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1. PROGRESS OF THE NATIONAL VET SYSTEMS TOWARDS MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF LISBON

1.1 STRATEGIES FOR AND BARRIERS TO IMPROVING THE STATUS, FLEXIBILITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The key challenge for Turkey is the demographics of its population: of its almost 70 million people, 20 million are in the age cohort 0–14 years.

According to projections made by the Turkish State Institute of Statistics, 40 million people will be in the working age group of 14–44 years and 10 million will be in the age cohort 45–64 years by 2020. This implies that almost 70% of the population will be of working age. This represents a unique opportunity for Turkey, in terms of both economic and social development, provided that there is a substantial increase in human resource development through adequate investment in education and training.

At the moment the situation is as follows:

- the total employment rate is 45.6%, while the EU average is 62.9%;
- unemployment threatens in particular the younger segment of the population (31.8% of young people in the age cohort 15–24 are unemployed);
- women's participation in employment is particularly low (28%) when compared to the EU average (55%);
- almost 60% of the labour force are basic education graduates or people who have dropped out of basic education;
- males receive on average 6.8 years of education, while female receive 5.3 years;
- 12.5% of the population (7.5 million people) is illiterate (4.7% of men and 20.1% of women);
- child labour affects 948 000 individuals in the age cohort 12–17;
- significant disparities exist between urban and rural areas, as well as

between western and eastern parts of the country.

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has responsibility for the planning, development, execution, monitoring and supervision of all types and levels of education and training with the exception of higher (i.e. post-secondary) education. The Council of Higher Education (YOK) is an autonomous body set up by the 1982 Constitution responsible for organising, orienting and accrediting higher education.

The period of compulsory education was extended to eight years in 1997 by combining elementary school and lower secondary school into basic education. Law 4702, enacted in 2001, provides the framework for extending basic education to 12 years with effect from 2004. However, since this extension implies a significant amount of investment in terms of resources and overall curricula reform, the deadline for its implementation has been delayed. Secondary schooling, which starts at the age of 14, consists of a minimum of three years of general or vocational high school or four years of technical high school. One additional preparatory year in a foreign language is provided in general, vocational and technical high schools and, in this case, the schools organising it are called 'Anatolian'.

Upper secondary school enrolment patterns for 2001¹ were as follows:

- general education: 60.3%;
- vocational education: 39.7%, of which 7.7% was in combined school- and worked-based programmes (programmes in which less than 75% of the curriculum is presented in the school environment or through distance education; programmes that are more than 90% work-based are excluded).

Participation rates in education, at all levels, for 2000/01 were²:

■ 18-year-olds: 16% (males: 18.5%; females: 13.4%);

■ 15–24 age group: 19.4% (males: 22.5%; females: 16.2%).

The participation rate in vocational programmes at upper secondary education level (ISCED level 3) is 19.4% for the age group 15–19³.

The VET system in Turkey includes:

- vocational and technical high schools providing training in more than 130 occupations and giving access or leading to the qualification of specialised worker and technician respectively;
- apprenticeship training, which is a combination of mainly practical training provided in enterprises and theoretical training provided in the apprenticeship school;
- non-formal education is defined as the education, training and guidance provided for those who never entered the education system or dropped out without achieving any level of qualification; non-formal education can be provided in VET and apprenticeship training centres.

Turkish legislation considers vocational training to be based on two main principles, with its theoretical (school training) and practical (in-company training) dimensions.

Vocational training policies and activities are mostly carried out by the MoNE within the framework of Act No 3308, which came into force on 5 June 1986 and brought about changes to the system, establishing new and strong links of cooperation with industry and commerce. Its purpose was to lay down principles relating to the training of apprentices, artisans and masters and to the vocational training to be organised in schools and enterprises. In fact, with the exception of Anatolian technical schools, the Council of Higher Education administers the post-secondary system.

¹ Education at a Glance, OECD, 2003.

² Statistics in Focus, Theme 3 13/2003, Eurostat.

³ ETF Key indicators database (provisional data school year 2002/03).

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In 2000/01 around 600 000 people were enrolled in VET, broken down as follows⁴:

VET schools for boys: 23%VET schools for girls: 8%

■ VET schools for commerce and tourism: 16%

apprenticeships: 50%other types of school: 3%.

The peak level of participation in VET was reached in 1997/98, with an enrolment of 49% out of the total secondary school enrolment. This can be attributed to the expansion of one branch of the system: the Secondary Islamic Education Schools (Imam-Atip Okullari), which are classified as VET schools.

Regulations were enacted by the Council of Higher Education in 1998 to limit access to higher education for VET graduates through the introduction of weighting coefficients to the scores they achieved in the entrance examinations, penalising them in comparison to general education graduates.

These new regulations led to a sharp overall decrease in VET participation, and influenced in particular the enrolment rate in Imam-Atip schools, which fell drastically from 27.5% of the total enrolment in VET in 1996/97 to 7% in 2000/01. This amounted to a reduction of 14% in total VET participation since 1997/98.

The issue of the barriers to entering higher education for VET school graduates has been the subject of a very heated debate in Turkey during recent months, in particular in relation to Imam-Atip schools. An amendment to the current law that attempted to redefine the role of the Council of Higher Education and eliminate the barriers to entering higher education has been approved by the parliament. However, it is considered by a proportion of the Turkish public and by some international observers as an attempt to destabilise the country's secularist status. The Turkish president has put a veto on the draft law and the issue now seems to

have been postponed until 2005. Hence, for the academic year 2004/05 the rules for the entrance examination to higher education remain unchanged.

Four National Directorate Generals within the MoNE manage the different schools and training centres of the VET system, namely:

- DG of Technical Education for Boys;
- DG of Technical Education for Girls;
- DG of Commerce and Tourism Education;
- DG of Apprenticeships and Non-formal Training.

Although the principle of mixed schools (boys and girls) is well established, the first two directorates mentioned above reflect the actual allocation of students to different schools according to gender. The rate of enrolment of boys in VET schools for girls is in general very low (maximum 10%), and in some regions (South-East) is almost nil. The same applies for enrolment of girls in VET schools for boys.

The system is horizontally and vertically inflexible, as students have difficulty moving between tracks and it is impossible to move from vocational to general education.

As regards participation of enterprises in the delivery of training, the existing legal framework makes provision for the practical training of students attending vocational and technical high schools and apprenticeship programmes on the basis of their field of specialisation. The time allocated for practical training in the final year of vocational and technical high schools is generally 24 hours a week. Students participating in this type of training receive two-day theoretical training and three-day practical training within enterprises.

Theoretical training (at least 12 hours a week) may be provided by schools or by the training units of enterprises.

⁴ Short Country Report on the latest developments in Education, Training and Employment Policies, Turkish National Observatory, Ankara, November 2002, p. 18.

Participants in apprenticeship training schemes spend only one day a week in school. Apprentices receive 30% of the minimum salary from the companies, and the social insurance is covered by the state.

Other ministries, organisations and institutions may establish formal and non-formal vocational education and training programmes at secondary level to meet their own skilled labour force needs. The most widespread among these are the health vocational high schools connected to the Ministry of Health. Other include high schools connected to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, finance high schools connected to the Ministry of Finance, and deed and land survey high schools and meteorology high schools connected to the state ministries (without portfolio). The curricula and regulations of these institutions are prepared in association with the MoNE, which also establishes the certification standards and the equivalence of the degrees granted.

The Vocational and Technical Education Research and Development Centre (METARGEM) was established in 1986 in order to provide planning, research and development services to the MoNE. A tripartite board governs METARGEM, and its responsibilities cover research and planning, curriculum development, design of projects, testing and evaluation, educational technology and technical publications.

Raise the status of initial vocational education and training (IVET)

In 2001 an attempt was made with the new Law 4702 to improve the status of IVET through the introduction of the following regulations.

- (i) Graduates of vocational and technical high schools may enter, without undergoing further examinations, post-secondary vocational schools if the latter deliver programmes in the same or similar field.
- (ii) Not less than 10% of the graduates of post-secondary vocational schools

- who entered these institutions without taking any further examinations will be allowed to undertake vertical transition to higher education.
- (iii) Foundations have been given the right to establish non-profit-making post-secondary vocational schools that are not attached to either universities or higher technology institutions, in order to train the skilled labour force required by the economy.
- (iv) The Vocational Education Council (which has been established with the participation of related public and private sector organisations to give advice to the MoNE on the planning, development and evaluation of all types and levels of the VET system) has been re-organised in order to extend participation to other public institutions and to the social partners.
- (v) Provincial vocational councils have been restructured with the aim of ensuring the participation of municipalities.
- (vi) The upper age limit for entry to apprenticeship training has been extended to 19 years of age.
- (vii) Flexibility has been widened to cover the entire duration of apprenticeship training, which may be up to three or four years. In addition, it has been made possible for the training period to be shortened by half for those starting apprenticeship training after completing general secondary education.
- (viii) Companies employing 20 or more staff shall provide practical training to vocational and technical high school students in a ratio of 5 to 10% of their total number of employees. In addition, enterprises offering practical training to 10 or more students must establish a training unit for this purpose.

It must be pointed out that since the above regulations were only introduced in 2001, there is as yet no feedback regarding their impact. This is particular the case for the regulations concerning the application of point (ii) above, as it is still unclear how the selection and access to higher education of 10% of graduates from post-secondary education will be achieved.

Improve the attractiveness of IVET

The eighth Five-year Development Plan for Turkey covering the period 2001–05 identifies an enrolment rate of 35% in general secondary education and 65% in vocational education and training as objectives to be achieved by the MoNE.

However, the attractiveness of IVET in Turkey is directly related to the equity of access to higher education. Everyone involved in the system is of the opinion that until this issue is resolved, VET enrolment will continue to decline, as it is seen as a second-best option. This issue is directly linked to the fact that the present system seeks to limit entry to higher education of Imam-Atip graduates; as these individuals are classed as VET graduates, this restriction applies to the whole VET system. The question is whether it makes sense to classify Imam-Atip schools as VET schools. In fact they follow the curricula of secondary general schools, with additional weekly hours devoted to the study of Arabic and the Koran.

As mentioned above, the new legal framework adopted in 2001 has been slightly improved, though it is still too early to assess its impact.

A previous attempt to improve the system's attractiveness was made by the Directorate General of Technical Education for Girls, which financed and implemented the 'METGE' project on a pilot basis during the period 1993–2000. The aim of the project was to assist schools to become more autonomous in planning their own activities. With effect from 2001/02 the project was extended to the other schools under this directorate.

Increase the flexibility of IVET

The EU-funded programme for Strengthening of Vocational Education and Training began in September 2002. Its aim was to assist the Turkish government through the MoNE, with the process of modernisation and adaptation of the VET system to the socio-economic needs of the country and to the principles of lifelong learning. The programme will end in September 2007.

Its main objectives include the strengthening of institutional capacity of public administration, social partner representatives and companies, at national, regional and local levels. This is expected to lead to the establishment of an effective partnership agreement among all institutions and social and economic partners involved in VET and to define their roles and contributions to the process of reform. To this end, the programme also includes an innovation fund for projects aimed at stimulating the participation of social partners in VET reform and development.

Under this programme 105 pilot training institutions will begin implementing competence-based modular curricula from the ninth grade (which is the first year of vocational or technical high school), with effect from 2004/05. Only 15% of the total teaching hours will be devoted to vocational subjects, and this will allow students to choose at the end of the ninth grade whether they wish to continue in the VET stream or move to general secondary. This represents the most significant innovation that is aimed at introducing flexibility into the system, since, as mentioned above, the horizontal transitional between VET and general secondary has not previously been possible. However, this will be done on a pilot basis and it should subsequently be extended to the rest of the system in order to ensure system-wide implementation and sustainability.

Another EU-funded programme for the Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training commenced in July 2003 will end in September 2007. The objective of this programme, which complements the first one, is to strengthen the capacity of Turkish authorities to organise and deliver a modern and efficient system of pre-service and in-service teacher training.

New competence-based modular curricula will be developed in order to improve flexibility in the teacher training system. The training standards for VET teachers will be defined within the framework of this programme, and five pre-service and three in-service modular and competence-based curricula will subsequently be developed.

During the life of the programme around 20 pilot projects, implemented by VET teacher training faculties, schools and enterprises, will be supported.

Synergy and complementarity between the two EU-funded programmes are monitored on a regular basis by the MoNE and the EU.

Main barriers to achieving these objectives

The main barriers to introducing innovation into the system include the following:

- a certain resistance to change on the part of all parties involved, but in particular on the part of national authorities;
- insufficient policy-making capacities;
- insufficient coordination between government departments (education and labour);
- rigidity and centralisation of the decision-making process;
- insufficient information on labour market demand, as a result of the lack of communication between the worlds of work and education;
- lack of statistical data and studies to monitor the outcomes of the VET system; the availability of such studies could be very helpful in taking decisions for future strategic development;
- the perception that a higher education diploma represents the key to employment, reinforced by the high unemployment rate among secondary school graduates and people with lower educational levels.

1.2 REDUCING THE NUMBER OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS

Those leaving education or training at the earliest opportunity and with few or no recognised qualifications

The early school leaver rate in Turkey in 2003 was 53.4%, with the rate for males being 45.5% and for females 60.6%; this compares to an EU average of 15.9%⁵.

Some 10% of young girls and boys are not enrolled in basic education.

The inequalities in education due to social class, region and gender are very apparent. For instance, according to the 2000 census the rate of illiteracy among women in Ankara is 7.5% overall, though the rate increases to 18.5% in the poorest areas.

In order to increase the participation of girls in education, the MoNE in cooperation with Unicef introduced the 'Haydi Kýzlar Okula' (Girls to Schools) campaign in June 2003. The campaign provides a financial incentive to families in order to encourage them to send their girls to school, and at present it is running in 33 provinces. As a result of the activities carried out under the campaign, the proportion of girls who are newly enrolled in basic education has risen to 47.8%. The objective is to increase this to 50% by 2006 and thus remove any differences between gender enrolments in basic education.

School expectancy in Turkey is the lowest among the OECD countries: a child aged five in 2001 expected only 11.5 years of schooling, the OECD average being 16.9 years.

As previously mentioned (section1.1 of this report) non-formal training is organised by the MoNE, particularly for individuals who have dropped out of compulsory basic education and illiterate women in the age cohort 14–44. These courses are organised in a flexible way in terms of their duration, location and level, in order to accommodate the needs of those who are working.

Those leaving formal education with low levels of basic skills at the age of 15

Basic education (compulsory education) in Turkey is eight years, ending at the age of 14–15. Compulsory education aims to equip individuals with core competences that will enable them to be active citizens. These do not include any vocational competences that will prepare them to enter work life.

⁵ ETF key indicators database provisional data referring to the third quarter.

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PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) of the IEA (International Association for Evaluation) relates to the performance of fourth-grade students (nine years old) in reading literacy (as opposed to PISA, which relates to students aged 15, in reading, mathematics and science).

Turkey participated in the PIRLS process and scored the lowest in both subscales (reading for literacy and reading for information), with 448 (OECD mean 531) and 452 (OECD mean 527) respectively. These results should be a matter of reflection and concern.

The main reason for individuals to leave school after completing compulsory education is economic difficulties.

As described above, apprenticeship training is the main form of training of young people who, after compulsory education, start to work in enterprises.

It is also worth mentioning the MEKSA Foundation, a German–Turkish non-profit-making organisation, which is very active in providing training to those who have low levels of basic skills through a network of 29 training centres spread all over Turkey.

1.3 INCREASING VET AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Since the introduction of the possibility of transition from vocational and technical high school to post-secondary education without examinations, considerable increases have been observed in the number of VET graduates in post-secondary education institutions. In 2002/03 182 891 students graduated from secondary vocational and technical education schools, and in 2003/04 130 275 VET-graduated students enrolled in post-secondary education programmes. In parallel, significant increases were observed in the number and capacity of post-secondary education institutions. In 2003/04 a total of 469 institutions (of which 443 were public institutions) were

operational. In order to cope with the sudden increase in the demand for enrolment, the MoNE has authorised vocational schools to organise post-secondary training courses. The time and resources available to train teachers and supply adequate equipment have sometimes been insufficient, and as a result, the quality of these courses has on occasion been questionable, and has differed very much from region to region.

1.4 INCENTIVES FOR UPDATING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Government

In 2003 the participation of the population aged 25-64 in lifelong learning was as follows⁶:

■ total: 1.1% (males: 1.6%; females: 0.7%).

In order to improve this situation, in 2001 the MoNE set up a special working group with the aim of developing proposals promoting the principles of lifelong learning.

As a result, in 2002 the MoNE introduced new regulations aimed at improving the quality of the labour force. According to these regulations, each employer would need to ensure that his or her workers can attest their educational level through possession of one of the following state-recognised certificates: a secondary vocational and technical high school diploma, or an artisan and mastership certificate. Workers would have the right to take leave of absence, to be considered as working time, in order to attend the necessary training courses to obtain such certification. However, the social partners were not consulted on this regulation, and never approved it, in particular because it was not accompanied by any financial incentive. The result is that, for the time being, this regulation has not been implemented.

⁶ ETF Key Indicators database (provisional data).

Among state agencies, the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR), which is responsible for organising active employment measures, sometimes provides assistance for upgrading the skills of employees.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, through its local branches, provides training on agriculture and home economics to villages.

Municipalities are by law responsible for organising courses aimed at assisting individuals to acquire skills and find employment.

KOSGEB, an agency under the Ministry of Trade, is one of the major providers of consultancy and training services to small and medium-sized enterprises and potential entrepreneurs, through its 25 enterprise development centres, 12 technology development centres and 10 laboratories spread throughout the country. KOSGEB is also implementing the 'Developing Young Entrepreneurs Programme' under the World Bank Privatisation/Social Support Project. The objective of this programme is to promote entrepreneurship culture at university level by presenting it as an option for young people when planning their future careers. Candidate entrepreneurs who complete this programme may get financial support to start up their businesses.

Employers

A number of non-governmental organisations offer continuing training activities. Among the most visible of these are a number of foundations established by affiliates of employers' organisations, namely the MESS Training Foundation (established by the Metal Industry Employers' Union), the Turkish Textile Foundation (established by the Turkish Textile Industries Employers' Union) and the Turkish Construction and Plumbing Workers' Training Foundation (established by the Turkish Construction and Plumbing Contractors Employers' Union).

The information available suggests that larger companies do organise training

activities for their staff, but since this is undertaken on their own initiative and using their own funding, it is largely undocumented and therefore not reflected in the official statistics.

Other stakeholders

Universities also play a role in the delivery of continuing training, usually in cooperation with public and private organisations and institutions.

Contribution of VET to successfully promoting inclusion

Active employment measures continue to operate mainly through the financial support of foreign donors. The World Bank has provided support through various programmes for privatisation in order to implement measures to assist laid-off workers to find new jobs or to set up businesses.

Of particular significance is the World Bank's programme for 'Redeployment and training', which was implemented during the period 1993–2000 and included:

- the delivery of training to over 84 000 unemployed people;
- the establishment of tripartite local and national employment councils to arrange vocational training courses;
- the preparation of draft regulations on private employment agencies;
- the establishment of 40 career information centres and 15 career counselling services.

In order to start familiarising Turkey with the European Employment Strategy, a programme supported by the EU, the 'Active Employment Strategy' commenced in October 2003. The aim of the programme was to promote a human resource development culture in Turkey and to implement active employment measures, which mainly rely on the financial assistance of foreign donors. The programme will end in March 2006.

ISKUR, as the Turkish Employment Agency and the main beneficiary of the above programme, is supposed to become a catalyst in developing this culture and raising awareness of public opinion and government on this issue. A National Action Plan for Employment will be developed under the programme, which is providing a fund for the implementation of active employment measures, including the promotion of social inclusion. The call for proposals for such measures has been launched nationwide, and 700 proposals have been received.

However, at policy level VET is not yet seen in Turkey as an instrument for promoting social inclusion for disadvantaged groups of people, and therefore no specific actions have been undertaken in this direction.

1.5 MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF AN AGEING POPULATION

Active ageing has been included in the Turkish pre-accession agenda, but it has not yet been translated into national policies and concrete activities.

The fact that Turkey has a young population and that a large proportion of this group is still facing unemployment (around 30% in large cities, according to data from the State Institute of Statistics) has led to the employment of those above 55 years of age being seen as a secondary priority.

To counteract the excess in the labour force supply, early retirement is widespread in Turkey. Those working in privatised enterprises are forced to take early retirement. However, among those who take early retirement, there is an increasing proportion who are willing to invest in upgrading their competences and to continue working, though there is a lack of organisations able to support these individuals in their endeavours. Another issue is that, in the present system of continuing vocational education and training, individuals who have had a long professional career are only marginally involved in the transfer of know-how and experience to the young workforce.

1.6 EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF VET

How effective is the VET system perceived to be?

There is no system in place to measure how effective the VET system is perceived to be. Several years ago the MoNE stopped collecting data on school dropouts at all levels, and this is a serious constraint in assessing the effectiveness of the system.

However, the effectiveness of the VET system is being regularly discussed at various levels in forums that allow the participation of all related parties. Some of these are national symposia organised by the MoNE, including the National Vocational Education Council, the Provincial Vocational Education Councils, preparatory activities for the Five-year Development Plans, and conferences and seminars organised by professional organisations and universities. The points frequently raised are as follows.

- It is believed that the participation of all social partners in the planning, development and evaluation of VET has a multiplier effect. In this respect, the interest of enterprises, professional organisations and non-governmental organisations has increased in the past 10 years.
- There is a widespread belief, especially among the private sector, that VET is still supply-driven. All related parties support the notion that in order to have a demand-driven structure, the National Competences/Occupational Standards System must be established as soon as possible. It is also expressed in all forums that the establishment of an Institution regulating occupational standards will facilitate an enhancement of the effectiveness of VET.
- In general it is believed that VET can offer a valuable path to employability. However, it is also generally accepted that the system with its current structure is unable to fulfil this mission. One of the most debated issues is the very low percentage of VET graduates who find employment.

The dominant focus of VET policies is considered to be meeting the needs of the labour market, while not enough emphasis is placed on meeting social and individual needs. There is a need to restructure the system into modular competence-based programmes, to give priority to individual needs and choices, and to prepare teachers to become actively involved in the process.

It is thought that the transition of VET high school graduates to post-secondary vocational education institutions without examinations may increase the flexibility and attractiveness of VET. However, as has already been mentioned, it is still unclear how the selection of 10% of post-secondary education graduates to go into higher education will take place. It is therefore still premature to say that the above measures have improved the effectiveness of the system.

A new regulation has been introduced to ensure the provision of VET to general high school graduates who have not been able to enter higher education, to enable them to acquire occupational skills, thus easing their entry into the labour market. However, there has been no feedback regarding the application of this regulation.

In the current national debate, is the VET system considered able to offer efficiency and good value for money?

- The strengths of the current VET system are its wide availability and its diversity.
- Efforts to increase the number of VET teachers with foreign language capabilities are supported.
- It is stated that VET graduates adapt more easily to technological changes. However, it is also pointed out that most VET graduates do not work in the areas for which they have been trained.
- It is believed that practical training delivered in enterprises provides students with a valuable experience of real work life.
- Students and adults enter the VET system without the benefit of any prior vocational guidance services, and it is believed that this decreases the efficiency of the system.

Attention is drawn to idle capacity in some VET schools and departments due to insufficient numbers of students. The workshops established at VET schools are usually fixed facilities. Rather than transferring the equipment to other places when demand decreases, efforts should be made to stimulate demand, in close contacts with enterprises. The lack of strategic planning in the optimisation of available resources is considered one of the main factors hampering the efficiency of VET.

Main trends in terms of investment in VET

Financing of education comes mainly from Turkey's general budget, the largest part of this being distributed among the MoNE, the Council of Higher Education and Higher Education Loans and dormitories (YURT-KUR).

The 16th National Education Council, which met between 22 and 26 February 1999, decided that the proportion allocated to education from public resources should be at least 10% of GNP and at 25% of the consolidated budget in the 2000–10 period, and that the share allocated to VET should be increased. In 2000 expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 3.4% from public resources, and was negligible from private resources⁷.

A fund was established in 1986 with the aim of collecting public resources, through the MoNE, and private resources (including companies' contributions) to finance formal and non-formal vocational education and training. However, the fund was terminated in 2001.

Schools may generate their own income (the so-called 'revolving funds'). A proportion of these funds serves as an indirect way of increasing teachers' salaries. The net profit resulting from these commercial activities must be transferred to the treasury, with the exception of a portion that can be used for the procurement of equipment, subject to the prior approval of MoNE. Trainees also receive some of the revenues.

⁷ Education at a Glance, OECD, 2003.

2. INNOVATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES

2

2.1 IMPROVEMENTS IN LEARNING PROCESSES AND CONTENTS

Piloting new approaches in learning and teaching processes is usually carried out within the framework of foreign-funded projects. For example, the concept of student-centred education is being piloted within the Project for Laboratory Schools established under the World Bank programme for support to basic education. It is planned to apply the successful outcomes achieved in these schools to VET schools.

The most relevant innovations in the VET system are being introduced through the implementation of the abovementioned EU programme for the Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training.

2.2 IMPROVING THE INTEGRATION OF DIFFERENT LEARNING SITES – INTEGRATION OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Some enterprises and training institutions organise training activities that strengthen cooperation between schools and enterprises through the protocols that they have signed. In this context there are around 100 protocols that have been signed between enterprises and professional organisations and the General Directorates of the MoNE responsible for VET.

The enterprises where students will receive practical training are selected according to predetermined criteria. However, the likelihood that enterprises will be able to meet all the needs for practical training as set out in the curriculum is low.

In view of this, complementary practical training is provided at the workshops of apprenticeship schools or training centres. TESK (The Turkish Craftsmen and Tradesmen Association) has established 16 'supra training centres' for this purpose. However, this initiative could not yet be extended to the whole system.

Another problem relating to school–enterprise cooperation is the coordination of theoretical knowledge with practical training. In order to solve this problem, teachers frequently visit the enterprises where students receive practical training. During these visits, teachers address the students' questions and, according to their own observations, design the theoretical part of the programme in line with the practical training.

Those responsible for student training within enterprises are usually masters who have received pedagogical training. These individuals also contribute to providing students with theoretical knowledge when necessary.

2.3 EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF VET PROVISION

For the individual (assessment of competences and knowledge)

Student assessment is school-based and there is no national standard examination system. The theoretical part of students' work is assessed through written and oral tests.

In determining success in practical training, the assessment of cognitive, psychomotor, behavioural attitude and vocational competences is the principle. The student is assessed on the projects, work pieces and experiments that he or she has completed within a term. In addition, every student takes an end of year competence

assessment. The combined average of students' annual performance and the end of year competence assessment gives the final grade of the student.

The master trainer of each enterprise is responsible for assessing the practical training performance of students.

For the institution (internal/external quality management)

The MoNE's Local Organisation Total Quality Management Project was implemented in 2001. Under this project, quality development teams have been established and working rules have been defined. In addition, organisational development management teams have been established in each institution. The work carried out by these teams is ongoing.

Some of the VET schools have completed the necessary procedures and have received ISO-9000 certificate. In addition, one of the objectives of the Strengthening of Vocational Education and Training Project is to develop a quality assurance system capable of achieving harmonisation and transparency in the VET system. Work relating to this issue is ongoing.

Skill competitions among VET schools and students are organised annually. The results of these competitions allow the success of skill training at school level to be evaluated.

For the system (monitoring and evaluation)

Evaluation of the VET system is the responsibility of the Vocational Education Council, in which all the stakeholders are represented. However, the evaluation by the council, which meets only a couple of times a year and comprises very high-level representatives, is not based on performance criteria but is of a more general and empirical nature.

2.4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STATUS OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

Teaching is accepted as being a specialised occupation in Turkey; teachers are trained through four-year university programmes. VET teachers graduate from around 20 vocational and technical education faculties.

The weighting system of the scores in the entrance examination to higher education favours VET students who enrol in VET teacher training faculties, and this leads to an apparent imbalance between the supply and demand of VET teacher training in Turkey. The total supply of VET teachers exceeds the demand of public and private training providers, with the consequence that they face serious employment problems in their profession. A considerable proportion of graduates of vocational and technical education faculties are employed outside the education sector. The MoNE is potentially the main employer for the graduates of VET teacher training faculties. However, while the number of teachers employed by the MoNE has been

declining over a number of years (on the basis of recent statistics only 5% are employed by the MoNE), the number of VET teacher training faculties and graduates has constantly and paradoxically been increasing as a path to higher education for VET school graduates. In addition, it is observed that education faculties base their student intake on capacity rather than demand.

As a result, while in some subject areas graduates cannot find employment as teachers, in other areas the MoNE cannot find graduates to employ (for example, in the field of electronics). In areas where there are teacher shortages, the MoNE employs graduates from the nearest thematic areas or other faculty graduates as teachers, after necessary pedagogical training.

It is worth mentioning that the faculties come under the Council of Higher Education, which regulates provision, while the MoNE as the potential employer represents the demand. The lack of dialogue between the two institutions jeopardises the efficiency of the VET teacher training system.

3. BUILDING EUROPEAN COMPETENCE FOR A EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET

3

3.1 CHALLENGES AND POLICIES IN RELATION TO THE LISBON EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

There is very limited knowledge and very little debate in Turkey about objectives and targets of the Lisbon employment strategy.

As mentioned above (section1.4), the EU-funded 'Active Employment Strategy' programme, which commenced in October 2003, aims to familiarise Turkish authorities with the EU Lisbon employment strategy through the elaboration of the First Turkish National Plan for Employment, which should be ready by the second half of 2004, along with the implementation of active employment measures.

ISKUR, the Turkish Employment Agency, as the main beneficiary of the programme, should become a catalyst in promoting the Lisbon employment strategy at both national and local level. In order to reach

this objective ISKUR must increase its number of employees to 3 100 (currently 1 400), as detailed in the legislation. Without adequate staff, it will be very difficult for ISKUR to ensure the full success and sustainability of activities undertaken under the EU programme.

Main challenges to achieving the Lisbon employment objectives, according to the European Commission's 'Kok Report'

The challenge for Turkey of reaching an employment rate of 70% by the year 2010 with a participation rate of 60% for women, in accordance with the Lisbon strategy, would require an increase of 25% and 32% respectively. These targets are over ambitious, and it is necessary for Turkey to define what can realistically be achieved by 2010 starting from the present situation.

Since the educational attainment level of the population is very low, and the target set in the Lisbon agenda is that by 2010 85% of students aged 22 years should have completed upper secondary education, its is clear that there is still a great deal to be done in Turkey to increase the participation of girls in education. The eighth Five-year National Development Plan sets the extension of compulsory education from 8 to 12 years as a target for 2005, and this is expected to boost participation in education. However, as previously stated in section 1.1 of this report, this implies a very high investment in education, and it is still unclear whether the government has the necessary financial resources to implement this extension. A more realistic mid-term strategy will probably need to be developed by the MoNE in order to tackle this issue. Turkey must also address as a priority its high rate of early school leavers, as well as give a substantial boost to lifelong access to education and training.

Policies and strategies being developed to tackle these challenges

The extension of compulsory education mentioned above and the National Action Plan for Employment, which ISKUR will develop under the EU-funded 'Active Employment Strategy' programme, are important steps forward in the achievement of the Lisbon objectives.

In December 2003 the first Preliminary National Development Plan was prepared by the State Planning Organisation as a basis for the financial assistance for economic and social cohesion, which is to be provided by the EU within the framework of Turkey–EU relations, during the 2004–06 period.

The plan is based on a medium-term strategy (2004–06), which identifies four development axes towards economic and social cohesion with the EU, namely:

- enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises;
- (ii) developing human resources and increasing employment;
- (iii) improving infrastructure services and environmental protection;

(iv) reducing differences in development among the regions, ensuring rural development and reducing the social imbalances that are a result of poverty and income inequality.

The second axis includes the following measures:

- active labour market policies (the promotion of employment of disadvantaged groups in the labour market, the employment of young unemployed people and redundant workers, the adaptation of employees and entrepreneurs to changing market conditions, and the creation of new employment fields and of additional sources of income for households in rural areas);
- reinforcement of the education system (enhanced links between the labour market and education, increased use of information and communication technologies in education, and the enhancement of lifelong learning opportunities for adults).

A regional development strategy covering the 26 NUTS II regions has been developed at national level with the aim of stimulating the internal potential of regions. This will be achieved through a human resource development approach linked to the promotion of local development initiatives, with the aim of providing a general framework for the four development axes mentioned above. The overall framework has the objective of reducing interregional disparities by raising the employment levels and competitiveness of the 12 NUTS II regions targeted as priorities within the scope of the development axes.

The total allocation for the second axis in the 12 NUTS II regions is of €70 million (€48.5 million from EU assistance and €21.5 million from the national public contribution) for the period 2004–06.

3.2 INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS

Role of stakeholders or social partners in the planning of VET at national, sector and company level

The Vocational Education Council is the highest forum in which the effectiveness and efficiency of VET is evaluated. The council takes decisions at national level concerning the planning, development and evaluation of VET. These decisions are implemented by the MoNE and related professional organisations.

The council, which meets every three years, is made up of 21 members: 16 representing the government, three from employers, one from employees and one from banking associations.

In accordance with the law, the contribution of social partner representatives to VET is provided through:

- preparation of legal documents following consultation with related parties and primarily with professional organisations;
- organisation of councils/symposia (for example TESK, together with the MoNE and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, calls upon the Central VET Symposium to meet every three years when deemed necessary);
- consultation on the Five-year
 Development Plan, which is prepared
 by the State Planning;
- participation in the VET National Council⁸, which is responsible for all activities undertaken to plan, develop and evaluate VET throughout the country in accordance with the legal framework;

participation in Provincial Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Councils, which have been established in each of the 81 provinces.

3.3 TRANSPARENCY, RECOGNITION AND MOBILITY

Establishing credit frameworks

There is no provision for a credit framework in Turkey at the moment.

Establishing or reforming the qualifications framework

Within the framework of the EU-funded programme for Strengtening Vocational Education and Training, the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework is envisaged, with the aims of:

- contributing to the determination of vocational competences in accordance with the developing needs of the labour market:
- providing VET in a modular and flexible framework based on competences;
- providing participative and transparent testing and assessment, based on national qualifications.

Implementing Europass

There are currently no institutional arrangements in Turkey for the implementation of Europass. It should be noted that the Memorandum of Understanding for participation in the Community's Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth programmes has only very recently been signed between the European Commission and the Turkish government; therefore as yet, the country has no experience in EU transnational programmes for education and training.

⁸ Members of the National VET Council: Deputy Undersecretaries of the MoNE responsible for VET, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Deputy Undersecretary of Finance, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the State Planning Organisation, General Directorates responsible for VET (MoNE), Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen Confederation, Turkish Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Maritime Trade and Union of Commercial Exchange, Workers' Confederation (which has the highest number of members), Union of Banks, Representative of Higher Education Council and Union of Chambers for Certified Public Accountants.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ETF European Training Foundation

GDP Gross domestic productGNP Gross national product

IVET Initial vocational education and training

MoNE Ministry of National Education

NUTS Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics

OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PIRLS Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

PISA Programme for International Student Assessment

VET Vocational education and training