ISSN: 1725-7344

HIGHLIGHTS
THE ETF IN 2004

SHARING EXPERTISE
IN TRAINING

THE EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION
IS THE EUROPEAN UNION'S CENTRE OF EXPERTISE SUPPORTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFORM IN THIRD COUNTRIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS PROGRAMMES

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A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (http://europa.eu.int).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005.

ISBN: 92-9157-427-9
ISSN: 1725-7344

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Printed in Italy.

Photo: ETF/F. Decorato

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SHARING EXPERTISE
IN TRAINING

FOREWORD

The year 2004 will go down in history as a milestone for European integration. In May, the European Union welcomed eight countries from Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Mediterranean islands of Malta and Cyprus after more than a decade of intense preparations.

For the European Training Foundation (ETF), 2004 saw other changes at a very practical level. There was a change of management when in July Muriel Dunbar took over from Peter de Rooij, who had steered the agency through its first 10 years. Towards the end of 2004 a new Commission, including members from former ETF partner countries, took the helm in Brussels.

2004 was also the year in which a new EU policy framework for external relations took shape. The new European Neighbourhood Policy, coupled with a steadily increasing focus on human resources development, implies an important role for the ETF.

This publication illustrates how the ETF has been swift to work the implications of these changes into its work in 2004. It is, however, more than just a snapshot of the diligent work of the agency. It is forward looking in that it illustrates how the efforts that made accession in 2004 so successful and how the lessons learnt in the process can be used for the further development of Europe and its neighbouring regions.

The European Union is no insular community. It must interact with the countries that should make up its "ring of friends". Whether the ultimate aim of cooperation is future accession into the European Union or not, we have a formidable stake in the social, political and economic development of our neighbouring countries. And since their development hinges to a large extent on the development of their human resources, we have a responsibility and interest in continuing to support the improvement of their education and training systems with all the means we can muster.

In the years preceding 2004, the ETF proved how it could bundle the expertise of 15 Member States to the benefit of 10 acceding countries. Today it can add first hand experience from these countries to its pool of resources. This puts the ETF in a better position than ever to support European Union assistance to human resources development in the EU neighbourhood.

Ján Figel'

European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism

Photo: ETF/B. Diewald

Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism

INTRODUCTION

Photo: ETF/F. Decorato

Muriel Dunbar, ETF Director

Having taken up the job of director of the European Training Foundation (ETF) in July, I am grateful for the opportunity to look back on its work during 2004. This kind of reflection on the past is a valuable tool that can help to signpost the way forward. Needless to say, this is particularly helpful for a new director.

The past few years have been marked by confrontation and conflict, some of which have touched the regions in which the ETF operates. The work of the international community to try to restore peace and to rebuild the fabric of damaged societies has, however, been encouraging.

The European Union has been a key player in this community, seeking to help its near and more distant neighbours to live at ease with one another and to develop strong and stable economies. The process encourages peace and stability, the spread of democratic values, as well as new markets for goods and services. It helps to create jobs and by increasing opportunities for people at home, it helps ease migration pressure and social unrest.

In 2004, the ETF continued to contribute to this process, working as a European institution and

alongside EU Member States as well as other major players such as the UN, the World Bank, and the OECD. Operating within the framework of EU policy, the ETF supported each of its partner countries to work towards social and economic stability.

Developing a flexible labour market, built on a foundation of up-to-date skills, is an essential factor in this progress. By drawing on its own expertise, as well as that available in the 25 EU Member States and other international agencies, the ETF continued to give advice and guidance to policymakers in partner countries to help them to respond to this challenge.

The following pages highlight some of the work of the ETF during the past year and the headway made through this. The first part of the document introduces the landscape in which the ETF operates: the European Union - expanded with 10 new Member States that were former ETF partner countries - in a global economy that requires a constant adjustment of skills supply and demand. Such adjustment can only be achieved through a process of continuous teaching and learning on a hitherto unseen scale.

The introductory part is followed by examples of ETF activities in 2004. Accounts of our analytical work, our stocktaking exercises, our pilot activities, and our involvement in the Tempus Programme give a flavour of the wide range of technical issues that must be confronted on the road to social and economic growth and stability. They also show the scale of the task faced by partner countries.

The enclosed CD Rom contains a selection of media releases, publications and other materials that the ETF has produced throughout 2004.

Encouraging results show that knowledge and skills development does make a difference. Through intensive work on the development of the most precious resources we can manage - human resources - headway is being made towards increased stability and prosperity not only within the EU, but in a European neighbourhood that extends far beyond the borders of the European Union.

Muriel Dunbar

Director, European Training Foundation

A CHANGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Good neighbours

In 2004, the European Union managed to do what would have been deemed impossible just 15 years earlier. It broke the divide that had split Europe for half a century. Ten former Eastern Block countries became full members of the Union.

Despite this expansion, Europe is still more than what is confined by the borders of the European Union. In a global economy, the European Union cannot sustain itself in isolation. Good neighbours are imperative for the development of stability and prosperity. The EU therefore lives in constant dialogue and interaction with a culturally very diverse group of neighbouring countries.

The EU has played, and continues to play, a central role in international support for political and economic reform and the development of greater stability in the **Western Balkans**. There is still much to do in this region but the situation has been transformed over the past couple of years. Democratic systems have developed considerably and all countries are committed to moving closer to the European Union. The EU is by far the largest assistance donor working in the Western Balkans.

The EU is particularly concerned that the **Mediterranean** does not become a geo-strategic fault line between successful and less successful economies and different socio-political systems. European leaders attempt to deepen dialogue and develop political and economic partnership with countries of North Africa, the Middle East and beyond. The Euromed Partnership aims to create a zone of peace and stability based on shared values and to build a region of mutual prosperity through a free trade area and single market with Mediterranean countries.

Photo: European Union photo library

The EU enlargement in May 2004 brought changes and new challenges

Photo: ETF/F. Decorato

Ring of friends

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is the direct political consequence of the previous Commission's desire to actively support what former European Commission President Romano Prodi called "a ring of friends" around the European Union. Its aims will govern cooperation with all ETF partner countries excluding those with an accession perspective, the Russian Federation and Central Asia, while including the Caucasus countries.

Its aims are:

- to share the benefits of enlargement instead of creating new dividing lines in and around Europe;
- to promote good governance and reform;
- to create the so-called "ring of friends" - an area of peace, stability and prosperity based on shared values and common interests.

It is important to note that further enlargement of the EU is not one of the aims of the ENP. Furthermore, the ENP does not replace existing legal and institutional arrangements, such as the association agreements and frameworks like the Barcelona Process.

The enlarged European Union must also continue to pay attention to its strategic relationship with the former Soviet countries of **Eastern Europe and Central Asia**. It is in everyone's interest to prevent the emergence of a new dividing line in Europe. The EU encourages economic and political change in this part of the world through the Tacis Programme. This provides support for institutional and administrative reform, the private sector and poverty reduction and has been effective in decreasing many of the tensions and anxieties of the past.

These region-specific programmes are important instruments in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which emerged in 2004 and aims to share the benefits of the recent EU enlargement with a number of countries that now border the EU (see box). The policy objective is quite simple: a circle of countries that share common values and that aim to develop a close relationship. This will strengthen stability, security and well-being for all concerned and avoid new dividing lines opening up between the enlarged EU and its neighbours.

Until 2006, financial support to the countries concerned will continue to be channelled through the MEDA and Tacis Programmes, but in the Financial Perspective 2007-2013 both will be replaced by one greatly simplified European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Participation in regular Community programmes is foreseen although, importantly for VET, not as yet through the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

How exactly support and cooperation will be implemented after 2007 is still, deliberately, kept open. This partly explains why DG External Relations' Karl Fredrik Svedang received so many questions when he set out the ENP at the ETF's regional Advisory Forum meetings in Turin in November 2004. His answer to the question 'How far can we go?' was: "That is a matter of political will."

Photo: European Union photo library

The creation of a "ring of friends" around the European Union is one of the goals of the European Neighbourhood Policy

Setting the course

How can Western Balkan countries best learn from EU accession experience? This was one of the key questions posed to delegates at the meeting of the ETF's Advisory Forum held in Dürres, Albania on 21 and 22 June 2004. The wide-ranging list of responses included: clarifying exactly what policy learning has come out of candidate countries, holding more regional meetings, increasing study visits if the circumstances are right and encouraging countries in the region to take control of their relations with EU Member States.

The meeting provided plenty of stimulating opportunities for participants to contribute to the development of activities in the region. Turning to the specific case of VET reform in Albania, delegates learned that only 16% of pupils are currently enrolled in vocational schools, because the system does not meet the needs of industry. Pessimism has changed to optimism in the last 18 months, however, because of a greater involvement of social partners and an increase in student numbers.

A visit to a local vocational school confirmed the new optimism. An international foundation helped committed local staff transform this collapsed school into a vibrant training institution providing car repair and plumbing courses. "This school is a stimulating example of both international cooperation and the important link between trainers and the labour market," said Peter de Rooij, who, in Dürres, entered his last week as director of the ETF.

In the context of the recent expansion of the EU and the potential for applying the experience gained in VET reforms from new Member States to candidate countries, participants reviewed progress in 2004 and then broke into workshops to help shape the ETF's Work Programme for 2005.

The meeting closed with delegates giving full backing to the ETF's Work Programme for 2005. Suggestions and ideas from the Advisory Forum meeting in Dürres were fed into the Governing Board meeting of 9 November 2004 in Turin for final approval.

Photo: ETF/A. Martin

VET developments in the Western Balkans were the focus of the Advisory Forum meeting held in Dürres, Albania, in June 2004

OUR WORK IN 2004

On 1 May, fireworks and celebrations marked the accession of 10 of our former partner countries to the European Union. In the preceding 10 years, we had worked with thousands of people in these countries to prepare their training professionals, systems and policies for European cooperation in equal partnership. We channelled expertise from the EU Member States to the region, developed and implemented pilot activities, supported the development of higher education through the Tempus Programme, and set up networks to aid the flow of information related to labour markets and training. For us, the accession of the 10 new Member States marked the end of a long process of networking people, piloting reform, brokering expertise, and building the capacity to deal with European processes, policies and institutions.

With economic growth outstripping that of the 'old' Member States and education indicators holding the promise of adequate human resources development in the longer term, in May 2004 the outlook for a smooth incorporation into the European Union was very bright indeed.

Photo: European Union photo library

2004 marked a year of change and development for Europe and the ETF

Photo: ETF

Photo: ETF

Learning from successful models in other countries is one of the ETF's main principles

An example then, an example now

Lithuania offers a flagship example of the impact of the ETF's work on VET reform in the new Member States. Operating from within the Ministry of Education, the Lithuanian National Observatory rapidly developed into a hotbed for innovative ideas on VET reform. Already in the late 1990s, the Ministry contributed to its core funding and the office became the country's laboratory for labour market needs analyses, sectoral and regional surveys, and pilot activities.

In a project supported by the Finnish authorities, the ETF helped establish a regional training centre in Marijampole. The centre was a partnership of seven existing training institutions in the region which dramatically increased their efficiency by joining management, curriculum development, resource centres and teaching materials. Legal provisions put in place before the start of the project secured its sustainability and within a few years, the successful model was employed throughout the country.

Now members of the European Union, in 2004 the Lithuanians hosted a group of Kyrgyz colleagues to share their experience in successful VET reform. In Lithuania today, the former Phare VET Reform Unit has become the country's European Social Fund Management Unit, while the National Observatory is now a constituent of the Methodological Centre of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education.

Preparing the education and training systems and the labour markets of the 10 acceding countries for EU membership was an immense operation. In the process, we compiled a wealth of information mapping reform progress, activities and stakeholder structures. Close cooperation with our sister agency, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), in the run-up to accession helped ensure that none of these resources were wasted. We handed over country files with all main publications and a 'who's who' of vocational education and training in each country. We helped our National Observatories to prepare for participation in Cedefop's Network of Reference and Expertise (ReferNET) and we helped stakeholders in the new Member States to prepare for participation in other Cedefop networks.

Photo: ETF/Erik Luntang

Peter de Rooij hands over information to the ETF's sister organisation, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)

Important clues

The degree of success of the current EU enlargement will have significant implications on the work of the ETF in the years to come. "The first round of enlargement will provide some important clues about how we should proceed with EU support to human resources development in other future Member States," said former ETF Director Peter de Rooij in May 2004. "We have worked hard to help the acceding countries prepare for accession, but only since the Lisbon summit has vocational education and training development moved to the position it really deserves on European policy agendas. Now there is broad agreement on the importance of adapting education and training to the needs of a knowledge society. There is also a detailed agreement on stepping up European cooperation in vocational education and training through a process that was started in Copenhagen in 2002. As a result, today we have an excellent opportunity to even better prepare future Member States for accession."

"The main challenge for the ETF in the years ahead will be to anticipate new EU policy directions," Peter de Rooij said. "The EU is reflecting on its physical limits. A future EU is likely to include the Balkans and the current acceding countries but it is unlikely expansion will continue much further after that. This makes the new neighbourhood policy more than just a staging post. The policy will be different from what it was when the new members were the main target for support and the end of that line was accession. The new policy will be to help countries in the 'wider Europe region' become more prosperous and stable, without the final aim of including them in the EU. So the ETF must use all its experience with the first wave of acceding countries to prepare the next, then use what can be taken from that for the development of a good neighbourhood."

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

Peter de Rooij,
ETF Director 1994-2004

Peter de Rooij's successor, Muriel Dunbar, is also upbeat about the future of the ETF in the framework of the new European Neighbourhood Policy: "If you approach VET as a tool for economic development, the ETF has an exciting and challenging mandate," she said in a recent interview. "It is crucial for the European Union to work on the development of strong economies in its neighbourhood, both for the development of new markets for goods and services and for the management of sustainable employment. A strong and prospering buffer zone around the EU will take the strain off migration problems and social unrest."

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

A festive reception at Villa Gualino in June 2004 marked the ETF's tenth anniversary

Ten years of the ETF

In June 2004, we celebrated our tenth anniversary with a reception at Villa Gualino, the home of the ETF in Turin. The reception also marked the departure of Peter de Rooij, Director of the ETF for its first 10 years, and the introduction of his successor, Muriel Dunbar.

A chronicle of the agency's first decade has been published under the title *Ten Years of the ETF*. The document is a lively account of a decade of remarkable progress. Much of the narrative is published as told by people with first-hand involvement.

Developing expertise

In 2004, as part of an evaluation exercise, we made an inventory of all of our activities and set out to find common denominators. One of the most striking things we noticed was that, internationally, support to education and training development seems to have become less expert-driven and more dialogue-driven. Today, knowledge and expertise are shared and built with partner countries, rather than disseminated. In simple phrasing: typically we no longer ask a consultant to write a report on a certain issue but we increasingly achieve our aims by gathering people around the table. Our work relies more on dialogue and feedback and this applies to both our organisational development and our external activities.

Our analytical work on core vocational education and training themes used to take place in so-called 'focus groups' and specific expert meetings. After considering the implications of the inventory, we found that we needed to align our thematic work more closely with project activities and to do this through more dialogue inside the ETF. Towards the end of 2004, our expertise development activities were reconfigured into a new framework that will offer both a broader range of expertise development instruments for the ETF project and country managers and an enlarged scope for discussion of expertise developments in the organisation as a whole. In this way, we hope to link organisation learning and individual development in a more integrated manner.

The inventory also showed that the ETF could be using technology better. As a result, in 2005 we will try to extend our thematic work into online technical advice communities. A classical example of organisational learning, it was in fact an e-learning project (see box), that put us on this track.

E-learning from our partner countries

Sharing expertise is not a one-way process - from the EU to the partner countries. This is excellently illustrated by the example of ETF co-operation in e-learning with Israel.

In 2004, a stocktaking report was published that stemmed from a decision originally made in 2001 to step up cooperation with Israel in the field of e-learning.

The report describes how Israel uses interesting and innovative solutions to the universal problem of bridging the digital divide, in particular where this divide runs between generations.

In the late 1990s in Israel, computers and internet connections were distributed to thousands of families. Originally the country planned to distribute 30 000 computers in this way but an evaluation after the first 10 000 showed that, although the right audience had been targeted and these computers were used, kids might not be the group that needed most convincing on the perks of owning a computer.

Parts of the initiative's activities were then redirected towards older citizens. A multi-generational connection programme was developed through which young pupils were asked to train senior citizens.

Examples such as these and the lessons learned through them can be used within the EU, but also in other partner countries. The work with Israel cuts both ways: the conclusions of the stocktaking report are being used in Israel for follow-up activities, such as in the field of teacher and trainer training. The ETF will feed good practice and general conclusions from the report into the new MEDA-ETE programme.

Photo: ILO/J. Maillard

Adults are a prime target in recent e-learning initiatives

Over time, the themes and related analytical activities will come to set the agenda for fieldwork, country studies and pilot projects. Projects implemented in 2004 built more on themes that moved into focus in the preceding years. These developed naturally from our activities in 2003 and are briefly introduced below.

The informal labour market

For many years the 'informal' economy was largely seen as bordering on the criminal and therefore for the most part ignored. For Western donor organisations it was often difficult to defend the spending of scarce funds in this area. Recently, however, the significance of the informal economy outside Western Europe has been reassessed.

As a consequence, some international donors now realise that paying attention to the skills needs of people who work in the informal sector makes sense. The vast majority of these people are bona fide workers but often they have limited skills and low social status. This frequently results in mass and long-term unemployment. As an example of the scale of this issue, in some countries of Central Asia the formal labour market is so underdeveloped that the informal sector employs up to 50% of the active population.

Governments are now starting to recognise that simply trying to abolish the informal sector is not an option and that more research is necessary into how people in the informal sector learn skills. Policymakers in the European Union have also shown a similar willingness to change their thinking. The focus of the Tacis Programme, for example, has shifted and now takes into account the impact of the informal sector on economic transition, reducing poverty and local economic and social development.

Since the ETF started researching the role of training in helping working people to move out of the informal sector, expertise developed in the area has been applied to project activity across the board. In 2004, Albania was selected for a survey on the informal economy and training. The ETF's Enlargement and South Eastern Europe Department initiated the study in September and the survey results are expected in the second quarter of 2005.

Photo: ETF

Helping people to find employment is one way of fighting local poverty rates

Local development and poverty alleviation

In Central Asia, the ETF is running a three-year project to identify the role of local training initiatives in poverty alleviation. The project initially operated in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, compiling inventories of current public and private local training activities. In 2004, the findings of these stocktaking exercises were disseminated to a broader audience and the project was extended to include the Caucasus countries and Tajikistan. The main users of the reports are EC Delegations, which all have poverty alleviation and local development among their priorities.

The project yielded an overview of current training activity, but its scope goes well beyond mere stocktaking. One of the conceptual results of the project is, for example, a framework for local development, which the ETF is now developing. It will be adapted for use in other participating countries with partners from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan operating as mentors in the extended project.

Expertise developed in this field, both within the ETF and within the European Union as a whole, will increasingly be employed in project work in the years ahead. Local development and particularly the beneficial impact of local partnerships are a core theme both within the EU and in our work with the partner countries. Local partnerships have been a pivotal element in our work in the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region as well (see box). Experience gathered in different regions is exchanged and employed throughout our organisation and activities.

Photo: European Union photo library

Close cooperation between experts, donors and implementing agencies is essential for making education programmes work

Donor cooperation

Cooperation with other donors was stepped up in 2004. Joint work with the World Bank in particular moved outside the usual geographic boundaries of the ETF. Close cooperation was, for example, realised in Yemen, where sector profiles were compiled as early as in 2002. A jointly developed training strategy framework was drafted, discussed and adopted in 2004.

Cooperation is moving increasingly from practical exchange of experience and joint organisation of conferences, seminars and workshops to basic research in core themes in human resources development. In an attempt to find common ground for future collaboration, in 2004 the ETF and the World Bank selected five issues which both parties considered crucial to training development in the Mediterranean partner countries. These were governance, financing, the role of social partners, quality, and skills for the informal sector. The target countries in this exercise were Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon.

Work launched around these themes included the compilation of background studies by mixed teams of 10 to 12 experts. Their mandate was to take stock of activities, but also to look into the future at plans, opportunities and needs. The final report, to be published in 2005, will be a regional report covering the five themes and with four country annexes.

The exercise yielded a much better understanding of some of the most pressing issues in vocational training in North Africa and the Middle East. It also led to a better insight into the workings of different donors. For the ETF, the usefulness of the report will be its focus on finance and its level of analysis. The exercise was funded by the ETF and the World Bank with added funding provided by the UK Department for International Development.

Identification of needs and opportunities

Developing expertise is not just a matter of increasing our understanding of the intricacies of training and its relationship to labour market development. Developing expertise is also needed with regard to countries that are relatively unexplored territory in EU development cooperation. One country for which the EU has recently opened new support lines is Tajikistan. With the help of the ETF, human resources development has now become the core of the Tacis Programme in this Central Asian state (see box).

Tajikistan beyond mere survival

Six years after a peace agreement brought Tajikistan's bitter civil war to an end, plans are well advanced for major training reforms seen as crucial to the country's economic recovery. A conceptual framework for reform and decentralisation of the mountainous Central Asian state's vocational training system has been drawn up with ETF help and a Tacis project to help prepare new laws is due to start in 2005.

Enrico Romiti, long-term expert of the Tacis vocational training reform project, said that the importance of training reform to the country's post-war recovery should not be underestimated. "This is the first Tacis project in Tajikistan that does not simply address pure survival issues such as water supply or healthcare. This is the first strategic project and the first in education."

Mr Romiti will be working with vocational training managers in three pilot regions in Dushanbe, Kathlon and Soghd, to identify new training 'families', upgrade woefully outmoded teaching and trainer skills, draw up new study programmes and identify emerging labour market needs.

Mirzo Yorov, Head of Tajikistan's Methodological Service Centre, said: "We were isolated for so many years that we are happy to be involved in a wider project. Without support of this kind we have no hope of finding a way out of the crisis of recent years."

Photo: ETF

Vocational training programmes bring solutions to crisis-affected areas like the Dushanbe region in Tajikistan

Training of teachers and trainers

In conjunction with the festivities marking our tenth anniversary in June, the ETF organised an international workshop on a much neglected theme that we have been trying to promote actively for some years now: the training of teachers and trainers. The workshop 'Stakeholder Interest and the Teaching Profession' was an elaboration of the 'policy-learning' theme developed at the November 2003 Advisory Forum conference 'Learning Matters'.

The workshop made a tentative attempt to tackle the issue of how the teaching profession can be modernised with the help of stakeholders in vocational education and training. It clearly illustrated the complexity of the issues involved. Teacher and trainer training lies at the very heart of education and it is very hard to keep any debate about teacher training reform from fanning out across the whole spectrum of our activity.

Nonetheless, opinions started to come together on the second day of the meeting with a synthesis report of the colourful debates of the seminar's six sessions. Key ETF expert Bernhard Buck presented possible ways ahead. The reports and all other documentation from the seminar can be found on our website.

Photo: ETF/F. Decorato

We are each other's teachers

The ETF remains committed to leading the debate on teacher and trainer training reform in its partner countries across the breadth of its activities, including Tempus (see box). The 2005 ETF Yearbook will be entirely devoted to this issue, and other activities are in the pipeline.

Training for democracy in universities

Towards the end of the 1990s, a consortium of European universities developing teacher training in minority languages in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia came to realise that a lack of civic education was hampering the divided country's democratic development. Led by the University of Malmö, they made a proposal for a Tempus project to be launched to develop teacher training in subjects related to democracy.

Their timing was perfect. The Pedagogical Institute of the Macedonian Ministry of Education had just started pushing the development of civic education but it lacked sufficient funds and expertise and its work was hampered by persistently lacking collaboration between training institutions and their catchment areas. There was a need for an integrated approach involving the authorities, all teacher training institutions, and the country's schools and kindergartens.

Their proposal was accepted and in 2001 the consortium set out to develop new learning and teaching strategies for democracy. Partners in the project included the Faculty for Preschool and Elementary School Teacher Training in Bitola, the Faculties of Pedagogy of Skopje and Stip, two kindergartens and five primary schools. Together they developed learning and teaching materials, upgraded facilities for practical learning and launched mobile training centres to expand the outreach of the project.

The consequences of the project, which finished in 2004, were felt throughout the country. A new national curriculum for pre-service teacher training was developed. Textbooks, magazines, and videotapes were distributed to schools and students at the pedagogical faculties. Workshops were organised throughout the country. The country's main education periodical, Education Worker, followed the project closely from beginning to end.

Partnership between everyone with a stake in civic education ensured continued dedication to the cause even after the project ended. The project introduced the faculties involved to the European Teacher Education Network (ETEN) and indeed such is their commitment that they will jointly host the 2005 ETEN meeting.

Photo: ETF/M. Arnó

Sharing information and expertise is a significant part of the ETF's work with its partner countries

Setting the trend in Syria

2004 saw the end of the ETF's involvement in a pioneering project to launch an apprenticeship scheme in Syria. Participants gathered at a seminar in Damascus last December to take stock of the results.

Several hundred young people are currently combining their school-based learning with practical training in a local company. The first graduates of the scheme are now entering the labour market, and 50% have so far found work compared to only 20% of graduates of the old-style vocational training system. "At Al-Hafez, we have so far employed all the graduates of this scheme who want to work for us," says Ahmed Shirin, production manager at the Damascus white goods manufacturers, "this scheme is producing the kind of people we need."

The project is introducing new forms of management in schools and has revamped school curricula for four trades. Begun in Damascus, it has been successfully implanted in Aleppo, Syria's second city and an important industrial base, and industrialists there are already talking of extending it to new trades such as foundry or tourism. Perhaps most significantly, the project has managed to launch a process of social dialogue in a country where the government and industry are not used to working together. "The ETF has played a very important role in launching the partnership between the different ministries and the chambers of industry," says Fouad Al-Ghaloul, Syria's Deputy Minister of Education.

Although the ETF has completed its work, the project will continue. Preparations are currently underway to extend the scheme to Homs; in Aleppo, the aim is for 10% of all vocational students to be enrolled in the scheme by 2010.

The influence of this seemingly modest pilot scheme does not stop here. The apprenticeship scheme has provided inspiration for much deeper reforms which will begin in September 2005. This €21 million MEDA programme will substantially upgrade 16 vocational schools, including the apprenticeship schools, and will build a strategy for a total overhaul of the Syrian VET system.

Bridging theory and practice

Many issues the ETF promotes in the partner countries are current within the European Union too. Adult learning, lifelong learning, national qualification frameworks and e-learning, for example, are cutting edge topics and the subject of focused development even within the European Union.

Partnership

Another of such issues is local and regional partnership for training and employment. It is now widely acknowledged that the tremendous level of diversification of what is learned, where it is learned and how it is learned can best be dealt with through local partnerships. While national and international authorities must increasingly ensure that framework agreements are in place on issues such as the recognition and portability of everything that is learned, it is only local consortia that sit close enough to the fire to feel it.

An apprenticeship scheme in Syria equips hundreds of graduates with practical skills needed by the country's labour market

Photo: ETF

Photo: ETF

The local economic and employment development in Albania and Kosovo (LEEDAK) project shows how neighbours can profit from common experience and expertise

They know best what the people in their community need, who may address it, with how much adaptation of teaching and training practice, etc.

The ETF's LEEDAK (Local economic and employment development in Albania and Kosovo) project allows two communities in Albania and Kosovo to develop local employability through broad partnerships between authorities, employers, social partners and training providers. They learn from colleagues in other European countries through study visits, but the project provides much more than just an antenna to the outside world. In fact, when it entered its second leg in 2004, local became even more local in LEEDAK.

Betting all odds on stakeholder involvement and the sense of ownership it yields, we ran a call for tenders for the implementation of the training strategy developed in Lezhë, Albania, in the first leg of the project. The call was exclusive to Albanian companies, the focus was restricted to tourism. A well-known local training company won the tender and brought in its own Albanian connections. It became a success story. Originally, the municipality was not included on the list of prioritised vocational training centres under CARDS. There simply was no vocational training centre. Today, the people who developed the Lezhë partnership are involved in spreading the word throughout the country and beyond.

Photo: ETF/F. Decorato

Adult learning

In South Eastern Europe in 2004 one of the core themes was adult learning. Initial education in the region still does not sufficiently encourage people to continue learning. In fact, many young people still leave school early.

Census results have shown that adult educational attainment levels are low. Few companies provide training for their employees. As a consequence, short-term labour market training schemes have been introduced by employment services in all countries to try to remedy high unemployment. Since there is a great need for adult learning, policy and legal frameworks need to be created to remove barriers to learning and to ensure co-financing, equal access and a broad participation, relevance and transparency of training offers, the recognition of skills, and proper use of public funds.

MEDA-ETE

On 29 November, the ETF hosted the launch of a regional MEDA project: "Education and Training for Employment (ETE)". The €5 million project is a new EU initiative supporting employment in North Africa and the Middle East through improved training and education. It aims at refocusing education and training policies in the region. The project will offer a platform for radically improved regional cooperation and will help develop common frameworks for collection, interpretation and international comparison of training and labour market indicators.

At the launch event in Turin, EuropeAid Cooperation office Head of Unit Carla Montesi said education had become a top priority in the EU's Mediterranean policy. "Countries in the region are preparing for EU association agreements and, ultimately, the free trade zone which should be in place by 2010. But unemployment is still high, particularly among women and young people, and the education sector is not always up to the task of responding to this yet."

In the years between now and 2008, the project will help 10 countries in the region improve and refocus their education policies and strategies, better match education and training to the needs of their labour markets, reinforce the capacities of service providers working for young unemployed people in the area of self-employment, and promote the use of information and communication technologies in education and training.

With the help of experts from all countries involved, the project identification team devised four components on which the project will rest. The project's think-tank will be an annual Euromed Forum on TVET for employment. It will be composed of the current members of the ETF Advisory Forum, with an extension to other representatives if required by the project.

Photo: ETF

The actual engine of the project will be an institutionalised network of information producers and key stakeholders in the region's training and employment systems. It will serve a regional observatory function, providing decision makers with relevant and up-dated analysis. It will also produce comparative analyses and thematic studies on training and employment-related issues.

The other two components cover specific support to self-employment for young unemployed people and the development of e-learning initiatives. The former will mainly address business support, counselling, training and follow-up services in the areas of self-employment and micro-enterprise creation. The latter will mainly address the use of e-learning methods and tools in teacher training services. It will not provide infrastructure but work in this field together with other EU initiatives such as EUMEDIS, a broader EU programme aiming at a qualitative improvement of the Euro-Mediterranean Information Society and MEDFORIST, the Euro-Mediterranean network for sharing IST learning resources.

ETF Director Muriel Dunbar confirms the launch of the Education and Training for Employment (ETE) project

The ETF Adult Learning project addresses these needs by piloting innovative alternatives and by helping to share knowledge and experience. In the framework of this project, we organised a workshop on adult learning strategies and tools in Zagreb in January. In May, we held a second workshop in Montenegro on the theme of partnership development. A third in November on the topic of financing adult learning was quite appropriately held in Hungary, a new Member State that can offer much in the way of good practice in VET financing under dire economic circumstances.

All of these were regional workshops. In parallel to these, new activities were launched in Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro. Stocktaking reports were compiled for all four while adult learning strategies were developed for three of them.

Qualifications

The Copenhagen Process and the way it strives to increase the portability of qualifications pushed the issue of qualification frameworks upwards on European education and training policy agendas. Qualification frameworks are no new issue; many European countries have advanced national qualification frameworks. But recent European developments have added urgency to international coordination in this field and with the European Neighbourhood Policy in mind, stimulating the debate on qualification frameworks in our neighbouring countries is a logical extension of internal EU activity.

Photo: ETF

The question of qualification frameworks is an important part of VET reform

The ETF has pioneered this field in a number of its partner countries, the highest profile of which, perhaps, is the Russian Federation. In the framework of general policy advice as requested by the Russian government, in 2003 we began organising workshops on themes that emerged from the Copenhagen Process. In 2004 these workshops came to cover national qualification frameworks and their contribution to lifelong learning.

In June 2004, we organised a policy workshop in Moscow, which brought together education and labour authorities. Participants, selected by the ETF, were drawn from the State Duma, the government, regional authorities and other high profile sources. They recognised the need to work together on this issue and even committed this recognition to paper, which was excellent progress.

At the request of the participants and the EC Delegation in Moscow, in 2005 work in the Russian Federation will keep its focus on national qualification frameworks. In parallel, we will launch a pilot project on national qualifications framework development in Ukraine, where a presidential decree of September 2004 opened the road towards true VET reform.

A first attempt at developing VET in Ukraine was made as early as 1998 but due to a lack of funds the initiative was abandoned prematurely.
The ETF, however, continued its work in the background, laying the groundwork. Pilot projects and other activities that took place in the years that followed were funded through our own budget.

In 2002, developments were suddenly accelerated when the country published its national doctrine for education in the 21st century. Vocational education and training had a prominent position in this and in 2003, we helped the Ukrainians put together a concept for a national VET reform strategy.

When the new Tacis VET Reform Programme was designed, much of its input was provided by the in-depth study on VET and labour market development that we published in 2004. The focus of the programme will initially be on continuing training and the decentralisation of VET management but from 2005 there is scope for more activities.

Sharing expertise

"What is good for us is good for them," said Ján Figel', the new Commisioner for Education and Culture in his interview with the ETF's new *Live & Learn* magazine towards the end of 2004.
This, in a nutshell, is the philosophy of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the guiding doctrine for EU

assistance to its neighbouring regions in the years ahead and introduced above. Indeed, much of the experience gained in the EU can be put to good use in the partner countries. Making this experience accessible to those who need it in these countries is one of the ETF's core tasks.

Accession and association

One of the key points of the European Neighbourhood Policy is that it grants equal importance to human resources development in potential EU Member States and in other partner countries. Indeed, the themes addressed are fairly similar throughout the regions in which the ETF is active: the agenda is set by European developments as dictated mainly by the Lisbon and Copenhagen processes.

The main difference in approach lies in technical preparations for accession that take place in the current and future candidate countries. These need to be prepared for participation in European structures, such as the European Social Fund (ESF) and European networks. Through our work in the new Member States, we have proven to be up to the task of helping these countries and our work has been made much easier because we can now draw on a pool of expertise available in the countries that have so recently gone through the process of aligning their institutional arrangements to EU rules and regulations. They have become full partners in our preparations for the next accession round. In Turkey for example, the ETF is assisted by experts from Poland and study visits to Poland have formed part of the Turkish programme. Delegates researched how Poland set up structures to accommodate the requirements of such programmes as the ESF.

In Turkey, our current activity focuses on development in one region, which will be used as a model for the rest of the country in the years ahead. In the region of Konya, skills needs have been identified and a training strategy has been developed with the support of the ETF and partners from the new Member States.

Institution building in these countries often means capacity building through a type of support that brings to mind the work we did in the new Member States and Romania and Bulgaria through such projects as the Special Preparatory Programme for the ESF. Tempus projects play an important role in this process too.

Photo: ETF/F. Decorato

The development of human resources in future EU Member States and other partner countries is the prime goal of any ETF project

In Romania, as another example, we focus on support to the development of sectoral dialogue, which had been identified as a weak issue. With ETF support, in 2004 sectoral committees with broad representation were set up to discuss the accreditation of training providers.

Research and analysis from the countries that are preparing for accession are fed back into the policy development arms of the European Commission. As one example, a major study covering progress towards the Lisbon goals in 32 countries was requested by the European Commission to prepare for the December 2004 meetings in Maastricht. Country reports produced in Turin provided the research input for the report's sections on three candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey). ETF experts also participated in the steering committee monitoring the completion of this study.

Learning from peers

Sometimes partner country specialists and project partners find it difficult to accept advice from foreign experts. Guidance from neighbours, who have experienced similar problems and found working solutions to these, may find fertile ground more easily. In an area of the world that has been torn apart by regional strife, learning from neighbours has an added positive dimension. Our 'peer review' exercises manage to bring these ideas together, taking advantage of the common history of the Western Balkans. The peer reviews were judged so successful that they were extended to other South Eastern European countries, including Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey.

In 2004, project experts from different partner countries in the region drew up assessments of vocational training in their neighbouring countries. Within a very short period of time this process started to improve regional cooperation among policymakers, and, through sharing expertise, to increase the capacity for future policy analysis in the individual countries in the region. The outcomes of the peer reviews contribute to assistance under the CARDS programme for each country.

As the example about St Petersburg shows, the philosophy behind the reviews - learning from peers - has been successfully adapted and adopted. It has become a recurring element in much of the work of the ETF.

Photo: ETF

Only where there is open dialogue can lessons be learnt

Photo: ILO/J. Maillard

Learning from each other

Russia's experience in transferring responsibility for vocational education and training entirely to the regional level is being keenly followed by professionals from neighbouring countries.

Teams of vocational school leaders and education officials from Ukraine, Tajikistan and Belarus were in St Petersburg in early December 2004 to learn from the experience of eight Russian pilot regions at the final seminar of a joint ETF and National Training Foundation project on VET decentralisation and restructuring in Russia.

The process could provide valuable lessons for other countries. Ukraine is moving towards a decentralised system following a presidential decree on VET reform issued in September 2004. In the run up to a Tacis project to support this, the ETF is working with five pilot regions to help draw up regional action plans.

Xavier Matheu, ETF country manager for Ukraine, said drawing on Russian experience - where developments are some six months ahead - made a lot of sense. "There are many parallels and there should be a chance to twin regions with similar industries and specialist needs to provide mutual support."

Vasily Yaroschenko, Deputy Head of vocational training at Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science, said that although there were no blueprints, he was "studying and absorbing experience" while at the seminar. Ukraine's political crisis, which was in its second week as the seminar took place, "would not interfere with long-term strategic reforms", he added.

Nurali Shoev, Deputy Rector of the Tajik Technological University, told the seminar that labour shortages in some Russian regions could be mitigated by formal inter-governmental agreements on the provision of better qualified Tajik migrant workers. Hundreds of thousands of Tajiks travel to Russia each year to work as low-paid labourers - often illegally and subject to police harassment - and improved training at home coupled with specific regional agreements could kill two birds with one stone, he said.

Eduard Gonchar, Head of vocational training at the Belarus Ministry of Education, where there are no current plans for major reform, said the Russian experience offered "valuable lessons" that could inform any future policy developments.

COPENHAGEN, MAASTRICHT: THE OUTLOOK FOR 2005

Promotion of the free mobility of human capital and the resultant Copenhagen Process have given cooperation in vocational education and training within the European Union a massive boost. The first fruits of this intensified collaboration became visible during 2004. Europass, the European initiative enhancing the portability of qualifications was presented when European ministers met in Maastricht in December. At the same meeting, these ministers showed their commitment to even tighter cooperation. They reiterated support for the Copenhagen Process and accepted the call to work harder from the committee that had mapped the progress of the Lisbon Strategy.

If indeed European Union Member States will work even harder at developing the desired knowledge-based economy in the half decade ahead, this will have far-reaching consequences for vocational training within the European Union.

New frameworks are already under development and much experimentation has taken place in EU countries, the best results of which are being consolidated as we write.

Photo: ETF/A.Ramella

Photo: ETF

A glimpse ahead

From 2007, the organisation of European external support will change quite dramatically. In an interview with the ETF's magazine *Live & Learn*, Commissioner Figel' offered a glance at developments that will impact on the work of the ETF in the years to come.

"As you will be aware, the more than one hundred instruments - including Tempus - that govern EU activity in external relations will be replaced by six broader ones after 2006," he said. "Tempus itself is expected to expand to cover school and vocational education and training as well as higher education, although details of the actual shape the programme will take have yet to be finalised. It is certain, however, that three of these six broad instruments will concern the future of the programme. These are the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, the new Pre-accession Instrument, and the new Development and Economic Cooperation Instrument."

"These proposals all contain articles which would expressly include assistance in education and training as an objective. They are designed to allow the adoption of thematic programmes within them and the new Tempus Programme is intended to be one of these."

"We expect the European Training Foundation to play a key role in assisting the Commission in its actions in all of these areas and we expect they will do so by providing the relevant Commission services with information and expertise to support policy development, implementation and evaluation. Although this is essentially the direction the ETF has taken in recent years, due to a clearer definition of strategies that impact on the work of the agency the organisation will change."

European Commissioner Ján Figel' expects massive changes to the EU's support to its neighbours

Photo: European Union photo library

Increased transparency in European vocational education and training has already resulted in an increased desire to compare systems, their impact and the qualifications they offer. This, coupled with an increased recognition of the need for quality control is expected to make benchmarking one of the key themes in the years to come.

The European Neighbourhood Policy asks that the fruits of this raft of European developments are shared with our neighbours. These are all ETF partner countries and current European developments are therefore likely to have an impact on the work of the ETF in the next few years more than ever before. Current themes in Europe will without doubt be current themes in the work of the ETF in the years ahead.

Not only is our thematic bias likely to shift. From 2007, incidentally also the year that marks the next enlargement round, European external support will take on an entirely new shape. Key decisions on exactly what this will be will be made in 2005.

In short, the years ahead will bring tremendous change. For the ETF, the changes that were in the air as 2004 drew to a close, are a challenge in the most positive sense of the word. The continuing focus on the key role of human resources in social and economic development promises increased recognition for the field in which we have operated since 1995, a higher demand for our services, and new responsibilities.

Our thorough preparations throughout the first decade of our existence have prepared us to respond to these challenges swiftly, appropriately and, most of all, flexibly.

etf
SHARING EXPERTISE IN TRAINING
REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE POLICIES IN 12 ACCEDING AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES
SYNTHESIS REPORT
JULY 2002

ANNEXES

1. Founding regulation and amendments

The European Training Foundation was established by Council Regulation No 1360/90 of 7 May 1990.

The original founding regulation was amended by the following decisions:

- Council Regulation No 2063/94 of 27 July 1994, amending the rules on the functions and staffing of the ETF and extending the geographical scope of the ETF's work to the countries eligible for the Tacis Programme;
- Council Regulation No 1572/98 of 17 July 1998, extending the geographical scope of the ETF's work to the countries eligible for support from the MEDA Programme;
- Council Regulation No 2666/2000 of 5 December 2000, extending the geographical scope of the ETF's work to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- Council Regulation No 1648/2003 of 18 June 2003, including rules concerning access to documents and amending the ETF's budgetary procedures.

Consolidated regulation

The consolidated version of the ETF Council Regulation CONSLEG: 1990R1360 - 01/10/2003 integrates the original founding regulation with the subsequent amendments.

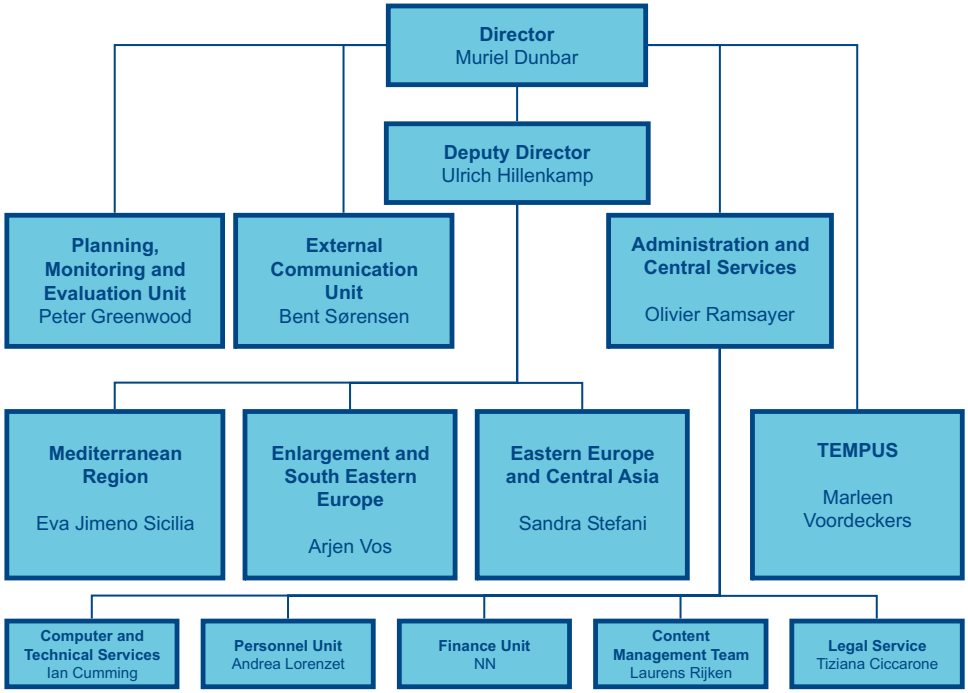
2. Budget (€)

	2003	2004	2005
Personnel costs	10 529 000	11 493 973	12 047 000
Building, equipment and running costs	1 421 000	1 470 027	1 453 000
Operational costs	5 250 000	4 636 000	5 000 000
Total annual subsidy	**17 200 000**	**17 600 000**	**18 500 000**
Other funds	500 000	800 000	Figure not yet available
Total	**17 700 000**	**18 400 000**	**18 500 000**

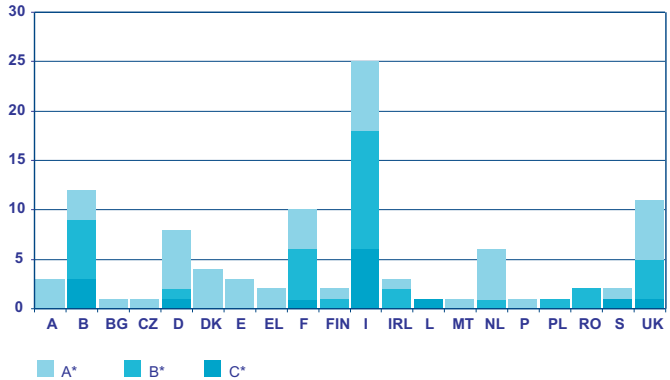
Photos: ETF/F. Decorato

3. Staffing chart and organigramme

Organisation chart



ETF staff by nationality



The total number of staff in 2004 at grade A* was 50, at grade B*, 35 and C* 14, giving a total of 99 temporary agents.
The total number of temporary agents foreseen in the establishment plan is 104.

ETF staff by gender and grade

	F	M	Total
A*14	1	1	2
A*13			0
A*12	1	6	7
A*11	6	8	14
A*10	3	3	6
A*9	2	2	4
A*8	6	7	13
A*7		1	1
A*6	1	1	2
A*5	1		1
Total A*	**21**	**29**	**50**
%	**42**	**58**	**100**
B*9	2		2
B*8	2	2	4
B*7	4	3	7
B*6	8	3	11
B*5	4	5	9
B*4			0
B*3	2		2
Total B*	**22**	**13**	**35**
%	**63**	**37**	**100**
C*6	2		2
C*5	1		1
C*4	1		1
C*3	5	1	6
C*2			0
C*1	4		4
Total C*	**13**	**1**	**14**
%	**93**	**7**	**100**
Total TA	**56**	**43**	**99**
%	**57**	**43**	**100**

4. Key decisions of the Governing Board in 2004 and list of members

The Governing Board met in March, June and November 2004. Observers from the candidate countries attended the meetings, which were chaired by Mr Nikolaus van der Pas, Director General for Education and Culture of the European Commission. In March and June, the meetings took place in Turin, while in November the meeting was convened in Brussels.

At the meeting of 16 March, the ETF Governing Board selected Muriel Dunbar to be the new director of the ETF from 1 July 2004 onwards.

At the meeting of 29 June, the ETF Governing Board:

- Adopted the ETF Internal Control Standards - and took note of ETF's plan to achieve compliance with the standards by the end of 2004;
- Adopted the ETF's Annual Activity Report for 2003 and its own analysis and assessment of it;
- Agreed the decision on the procedures for the adoption of the ETF implementing rules for the new Staff Regulations;
- Noted the contract with the new director, Dr Muriel Dunbar, and the related probationary period procedures;
- Noted the ETF progress report on the implementation of the action plan in response to the external evaluation for the period March-June 2004; and
- Noted the progress made by ETF in implementing its 2004 Work Programme.

At the meeting of 9 November, the ETF Governing Board confirmed the planning perspectives for the ETF in the period 2004-2006 by adopting:

- The amended budget for 2004;
- The ETF Work Programme 2005;
- The ETF draft budget 2005 and establishment plan;
- The rationale for ETF priorities for 2006;
- The guidelines for the 2005 external evaluation of ETF.

The Board also reinforced the ETF's policy and operational framework by adopting:

- A policy for services to EU Member States;
- A procedure for the preparation of the analysis and assessment of the ETF Annual Activity Report 2004;
- The membership of the ETF Advisory Forum;
- The participation of ETF Staff Committee as observers in future Governing Board meetings.

ETF Governing Board members 2004

	MEMBER	ALTERNATE
European Commission	Mr Nikolaus van der Pas (Chairman) *DG Education and Culture* Mr David Lipman *DG External Relations* Mr Dirk Meganck *DG Enlargement*	
Austria	Mr Karl Wieczorek *Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Labour*	Mr Reinhard Nöbauer *Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture*
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Czech Republic	Ms Helena Úlovcová *National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education*	Mr Vojtech Srámek *Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport*
Denmark	Mr Roland Svarrer Østerlund *Ministry of Education*	Ms Merete Pedersen *Ministry of Education*
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Finland	Mr Timo Lankinen *Ministry of Education*	Mr Ossi V. Lindqvist *University of Kuopio*
France	Mr Jean-François Fitou *Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Cohesion*	Mr Jacques Mazeran *Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research*

	MEMBER	ALTERNATE
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Greece	*Awaiting nomination*	
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Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION

HIGHLIGHTS
THE ETF IN 2004

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the
European Communities 2005

44 pp - 21.0 x 21.0 cm

ISBN: 92-9157-427-9
ISSN: 1725-7344

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TA-66-05-951-EN-C

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