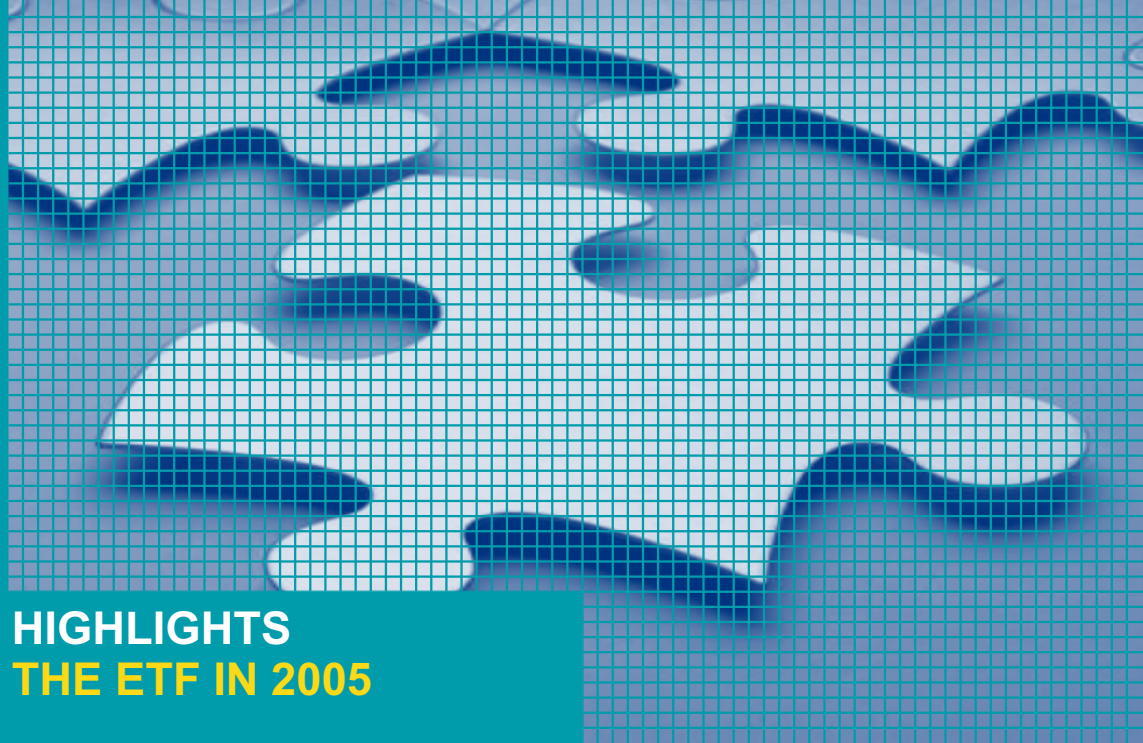


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HIGHLIGHTS THE ETF IN 2005

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

HOW TO CONTACT US

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HIGHLIGHTS THE ETF IN 2005

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

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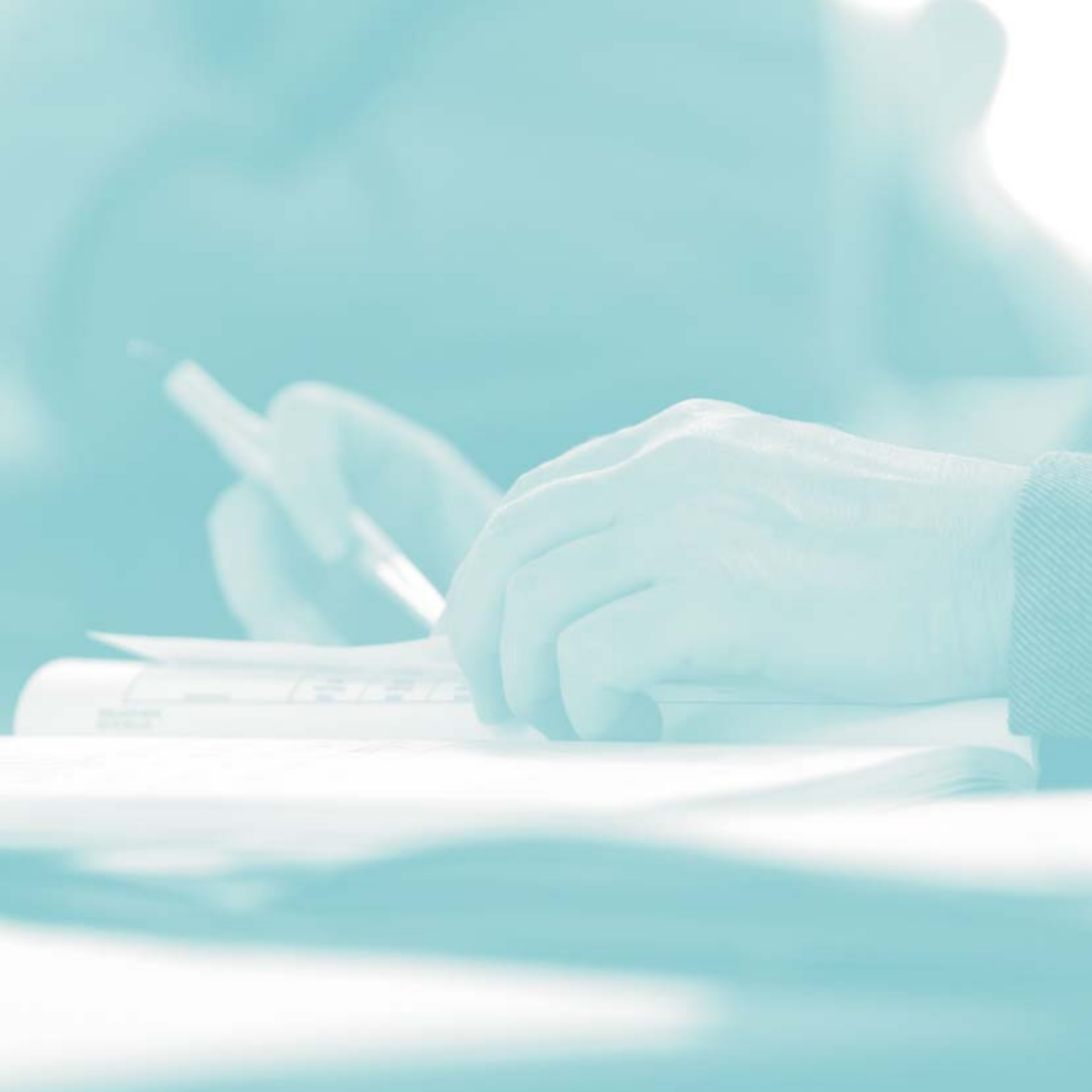
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FOREWORD

In a globalised world, peace, prosperity and development depend on the skills of the people who live and work in it. Human capital is Europe's most important asset in the 21st century. This is why the European Union has put investing in our citizens – our human resources – centre-stage. We must equip ourselves with the tools to shape globalisation in our favour. We have set ourselves challenging targets for the development of a knowledge-based society, rooted in a philosophy of lifelong learning and mobility. This stands at the heart of Europe's current reforms.

But our efforts to empower citizens with knowledge and new skills do not stop at the Union's border. Education and training are increasingly important elements of the EU's foreign policy. By helping people around the globe, through generous assistance, opening trade opportunities and supporting political reforms, the European Union sows the seeds of stability, democracy and economic development. Ensuring access to education and training is fundamental for building human security. Humankind will not enjoy security without development; it will not enjoy development

without security; and it will not enjoy either without human rights and the right to education.

Education and training are particularly important in the Union's immediate neighbourhood. In the long-term, the development of our neighbours depends on the strengthening of their own human resources. Therefore, educational and scientific cooperation as well as easier travel for researchers and students are an essential element of our European Neighbourhood Policy. By building bridges in these fields, we can truly "learn from each other" and provide the key to modernisation.

This 2005 edition of the *Highlights* of the European Training Foundation (ETF) reflects the important role this agency plays in the process. The ETF is not only an important player for the training of Europeans. It also provides the European Commission with precious ideas for our foreign policy. The ETF, through its intimate knowledge of our partner countries' education and training systems and labour market, helps us define our priorities and decide how to address them effectively.

This edition of the *Highlights* also shows how well the ETF has developed in recent years, covering a growing number of actions and agendas that converge on the same ultimate aim: Equipping citizens with the essential skills to embrace change and reap the benefits of globalisation.

Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner
EU Commissioner for External Relations
and European Neighbourhood Policy



*Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner
for External Relations*



Muriel Dunbar, Director of the ETF

INTRODUCTION

The publication of our annual *Highlights* is always a moment of reflection for me. I think 2005 was a year that better than any year in the past cemented the ETF's role in the family of European institutions. Our work with and for the European Commission is going from strength to strength. There is a continually increasing focus on human capital in social and economic development. And if any of us have felt like prophets in the desert in the past, spreading a message that was drowned out by other economic or political agendas, there is not a glimmer of this feeling left any longer. Our work, developing education and training in the European Union's partner regions, is a crucial element in the European drive towards stability and prosperity through economic and social development. It is fully recognised as such.

Because of this, today we can see the fruits of our efforts in a broad range of European support initiatives in our partner countries. Our labour market reviews are used to define European assistance priorities and assess the feasibility of EU support programmes. Our input is requested and appreciated in the identification and design of projects to support reform and development.

This has given our work an impetus that cannot be underestimated. It has helped to give ETF staff the confidence to take on new and innovative topics, many of which are at the cutting edge of current thinking in education and training development: the role of training in poverty alleviation and social inclusion, the benefits of local self-determination, the need for policy learning.

While promoting learning and its indisputable benefits, I am also very happy that we have not lost our desire to keep learning ourselves. The openness of the ETF to learn from experience has long been a key ingredient of its continuing development and success. We must continue to benefit from the learning opportunities which our

work provides. This openness to innovation and new opportunities will be put to the test in the year ahead. New candidate countries have been nominated. The new instruments for EU external support are entering their final stage of preparation and a revision to the mandate of the ETF is currently under consideration.

This edition of the ETF *Highlights* shows how we worked towards these challenges in 2005. Forward looking as always, its contents are loosely grouped around the four themes that will form the backbone of our large 2006 conference 'Skills for Progress'. This conference will bring together 250 experts from both the EU and our partner countries for a critical review of and constructive input into our work – our best guarantee that also in the years ahead we can continue to help people to take command of their own future by developing skills for their working lives.

Dr. Muriel Dunbar
Director



LEARNING FROM DIVERSITY

The ETF maxim is 'sharing expertise in training'. When the slogan was introduced, it expressed an objective as much as a method. By 2005, however, more than at any time in the past, sharing expertise had become *the* hallmark of ETF intervention. Following the introduction of the principle of policy learning at the ETF conference Learning Matters in 2003, sharing expertise for the benefit of policy learning in the partner countries became part and parcel of all ETF projects.

The idea is simple: familiarise partners with a variety of solutions to problems similar to those they face and help them to rework whatever they find useful into a solution to *their* specific problem. The ETF's position as an agency representing one union of 25 sovereign states puts it in a unique position to use both their diversity and their harmonisation models as assets.

The ways in which the ETF supports such 'sharing expertise' are versatile. They include, among others, study visits, international networks, local partnerships, workshops and publications. Methods and means vary from region to region and depend

in good part on the EU policy framework in which cooperation with the different partner countries takes place.



Photo: ITCI/O.M. Montesano

Sharing expertise with partners

Good for the EU, good for our neighbours?

What is the added value of the European Union in education and training and what is the potential of this added value in EU external support? In June 2005, some 70 participants at an ETF seminar on the theme concluded that Europe's biggest asset in foreign support is its diversity – its wealth of experience and good practice from which partner countries can learn a lot of the navigation aids before setting to sea themselves.

Among participants from the non-EU Mediterranean countries there was consensus that comprehensiveness – in themes, countries and actors, and in the way support is increasingly approached in a systemic way – was the trademark of EU support. They further underlined the sector-wide approach and the policy learning principle as valuable aspects of EU support.

Participants from South Eastern Europe concluded that the most important aspect of EU support is that it is less conditional than other support tends to be. This group also identified synergy between policies as a strong point of EU support.

Participants from Eastern Europe and Central Asia noted that the challenges faced in their part of the world are very

similar to the challenges the EU faces and that therefore access to EU solutions is important for them. The group believed that the diversity of solutions for similar problems can be a great source of inspiration for partner countries. But they will all have to patch the pieces together themselves and therefore local expertise must be developed. The group stressed that, as far as appreciation of local expertise is concerned, EU support excels.

A frequently mentioned area of strength which may be easily overlooked because it is taken for granted in the EU is regional cooperation. Particularly in the MEDA region, regional cooperation requires a lot of support because of the strong mobility of labour within the region. Forging the original European Coal and Steel Community into the union it is today, the EU can be argued to have quite a track record in this field. "The problem today, however," quipped Jordanian ETF Editorial Board member Munther Masri with reference to the 2005 referenda on the EU constitution, "is that in Europe, the governments seem to be more enthusiastic about moving together than the people. In our countries the people are more enthusiastic than their governments."



What's good for the EU is good for our neighbours, Turin, June 2005

Learning for accession

At their regional forum meeting in Dürres, Albania, in June 2004, members of the ETF Advisory Forum were asked how Western Balkan countries can best learn from earlier EU accession experience. Their suggestions included: clarifying exactly what policy learning has come out of candidate countries, holding more regional meetings, and further increasing the number of study visits. In 2005, the ETF responded to these requests through a number of activities.

One of these was a regional conference in Zagreb in February 2005 that brought together ministers, international experts and other delegates from 18 countries. The meeting – at which the ETF presented the result of the previous years' peer review exercise – provided an opportunity to review progress made on vocational, education and training reforms and to update countries on recent EU developments.



The conference was held against the backdrop of a call by members of the European Parliament for the Western Balkan countries to better coordinate their regional infrastructures with a view to further EU integration. This co-working approach was to be underpinned by a philosophy known as the 'open method of coordination', the purpose of which is to provide one coherent strategy while at the same time respecting local and regional customs and culture.



Photo: ETF

Learning for accession, ETF conference in Zagreb in February 2005

There have been some very positive signs. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria have proposed closer cooperation on the difficulties faced in adopting the Copenhagen principles. Another idea for stronger regional cooperation emerged from Croatia, Romania, and Serbia and Montenegro. Among their joint proposals was the development of regional qualifications in professions such as tourism and construction.

Commissioner: ETF “connected”

Ján Figel', the EU Commissioner for Education and Training, visited the European Training Foundation on 18 February.

The Commissioner was pleased with the activities and the results achieved by the ETF in its 30 partner countries. “The ETF is not an ivory tower. It is clear how much the agency is concerned with the real challenges in the countries it deals with, and that it is very connected to the situation on the ground in these countries,” he said.

In his meeting with Muriel Dunbar, the Commissioner underlined that education and training must play an increasingly important role in the EU's relations with its neighbours, and the EU and the European Commission will need the guidance and advice from the ETF in this respect.

Muriel Dunbar welcomed the strong support from the Commissioner to the work of the ETF: “It is crucial for the European Union to work on the development of strong economies in its neighbourhood and the work of the ETF is based on the fundamental contribution that education and training can make to help people to develop their skills and their living conditions,” she said.

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education and Training visits the ETF, February 2005

Qualification frameworks - a new vehicle for change

This proposal brings us to one of the core issues that dominated ETF work in 2005 across the partner regions.

Until very recently, many of the transition countries in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans used lists of recognised occupations to deal with training demands from the labour market. Schools and their curricula were organised accordingly. Throughout the early years of transition, the prospect of a radical overhaul of education systems often seemed too daunting to the countries involved and reform came largely in the shape of, often piecemeal, curricular revision.

This was a losing battle. The lists had to be modernised as old occupations changed and new ones appeared. Their rigidity made professional training very segmented. Basic vocational education took place in vocational schools but it was very specialised. Secondary technical education was very theoretical and directed at entering higher education rather than filling middle management and technician occupations. University level education was very academic. There was no higher vocational education. The gap between different levels of education in single sectors – such as agriculture or tourism – was so huge that there were no horizontal or vertical pathways connecting them.



Photo: ITCILO/F. Decorato

Qualification frameworks help make education more flexible

In the EU such problems have increasingly been addressed by moving away from detailed job profiles and towards more fluid descriptions of sectoral competence needs through so-called qualification frameworks. In qualification frameworks, different levels of qualifications in single or even multiple sectors are related to each other, allowing linkages and pathways throughout the system. As such, a qualification framework offers education developers flexibility and a different angle from which to view their education systems.

In the context of education reform, the ETF today increasingly uses experiences with such national qualification frameworks as a way of exposing critical education policy issues. Revised curricula – an important reform tool throughout the 1990s – are

in constant risk of being overtaken by events. Qualification frameworks, on the other hand, force education into flexibility, interconnection and stakeholder cooperation, all of which are key ingredients in a modern education and training system.

ETF work on qualification frameworks started with the then partner country Slovenia in 2000. This work was extended to other countries in the Western Balkan region in 2002. Work on qualification systems was extended and in 2004 taken to Central Asia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine and a selection of the Mediterranean partner countries. It will be further extended to Caucasus countries and additional Mediterranean countries in 2006.

Study visits

Study visits are part of the majority of ETF projects. They are a way of familiarising partner countries with current practice in different EU countries and building bridges between individuals and organisations inside and outside the European Union. Study visits help professionals in the partner countries understand that individual problems require individual solutions – models cannot be copied. However, they also help them to appreciate the value of international common denominators, such as benchmarks and international standards that are so important in a globalised world. More importantly, they provide for an opportunity to reflect on the situation at home on the basis of comparisons with the country visited.

In 2005, study visits were organised in the framework of a variety of ETF projects. Below are just a few examples.

- To familiarise themselves with qualification frameworks in operation in EU Member States, people from Kosovo and Montenegro visited Ireland and Scotland, people from the Russian Federation and Ukraine visited Spain and people from Central Asia visited the Netherlands and Estonia.
- In the framework of the large regional project Education and Training for Employment, which the ETF manages for the European Commission, VET and labour market officials from the MEDA countries and Turkey took part in a study visit to

Antwerp in Belgium (see inset). A group of professionals in teacher training visited Finland in December.

- In November, six experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan visited Rome and Naples to get an insight into how Italy's education and training system addresses the needs of disadvantaged groups.

To ensure that knowledge gathered through study visits is not locked up in individuals, participants typically have a reporting duty, disseminating their experiences through follow-up meetings with colleagues in their home countries.



Photo: ETF

MEDA-EET participants on a study visit in Helsinki, December 2005

Study visits show policy in practice

Study visits are among the best ways to show VET and labour market policy in action and to allow people to learn from their peers. The ETF organises several tailor-made programmes of visits every year on a variety of themes. Last December a group of 14 VET and labour market officials from the MEDA countries and Turkey took part in a study visit to Antwerp in Belgium as part of a broader event on how young people make the transition from school to work. This was the first training activity of Education and Training for Employment, an ambitious project aimed at boosting employment in the Mediterranean region. Funded by the EU, it is being implemented by the ETF.

A busy two and a half days included visits to several small-scale youth training projects around the city including a restaurant staffed by trainees, a building site and a bicycle repair workshop. Employment offices, training centres and a

presentation of Antwerp's approach to guidance for young people were on the menu. Representatives of the city council and the Flemish Ministry of Community Education explained how links are forged between the VET system and the world of work. "Facilitating young people's move into their first job is a complex process," says Walter Van Trier, the ETF's Belgian expert, "You can't do that within just one organisation so the special focus of this study visit is to show people the importance of good coordination between all the different actors."

By the end of the visit, the delegates were footsore but also stimulated by all they had seen. "I find it very useful to see what is being done in other countries and to see how we measure up," says Ziad Jweilis, director general of technical education at the Palestinian Ministry of Education, "If we are doing the same, hopefully we are on the right track, if not, perhaps we can avoid making the same mistakes and this can save us both time and effort."

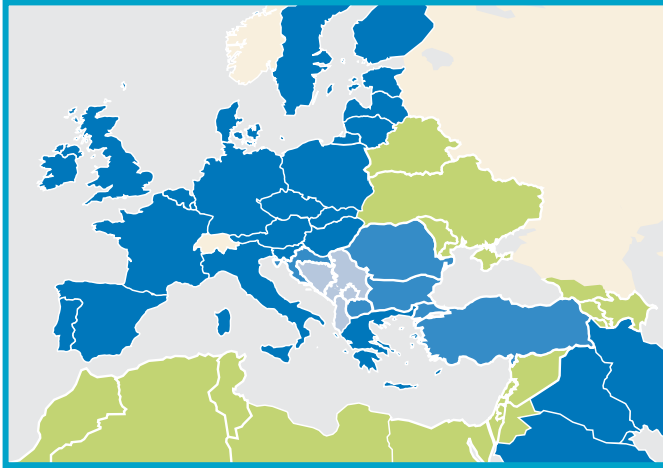
Neighbours in policy

Study visits are one way of allowing people to learn from their peers. Another method that is increasingly applied involves linking entire project teams from neighbouring countries facing similar challenges. In the development of qualification frameworks, for example, it is critically important to achieve a level of coordination among countries that traditionally share labour mobility. Examples of this can be found both in the Arab world and in Central Asian countries that until recently were gathered under the umbrella of the Soviet Union.

The ETF tries to include cross-border cooperation wherever this is relevant or deemed beneficial to project results or their dissemination. As such it has already amassed valuable experience that can be applied in different settings when the European

Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument is launched in 2007 and support to groups of countries will almost certainly be guided by more uniform policy goals.

In the national qualification framework projects, cross-border cooperation has been given a prominent role as much of the work in these projects is modelled on multilateral cooperation within the EU and the whole issue of developing individual models that are nonetheless compatible in an international setting. Partner countries stand to gain immensely from EU experience through the Copenhagen process. Partner countries in Central Asia, for example, familiarise themselves with EU practice in groups with colleagues from neighbouring countries and are assisted in the process by experts from the Netherlands and Estonia.



The neighbourhood countries

Support for the development of cross-border cooperation of the type promoted through the EU's INTERREG Programme is an element that will come within reach for countries bordering the EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe, not least because cross-border cooperation will be one of the focal points of the European Neighbourhood Instrument.

Until now, the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine received support through the Tacis Programme. Since they now have direct borders with the European Union they have become eligible for support funds that were not accessible to them earlier. The same will probably be the case for Moldova from 2007 onwards. In 2005, the ETF helped these countries prepare for access to opportunities related to human resources development so that they can be ready once the first calls for proposals are made.

One example of a project affecting Belarus, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania is highlighted on these pages.

Crossing borders

One of Europe's best kept secrets could soon be opened up to tourism – if a training proposal supported by the ETF gets the go-ahead in 2006 under a European Union project on cross-border cooperation.

Straddling the border between Poland and Belarus, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park is an ancient and pristine region of forest and marsh where wild bison still roam. It is rarely visited by anyone other than local wildlife enthusiasts. With an almost complete lack of infrastructure – no hotels, restaurants, tourism services or trained staff – it's hardly surprising.

A proposal that came out of an ETF-backed seminar of senior VET managers from Belarus, Lithuania, Poland and Latvia held in Minsk in September 2005, could help change that.

Edward Kalitsky, first vice-rector of the Republican Institute for Vocational Education, Minsk, said that Brest and Grodno – the two regions in which the forest is located – were ideally placed to encourage eco-tourism.

“Grodno and Brest are free economic zones that already attract a lot of foreign investment and there is interest in a project likely to generate more inward investment,” said Mr Kalitsky, who was in Kiev for the ETF's final conference on regional VET system development at the beginning of December.

Detailed proposals were drawn up in January 2006 ready to submit when the expected call for submissions is made in 2006, Mr Kalitsky said. "The ETF has much experience in working on cross-border projects that can then be translated across entire countries to take the benefits wider," he added.

Xavier Matheu de Cortada, ETF country manager for Ukraine, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, said: "Under the new cross-border programme – funded by Tacis and INTERREG - there is an opportunity for training organisations to be more involved, enabling the promotion of shared values, skills and experience."



Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park

LINKING THE WORLDS OF TRAINING AND WORK

Matching education and training to the demands of the labour market sounds simple. It is not. In the European Union, employers, social partners and the education sector are in a constant battle of words over the appropriateness of skills and competences of fresh graduates. But although they often disagree, at least they talk.

Much more difficult is the situation in many of the partner countries where, until very recently, all communication between the worlds of work and education was channelled through the switchboard of the central authorities. In these countries, direct dialogue among those with a stake in education and training – authorities, employers, social partners, students, trainees – is often still in its infancy.

Once they talk, the collective task they face is daunting. They need to divide responsibilities. Who decides what goes into curricula? Which curricula? Who pays for training? Who establishes qualification standards? Who decides when is the moment to change the content or methods of training? On the basis of what information? How can equal access to training be ensured?

The ETF helps partner countries overcome these challenges. Much of the work of the ETF in this field focuses on assistance in the decentralisation of VET management, the establishment of platforms and structures for dialogue, and the development of labour market information systems.

Decentralisation of VET management

Vocational education and training typically caters for local labour market needs. Therefore, it can be argued that local partners stand the best chance of ensuring the appropriateness of locally provided education and training. In countries that have a political heritage of centralised government this requires decentralisation.

*Decentralisation can help to link training
with the world of work*

Photo: ITCILO/F. Decorato



Decentralisation

Evicting squatters from student dormitories may not figure in most VET management decentralisation plans but that was one of the novel challenges Ludmila Shiyanova faced in 2005 in Russia's Baltic enclave, Kaliningrad.

Ms Shiyanova, head of the Kaliningrad region's Ministry of Education VET unit, said that years of neglect following the collapse of the Soviet Union had done more than just starve the vocational education system of cash.

"Squatters had moved into many of the dormitories in Kaliningrad during the 1990s that are needed to house students from across the region. We are now having to take these people to court to evict them," she told the ETF's final conference on VET and the development of regional management in Russia and Ukraine, held in Kiev from 30 November to 2 December.

When Kaliningrad took over management and control of secondary VET in January 2005 responsibility for overseeing that change fell to "one small agency – myself," Ms Shiyanova joked.

ETF support for managing the change – which involves both assuming control and reforming VET to make it more responsive and relevant to today's labour market – had played an important role, she said.

A thorough review of the VET system and careful study of financial and demographic statistics gave Shiyanova's unit critical leverage in dealing with those government agencies that fund VET. A key objective for reforming the system was identified: "The VET system should become an equal and independent economic domain that efficiently interacts with the regional economy."

It is this philosophy that is driving an action plan that will stabilise funding, modernise facilities and overhaul teaching structures by 2007 and establish two new types of VET institution – resource centres and multi-subject diverse training complexes – by 2010.

Vocational education and training needs to be responsive to the labour market

Many countries in Western Europe have gone through varying degrees of decentralisation in the past decades but even more good practice on this is to be found in the new Member States. Since their entry into the European Union, the ETF can even better harness their experience for the benefit of its partner countries.

Lessons learned in Central Europe in the past decade are now applied in, among others, the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine.

In Ukraine, the ETF helped to design a Tacis project to support the decentralisation process in vocational education and reform. Because the ETF worked on the design of this project, it could use the period between design and implementation to help a number of Ukrainian regions analyse their needs in VET and draw up action plans so as to be better prepared for the Tacis project. Thus ETF support allowed them to enter the project well-equipped.

In the Russian Federation, decentralisation is at a more advanced stage. Tacis intervention in this field was concluded by 2005 so here the ETF helped Russian partners to apply their newly gained competences.

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



Labour market studies

Current labour market information and its correct analysis is critical for maintaining the relevance of education and training. It is also critical for donors supporting human resources development. The ETF helps partner countries to develop labour market monitoring structures and it helps the European Commission to define its support policies by providing current analyses of the situation in the labour market in the partner countries. In 2005, work in this field was more intense than at any earlier stage in the history of the ETF.

For the Commission's Directorate General for External Relations (DG RELEX), the ETF carried out a series of labour market reviews that will be used as background material for the design of future EU assistance to the Western Balkans. Because countries in the Western Balkans are potential future Member States, these labour market reviews follow the logic of the revised European Employment Strategy. The reviews for all countries were concluded in 2005 and the findings will be published in 2006.

ETF work does not stop there. The labour market reviews are used for designing support programmes and here too the ETF is often asked for its input. For Serbia, for example, the European Agency for Reconstruction asked the ETF to prioritise the results of its 2005 labour market review and on the basis of its conclusions design a CARDS

employment project for 2006. Prioritisation was done together with the Serbian national authorities. These priorities were also presented to DG Enlargement which, during 2005 took over the responsibility for EU assistance to the Western Balkans, from DG RELEX.

In 2004, the Caucasus countries were formally granted support through the future European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument. DG RELEX therefore also requested reviews of the situation in the labour market and vocational education and training to be drawn up for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Work on these studies was concluded in 2005.

In 2003, the Commission's EuropeAid asked the ETF to evaluate the framework in which their projects operate in the Mediterranean region. This formed the basis for labour market reviews covering initially Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. Lebanon was later included at the express request of the Commission. Work on these countries started in 2004, when local experts prepared country reports. A second phase of activity started in 2005 and focused on three broad topics: the institutional and regulatory framework, active labour market policies, and past and current reform initiatives. The final product of this project is a comparative regional report with chapters covering the link between education and economic performance, labour mobility, the informal sector and employment policy.

Training with employers

For sound economic development, employers' input in qualification issues is desperately needed. In Romania, however, most employers have such a hard time surviving from day to day that they simply have no time to get involved in training. With the help of the ETF, in 2005 the country set up sectoral committees to represent the voice of employers.

"When we produced the monographs on vocational education and training and employment services for the then candidate countries for EU membership in 2003, we already found that there was much consultation but little participation of social partners and employers," says Arjen Deij, ETF Country Manager for Romania. But, as elsewhere, the real impetus came when the Romanian education authorities wanted to move from their old qualification system towards a qualification framework. "They realised they needed more input from economic partners and that a structure to build such input into the system was missing."

In 2005, two trial committees were established in the metal sector and food industry. "Their members had never worked with training issues before," says Arjen Deij. "We picked issues that we thought they needed to express their opinions about and discussed these with them. We discussed qualifications and competences, continuing training and finances, quality assurance and assessment, work-based learning – for many it was quite a steep learning curve. They were trained and linked to peers in the EU."

On the basis of the work with these two showcase committees, guidelines for developing and running sectoral committees and a guide for reviewing qualifications were published in Romanian. The positive experiences of the first two committees have set an example that is now not only replicated in other sectors in Romania, but also built upon by British, Danish, Dutch and German bilateral donors that are active in Romania.

MEDA–ETE: Education and Training for Employment

These reports are not used solely for the purpose of programming by the European Commission. The large regional project 'Education and Training for

Employment' (MEDA-ETE) will also draw extensively on them. Research conducted for the studies has formed important background material for the team that finalised the design of this ETF managed project in 2005.

To recap, the MEDA-ETE project covering 10 countries in the Mediterranean region was launched in November 2004. Four main components were envisaged. The first two concern a Euromed annual forum and international network on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for employment. The third covers support for the self-employment of young unemployed people. The fourth is intended to support the development of e-learning for training in the region.



Photo: ETF/EUP images

The signing of the MEDA-ETE project agreement



The ETF's Editorial Board discussed the Yearbook 2005 on teachers and trainers

2005 was a preparatory year in which the organisational framework for the project was established. A work plan was approved in April. A dedicated project website was launched and members from the Mediterranean countries were selected for the three different Euromed networks: the observatory network, the teacher and trainer training network (TTTMEDNET) and the school-to-work transition network. These networks comprise government officials, education and labour representatives and statisticians from each participating country. The first meeting of the observatory network, followed by a study visit, took place in Lisbon in January 2006. The teacher and trainer training network met in Turin in September and was followed up by a study visit to Helsinki in

December. In November, Antwerp was the host city for a joint workshop and study visit for the school-to-work transition network. Parallel networks of international and local supported the work of the project through the publication of thematic and country reports as well as regional analyses on key indicators in training and employment, the role of e-learning in teacher and trainer training and the transition from school to work in Europe.

Implementation of the components covering self-employment and e-learning has been partly subcontracted. Tendering procedures for this were concluded by the end of the year and activities will commence in 2006.

The role of teachers and trainers

Teachers and trainers are an essential part of the interface connecting the worlds of learning and work. The ETF has long recognised this and in 2005 years of intense activity on the subject of their fundamental role in education reforms culminated in the ETF dedicating its entire 2005 *Yearbook* to the theme.

Indeed, one of the key conclusions of the *Yearbook* is that the ability of vocational education and training to play a crucial role in society depends in good part on whether its teachers are prepared to incorporate reform into their daily work. The editors argue that the general assumption that policy instruments will drive the necessary reform in schools is not well supported by empirical evidence.



They support their arguments with experience from ETF pilot projects that have demonstrated the importance of intertwining teacher development with school improvement. These confirm that the work environment of teachers should be seen as a learning opportunity and that therefore it should be organised accordingly: schools, teacher training institutions and companies must help to integrate learning into the daily work of staff.



Photo: ETF

The Training for Employability conference in Thessaloniki in March 2005



Training for Employability

In the countries of the Western Balkans, unemployment levels are extremely high. EU support to the region therefore has a strong bias towards employability and training. The ETF works closely together with the European Agency for Reconstruction which shares the common objective of helping the region and its people to help themselves by building up their education institutions and economy with a view to further integration into Europe.

In April 2005 a workshop in Thessaloniki – co-organised by the ETF, Cedefop and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe – discussed how education and training can be better utilised in the region to support economic development. The workshop concluded that policies clearly linking the two are still underdeveloped and must be strengthened. It proposed follow-up activities to support this. It also recognised entrepreneurial skills as vital to economic development in a region with so many young unemployed people and proposed measures to stimulate the climate for enterprise development.



With the ETF already developing a comprehensive framework to map entrepreneurship learning and employment legislation in the region, it can play a pivotal role as activities in this area unfold in the region.

PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Learning for self-employment

One example of an activity through which the ETF helps to develop entrepreneurship in its partner countries is the Western Balkans Entrepreneurship Learning Initiative.

Within the EU all 25 Member States have voluntarily signed up to the Charter for Small Enterprises. The Western Balkans also endorsed the Charter. In 2004



Photo: Purdue

Entrepreneurship learning can contribute to competitiveness

DG Enterprise asked the ETF for support in the two aspects of the charter that specifically address entrepreneurship learning and that are particularly topical in the region: entrepreneurship and training, and skills for small and medium-sized enterprises.

In response to this request, and borrowing on the spirit of competition, the ETF launched an open call for proposals for national 'entrepreneurship partnerships' in the Western Balkans and Moldova. The four best proposals came from broad partnerships in Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. These were singled out for further assistance.

The ETF set out helping the teams to appreciate how learning can contribute to better self-employment in an environment that had traditionally focused on developing narrowly defined skills. Two large workshops, backed up by technical meetings and working groups, were used to help participants dissect the learning system from primary to adult education and university research.

One direct result of the project has been that all countries involved have now agreed to develop national entrepreneurship learning strategies.

Results of the initiative were fed back into DG Enterprise, which will use them in the further development of the charter.

Impact assessment

The Western Balkans is not the only region where the ETF is active in the field of entrepreneurship learning. Proposals to address the needs of the informal economies in North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia also borrow on this theme while

management training activities in Russia, though addressing a different target audience, are also developed in the spirit of promoting an entrepreneurial culture.

The ETF's main contribution to the latter, management training in Russia, consisted in 2005 of a thorough assessment of the impact of the multitude of management training activities that have been developed in the country in recent years. The encouraging results of this review were presented at a conference in Moscow in December 2005.



Assessing the impact of management training

Many Russian managers still believe in miracles – until they take part in European or Russian backed training, Sergei Sementsov, head of the Expert's Council of the Presidential Programme, quipped during a one day ETF-backed review exercise in Moscow.

Mr Sementsov, who took an active part in the conference on the results of the Impact Assessment of Training for Company Development in Russia, said a key benefit of training stints spent in the west was disillusionment, in the best possible sense. "One of the outcomes of management

training is that they understand that miracles don't happen. You have to work for success. When you go to the west you understand there is no paradise on earth."

"European and Russian partners get along better as a result of the training", Siria Taurelli of the ETF highlighted, "feeling that you are on equal terms with your business partner helps to generate lasting relationships built on trust and understanding".

Robert Teunissen, the ETF's management training expert, said that Russia's unique position in Europe – as the one country that in the 1990s had established a national programme to train an entire new generation of managers – gave it tremendous importance in tracking change. "Russia has realised that it must move away from the traditional command and control system – to give people the chance to think and innovate requires a totally different approach to managing people," he said.

Miroslava Kopicova, director of the National Training Fund, Czech Republic and a member of the ETF's Advisory Forum, said reviewing the Russian experience was essential to supporting modernisation. The Czech Republic had never undertaken a national scheme to develop and train a new social class – managers – because western investors brought their own models with them when the country opened up after 1989. "The Russians had an excellent idea to take such a large number of people abroad for training, but it is essential to set down targets and review progress and share experience at regular intervals," she said.

Photo: ETF



Siria Taurelli, ETF expert at the management training meeting in Moscow in December 2005

Tempus university-enterprise cooperation

A study on university-enterprise cooperation examines entrepreneurship in the framework of the Tempus Programme.

In the very first Council Decision establishing Tempus in 1990, university-enterprise cooperation was already mentioned as an important objective. Throughout the years many partner countries have highlighted it as a priority for Tempus activities in order to increase the relevance of higher education to labour market needs.

In line with EU policies and in full recognition of the link between human resource development and prosperity, the current study identifies links between universities and enterprises in the Tempus partner countries and their contribution to economic growth in the regions.

DG Education and Culture asked the ETF to carry out the study in July 2005.

Core research – including questionnaires, desk research and field visits – was carried out in the second half of 2005. More than 800 Tempus programme contacts, including universities, small and medium-sized enterprises, micro-enterprises, NGOs and social partners were approached with tailor-made online questionnaires. Projects with particularly interesting examples of university-enterprise cooperation were identified in all Tempus regions and field visits were made to Egypt, Morocco, Serbia and Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Russia and Moldova.

The final draft of the study will be available in spring 2006. It will provide an overview of existing cooperation activities and give recommendations for future initiatives. Its findings will also feed into the activities of ongoing and future Tempus projects.

The study's focus on economic development and employment creation will further assist partner countries in their efforts to achieve growth through the development of their people.

Photo: ETF



Academic experts help with the selection of Tempus projects in Brussels in February 2005

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

Though not all ETF partner countries have high poverty levels all have gone through a period of dramatic impoverishment. The ETF helps them to develop and implement comprehensive strategies with skills development fully integrated as a key instrument for poverty reduction and social cohesion.

Many countries in South Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and the Mediterranean area have severely limited state budgets and administrative capacity. Their macro-economic context suggests that the potential for poverty reduction through economic growth lies, among others, in developing and utilising existing human resources more efficiently. This underlines their need for the development of skills, not least in support of local public and private initiatives.

These countries need well-balanced and dynamic VET systems that can flexibly cover learning and qualification needs from very different groups of people. Many countries are torn between a high-tech/high-skills and a low-tech/low-skills national strategy. In fact, preferential treatment for higher education has had many adverse effects on

the quality of both higher and secondary vocational education.

A focus on poverty and social cohesion may contribute to better balanced and more effective national vocational education and training and higher education reform policies but further research and policy evidence are needed to substantiate this positive correlation between training and poverty reduction in transition economies.

Over the past years, the ETF has gradually crossed into the territory of poverty alleviation, mostly through its work on recognition of informal skills and labour. It initiated several projects in partner countries that are directly or indirectly linked to poverty alleviation and social cohesion.

Vocational training needs to reach many diverse groups

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



Making the best of local resources

In a region such as Lezhë in Albania – impoverished but with considerable business potential in tourism – a collective effort to harness the development potential of young people migrating from the countryside into the town, can make all the difference.

With financial support from the Italian government, the ETF's LEEDAK (Local economic and employment development in Albania and Kosovo) project helps Lezhë to create jobs through a broad partnership between local authorities, employers, social partners and training providers. They learn from colleagues in other European countries through study visits but, more importantly, they learn from each other because LEEDAK has gathered them around the table.

It may sound simple, but in Lezhë a local platform for the collective development of the community through targeted training simply didn't exist. Frantic building activity along the region's coastline was not matched by training activity to prepare the people that are to staff the resorts that are mushrooming in the area. Only 7% of local young people are enrolled in vocational education, against 20% nationally and 40% as the new Albanian government's target for 2009.

"The project has brought Lezhë a coordinated local training strategy that employers and training providers are now getting ready to implement," says Bardh Rica, Head of the Regional Council. "We are working on a status assessment for vocational education, defining priority measures for revitalising the local labour market. We are improving curricula with the help of local enterprises and we are ready to demonstrate the benefits of our cooperation structure through small-scale prototype projects."

One of the visible results of the pressing demand for training is Liss secondary vocational school. Originally an



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

Genc Pollo, Albanian Minister of Education speaks to the media in Tirana in November 2005

agricultural school, it closed down during the 1990s but reopened in 2003 with two branches: one for business economics and one for tourism economics. Headmaster Zefeni Kola says the school can help turn the pressing problem of rural migration into an advantage for Lezhë: "Lezhë has huge resources, both natural and human, we have an opportunity to exploit the former and an obligation to develop the latter."

Indeed, killing those two birds with one stone is what local partnership is all about.

There have been early projects on European Social Fund experience, disadvantaged groups, social integration, small and medium sized enterprise development, local development and more recently also specifically on skills for poverty reduction and migration.

Skills development for poverty alleviation in Central Asia

In 2005, the ETF undertook a stocktaking exercise on skills development for poverty reduction in

Central Asia, which resulted in a series of national reports defining the current state of affairs in this field in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Through a number of international seminars, among others in the framework of the NORRAG network, and a study visit to Italy, key policymakers and researchers from these countries were familiarised with the current debate on poverty reduction in the donor community.

As work progressed, however, the ETF staff involved came to realise that there is a need in these countries to be far more specific in developing policy priorities.



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

Skills development can contribute to breaking the poverty cycle



Photo: ITCILO/M. Montesano

Training reforms need to relate to poverty reduction

The national studies identified the occurrence of high poverty especially in rural areas as a result of the collapse of state owned industrial and agricultural enterprises during the earlier transition years. Industry has not yet picked up in rural areas and agriculture has developed largely towards subsistence farming. There is also considerable migration of qualified young people and adults from rural areas, both towards the urban centres and abroad. Urban migration seems to be family based with the effect of a certain 'ruralisation' of urban centres. International migration is largely a male affair. Women are left behind in rural areas with the responsibility to combine family care and income generation. Thus a dramatic vicious poverty cycle has been set in motion. Skills development may contribute to breaking that cycle but only in a thoroughly reformed education and training system.

One conclusion was that those who develop education and training policy in these countries must better relate their national vocational education and training reforms to poverty reduction and pay more attention to the inclusion of skills development in their respective national poverty reduction strategies. Also, cooperation and experience sharing across the countries in the region needs to be continued to promote policy learning.

In 2005, a start was made with the establishment of a regional network of high level policymakers and experienced policy researchers. New plans for extended activity in this field were drawn up and found their way into the 2006 Work Programme.

Learning media

In this new world of learning, people are increasingly helping themselves to their own customised menu from an endless buffet of learning and training opportunities – some school-based, some on-the-job, others digital and virtual. Their greatest need in this confusing world of choices is for guidance. Such individual guidance is not something any public authority in a free market economy can or should offer. It is a classic issue of supply and demand. The demand exists; people *do* want to be informed about opportunities to improve their lives, just as they want to be informed about opportunities to improve their health, homes, and social lives. The media have an opportunity – a business opportunity even – to jump into the supply side of this.

Kick-starting a renewed dialogue between education and training information providers and the media was one of the reasons the ETF convened the seminar on education and training in the media in Turin in April 2005. Opening a dialogue among prominent professionals in media and education, it was a tentative but fruitful start that taught the ETF a lot about how it can be better at informing editors and journalists of what goes on in the world of learning. Furthermore, the meeting sparked renewed interest in the topic among the editors and journalists present.



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



The media discuss training issues in Turin in April 2005

A GLANCE AHEAD

New instruments for EU support

Regardless of theme or geography, much of the work of the ETF in 2006 will in one form or another come to anticipate the new EU instruments for external relations. From 2007, a whole new set of support frameworks will come to replace the Phare, Tacis, CARDS and MEDA Programmes. They are intended to simplify and streamline the EU's external support.

Two of the new instruments will become particularly important for the ETF: the instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. Through its contribution to the programming phase, the ETF is well-prepared to work in this new policy environment and preparations for the transition from the old to the new instruments are already underway.

Director Generals reshuffle

As part of an internal reshuffle of Director Generals and Deputy Director Generals in the European Commission, on 1 January 2006 Odile Quintin took over from Nikolaus van der Pas as Director General for Education and Culture. This means she also takes over his role as Chair of the ETF Governing Board.

Her history as Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is likely to be a tremendous asset to the work of the ETF on the link between on the one hand education and training, and on the other hand employment and social issues.

Nikolaus van der Pas will take her position at DG Employment and the strong links between the ETF and his new directorate also stand to benefit from this move.



Nikolaus van der Pas hands over DG Education and Culture to Odile Quintin

Photo: ETF

New ETF Council Regulation

Hand in hand with the introduction of these new EU external relations programmes is the formulation of a new Council Regulation for the ETF. Work on it began in 2005 and the new regulation is likely to come into force at the beginning of 2007. Changes expected include a widened mandate for the organisation from the vocational education and training field to human resources development in general.

Local development and poverty reduction

As is clear from this year's *Highlights*, several ongoing ETF projects focus on decentralisation and making vocational education and training better respond to local needs of learners and companies.

This trend is set to continue. The relationship between poverty and learning – or rather the lack of it – will be further explored. Support will also be fine-tuned to needs that arise from approaching vocational education and training reform through qualifications frameworks rather than just curricular change.



*Shirin Ebadi,
2003 Nobel
Peace Prize
Winner,
at ETF*

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

The rich source of ETF experience in these areas will be tapped in the 2006 edition of the *ETF Yearbook* which will be dedicated to the theme of skills development for poverty reduction.

Gender issues

One field in which the ETF intends to step up activities in the years ahead is gender issues related to skills development. Through its support to education and training reform in its partner countries, the ETF is in a good position to promote focus on gender equality in such reform.

To better exploit this potential, the ETF has established a group of staff to focus on gender issues in education, training and employment. Coinciding with International Women's Day, an international conference on the theme is scheduled to be held in Turin in March 2006.

Skills for Progress

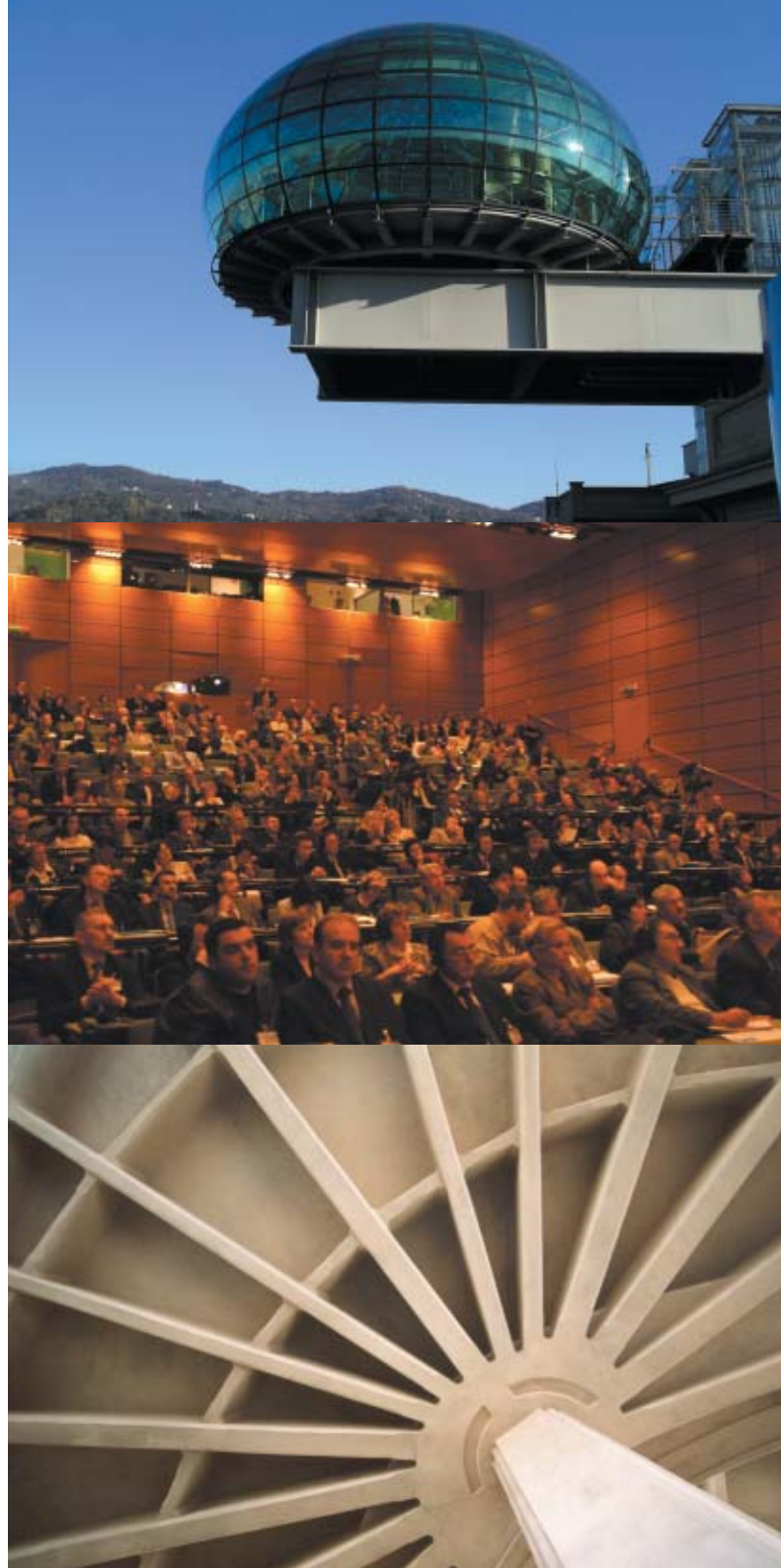
One of the absolute highlights of 2006 will be the triennial ETF Advisory Forum conference, to be held in Turin in June 2006. The theme for the 2006 conference will be Skills for Progress. Four broad fields will be explored in plenary sessions and working groups. These will be entrepreneurship learning, learning from diversity, employment policy and skills development for poverty reduction. The conference is expected to draw some 250 participants to Turin.

Lingotto conference centre, Turin, Italy

Photo: Valeria Morra

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

Photo: Simone Morra



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

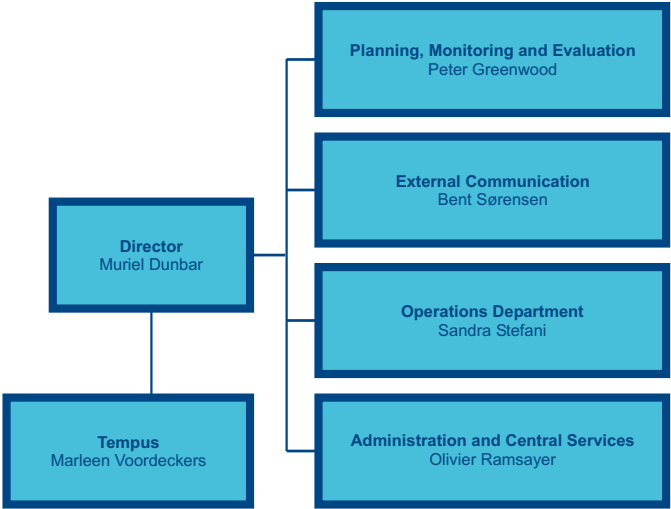
	2004	2005	2006
Personnel costs	11 493 973	11 942 000	12 756 800
Building, equipment and running costs	1 470 027	1 568 028	1 688 000
Operational costs	4 636 000	4 989 972	5 005 200
Total annual subsidy	17 600 000	18 500 000	19 450 000
Other funds	800 000	479 232	not yet available
Total	18 400 000	18 979 232	19 450 000

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

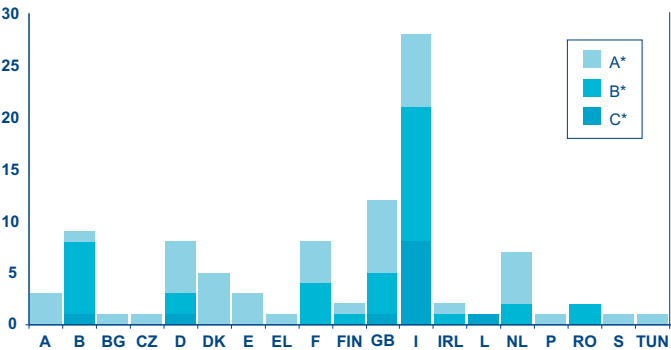


3. Staffing and organisation charts

Organisation chart



Nationality of 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*16			
A*15			
A*14	1		1
A*13			0
A*12	1	5	6
A*11	7	8	15
A*10	2	1	3
A*9	3	2	5
A*8	6	6	12
A*7		3	3
A*6	1	1	2
A*5	1		1
Total A*	22	26	48
%	46	54	100
B*11			
B*10			
B*9	2		2
B*8	2	2	4
B*7	6	1	7
B*6	6	5	11
B*5	3	4	7
B*4		1	1
B*3	5		5
Total B*	24	13	37
%	65	35	100
C*7			
C*6	1		1
C*5	1		1
C*4	2		2
C*3	3		3
C*2			0
C*1	4	1	5
Total C*	11	1	12
%	92	8	100
Total TA	57	40	97
%	59	41	100

4. Key decisions of the Governing Board in 2005 and list of members

The Governing Board and observers met on 14 June and 29 November 2005. The meetings were chaired by Nikolaus van der Pas, Director General for Education and Culture of the European Commission.

At the meeting of 14 June, the Governing Board confirmed the main achievements of the ETF in 2004 in comparison with the objectives set in its planning perspectives for 2004-06 and the 2004 Work Programme by adopting the Annual Activity Report 2004 and its own analysis and assessment of it.

In addition the Governing Board members took note of the progress reported on the following technical and administrative issues:

- The outcomes of the first audit of the ETF by the Internal Audit Service;
- The final progress report on the 2002 External Evaluation of the ETF;
- The analysis of the first results from the ETF Internal Annual Evaluation Programme;
- The progress report on the 2005 External Evaluation of the ETF;
- The adoption of an Internal Communication policy.

The ETF Governing Board met on 29 November 2005 in Turin. The main outcomes of the meeting were:

- the examination and adoption of the ETF's draft budget and Work Programme for 2006. The final adoption of the budget and Work Programme will depend on the decision of the budgetary authority on the overall budget of the European Union.
- the adoption of revised Rules of Procedure for the Governing Board. These changes bring the activities of the Governing Board into line with recent changes in the ETF's Council Regulation deriving from its Financial Regulation.
- the adoption of revised Rules of Procedure for the ETF Advisory Forum. These changes bring the work of the Advisory Forum into line with the new role of the Forum agreed with the Governing Board in March 2004.

ETF Governing Board members 2005

	MEMBER	ALTERNATE
European Commission	Nikolaus VAN DER PAS (Chairman) DG Education and Culture David LIPMAN DG External Relations Dirk MEGANCK DG Enlargement	
Austria	Karl WIECZOREK Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Labour	Reinhard NÖBAUER Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture
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Estonia	Küllli ALL Ministry of Education and Research	
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France	Agnès LECLERC Ministry of Employment and Health	Jacques MAZERAN Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research

	MEMBER	ALTERNATE
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Portugal	M. Cândida MEDEIROS SOARES Ministry for Social Security and Labour	Maria Teresa PEREIRA PAIXÃO Institute for Quality in Training

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United Kingdom	Franki ORD Department for Education and Skills	

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



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