioner Thyssen last year, the European Union has put skills at the centre of its reform plans. This is a global trend, but in Europe, we really see skills coming to the fore. In fast-changing economies, there is a need to focus on skills that give citizens access to jobs, as well as mobility, adaptability and an ability to contribute productively to society throughout their varied careers. The ETF contributes as a centre of expertise on human capital development and skills, bringing more than 20 years' experience to the table.

Skills development and youth employability are an important part of the EU's assistance to neighbouring countries. How does this benefit Europe?

There are at least three dimensions through which Europe benefits directly. Firstly, with fast-changing and aging demographics there is a need to attract the best, skilled workers, to support economic growth. Promoting skills development in the neighbouring countries is part of the solution.



Secondly, developing human capital and skills contributes to stability in countries and helps to strengthen the labour market. We have all seen the costs of instability and we know that a stable neighbourhood is of direct interest to us as citizens of the European Union.

Thirdly, people are looking to improve their lives and find meaningful ways to contribute to their own countries. Fostering prosperity and solidarity, particularly in the countries on our borders, is part of the EU's vision for relations with its neighbourhood.

The ETF works closely with EU Delegations in the partner countries. From your own experience as Deputy Head of an EU Delegation, how can the ETF further strengthen these important partnerships?

The European Union over the past ten years has continued to strengthen its diplomatic reach. The Delegations, as part of the European External Action Service, are the bridges between the EU and the partner countries. They bring together European interests and the interests of the country in which they are located. The Delegations are natural interlocutors for the ETF to identify areas of action as part of the EU's broader strategy in relation to the third countries.

The ETF can provide expertise in the area of employability, skills recognition and qualifications. The Delegations are very receptive to this because they are more directly in contact with the realities of the countries. In many countries, particularly in the Mediterranean, we see very young societies and high youth unemployment. While partner countries to the east are experiencing similar challenges to Europe – skills shortages and a fast-aging workforce. The Delegations can translate our messages into concrete actions and projects. We are natural partners!

From your own experience in India, what can the ETF learn from the Asian experience?

The Asian experience shows us that Europe is not the centre of the world – we can forget that! At the same time, it also shows us that Europe has a very important role to play globally, and this global role is an essential component for promoting stability, openness and international cooperation. The Asian experience is also a reminder of the importance of human capital and know-how in any growth strategy: investing in skills is truly investing in the future.

What attracted you to the work of the ETF? What challenges are you looking forward to?

I have always been passionate about the role of education and training. That is an interest I had as a researcher and the first area I worked in when I joined the institutions in Brussels. So now, I come back to my first love in terms of policy work. I have also always been attracted to international cooperation in areas of mutual benefit. The ETF combines the chance to work in these two areas, where I feel the EU has an important role to play. I am delighted to be here today!

The challenges we face in implementing the ETF's mandate very much mirror the bigger challenges faced by the EU. We have a challenge of relevance, we have a challenge of demonstrating results and we have a challenge of communicating what we do to our citizens. I am confident these are challenges we can meet in close cooperation with our partner countries.

You met many ETF stakeholders at the Changing Skills for a Changing World conference in June. What would you like to say to them at the start of your mandate as Director?

When I attended the Torino Process conference, I was surprised at the level of commitment of the partner countries in engaging with the ETF and in sharing their experience to look for new ideas. Our commitment is to continue to support their reform efforts, and to continue finding, with them, the best ways to face these common challenges.

We have learned a lot about your professional experiences, can you tell us a little more about Cesare the man?

I am an internationalist. I have always been attracted to the idea of crossing borders and moving around. My career has allowed me to live in three different continents, and to experience directly the difference between travelling and living in a different country. This ideal of cross-border cooperation is what attracted me first to the European project and remains something that drives me to fostering closer relations with the partner countries.

Photo: Andrea Guermani



STRENGTHENING REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

ETF partner countries Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro are moving forward with plans to consolidate a market of some 20 million people to boost business, jobs and growth across the region.

The Regional Economic Area, endorsed by the leaders of the six countries at the Western Balkans Summit in July, will enable the movement of goods, services, investments and skilled workers throughout the region without obstacles.

Digitalisation, entrepreneurial skills, labour mobility, smart specialisation, mutual recognition of qualifications and public-private partnerships to enhance work-based learning in vocational education are all part of the action plan discussed at the high-level meeting that took place in Trieste, Italy. Western Balkan leaders were joined by their counterparts from Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, EU representatives and ETF experts.

The ETF hosted a workshop as part of the summit's Youth Forum, which brought together 60 young people from the Western Balkans and the EU. Working in close cooperation with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, the workshop looked at ways of promoting entrepreneurship. Participants discussed the need to invest in people to develop entrepreneurial societies.

Labour mobility

Summit delegates agreed to removing obstacles to the mobility of professionals through regional mutual recognition agreements of professional qualifications, and to further improve mobility opportunities for students, researchers and academics. In this context, the European Commission noted ongoing measures to improve the uptake of the EU's Erasmus+ programme in the Western Balkans. Celebrating 30 years, the programme continues to support education, vocational education, training, youth and sport.

Private sector development

A dynamic business environment is essential for the diversification and modernisation of economies. The delegates agreed to work towards a more dynamic investment environment building on entrepreneurship and using regional strengths, including young people and scientific expertise. Among the topics discussed were

training in entrepreneurial skills, capacity for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and innovative public-private partnerships to enhance work-based learning in vocational education.

The European Commission announced EUR 48 million for the Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility and a further EUR 7 million to support concrete business opportunities through the Regional Economic Area. This will help to 'reinforce the capacity of Western Balkan economies to meet the EU accession economic criteria,' the Declaration by the Italian Chair reads.

The Declaration also emphasises the participants' support for the European perspective of the Western Balkans. 'The future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union, a Union open to those European countries which respect its values and are committed to promoting them.' Access the full declaration here: goo.gl/kEbmeo

Maintaining momentum

Prime ministers of the six Western Balkan countries were swift to organise a follow-up meeting in late August, in Durrës, Albania. European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn and World Bank Vice President for Europe and Central Asia, Cyril Muller, were invited to the discussions.

Speaking at a media conference after the meeting, Commissioner Hahn said the move towards regional economic cooperation was 'an integral part' of the countries' EU accession process, and one that would particularly benefit citizens. 'The Regional Economic Area is ... simply supporting all the countries in the region in their European aspirations.'

He noted that exports to the EU by the six countries had doubled in the past ten years, to EUR 46 billion, while internal trade amongst the countries had not increased. 'This shows that there is a lot of potential. This is the idea behind the regional economic market. I am grateful for this initiative and the spirit to create ownership of this process in the region.'

Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama said the 'fundamental transformation' would make the region more attractive to investment, speed up economic growth and well-being. 'Each of us [countries] on our own are very small markets, very small economies. Being all together we are an important market – we can become an important economy.'

Text: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF

Image: European Commission/Chapple Cartoons



Spotlight

Albania

Following the European Commission's new orientations for pre-accession assistance, Albania was the first EU candidate country to embrace a sector-wide approach. The National Employment and Skills Strategy and Action Plan 2014–20, adopted by the Government in November 2014, outlines a vision for the sector and brings together, in one document, ambitious vocational education, employment and social inclusion objectives and measures. The ETF, alongside the International Labour Organisation and other development partners, assisted the national authorities in compiling the Strategy and Action Plan.

Albania's efforts have been acknowledged by the EU, which has agreed to support the implementation of the Strategy through a Budget Support programme worth EUR 30 million. Here again, the ETF has helped EU actors to select suitable indicators that would testify to the achievement of progress in the Strategy's implementation and trigger the release of specific tranches of money. Implementation has been underway since 2016. Annual progress reports are compiled and an Integrated Policy Management Group monitors implementation.

The 2016 Annual Progress Report showed that substantial progress had been made in terms of modernising employment services and measures to get unemployed people into jobs. However, overall progress in vocational education and training (VET) has been slow, mainly due to delayed efforts to overhaul the legal framework for VET, an area that has been flagged as a priority by the Rama government, re-elected in 2017.

An example of good practice is a multi-functional VET centre established with the backing of the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) in Kamza, an economically and socially deprived community near Tirana. Here a new model of VET is being piloted that offers full programmes to young people and short and medium-term courses to adults, the unemployed and socially disadvantaged people. Albania wants to move towards this type of model which ensures quality and inclusiveness.

Update by Evelyn Viertel, ETF Country Manager for Albania



DISCOVER YOUR TALENT!

European Vocational Skills Week
20-24 November 2017



DISCOVER YOUR TALENT – 2.0

Building upon the stellar success of #EUVocational Skills Week 1.0, the European Commission's initiative highlighting the benefits of vocational education and training (VET) returns in 2017.

Organisers are setting the bar high, with a target of 1,500+ events and activities taking place across Europe and beyond, including ETF partner countries, before the end of the year. The main event, on 20–24 November in Brussels, will bring together thousands of participants from the worlds of VET, business, education, government, civil society, unions, youth organisations, think tanks and more.

The ETF is again a partner in the initiative, and all of its 29 partner countries bordering Europe are encouraged to get on board by hosting their own events at a local, regional or national level. Running from September through to December, these activities can include open days, company and classroom site visits, conferences, social media campaigns and articles published about initial and continuing vocational training.

Collectively, the #EUVocational Skills campaign demonstrates how VET is a smart pathway to high-quality jobs and increased employability. This year a special focus is placed on the role of work-based learning, apprenticeships, labour mobility between countries and/or sectors as well as innovation and competitiveness.

In 2016, the inaugural vocational skills week directly mobilised more than 700,000 people and reached a further one million online through the #DiscoverYourTalent social media campaign. The ongoing work to highlight VET is part of the new Skills Agenda for Europe – the European Commission's action plan to help ensure that the right training, the right skills and the right support is available to people.

Who can get involved?

VET stakeholders: learners, parents, companies, business organisations, social partners, education and training providers, adult learning organisations, chambers of commerce and other professional organisations, researchers, career counsellors, public authorities, and society at large, are all invited to take part.

Interactive activity map

The European Commission's webpage (visit goo.gl/Z2iUKZ) includes an interactive map featuring events from across Europe and candidate countries: Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. Activities organised in these countries can be registered directly through the webpage. Stakeholders in other

ETF partner countries are also encouraged to host events and activities and can do so in cooperation with the ETF.

Award winners

The award ceremony of the #EUVocational Skills Week 2016 was a highlight of the event, showcasing outstanding examples of excellence in VET. The ORT vocational school network in Israel – the 2016 laureate of the ETF's Good Practice in Training Award for entrepreneurship – was recognised. The award returns in 2017. This year, the winner of the Torino Process Award (Entrepreneurship as a key competence) will be announced during the European Vocational Skills Week in Brussels. The ETF received dozens of entries from training providers in partner countries, demonstrating how they promote entrepreneurship as a key competence through the learning curriculum. Stay tuned as we will be bringing you some of the most inspired entries in the lead up to the big announcement.

*Text: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF
Photo: European Commission*





UKRAINE MOVES AHEAD WITH **EDUCATION** **REFORM**

The Ukrainian national parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, has adopted a new framework law on education which brings the system closer to European standards.

The new law, passed on 5 September, ushers in a 12-year school system in place of the current 11 years, with compulsory education to age 18. It shifts the Ukrainian system away from the former Soviet model, in which the Ministry of Education determined the content of curricula, and closer to European models, in which the government adopts educational standards, with education institutions free to develop curricula, content and teaching methods in order to deliver them.

The new law provides that Ukraine's education will receive at least 7% of GDP from national, regional and local budgets and other sources of funding, and opens the door for limited self-funding of public educational institutions.

'This is a basic law. Its approval unlocks further education reforms and the adoption of laws on secondary education, vocational education and adult education. It is a chance for our education system to change,' announced Ukrainian Minister of Education and Science, Liliya Hrynevych.

The ETF cooperated closely with the Ukrainian government, together with experts mobilised by the European Commission's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument, in developing the law, providing advice and support on key aspects such as lifelong learning, quality assurance and decentralisation. It was also involved in the drafting process, commenting on successive drafts of the law and participating in parliamentary hearings.

'This is a very modern law, reflecting up-to-date ideas on education. The ETF accompanied the Ukrainians throughout this process,' explains ETF expert Arjen Deij. 'It's a good example of what we can achieve when the political will is there, by responding to needs, bringing the actors together and empowering them to develop home-grown solutions in line with European and international good practice.'

The ETF continues to work closely with the Ministry of Education and Science on education and training policy. As reported in Live&Learn 39, the jointly developed Green Paper on the decentralisation of vocational education and training (VET) was presented in Kyiv in April this year in the presence of Ukrainian Prime Minister, Volodymyr Groysman, and EU Ambassador, Hugues Mingarelli.

The results of this work will feed into a new law on VET that is expected to come before the Ukrainian parliament later this year. The EU has pledged to support the Ukrainian government in implementing it. 'If there is the political will on your side, we will mobilise all our resources to support you,' declared Ambassador Mingarelli in April.

The ETF is now working on two fronts: supporting the ministry by providing expert advice and facilitating stakeholder dialogue on the forthcoming VET law, and supporting the EU Delegation in designing a major assistance programme for the VET sector.



'In Ukraine, legislation drives strategic reforms,' says the ETF Country Manager for Ukraine, Margareta Nikolovska. 'The new VET law is extremely important for skills development and economic growth in the country. Together with the Ministry of Education and Science and other key stakeholders, we will support dialogue on the new VET law, and see how we can embed it in the ongoing decentralisation process.'

Working in partnership

The EU's political assembly of regional and local representatives – the Committee of the Regions – has a long-standing cooperation with local and regional authorities in the Eastern Partnership region, including Ukraine.

Local and regional politicians from these countries identified economic development – including youth employment – as their preferred priority for collaboration with the EU, under the revised European Neighbourhood Policy adopted in 2015.

Speaking at the Torino Process 'Changing Skills for a Changing World' conference in June, the Committee's President Markku Markkula said: 'Economic and social development at local and regional level has a better chance to succeed when working within a decentralised system, where action is taken at the local level, which is closer not just to citizens but also to the economic and social specificity of a given region.'

'The local level is becoming increasingly important in implementing skills management and often has a more innovative approach, even though local innovative capacities often suffer from weak institutional support,' he continued, noting the process of decentralisation in Ukraine.

'Vocational education and training, and more precisely, market-oriented vocational training opportunities for business development, is a priority area for cooperation with the new amalgamated communities in Ukraine.'

*Text: Alastair Macphail/ETF
Photos: Gary Bonge/ETF*





CHANGING SKILLS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

In the fast-changing world of work, people need a broad set of skills and adaptability to fulfil their potential. Demands for new skills and future challenges was focus of the Torino Process 'Changing Skills for a Changing World' conference on 7–8 June in Turin.

Ministers, VET practitioners, social partners, labour market experts, business leaders, young innovators, international organisations and EU officials were among the 300+ delegates from across the ETF's partner countries, Europe and beyond! Thousands more tuned in through social media, webinars and webcasts.

The historic Lingotto building, that once housed FIAT's famous car factory, was a fitting venue for a conference looking at the future of skills and training.

'We need the skills of people to keep pace with the fast-changing world,' Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, said in her keynote address.

Highlighting the importance of investing in people as a cornerstone for the future, Commissioner Thyssen detailed the new Skills Agenda for Europe. The European Commission's blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills 'puts together actors who might otherwise not find themselves in the same room – to work on practical and forward-looking shared solutions,' she said.

#ETFTRP

The conference concluded the fourth round of the Torino Process – the ETF's flagship programme helping partner countries to improve VET systems and outcomes – the findings of which helped to frame discussions.



Former ETF Director, Madlen Serban, underlined the importance of widening the scope of the ETF's work with partner countries to meet and embrace change. 'Do we want to make progress in perpetuating what does not work, or to make progress in changing the world? The ETF wants to give a purpose not only through work but coming together, creating communities.'

Aleksandre Jejelava, Georgia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Science, said public policy must follow life, not the other way around. 'We have to be braver about changing things – we still treat education like a factory system.'

Lifelong learning

James Calleja, Director of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) cited studies that show workers are rarely offered the opportunity to upgrade skills on the job, and skills training often takes place informally.





President of the Committee of the Regions – the EU's political assembly of regional and local representatives – Markku Markkula agreed there is 'a dire need for continuing training and innovation, for constantly reinventing the teaching and learning processes, especially in the context of the digital world.'

The ETF and the Committee of the Regions have a long-standing cooperation with local and regional authorities in the Eastern Partnership region: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. And through the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly. 'Collaborating with regions and cities is crucial for a more highly skilled labour force and commercial innovation,' he said.

The need for a more linked-up approach to education and training was also emphasised by an expert panel that focused on the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Innovation and VET

One of the highlights of the event was the Ideas Market, featuring projects by young innovators like Keren Or Kadosh from Israel who, through the vocational Amal School Network, created a drone that carries a replaceable first aid kit. Serbia's Neven Marinovic runs Smart Kolektiv, a leader in the field of corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship. And Lebanon's Hanin Al Fakih runs her own sustainable development NGO and co-coordinates the Norwegian People's Aid project 'Oil for Development', contributing to the sustainable management of oil resources. Hanin is one of the ETF's Young Mediterranean Leaders, a group of outstanding young people who contribute their ideas and help shape the future of the region's vocational education and youth employability policies.

After touring the market, Commissioner Thyssen underlined the value of the ETF's work with Europe's neighbours. 'The ETF and the Torino Process open the door to practical cooperation.'

*Text: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF
Photos: Andrea Guermani*

Five concepts of the Torino Process 2017 conference

Innovation – Shaping policy around innovation

Diversification – Reaching more users in better, more customised ways

Delivery – Moving from policy formulation to action

Cooperation – Through a multi-level governance approach

Future – Forward-looking, anticipatory data collection and analysis



CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

Partner countries are moving forward in participatory VET governance models, the modernisation of qualification systems, and better skills anticipation and matching. However, impact at system level remains limited and challenges continue regarding VET attractiveness, access to skills development and lifelong learning, and the modernisation of training provision.

Fast-changing economic needs, technological developments and social demands present challenges and opportunities for VET and skills development and provision. The Torino Process 2017 conference highlighted the following priority development areas.

Making system change a reality through relevant policies

Policies must target present and future needs, ensure system adaptation and flexibility, and support the delivery of results to all citizens. Expanding cooperation across the policy cycle, from development to implementation, increasing integration and a holistic orientation will ensure skills are part of the innovation and cohesion strategy.

Expanding opportunities and access to VET and skills development

Demands for new skills and future challenges is placing increased pressure on VET to cover more users and expand opportunities. In particular, VET needs to open new pathways for adults, and better anticipate and adapt to future needs. Attractiveness and accessibility can be improved through innovation and skills anticipation. More flexible and diversified pathways are needed to help make lifelong learning a reality for all citizens.

Exploring and building innovation

Innovation is at the heart of VET transformation and adaptation. Digital and technological change is an opportunity to boost VET

development, delivery and infrastructure. Innovation is a process through which VET and its governance can transform. It is a means for partner countries to develop curricula, teachers and trainers and public-private partnerships.

Making competences work for the future

What skills are relevant for the future? For VET to contribute to the needs of tomorrow, a new generation of core competences that focus on entrepreneurship, critical thinking and creativity is needed. This base will support innovation and unlock the potential of individuals and communities. It will help VET providers to innovate and co-create innovative solutions.

Developing trust to increase efficiency and effectiveness

A functioning and agile system, which embraces innovation and the diversification of provision, is based on trust. Innovation and system transformation is built through transparency and accountability, including ensuring clear roles for all system actors. Looking forward, countries need to focus more on disclosing information, communicating policies and results to citizens, and providing better access to evidence through monitoring and information management.

Focusing on people, people and people

A personal commitment to change will make policies work for the well-being of society and citizens. This can be achieved by maximising the impact for each citizen; developing the competences of all players; bringing new players around the policy table; breaking out of the box of inherited practices; engaging learning communities that support, benefit and create innovation; and listening to citizens and the needs of the society.

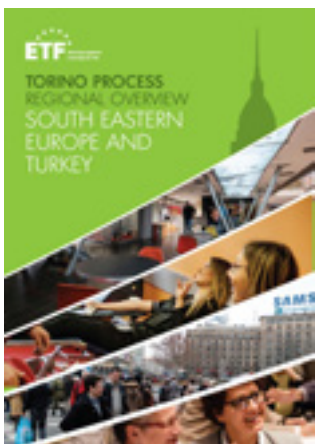
The ETF will support partner countries to shape and implement actions towards the realisation of these priorities.

This is an excerpt from the conference conclusions.

TORINO PROCESS

SPECIAL

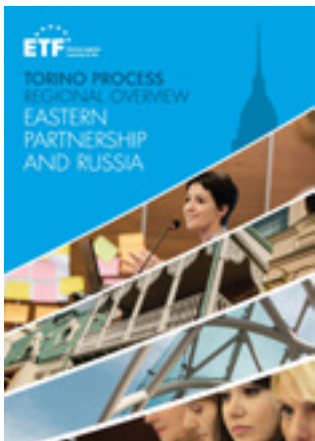
REGIONAL OVERVIEWS in English, French and Russian



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Did you know our colleagues at EU Neighbours have published the executive summaries of the 2016–17 Torino Process country reports. Head over to their new-look website: www.euneighbours.eu



YOUTUBE

Georgian Deputy Prime Minister, Aleksandre Jejelava, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen and ETF new Director Cesare Onestini – these are just some of the speakers captured on film at the ‘Changing Skills for a Changing World’ conference in June. We have created a special playlist for this Live&Learn: goo.gl/mcci6n



TORINO PROCESS BLOG

More than 9,000 visits from viewers located in 90+ countries, the #ETFTRP blog is taking readers to the stories behind the numbers: www.blog.torinoprocess.eu



STORIFY

Tweets, pics, Facebook Live, mini-movies, and more! We have collated all the best bits from #ETFTRP on an interactive storyboard using Storify: storify.com/etfeuropa/



THE FIFTH WAVE: TORINO PROCESS FUTURE ACTION

Young innovators Baia Abuladze and Arman Toskanbayev are the face of the future in countries just beyond the European Union's borders.

In Georgia – where citizens are celebrating recently achieving visa-free access to the European Union – Baia, 23, is an entrepreneur famous for being Georgia's first female winemaker.

Arman, a 26 year-old entrepreneur who has founded four companies since opening his first – a computer repair firm – when he was 17, comes from Karaganda, an industrial region of central Kazakhstan, known for its coalmines.

Like other young and enterprising people working in or around vocational education and training across the ETF's 29 partner countries, Baia and Arman understand that facing up to the challenges of the 21st century requires the adoption and application of a raft of new, flexible skill sets. Their experience can offer valuable lessons to understand the importance of flexible, innovative policies and policy development.

Arman left school at 16 and did not go onto formal further study. Inspired by a teacher who suggested he repair computers for a living, he taught himself how to do this and launched his first business. A decade later he is a successful businessman who has four businesses including portable greenhouses, a consultancy and an NGO that trains young people in entrepreneurship. His high-end watches, which sell under his group brand Otan (which means fatherland in Kazakh), hit the headlines when he presented a specially made one-off timepiece to Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev. (Live&Learn 38)

'When I set up a business fixing computers I had no idea how to do it,' Arman recalls. 'I simply found people who could teach me. That is the principle of business: if you don't know how to do something, go and learn it.'

Learning the wine business was something that Baia grew up with: her grandfather Bondo, now 83, is the agronomist in her home village of Obcha, three hours' drive west of Tbilisi. She did not go to college,

but set up her business, Baia's Wines, in 2015 using both traditional (UNESCO protected) 'qvevri' clay-vessel fermentation and modern European techniques. Today she produces 4,000 bottles of three whites and one red a year from her vineyards on 1.5 hectares of stony clay and sand hillside terraces. The wine retails through boutique shops and selected restaurants for the equivalent of around EUR 8 a bottle.

'The challenge now is to find partners to open up an export market in Europe,' she says, adding that in 2016 one of her wines won a silver medal at a wine fair in Düsseldorf.

Innovation, cooperation, delivery, diversification, future – the five concepts of the Torino Process 2017 conference – also drive Algerian businessman M'hamed Kouidmi's Business Wise. The 'social enterprise' offers consultancy and training services, including Mahara'ty (My Skills), a not-for-profit training scheme, free for underprivileged young unemployed people. The scheme couples trained mentors with young people, focusing on outcomes and innovative solutions that meet today's training needs.





Romanian online teaching platform Wand.education is another fresh approach that is already being piloted in the United Kingdom, Malta, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Romania. Designed to help teachers create interactive digital lessons using videos, cartoons and 3D objects to deliver assignments to VET students, the system, launched in December 2016, is backed by Romanian software company Siveco.

‘Wand offers creativity, delivery and mentoring that allows a continuous feedback loop to teachers, students and parents’, says Silvia Popescu, Wand marketing manager.

Riding the next wave

Speaking at the ‘Changing Skills for a Changing World’ conference, Anastasia Fetsi, the ETF’s Head of Operations, reviewed progress of the fourth round of the Torino Process (2016–17) before presenting the five concepts.

Better, wider and increased cooperation between all those who could contribute to policy development is important, she said. Diversifying the way VET is delivered and structured is essential as systems of skills training reach a turning point in effecting change.

Innovation – long a key focus of the ETF’s work – would only become more important in a fast-changing world. And a focus on the future, on anticipating demands, not just reporting on what VET is doing well or not, must be at the forefront of those involved.

‘The world is changing; we have to see what are the opportunities and risks that this change brings’, Ms Fetsi said. ‘If we want to make VET an attractive pathway then what is important is to welcome this forward-looking approach and try to make it adaptable in a practical way.’

With many partner countries coming up to the conclusion of existing 2020 strategic plans for VET, the big question now is ‘what comes next’, she added. ‘Working with the five concepts will help guide planning for the next step forward.’

*Text: Nick Holdsworth
Photos: Andrea Guermani*





TALKING WITH **TAJIKISTAN'S DEPUTY MINISTER** OF LABOUR MIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Mountains cover more than 90% of this landlocked country, the smallest in Central Asia with a population of around eight million people. With the lowest GDP in the region, Tajikistan is also the youngest country, with one third of the population under 14 years old.

The youth bulge is placing considerable pressure on the education system and labour market. While progress is slow, developments in vocational education and training (VET) are being realised through robust cooperation between the European Union, international donors, and the Tajik government.

Deputy Minister of Labour Migration and Employment, Abdusalom Mirzozoda, who oversees VET, joined the 'Responding to Challenges' panel discussion at the Torino Process conference. Live&Learn caught up with him to find out more.

What are some of the achievements and challenges in VET and labour market development?

I will start from the main achievements. We have started to develop a new generation of professional standards for VET specialisations working together with employers' representatives. Within the Asian Development Bank's project, improving the physical facilities (premises, equipment and infrastructure) has begun in 28 VET schools; we hope this will help to increase the attractiveness of vocational education.

Along with the government, international donor organisations such as the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the ETF, the Asian Development Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank, are contributing to the success. Currently, there are four international projects in the area of vocational education. They cover topics such as system reinforcement and technical aid for the professional development of teachers and trainers. Meanwhile, infrastructure and human resources for the Training and Methodological Centre for VET Quality Monitoring, created in 2014, are being consolidated.

Undertaking fundamental reforms in the area of education is a priority for the Tajik government, which has taken action to create a legal

framework for the initial VET sector. In this context, we are aiming to improve the quality and system of vocational institutions, taking into consideration the needs of the labour market and demand for human resources. Tajikistan aims to transform VET into one of the key instruments of human capital development and the catalyst for lifelong learning and sustainable development of the country, facilitating the increase of competitiveness and social cohesion.

Among the main challenges is the need for qualitative and structural improvement for the professional development of teachers and trainers in VET. We also have to develop a comprehensive action plan for further development of VET reforms, based on the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan, recently adopted by the government. We still have a lot to do to improve VET quality and increase VET attractiveness for young people and adults.



How does the ETF support Tajikistan? What is your own experience of the cooperation?

Over many years of cooperation with the ETF, which includes visits by at least two former ETF directors, we have seen substantial work to consolidate different categories of VET workers – from instructors and teachers through to management of VET institutions.

The ETF is one of the main partners in initiating and developing strategic directions for VET reform in our country. For instance, the School Development Initiative in Central Asia made an important contribution to the quality of training for engineering and teaching staff.

Through the ETF, several study visits have been organised for VET teachers and instructors to Europe and other Central Asian countries. International experts have also assisted our teachers and instructors in the development of modular learning programmes.

I would also like to mention, in particular, the Torino Process – one of the principal instruments to undertake an analysis of the VET system and identify gaps and challenges for further development.

Looking forward, what are the most important areas where the ETF can help?

Taking into account the ETF's significant experience, its support in all areas of VET reform is very useful for Tajikistan. The focus now is to improve the system of continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers. In addition, monitoring, evaluation and quality assessments, the development of professional standards and the national qualifications framework, and systemised data collection are important areas for collaboration.

What will you take away from the Torino Process conference?

First off all, I would like to thank the ETF for organising this event and inviting us to participate. The 'Changing Skills for a Changing World' conference is a good platform to learn and exchange good practice for VET system development. We hope to acquire the information and knowledge to be able to implement developments, in particular, in preparation of the next round of the Torino Process.

*Text: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF and Nick Holdsworth
Photo: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF*

Spotlight

Tajikistan taking ownership

Tajikistan has long been involved in the Torino Process, but the 2016–17 round marks a turning point in 'ownership' as the country produces its own report for the first time. In March 2016, the country's Prime Minister founded a working group covering the Torino Process priority areas: overview and vision; labour market demand; the social sector; internal efficiency; and governance and policy.

Since then, the working group members have been learning key lessons in how to analyse the state of VET in Tajikistan, according to Subhon Ashurov, an independent expert assisting the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment with the working groups. 'This is the first time such work has been carried out by our experts in the ministry. It improves the potential of the work of the ministry, supports analysis and leads to concrete recommendations. Working on the Torino Process report ourselves allows us to take ownership of the results of this process.'

'The process has enabled Tajikistan's VET leaders to understand the need to work on professional standards and improve plans for implementing reforms in the VET system', Ashurov says. Continuing professional development of VET staff is critical to this. But the Torino Process is not just about recognising areas on which to improve, but also identifying best practice and Tajikistan has a clear example: adult education. 'We have created a system of adult education that makes a strong contribution to the professional development of our labour resources; they do not have such a system in neighbouring countries.'

Turn the page to get a regional overview of the findings of the 2016–17 round of the Torino Process.



Central Asia

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

Employment rates across the region show relatively stable patterns

Employment rate in 2015



Kazakhstan

80.4%

Kyrgyzstan

67.2%

Change since 2013:

Kazakhstan

-0.4%



Kyrgyzstan

+0.9%

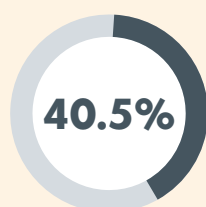


With decreasing unemployment across the region

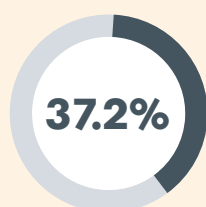


ranging from **5%** to **11.5%**
for the active population

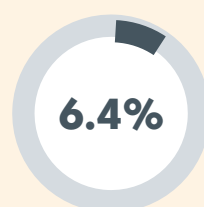
Most countries have seen an increase in VET participation



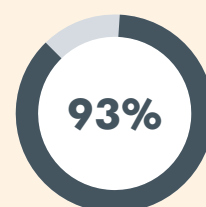
Kazakhstan



Kyrgyzstan



Tajikistan

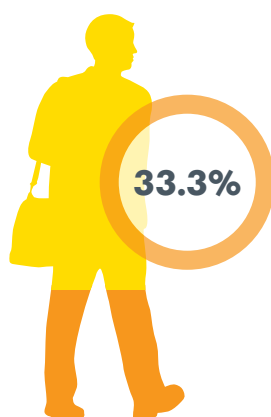


Uzbekistan

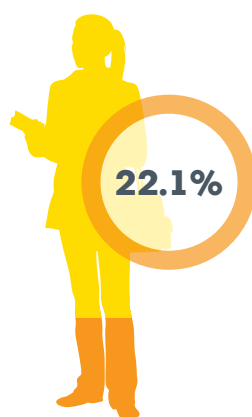
Percentage of total upper secondary students in vocational programmes

Education levels vary across the region

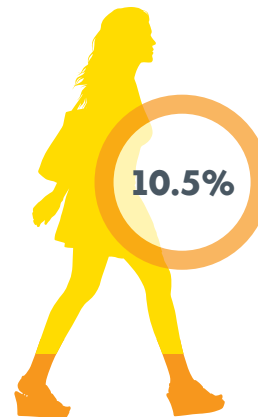
Adults attaining a higher education degree:



Kazakhstan



Kyrgyzstan



Tajikistan

The **share of NEETs** (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in the **region** is on the **increase**.

Percentage change since 2013:



Kazakhstan



Kyrgyzstan



EMPOWERING WOMEN INTO WORK IN JORDAN

Huda Abdo has a big job. As an employment expert at the Ministry of Labour, she covers the Badia region and rural areas. Around 80% of Jordanian territory is within the Badia region. With more than 300 urban communities, it also contains important grazing lands – essential to the way of life of the Badia Bedouin people.

Though rich in natural resources, including oil shale, phosphates and other minerals, economic activity is limited. Serious issues with employment and poverty have prompted the Jordanian government to prioritise development and economic sustainability in the region. Priorities include diversifying sources of income for people living in Badia and encouraging greater participation of women in the workforce.

Jordan, in common with many other Arab countries, has a very low female labour market participation rate, 14% despite the economy crying out for workers with employable skills. Many reasons are cultural: there is an expectation that women will raise children, care for the family and at best practice home-based handicrafts. Others are more social: educated women hold administrative jobs in urban areas but politics remains a largely male preserve. Policies to encourage women's labour market participation have not been a priority – until now.

'We are keen to decentralise vocational education and training (VET) and involve women more in the municipalities,' Ms Abdo says, noting GIZ

(German Agency for International Cooperation) project aimed at encouraging more women to enter municipal politics, VET and the labour market.

'Women's participation in the workforce is key', she says. 'Workshops are underway to raise awareness. We wish to improve the participation of women in local councils by supporting decentralisation and taking the gender concept into account in the transition to decentralisation,' she adds.

Bringing women into the workforce is not only of importance for Jordanian women: the influx of an estimated million or more Syrian refugees to Jordan has put huge pressure on employment and training services, and policy formulation.

'Women among the Syrian refugees are going to work and take up many opportunities, especially in agriculture and in rural regions.'

That is not necessarily a bad thing, as Mohammad Al-Ssoub, Director of Jordan's National Employment and Training institute, observes: 'I think that accepting this number of refugees – if they work – will be positive in economic terms although there are some tensions as they are perceived to be taking jobs from local workers.'

Text: Nick Holdsworth





#EU4YOUTH

Meet Sadah, she's ambitious! 'In 10 years' time, I will have my own supermarket,' Vocational Training Centre student and shop assistant trainee says. Sadah is combining her studies with on-the-job training at the Az Zarqa Dukaneh supermarket in Jordan. Store manager Rasheed is so impressed with her skills that he says he will likely employ Sadah once she receives her qualification in retail business.

Sadah's employability prospects are not unique. Analysis shows that, in 2015, 50% of the retail sector course graduates who sought work found it. The training course was set up through the ETF's Governance for Employability in the Mediterranean (GEMM) project, which kicked off in 2013 to address the high rates of youth and female unemployment across the region.

Sadah's story features in the new #EU4Youth campaign, which is highlighting the direct impact of EU-funded projects across the Southern Mediterranean. The social media campaign, by EU Neighbours, is expected to reach more than a million young people in ETF partner countries Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia.

Jordanian dressmaker Bassam Jallad says the retail sector course has proved to be a success because local employers are involved. 'We can hire these girls (graduates) and train them on how to display the products, showcase them and maintain them. From our point of view, this is a wonderful thing – we can serve the local community.'

The ETF-designed and EU-funded GEMM project has officially wrapped up, but Sadah's story demonstrates how the benefits continue. The retail sector course was one of nine local, innovative and action-oriented, pilot projects set up in different partner countries.

Improved employability, increased female participation and stronger multi-level partnerships are among the outcomes of GEMM. More than 30% of participants were women, more than 100 local enterprises were involved, and hundreds of vocational graduates have since found work, or work placements.

UNLOCKING NEW NETWORKS

Another exciting new initiative is the virtual exchanges project, set to link young people from ETF partner countries in the South Mediterranean, virtually, with young people across Europe.

The European Commission has launched a call for tender for an online learning programme, which will run through Erasmus+, the EU's flagship programme for education, training, youth and sports.

Beginning in 2018, the initiative, called EVE, will link young people aged 18–30, with youth organisations, learners, vocational training and adult education platforms, academics and more, through innovative online learning activities.

The online hub will centralise all information related to the EVE initiative in one place, and in doing so, further strengthen people-to-people contacts and intercultural dialogue between Erasmus+ programme countries in Europe and EU neighbours in the south.

Claire Morel, from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, says the project is an exciting opportunity for young people in the ETF's partner countries. 'Erasmus+ provides opportunities for millions of Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad. But the programme also extends beyond Europe.'

'Many of the ETF's partner countries neighbouring Europe can take part in some Erasmus+ activities, notably in higher education but also informal education and voluntary activities – and this is a great example!'

'Evidence shows that experience abroad not only offers valuable opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills. It also enhances tolerance and mutual acceptance.' 'The problem is that many young people cannot, for many different reasons, take part in physical mobility. The ultimate aim of the EVE initiative is therefore to expand the reach and scope of the Erasmus+ programme via virtual exchanges.'

*Text: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF
Photo: Cristian Afker*

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



SKILLS DIMENSION OF **MIGRATION** IN **JORDAN**

Labour emigration and immigration in Jordan has long contributed to political, social and economic development. The recent influx of Syrian refugees, however, is placing huge pressures on the country. In the first research of its kind, the ETF has mapped skills policy and support measures available to refugees, emigrants and foreign immigrant workers in Jordan.

Building upon the global inventory of migrant support measures from an employment and skills perspective (MISMES), the research identifies 35 MISMES that support skills development, job and skills matching. Due to limitations of the research, the number of support measures is not exhaustive.

The majority of the MISMES, 23, are aimed at refugees. Around half of these focus on soft skills, life skills and key competences such as language, financial and market literacy. The MISMES are mostly funded by the international donor community, including the EU, which is the largest contributor to the response to the Syrian crisis. The research recommends better coordination and efficiency to help avoid an overlap of services.

Of the remaining MISMES, seven are targeted at foreign immigrant workers, with the aim to improve the working conditions of immigrant labour – a priority area identified by the government to attract more low-skilled Jordanian workers into these sectors. Only five MISMES exist for Jordanian emigrants, which is a ‘strikingly low’ number given the high emigration flows of skilled Jordanians.

Tapping into the potential

The research makes a number of draft recommendations to improve skills utilisation and overcome labour market integration problems and skills mismatch. These include embedding more MISMES into the national system, with a special focus on local authorities, and building a more strategic approach to migration.

Entrepreneurship initiatives are identified as a development area with ‘high potential’ particularly for Jordanian returnees as well as refugees. More rigorous information collection, monitoring and evaluation of MISMES is needed to better plan and implement future measures.

The research also highlights many innovative examples of MISMES for refugees, including the Makani My Space approach, led by local civil society groups, promoting soft skills for young people. The Wise Water Plumbers project is helping to save water, while promoting gender equality and socio-economic integration. The Skills Exchange programme between Syrians and Jordanians provides a skills transfer platform for low and medium skilled workers.

In another project, a private college has adjusted its vocational education programmes to refugees’ needs and thousands more Syrian refugees and Jordanians are accessing short-term labour-intensive rural job opportunities through the established Employment Intensive Investment programme. Most of these projects have the potential to scale up, however they remain pilots with extremely low numbers of beneficiaries, the research says.

Moving forward with MISMES

Jordan’s Ministry of Labour welcomed the ETF research, which was presented at a high-level workshop organised by the ministry, the ETF and the EU’s Delegation in Amman in July. Speaking to stakeholders from public institutions, NGOs and key international donors, the ministry’s Hani Khleifat said a collaborative approach would further contribute to longer-term economic development.

‘Jordan has given paramount importance to supporting migrants according to available capacity and resources’, he told participants, referring to Syrian refugees. ‘The challenges are big and not one organisation can address them. We can improve the situation working together as partners ... to implement these recommendations within a timeframe.’

Hamdan Yacoub, Head of the Syrian Refugee Unit at the Ministry of Labour, described the research as ‘excellent and fruitful’. ‘We regard it as a good reference.’

Maha Kattaa, Response Coordinator to the Syrian Refugee Crisis at the International Labour Organisation office in Jordan, welcomed the focus on the role of employers and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit. 'We should promote entrepreneurship as a means of self-employment and regulations should adapt.'

On the issue of data, Daniela Cicchella of the Jordanian office of the UN refugee agency, the UNHCR, said there are opportunities to enhance the collection of information on skills. 'I am really glad to see that refugees are also seen as a resource, not a burden to the community. Studies like this can enhance the workforce and economy in Jordan,' she added.

Abdelaziz Lyamouri, from the EU Delegation in Jordan, thanked the ETF for 'very great and important work in the area of migration.' 'This research provides a very important view and perspective for enhanced Mobility Partnership between the EU and Jordan.' His colleague, European Migration Liaison Officer, Jean-Francois Puel, urged participants to submit good ideas that could be implemented as projects in cooperation with EU Member States in the area of skills and migration.

Next steps

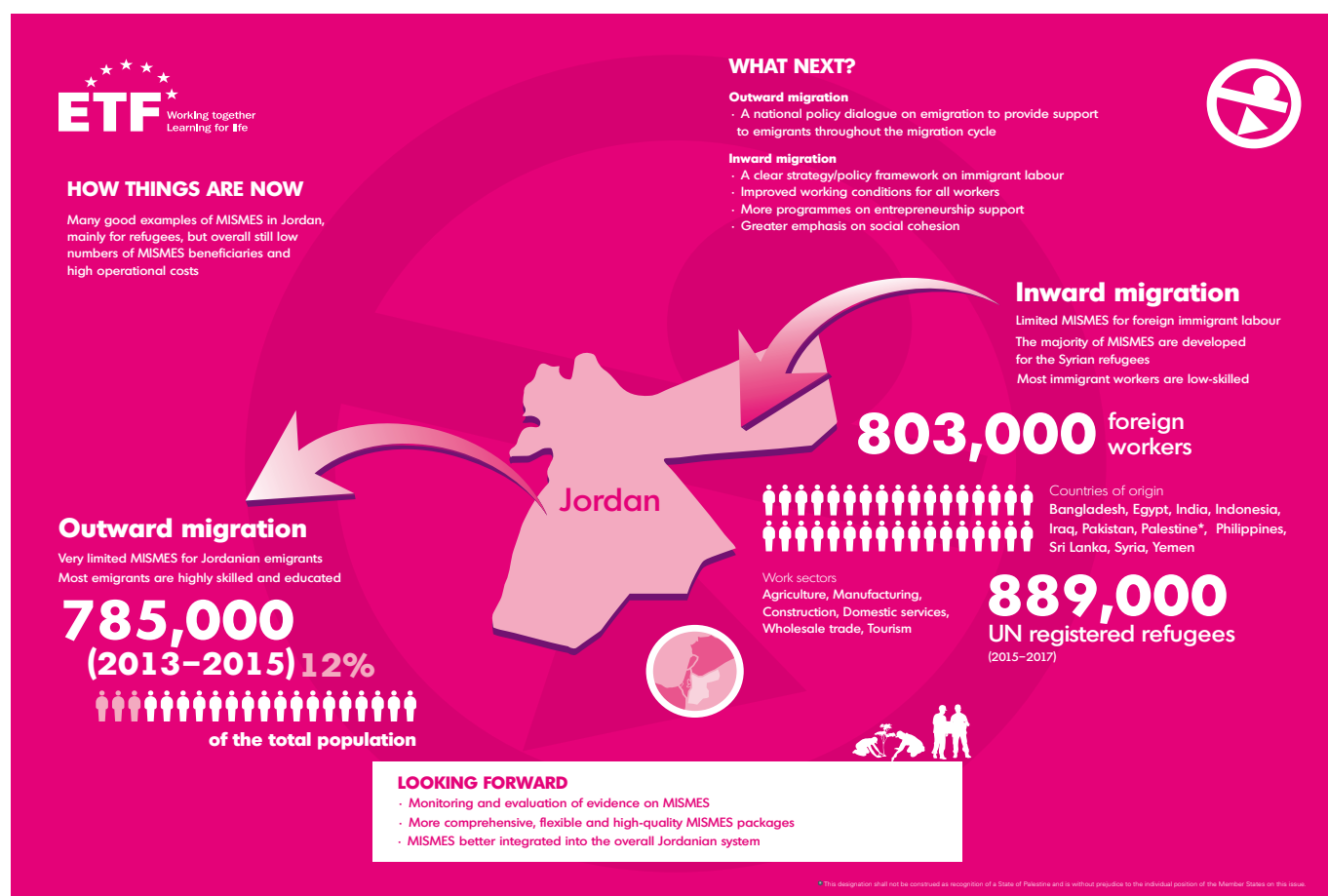
ETF expert Ummuhan Bardak, who presented the findings at the workshop, emphasised the excellent cooperation and collaboration achieved with all stakeholders, both national institutions and the offices of international donors, in finalising the ETF research.

'Migration is a fact and here to stay – with both challenges and opportunities. Rather than ignoring this fact, our policies should deal with the situation and achieve better results. Jordan has a dynamic environment with a constant evolution of migration policies, but developing more integrated MISMES packages, with a special focus on employers, is a must for future interventions.'

Text: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF

Infographic: Article 10

The full report is available on the ETF website, here: goo.gl/k8koms





BOOSTING BUSINESS THROUGH THE SBA

Entrepreneurial spirit in education, women's entrepreneurship and helping business go global is the focus of the latest series of Small Business Act assessments, underway in 15 ETF partner countries.

The Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) is designed to promote entrepreneurship in education and training, reduce red tape, increase access to finance and boost the overall business environment.

The ETF assists the EU in carrying out SBA assessments in three regions – South Eastern Europe and Turkey (SEET), the Eastern Partnership and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) – to monitor and track countries' progress against SBA requirements.

In SEMED countries the latest round of SBA assessments kicked off in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia earlier this year, while Algeria and Egypt began the process in September.

The SEET countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey – also began in September, with assessments due to run through to June 2018.

The next round of assessments in the Eastern Partnership countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – begin in 2018.

3D perspective

The focus of this round of SBA assessments is threefold: how entrepreneurship is being promoted in secondary education and training; women's entrepreneurship; and skills to support SME internationalisation.

The ETF has been actively promoting the new European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), which is a reference tool for policy makers, curriculum specialists and teachers to develop the entrepreneurship attitudes and skills of school children, students and adults through teaching and learning.

Recent policy developments and good practice in entrepreneurial learning, women's entrepreneurship and the internationalisation of SMEs, are being captured in the countries by multi-stakeholder focus groups. This partnership approach, bringing policy makers and

education and training providers together to share intelligence, ideas and forward-looking perspectives, is typical of the ETF's work.

Neighbours in the south

The first SBA assessments in the SEMED region took place in Tunisia in April, 2017. Najmeddine Boukhari, from Tunisia's Agency for the Promotion of Industry and Innovation says the SBA work helps 'both government and the training community determine how best to improve entrepreneurship.'

ETF expert Mariavittoria Garlappi says she was 'delighted to see EntreComp in action' at Aouina primary school. 'Children are at the centre of the learning process and teachers act as facilitators and not as traditional content providers.'

More efforts are needed in training for women entrepreneurs, in collaboration with a wider drive to empower women in businesses, concluded one multi-stakeholder focus group. On the topic of the internationalisation of SMEs, the focus group noted the importance of training and skills development, particularly for firms operating in the domestic market.

Partner country Jordan was praised for progress in the internationalisation of SMEs, moving beyond policy dialogue, and the endorsement of a new Entrepreneurship Support Strategy.

In the areas of women's entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial learning, a lot of analysis has been undertaken, allowing Jordan



to plan for the next period. Examples include a national survey on women's entrepreneurship and SME development, in the framework of the 'Enhancement of the Business Environment in the Southern Mediterranean' project – a partnership between the EU and partner countries in the region.

Israel continues to be a stand out in the region, with excellent achievements reported in all three areas of the SBA assessment. Entrepreneurial learning is being taught as a key competence across levels of education and training.

In women's entrepreneurship, Israel has been exploring policy needs and ways to address them in depth. 'Israel is very impressive, taking a systematic approach to implementing recommendations across all levels of education and training. We advise other countries to take note!' says ETF expert Olena Bekh.

Building upon previous rounds

The next round of assessments in the Eastern Partnership countries begin in 2018, but there is plenty of momentum in the interim, particularly in Ukraine and Georgia.

Ukraine has been developing and implementing the recommendations of previous SBA assessments, the last round taking place in 2015–16. It is implementing a key competence-based approach throughout its education system, including adopting the principles of the EntreComp framework.

The ETF continues to provide expertise and support as Ukraine moves forward with the next phase of curriculum development, teacher training and standards, explains Olena Bekh. 'Ukraine is taking a systematic hands-on approach to implement reforms. The SBA assessments have really triggered action, the wheels are in motion, and we look forward to seeing what can be achieved by the next round of assessments which begin in 2018.'



Partner country Georgia has also set ambitious goals. The country integrated the SBA recommendations from 2015 in its current SME Development Strategy to promote entrepreneurial culture through lifelong entrepreneurial learning at all levels of education. One of the planned actions is to adopt EntreComp into the curriculum and teacher training in upper secondary general education and VET, and thousands of teachers will be trained to promote the entrepreneurship key competence in Georgian schools.

Growing through good practice

Identifying good practice helps policy makers, business and training providers share knowledge and know-how, prompting further development. To highlight good practice and inspire partner countries in their work relating to the SBA, the ETF launched two separate calls.

The first, open to all VET providers in the ETF's 29 partner countries bordering Europe, sought good practice examples of entrepreneurial learning as a key competence in the curriculum. The most inspiring submission will be invited to Brussels during the European Vocational Skills Week to receive the award (20–24 November 2017).

The second call focused on training for the internationalisation of SMEs. A key priority of the SBA is to get more SMEs working internationally, reaching new export markets. Training is an important factor in supporting this. The ETF sought good practice examples from both ETF partner countries and EU Member States that support business to trade internationally, in particular ETF partner countries with specific trade arrangements with the EU.

*Text: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF
Photos: Andrea Guermani*

For more info on #EntreComp, visit the @etfeuropa YouTube channel here: goo.gl/FRsV4J



WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

In many countries, women continue to be under-represented in the workforce. Entrepreneurship is one way to help more women into employment and gain financial independence.

Being your own boss provides greater flexibility and better work-life balance, but getting started can be a challenge. Access to education, training, finance, business support measures and mentors helps support women to realise their entrepreneurial dreams.

Through the assessments of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA), the ETF works with its partner countries bordering Europe to understand, holistically, the situation on women's entrepreneurship and plan for future actions.

Identifying barriers – social, economic, political, educational, etc. – helps with the development of future policy support tools, including improved access to training and finance. The ETF also identifies good practice in training in women's entrepreneurship and promotes online platforms for policy makers and training providers to share these.

Women's Entrepreneurship Laboratory

Getting women to the top in business in the Eastern Partnership region – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – was the focus of the ETF's second international Women's Entrepreneurship Laboratory held in Kyiv in late March.

Policy makers, women entrepreneurs, business leaders and EU experts put their heads together to see how policy environments can be improved so that women can play a more effective role in the drive for growth and jobs.

The group highlighted many barriers to women's business: cultural, policy gaps and weak institutional support in areas including training. They concurred that more effort in connecting the range of policies supporting women's entrepreneurship (economic, education, social) was needed, particularly in the context of the latest round of the SBA assessments.

The laboratory also allowed for an interim review of progress on recommendations on women's entrepreneurship following the 2016 assessment of each country's performance in the context of the SBA.

Local partners in Kyiv have established a dedicated webpage and intelligence platform – www.weinspirelab.org – to support the assessment. The platform interfaces with a wider online area to support women's entrepreneurship in the European Union – www.wegate.eu.

This laboratory, built on the first, highly successful women's entrepreneurship laboratory in Rome in 2014, brings new energy to the women's entrepreneurship drive in the Eastern Partnership region.



Learn more about the ETF's work in the area of Women's Entrepreneurship (in English, French and Russian) here: goo.gl/XUW2b7

'We're keen to ensure that our policy events are engaging and that there is clear learning value for participants,' says ETF expert Olena Bekh who facilitated the laboratory.

Funded by the EU's Eastern Partnership Platform II, the laboratory was hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ukraine. It was supported by the European Commission and organised in close

collaboration with the Ukrainian Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the European Business Association and Eurochambres.

*Text: Susanna Dunkerley/ETF
Photo: Igor Pylypenko*

Spotlight

Advancing gender equality in Armenia

In Armenia, many women are highly educated, but traditional male-female roles, a lack of affordable and available childcare and flexible working conditions restrict women's economic opportunities. Domestic violence against women is also widespread.

In 2015, the ETF identified a training programme helping survivors of gender-based violence to gain the knowledge, skills and support structures to start their own business or find employment. Women like Hasmik Khachatryan, who, after enduring years of beatings, violence and psychological abuse at the hands of her ex-husband, fled with her two children to the capital Yerevan.

As part of her rehabilitation, she was selected to participate in the Advancing Gender Equality and the Rights of Survivors of Gender-Based Violence programme. This is a business development initiative funded by the Near East Foundation (NEF), an NGO working with local partners in eight countries to, among other things, promote women's empowerment. Working together with the Gegharkunik Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the NEF programme provides vocational training skills development for women to plan, organise, finance and manage a small business.

It was here that Hasmik learned just what was needed to set up her small bakery, specialising in traditional baklava recipes from the Gava region where she fled from. Skills that she says extend beyond business. 'I became self-confident enough to start this venture and gain financial

independence. My dream now is to grow the bakery. I imagine many women working here, like me, who really need a job. I imagine lots of space and lots of satisfied customers!'

More than 160 women survivors have signed up to participate in the programme and 130 have developed business plans. A further 50 have received funding to support their businesses.



For more info on the business development initiative in Armenia, visit the @etfeuropa YouTube channel here: goo.gl/UoXSXe



Q&A MIRJAM DE JONG

Early identification of the qualifications and skills of migrants and displaced people supports their labour market integration and social inclusion. In Turkey, the ETF has joined forces with the government, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Labour Organisation to improve the skills and labour market integration of refugees and host communities.

To support this work, the ETF's Qualifications team has developed a flowchart that visualises routes towards labour market integration, which is designed to help coordinate activities in this field. Available in English, Turkish and Russian, the tool will also be shared with stakeholders working in the field in the Eastern Partnership region – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – in October. Live&Learn caught up with ETF expert Mirjam de Jong to find out more.

The Turkish government asked the ETF to help support its work on the integration of refugees. Why did this call come?

In Turkey, there are now 3.4 million Syrian refugees and 300,000 Syrian children have been born in Turkey since the conflict in Syria began. These refugees can't go back, at least not in the short term. The Turkish government is looking for ways to integrate them socially and economically. Getting a decent job is important for refugees as it supports their economic and social inclusion in Turkish society. Many Syrian refugees are already working, but many are working in the informal economy, often underpaid and are competition for local citizens.

Your team has been working on a tool to help support this work. It is visualised in the flowchart on the opposite page. How does it work? Can you walk us through it?

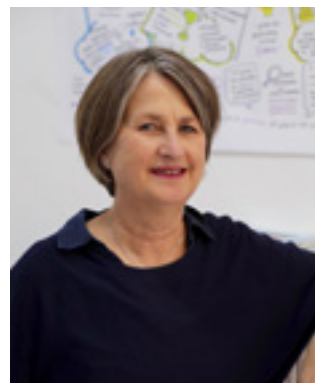
The process starts when migrants and displaced people such as refugees arrive. The first phase, the bright blue box, is the registration and social support. Preferably, this first phase already includes a fast screening of these people's skills and qualifications. This is very important, because as research shows, the earlier the persons enter the labour market the better it is for their integration.

The new EU's Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals is highlighted at the first step. How does it fit into the picture?

Launched by the European Commission in June, as part of the new Skills Agenda for Europe, the Skills Profile Tool supports the early identification of skills of migrants and refugees. The tool can be used at reception desks or by public employment services in an interview setting to get to know the persons, their skills, qualifications, background education, work experience, aspirations, and to provide them with clear recommendations on the next steps. It is an extensive and flexible tool, in many languages, and it can be combined with existing procedures. We think this tool, which is now available as a beta version for testing, could be ideal for fast screening at the first stage.

Moving down the flowchart, can you explain the three different routes?

Thematically, let's say, you have three types of people of working age. This is represented on the flowchart by three routes. The first category, the dark blue box, is for people who already have qualifications, either higher education or vocational. The best option and first step for them is to have that qualification recognised.



The second route, the pink box, is for people who don't have a qualification, or perhaps it is very outdated, but they do have skills and work experience. They can go through a process of validation of non-formal or informal learning, where they get a certificate based on the skills they have acquired. Thanks to the work carried out by the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) and a large number of VocTest centres, Turkey has a lot of experience with validating vocational skills. However, it is designed for people who are already working but lack a formal qualification. The VQA and VocTest centres have a lot of interest in how this experience can be extended to other target groups, such as refugees, and if so, to understand the capacities that will be needed.

The third route, the purple box, is for people who don't have qualifications or work experience and should go into a dedicated training programme. What we often see happening, however, is that refugees are going into training programmes without a proper selection process. You have people with skills and qualifications that don't end up working in their field. This mismatch is a waste for both the refugee and the country.

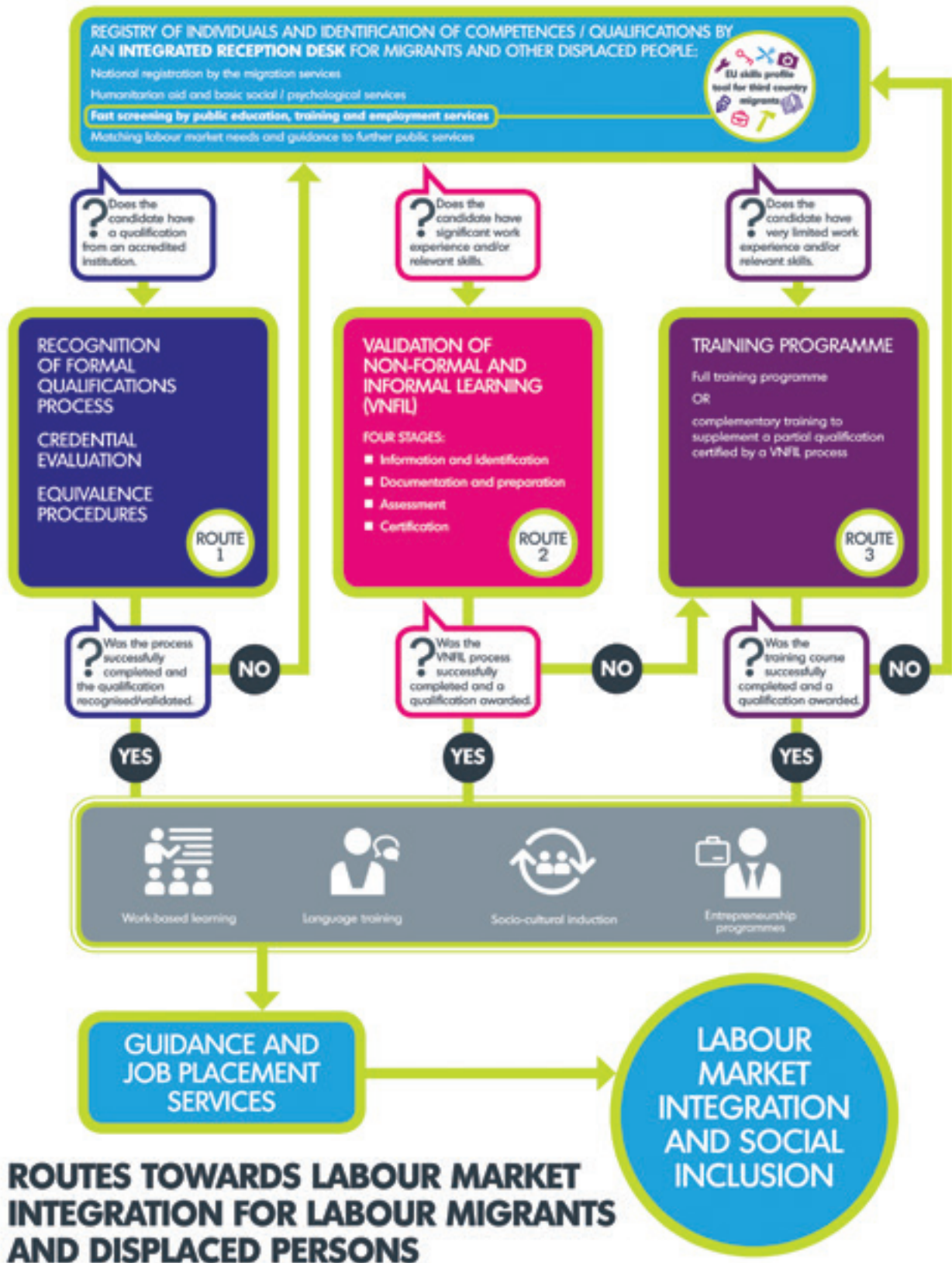
What happens after one of the three routes is taken?

The ultimate aim is labour market integration and social inclusion, but that's not an automatic outcome. After the recognition process, validation or training, other support is needed. This could be an internship, work-based learning, language training, social-cultural induction or entrepreneurship programmes followed by job support and guidance.

How will this tool be used in the field?

The tool is already available in Turkish, Russian and English. We have introduced it in Turkey, and we are taking it to the Eastern Partnership region in October. It is for all stakeholders working on qualifications and skills recognition and validation, from public employment service providers, refugee support groups, municipalities, universities and policy makers. In many countries, we see a lot of activity going on in this field by different actors, but coordination is difficult and limited. Such a simple tool could help coordination and efficiency.

Photo and infographic: ETF



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