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NEWS, VIEWS AND INITIATIVES FROM ACROSS THE ETF COMMUNITY

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Jan Figel', European Commissioner for Education: Qualifications frameworks - an opportunity for people

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

07 New regulation

14 Turin schools social
inclusion

18 Enterprise spirit must
break out of business
schools

Letter from the editor A HISTORIC MOMENT

Strong emotions are not normally a part of day-to-day EU business, but I must admit that Wednesday 16 December 2008 was a very special day for the ETF and for me.

It was 09.14 in the morning. The European Parliament plenary session in Strasbourg was only a few minutes old when the MEPs unanimously agreed on the common position for the ETF recast regulation. It was all I could do not to wave my arms! A few minutes later the ETF was being

congratulated from all sides: from EU Commissioner Margot Wallström, from the French MEP Bernhard Lehideux, who has been the rapporteur on the ETF case and from European Commission colleagues. And it was with great pleasure that I forwarded this historic news to staff in Turin, and to the members of the ETF Governing Board.

The process of achieving the re-cast regulation for the ETF has been a long and complicated one.

That process has now been concluded and is one which, it appears, will bring many of the developmental opportunities which we were hoping for to the ETF.

During the process the various EU-institutions stated their preferences and following complex negotiations they managed to reach a common position. This provides a strong basis for the future of the ETF, and the organisation has over the last couple of years prepared



04

Cooperation on education - making a difference to ordinary people's lives



07

New regulation



09

Serbia special



12

Education goes global with the ETF's contribution



13

VET in Central Asia: The ETF as facilitator

CONTENTS

THE ETF HELPS TRANSITION AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO HARNESS THE POTENTIAL OF THEIR HUMAN RESOURCES THROUGH THE REFORM OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LABOUR MARKET SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EU'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS POLICY.

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Cover Photo:
Ján Figel', European Commissioner
for Education and Culture
Photo: ETF/EUP Images

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itself to be ready to respond actively to the new regulation.

The article on p. 7 describes the major changes and the perspectives of the new, enlarged mandate. The recast certainly offers an opportunity to re-profile and promote the ETF as a dynamic, international organisation, one of the largest of its kind, specialising in the field of education, training and labour market reform to meet global, socio-economic challenges.

By being proactive we will have a greater degree of influence on the type of activities we engage in, the countries we engage with and the way we are perceived by EU institutions and the rest of the international community. Within the enlarged scope of the new regulation we will identify and pursue opportunities which are compatible with our mission and our aspirations. Our developmental opportunities are as broad as we choose to make them.

With the new governance structure for the ETF, we will also benefit from much closer cooperation with the European Parliament and I look forward to welcoming three Parliament representatives and to supporting policies in the field of human capital development within the EU external assistance instruments.

Dr Muriel Dunbar,
ETF Director



14
Turin schools
social inclusion



16
MEDA-ETE
Dissemination
days



18
Enterprise spirit
must break out
of business
schools



20
Is the new
understanding of
skills reflected in
ways of
measuring human



22
ETF attends EU
Development Days

//DYNAMISM IN EDUCATION IS VALUABLE FOR INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT//

COOPERATION ON EDUCATION - MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO ORDINARY PEOPLE'S LIVES

Europe's education Commissioner on qualifications frameworks

Ján Figel', Europe's Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth talks to the ETF about the advantages of the European Qualifications Framework and why entrepreneurial learning will be important in 2009.

Photo: ETF/EUP Images



the ETF's natural partners. This is no accident but part of a studied decision to share what is becoming a very useful tool. "European dynamism in this area - the modernisation of VET and universities, the increased compatibility of qualifications - is very valuable for our internal development," says Figel', "but we also want to share what we have and the ETF can serve as a very important mediator." This is why the ETF, together with the Directorate General of Education and Culture and CEDEFOP, is holding a major conference on how EQF fits into the international context on 29 - 30 January in Brussels.



Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education and Culture

The European Qualifications Framework or EQF is not just an acronym dreamt up by Brussels, it is a way of reorganising qualifications which has the potential to empower people across Europe, according to Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth.

It is also inspiring reforms in countries around the EU, the countries who are

The EQF acts as a single, logical framework where all existing qualifications, whether they be gained in primary, secondary, higher or even informal education, whether they be academic or vocational, can be slotted into place. It classifies them according to eight levels of reference and is based upon the outcomes of learning rather than traditional inputs such as

length of study or where studies took place. "The focus is on what people have learned, what their skills and competences are, what can they actually do," says Figel'.

Superstructure

The EQF is the Europe-wide superstructure and its presence on the ground comes in the shape of national frameworks EU countries are gradually putting into place. Formally adopted by the EU last April, Member

States have until 2010 to hitch their own frameworks up to the superstructure.

The benefits of qualification frameworks are many. The EQF was originally designed to encourage workers to move freely around Europe's single market. "It gives qualifications more transparency, leads to a faster recognition of knowledge, promotes lifelong learning and allows us to value non-formal and informal learning," says Figel'.

What this means is that people will be able to take their qualifications with them when moving from one country to another. Employers will be able to see at a glance what skills a potential employee has. This should help avoid people getting trapped in low skilled jobs when they are capable of more. "At the moment I often come across engineers from Central or Eastern Europe driving taxis because their qualifications are just not recognised," says Figel'.

Entrepreneurial learning in 2009 and beyond

2009 has been designated the European Year of Creativity and Innovation as a more creative and innovative Europe means greater social and economic well-being for all. People who have these two qualities are more open to new ideas and better able to seize opportunities in a fast-changing world, so the thinking goes.

Promoting entrepreneurial learning should play a key role in the series of activities marking the year, according to Education and Culture Commissioner Ján Figel', but it should also be embedded in broader reform processes and at all levels of education. "We always see entrepreneurship as linked to starting a business, but really it is important for employees and employers too," he says, "it is about mindsets, how we are able to turn ideas into action, create a project, understand a risk or follow up an initiative." Not for nothing has entrepreneurship learning been recognised as one of the key competences for lifelong learning at a recent meeting of European education ministers.



So far France, Ireland, Malta and the UK have national qualifications frameworks already in force. However, most EU Member States have expressed their intention to follow them and a good number have indeed started work to this purpose, recognising that a comprehensive, consistent organisation of qualifications will help their citizens to progress in the education and training systems and move more effectively in the labour market – domestic as well as European.

Transparency

While the EQF was dreamt up as an internal EU tool, it is also proving useful to the ETF's partners. Countries as far

afield as Morocco, Ukraine or Uzbekistan are discussing the feasibility of reordering their educational landscape by introducing a national framework. Countries in the Western Balkans such as Albania are plagued by the use of fake diplomas and there too qualification frameworks could help. "The answer is the same as in the EU, transparency, quality and instruments of recognition which are based on real standards," says Figel'. Over the past few years, Europe has developed a host of new instruments for improving vocational education and training in Europe including Europass, the European credit for VET (ECVET) and the fledgling quality assurance framework for VET (EQARF).

But what really concerns Ján Figel' is how these new ideas can make a difference to the lives of ordinary people. And how international cooperation can empower not just the beneficiaries but the people involved too. "The growing intensity of cooperation in education and training is not only beneficial for social and economic progress, it is also great for people-to-people cooperation," he says, "I believe that if we want to live together in harmony we need to give people more chances to be part of this cooperation with their existing knowledge and qualifications." ■

ETF to share knowledge with the world

The 16 December 2008 saw the second reading in the European Parliament of the vote on the ETF's recast regulation. Ján Figel' is enthusiastic about the role the ETF can play given its new mandate. "The ETF has played a very important role until now and this will grow with the recast regulation. We are speaking much more about the modernisation of training in Europe and about international cooperation" he says.

"The ETF can concentrate on providing expertise and becoming a reference point for the professional VET world. Also, due to the growing importance of education and training in partner countries as well as the EU, it could be a catalyst for, or promoter of social development in these countries."

Ján Figel' illustrates his vision for the future of the ETF through a Latin saying: you are what you share and you can only share what you have. "If Europe is more knowledge-friendly, I think it can share this knowledge with the world around it" he says. "If we are just pretending or making empty declarations, we have nothing to share. This means that European credibility and our eternal quest and dynamism in the modernisation of VET, universities and the acceptance of the compatibility of the qualifications framework are highly valuable for our internal development."

Ján Figel is convinced the ETF can serve as an important mediator for this quest. "Europe is open and the number of family members and countries in the space around the EU is growing" he says. "We have not only established the Neighbourhood policy but have a very specific initiative in the Union for the Mediterranean, and recently we proposed the Eastern Partnership. We want to intensify cooperation and person to person contacts so education and training have a high profile in these initiatives and the ETF definitely has a role to play here."

FIND OUT MORE:

EQF -
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm

Europass -
<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>

ECVET -
http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/index_en.html

Union for the Mediterranean -
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/index_en.htm

Eastern Partnership -
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/index_en.htm

European Year of Creativity and Innovation -
<http://create2009.europa.eu/>

by Rebecca Warden, ICE

MEP Benrard Lehideux with ETF Director Muriel Dunbar before the approval of the new ETF regulation

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



//THE ETF IS NOW THE LARGEST ORGANISATION OF ITS KIND//

NEW REGULATION

A historic day for the ETF

On Tuesday 16 December 2008, the European Parliament adopted a regulation reforming the mandate and governance of the ETF.

Following over two years of intensive work and negotiations between the EU institutions, the European Parliament on 16 December 2008 unanimously agreed to strengthen the EU's external support in education and training by adopting a new, stronger mandate for the ETF.

The agreement closely follows a Commission proposal which sought to broaden the thematic remit of the ETF to include human capital development, particularly education and training with a view to lifelong learning as well as related labour market issues. Furthermore, the new regulation provides the opportunity for the deployment of ETF expertise in third countries other than those covered by the instruments for Pre-Accession and the Neighbourhood Partnership.

Welcoming the Parliament's adoption, EU Commissioner Jan Figel, stated:

"I am delighted with this important step. The ETF is an increasingly valuable interface between the EU and

the neighbouring regions, and the new mandate provides a strong and sound base for the future of the ETF."

For the staff and management at the ETF, the Parliament's approval was a historic and very happy moment. The enlarged mandate is regarded as a strong recognition of the work the ETF has provided to partner countries since 1994.

"The ETF is now the largest international organisation of its kind, specialising in the area of education, training and labour market reform to meet global, socio-economic challenges, and the new mandate and the enlarged scope of the new regulation open new developmental opportunities for us," Dr Muriel Dunbar, Director of the ETF says.

Opportunity

Currently the ETF works in 29 partner countries, but the new regulation opens the door for the deployment of ETF

expertise in countries other than those covered by the instruments for Pre-Accession and the Neighbourhood Partnership. In the future, the ETF will be able to operate in all of the EU's partner countries, including those in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) and Latin America.

"Many countries in these regions have been forced to make drastic reforms to their industrial activities, and this has given rise to a need for human resources adaptation to which the ETF can usefully contribute", says Bernhard Lehideux, French MEP and member of the Liberal group, ALDE, who has been leading the Parliament's work on the ETF recast regulation.

Prior to the vote on 16 December, the Parliament had already debated the ETF recast regulation, and different political groups strongly supported the changes proposed to the ETF mandate.

"The proposal contains measures, which involve improvements. The scope of the

tasks is increased so it no longer applies only to vocational education and training but also covers lifelong learning as an additional concept. This is a concept, which we make increasing use of and which is important in our policies,” stated Jan Andersson, Chair of the EP Committee for Employment and Social Affairs and member of the Socialist group.

Neighbourly assistance

On behalf of the Greens, MEP Sepp Kusstatscher, also welcomed the new possibilities for the ETF’s future work. “The work of the agencies and foundations is often regarded merely as an expense factor. I am convinced that the work undertaken by the ETF in Turin provides very useful neighbourly assistance, whether in the Balkans, Eastern Europe or even North Africa. It is probably impossible to esteem this practical support that the ETF provides for our partner countries in developing and establishing high quality training systems sufficiently highly. I would therefore like to thank and compliment those in charge at the ETF,” he said.

Several Parliamentarians focused on the need for a long term approach and the role of the ETF in opening the EU to the world.

“This agency, which works as an instrument of EU external policy, has the potential to respond fully to challenges addressed by territories like Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The rich experience that the ETF has acquired over the years could now be channelled towards areas that desperately need vocational training in order to improve access to learning and

social inclusion,” Renate Weber from the Liberal group, ALDE, stated.

Danish MEP Ole Christensen from the Socialist Group also supported this line. “It is important when considering the EU’s future that we think long term. The European Training Foundation is therefore an extremely important agency. The EU should not be a closed club. It is important that we help potential new Member States as much as we can,” he said.

Stronger relationship

During the debate the members also discussed how to strengthen the relationship between the European Parliament and the ETF, and it was agreed to include three non-voting experts appointed by the European Parliament on the ETF Governing Board.

“The involvement of the Parliament in monitoring the activities of the ETF is particularly important. This issue, moreover, goes well beyond the scope of this agency. The Parliament has only one, often rushed, opportunity to look into the workings of agencies when voting on budgets and the discharge. However, it is no longer possible, I think, especially with the imminent coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, for the Parliament not to be more deeply involved in issues involving the agencies. That is why, in the specific case of the ETF, the Parliament will in future appoint three representatives, admittedly non-voting, but nonetheless three representatives on the Governing Board, on the condition that they have expertise in the ETF’s areas of work,” rapporteur Bernhard Lehiduex said.

On behalf of the European Commission, EU Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel, saluted the work done on the new regulation. “I am grateful to the European Parliament for having responded favourably to the Commission’s proposal. Thanks to good cooperation between the three institutions we have managed to find satisfactory solutions for all of them. This recast regulation will enable the European Training Foundation to benefit from its new legal basis in a timely manner and thus to provide more effective assistance to the beneficiary countries, which is, after all, obviously the purpose of the exercise,” he said. ■



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

FIND OUT MORE:

ETF recast regulation -
http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/AboutETF_EN?OpenDocument

by Bent Sørensen, ETF

COUNTRY FOCUS: SERBIA

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



FRANCESCO PANZICA - THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ETF IN SERBIA

Fourteen years of service to VET and labour market reform

The ETF's Country Manager for Serbia, Francesco Panzica, has the distinction of working for the ETF before it even existed. "In my previous job as head of the mayor's office at Turin City Council, I was involved in the negotiations for basing the ETF in Turin and helped with the search for a suitable venue," he says. Thus when the organisation came into being in October 1994, it was a natural step for him to apply to work there, attracted by the prospect of working in a thoroughly international environment.

Mr Panzica spent over five years working in the ETF's central services, specialising in human resources and technical services, before changing to project management in March 2000. While he enjoys administration, "it's a bit like having a baby that is always the same age," he says, "moving over to operations gave me the chance to be more creative. You see your baby growing up over the years and when you finish a project you see the results of your efforts. That is really rewarding."

Mr Panzica's offspring include a two-year research project on migration and skills in Albania, Egypt, Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine, another on boosting capacity for local development in Lezha, Albania and a third on social dialogue in the Balkans. An expert on the Balkans, he acted as country manager for Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia before taking on Serbia in 2004.

He has seen the ETF growing up over the years as its role has evolved in tune with the changing philosophy of EU assistance. "These days our role is more about helping others to get things done than doing them ourselves," he says on his last day in his office in Turin before flying off to Belgrade. Here Mr Panzica is due to conduct a workshop on drafting the terms of reference for a project on continuing VET reform under IPA 2007 for 20 officials from various Serbian ministries. "Before everything was done by donors, now it is more demanding as

donors have to support the capacity of people in line ministries to do things," he says, "there is a big need to develop more capacity, but in the long run it will be much more sustainable."

This project will be one of Francesco Panzica's last with the ETF as he is due to retire in 2009 when Vaclav Klenha will take over responsibility for Serbia. ■

by Rebecca Warden, ICE



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

COUNTRY FOCUS: SERBIA

//THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EU AND SERBIA WILL STRENGTHEN TRADE LINKS//

SERBIA COUNTRY FOCUS

Reforms begin in earnest in Serbia



Photo: Ivana Jurcic



In Serbia it is very important to link training with employment

European Union cooperation with Serbia has taken on a fresh impetus since the new government assumed power in April 2008. After years of relative isolation, the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Serbia and the EU in April 2008 was a significant milestone. The agreement will strengthen trade and political links and paves the way for Serbia to be considered for EU accession at a later date.

The new brooms at the top have been busy during the ten months since assuming power. Two new laws - one reforming insurance and benefits, the other aiming to promote job opportunities for the disabled - are expected to be passed early this year. The Ministry of the Economy and Regional Development has also set up a new unit to monitor the impact of active measures in the labour market.

With support from the ETF, it plans to use this as the basis for a broader system for impact evaluation of interventions in the Serbian labour market. "We value support from the ETF and other organisations," says Ljiljana Dzuver, Assistant Minister for Employment at the Ministry of the Economy and Regional Development, "support in organising staff training, examples of good practice and exchanges of experiences are extremely useful for us."

The ETF's priorities in Serbia

The ETF's aims in Serbia over the next five years are varied. They include strengthening quality assurance in vocational education and training, helping improve teaching and learning processes and supporting the development of a system of continuing education for adults. Capacity building within the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, by developing governance and the ability to carry out reforms and manage change, is a fourth priority.



Photo: Purdue

Working for social inclusion

Serbia has been an active participant in the ETF's project 'Social inclusion of ethnic groups in education and training'. The three-year project aims to help national stakeholders in the seven countries of the Western Balkans learn how to improve the education chances of people from ethnic groups and give them better job opportunities. Serbia, which currently holds the presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, recently produced a roadmap for building a genuinely inclusive education system including measures for more appropriate teacher training and ways of integrating students from ethnic groups or with disabilities into the education system from pre-school right through to higher education.

There is plenty to do. Years of economic and technological stagnation have left the Serbian labour market with high long term unemployment, particularly for women and young people, and a significant mismatch between supply and demand, according to Ms Dzuver. This explains the need for active intervention on all levels. "Targeting specific groups of people, those who find it more difficult to find employment, is extremely important for achieving greater social inclusion," she says, "while monitoring the impact of these measures allows us to make adjustments and plan better in the future."

Reform is also underway in Serbia's vocational education and training system. A project under the IPA 2007 programme is aiming to improve the

performance of the secondary VET system. As part of its support to EU services, the ETF has been working with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development to produce the terms of reference for this project, completed at a workshop in Belgrade last December. The ETF was keen to involve the second ministry in the work. "It is unusual for the two ministries to work together like this," says Francesco Panzica, ETF Country Manager for Serbia, "but it is very important to link training with employment and now there is a real commitment from both sides to this initiative."

by Rebecca Warden, ICE



The EQF can be source of inspiration for other countries

EDUCATION GOES GLOBAL WITH THE ETF'S CONTRIBUTION



Photo: Purdue

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was conceived as an instrument to promote internal mobility within the European single market. It is a common instrument which links national qualifications systems together, promoting worker mobility. ETF expert Vincent McBride tells Live and Learn why the EQF can be used as a “link between local and global experiences” in education and training and why the European model can be a “source of inspiration” for other countries.

What are the main conclusions after the EQF conference held in Brussels last January?

It was the first of its kind and brought together many countries from different parts of the world that are developing qualifications frameworks: this has never been done before by the EC. The EQF, which is part of the Lisbon Strategy, has an external dimension because it interacts with other countries. For us it is a new beginning and paves the way for a new form of work. With the EQF, we bring the European dimension closer to other countries. We live in a globalised world, we often work in different countries, we learn other languages, we study in other countries...the EQF is a way of linking the local experience to a more global experience, in this case the European experience. The EQF is a tool to achieve that in terms of qualifications.

What is the added value of the ETF in this global qualifications process?

The ETF is creating a space where people can come together, talk and

share information. We are holding a major international event on the EQF in Brussels on 29 January 2009 which will create a space for people to meet and discuss. There has never been a conference like this before, there has never been a time where people have come from across the world to discuss such an issue in education.

The EQF is an instrument to bring us closer together, to link us and to see where we can share information and where we can make partnerships with other countries and regions in the world and at the same time to help us understand who the key stakeholders in these other countries are. That is a major step in itself.

Can the EQF be copied by other countries or regions in the world?

The EQF is not something that can be just copied by someone outside Europe. I think the EQF can be a source of inspiration for others: people can take the EQF and try to fit it into the right context, this is the key

idea. The EQF could be a reference point. But there are a lot of myths around the EQF. One of them, for example, is that it is the equivalent of a single European qualification system. The EQF is only a tool for greater transparency to assist member states and individuals in the area of mobility and make it easier for people to understand and compare the different qualification systems. It is also not a framework for the recognition of qualifications: that's another myth!

FIND OUT MORE:

EQF - EQF -
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm

by Fernando Heller, ETF

Franca Crestani, ETF country manager for Tajikistan

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



Photos: ETF/N. Holdsworth



VET IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE ETF AS FACILITATOR

VET has been marginalized for years in the debate on education reforms, but in recent times it has been back on government and donor reform agendas. To capitalize on its long experience in VET, the ETF is promoting an increased exchange of experience between the five Central Asian countries, looking at their challenges, plans and lessons learned in VET.

The ETF has been active in the region since 1995, implementing capacity building programmes and piloting innovative ideas under the European Commission's development cooperation agenda, ETF expert Franca Crestani tells Live and Learn.

In October 2008 you took part in a regional conference on quality in VET, organised by the ETF in Dushanbe. What were the main conclusions?

It was the first time the ETF had focused the content of a conference on the subject of quality in VET in Central Asia in a medium term perspective. Policy makers, stakeholders and donors from Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan participated. The discussion was very rich and it was the first step in supporting the regional dialogue and exchange of policy developments on quality in VET. The main achievement of this conference was increased awareness on the need to develop quality and to use it as a tool to support the reform of the VET sector. The stakeholders are certain that regional

cooperation in VET is important and should be continued.

What are the main challenges?

I would say the first challenge is to better serve the needs of the changing societies. The structures and needs of the labour markets are changing very fast and there is a need to adapt skills and competencies. The VET world in Central Asia is not ready at the moment to meet the requirements of the new economic developments. There are very fragmented labour markets: on one side we see unemployment and migration, in particular from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Russia, and on the other side there are vacancies that cannot be filled because of a lack of skilled people in specific fields. The main problem is that the VET system needs urgent reform in order to meet the new challenges of a dynamic society.

What is the ETF's contribution to that process?

At the moment, the ETF is working on the National Qualifications Framework

(NQF) project, using it to provide instruments for the modernisation of the VET system. It is also involved in the project on Skills Development for Poverty Reduction (SDPR) that operates in the VET sector at school level.

To give an idea of how ETF work is perceived in the region, I can give the example of Tajikistan: when the ETF started its work in the country in 2003, the VET system was definitely marginalised and the main policy makers now claim that the ETF started a real revolution in that area. Our added value, as an EU agency, is that the ETF acts as facilitator in a policy learning process where partner country institutions are encouraged to involve new stakeholders and to make use of their "policy memory as well as international experience in the field"*. ■

* ETF Yearbook 2008, Policy learning in action, p. 14.

by Fernando Heller, ETF

/// I SEE PEOPLE, NOT COMMUNITIES ///

TURIN SCHOOLS SOCIAL INCLUSION

Balkan network studies Turin's drive for social inclusion

Throughout the last century, Turin has been a city characterised by the consequences of immigration. Immigrants initially flocked to the city from other regions of Italy, attracted by job opportunities in the city's booming industries. Since the 1970s, however, immigrants have come to the city from much further afield, with large groups of Moroccans, Romanians, Albanians and West Africans from Nigeria and Senegal now dominating the immigration statistics. Today, 10% of the population are considered new residents. Many of them have young children. Some 19,000 children in primary and secondary education have no Italian relatives.

The 'new Torinesi'
at school

A city with more than 100 different nationalities among its citizens, Turin has a lot of experience to share with its Balkan counterparts who are confronted with the dilemmas of social exclusion and the role that education and training can play in fighting it.

On 13 and 14 November 2008, the city welcomed the ETF experts network on ethnic groups and social inclusion in education and training in the Western Balkan countries to visit three of its schools: the *Leonardo da Vinci* school in the Falchera area which deals with a very large Roma

population, and the *Lessona* and *Fiocchetto* schools in the culturally diverse market area bordering the city centre.

At the *Fiocchetto* and *Leonardo da Vinci* schools, the children made it clear that years of hard work are now



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



Ilda Curti, Turin's Deputy Mayor
for Integration and Urban
Regeneration Policies

bearing fruit. Using songs and play, they did so better than any Powerpoint presentation could have done, with some addressing the visitors in their native tongues, such as 5th grade Ioanna of the Leonardo da Vinci school, who told the group in Albanian about her life in school in northern Italy.

The city's current policy has grown out of more than twenty years of more and less successful attempts to reach out to what it terms the "new Torinesi". It was perhaps best put into words by Ilda Curti, Turin's Deputy Mayor for

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



Giulia Guglielmini, Turin school
principal

Integration and Urban Regeneration Policies, who told the few dozen colleagues from countries on the other side of the Adriatic: "In my work I meet people, not communities."

She told of Turin's aim to build a new, modern city, stressing its focus on promoting micro-level interaction among communities and the key role that schools can play in this.

Interaction

School principal Giulia Guglielmini supported this with her explanation of the school's efforts to achieve true interaction (*interazione*) rather than integration (*integrazione*) among its pupils, and highlights the problems the school has with attendance of pupils from some communities. The Fiocchetto school is in an area of the city that has a particularly high number of immigrants among its citizens.

"We have 100 Roma kids in our school, most of whom come from Romania and Bosnia," said Francesca De Bellis, the teacher coordinating the activities for the integration of Roma students in the school. "Two-thirds of these live in unstable situations, with families in mobile camps, some of them even illegal. It is hard to keep these children in school and to let them develop social bonds with others."

The school studies attendance with the help of the local authorities, the university and the police, organising transport to and from camps and maintaining close links with the families.

New arrivals

With the Turin delegation came Silvana who has Serbian parents and grew up in Italy in a Roma community. She is a volunteer on the city's one-year project to support new arrivals in Turin. She has first-hand experience of the effects of the city's efforts to make the city the place which new citizens can call home.

"My experience has been very positive," she said without the slightest hesitation, "this is *my* city. I have always felt accepted by everyone here and today I am happy to return the favour."

Silvana is now helping to settle in an immigrant family from Germany, none of whom speak Italian.

The study visit formed part of the third regional experts meeting taking place in the framework of the ETF regional project on ethnic groups and social inclusion in education and training in the Western Balkan countries. ■

by Ard Jongsma, ICE



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MEDA-ETE team leader
Borhène Chakroun



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



// OWNERSHIP IS NOW IN YOUR HANDS //

MEDA-ETE DISSEMINATION DAYS

MEDA-ETE - positive proof that
countries can learn from each other

After four years of hard work building regional cooperation, the MEDA Education and Training for Employment (MEDA-ETE) project is entering its final phase, that of publicising the results. Dissemination days have been held in nine participating countries, keeping the MEDA-ETE team constantly on the move from late October through to the last event in Ankara on 16 December last year.

These events have been a chance to showcase MEDA-ETE's achievements, flag up those activities which will continue beyond the lifespan of the project and reflect on the lessons learnt. "All presentations were given by the network members themselves," says the MEDA-ETE team leader Borhène Chakroun, "ownership is now in their hands."

Jordan was the first stop on the dissemination tour. Component 4 of the project has produced an online course for training VET trainers in the fields of IT and tourism. The Vocational Training Corporation, the Jordanian partner for e-learning, has translated the course into Arabic and is now using it for all its VET teachers. They have also made this adapted version available to trainers in neighbouring Egypt, Syria and Palestine, one example of the kind of regional cooperation that MEDA-ETE aims to promote.

At the dissemination event, Jordan's Ministry of Education asked for

permission to use the course to benefit its own teachers in general education. "I find that very gratifying as it bodes very well for the sustainability of the course," says Chakroun.

Tunisia and Israel are also taking full advantage of this opportunity to develop e-learning provision. 15 Israeli trainers have already completed the course and Israeli training network Colleges & Schools for Advanced Technologies & Sciences (ORT Israel) is aiming to train a further 4,000 in coming years. In Tunisia, the four most important institutions in VET worked together on e-learning. "This in itself is an excellent pre-condition for a wider roll-out of activities," says Ulrike Damyanovic, the ETF's project leader for e-learning. They are now planning to integrate the new e-learning course into their regular training activities.

Involving the teacher training institutes from the start has helped foster commitment and a strong sense of ownership, according to Damyanovic. Another lesson she has learnt from her

MEDA-ETE experience is the importance of providing training and material in the local language in order to make them really accessible.

In Damascus on 1 December, the Syrian participants in component 3 on entrepreneurship were keen to tell people about the benefits of the Moroccan best practice Moukawalati. Developed by Moroccan employment and training agency ANAPEC, the method guides would-be entrepreneurs through every stage of setting up a business. It was chosen by the Syrians as a best practice to adopt in late 2007.

One year on and recipient organisation GAEED has seen its methods transformed. It has changed from an agency which merely provided funding for start-ups to one which provides guidance and information every step of the way. With help from ANAPEC, GAEED trained 24 trainers (including eight women) in the new method, changed its system for selecting potential entrepreneurs and set up an information system which allows it to

Abdelaziz Jaouani, ETF project team member for entrepreneurship

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



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track people's progress. More than 45 young Syrians from five cities have already been trained in the first pilot.

The Syrians were the only ones to choose a best practice from another MEDA country rather than a European one. "The others all needed to work through an interpreter but in Syria, everything was in Arabic and the training really flowed and was completed in record time," says Abdelaziz Jaouani, ETF project team member for entrepreneurship. "I always point to this example of South-South cooperation to show that MEDA countries do not always need

European ones to develop. A common language and cultural affinity count for a lot," he adds. This new working relationship looks likely to continue; ANAPEC recently signed a new contract to provide GAEED with further training, an initiative taken and funded independently of MEDA-ETE.

For Chakroun, all this backs up the founding principle of MEDA-ETE that countries certainly can learn from each other. "But you do need the instruments and the approach to make it work," he says. MEDA-ETE, with its decentralised network of networks approach, can provide these, although

the experience of the past four years does suggest some improvements to the original design. "What was missing with MEDA-ETE was a political umbrella," says Chakroun, "some kind of ministerial committee to set common objectives and targets and be someone to report back to." An approach such as this, conducting various activities in ten countries at the same time, calls for what Chakroun calls variable geometry. "You can't achieve the same things with all countries," he says, "you need a flexible approach so that the willing can move on faster than the others."

What is MEDA-ETE?

The MEDA-ETE project aims to boost employment in North Africa and the Middle East by improving the quality of education and training. It does so by harnessing the expertise already present in the region and sharing it with others. The project is built on a series of networks bringing together policymakers, government officials and social partners from 10 countries to work towards a set of clearly defined goals. Networks have been set up on entrepreneurship, e-learning and building a regional Observatory Function to act as an information system for the MEDA region. Thematic studies have addressed vital issues such as apprenticeship schemes, the transition from school to work or quality in VET. Others have taken on a life of their own as is the case of career guidance in Egypt or national qualification frameworks in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

FIND OUT MORE:

MEDA-ETE -
www.meda-ete.net/

by Rebecca Warden, ICE

//ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING MUST GO CROSS CAMPUS//

ENTERPRISE SPIRIT MUST BREAK OUT OF BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Entrepreneurial learning - showing us how to get by in uncertain times

The need for our education systems to teach people how to be entrepreneurial, take risks and seize new opportunities has been working its way up the political agenda for some time. The current economic crisis is only making this clearer as people realise that a range of new skills will be necessary if they are to weather the storm.

"The events of the past few months have been completely unpredictable," says Paul Hannon, Director of Research at the UK's National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE), "if we want to succeed in these uncertain times, the only response is to be entrepreneurial." The ETF is making a contribution with its pilot project on how to promote entrepreneurial learning in higher education.

It has brought together a group of academics and innovators from 16 countries in the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region to develop a set of indicators which can track the spread of entrepreneurial learning in higher education. "Indicators can help our partner countries not only measure their progress but also make it more visible," says Marie Corman, in charge of Euro Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation at the European Commission's Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry. The first batch of indicators will be road tested at eight

universities during 2009 and a further eight universities in 2010.

Universities

Entrepreneurial learning is an area which is still evolving, according to the ETF's Efka Heder, and one where EU countries have as much to learn as their neighbours. At universities, if entrepreneurial learning is provided, it tends to be confined to business

schools and faculties of economics. But recent research by the US's Kauffman Foundation shows that almost 90% of graduate start-ups come from other disciplines. "We want to move away from the business school model of entrepreneurship education," says the ETF's Simona Rinaldi, "it must go 'cross campus' so that all students are equipped with entrepreneurship skills they can use in the labour market."

Vocational universities take the lead in the UK

The availability of entrepreneurship education at UK universities is patchy at best, according to NCGE's Paul Hannon. "It's a complex environment. Sometimes academics do not see it as a robust discipline, therefore having less value for things like league tables," he says. It is often the more vocational institutions which have taken the lead although many more are beginning to appreciate that entrepreneurial learning gives them an edge in the competition to attract students. When it comes to teaching entrepreneurship, the changes are mainly conceptual; "it is not just about what you teach but how you teach," says Hannon, "this is why good teacher training is vital."

Tunisia's Sfax University provides an example of how to mainstream the entrepreneurial spirit across disciplines. Two modules designed in the faculty of economics have become compulsory for all students and the university now hosts a dedicated centre for nurturing new business ideas. The initiative has been taken up by the Ministry of Education which has asked all 13 of the country's universities to set up their own centre and embed the modules in the national curriculum. "If you want to succeed, the decision makers have to be committed, you have to convince teachers and you must have a well-designed curricula and good teaching materials," says Lassaâd Mezghani, Associate Professor of Economics and the brains behind the project "if not you risk putting the students off and the message will not get through."

From his base in mechanical engineering, Radmil Polenakovik has masterminded the spread of entrepreneurial learning throughout Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and is currently applying for accreditation for his online



Lassaâd Mezghani is Associate Professor of Economics at Tunisia's Sfax University, creator of the university's incubator for spin-offs and the main mover behind the spread of entrepreneurial education throughout Tunisian higher education.



Paul Hannon spent ten years as graduate entrepreneur in the food business before returning to academia to look into innovative approaches to entrepreneurial learning. He is currently Head of Research at the UK's National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship and a leading authority on the subject.



Marie Corman is in charge of EuroMediterranean Industrial Cooperation at the European Commission's DG Enterprise and Industry. She works with MEDA countries to promote the EuroMed Charter for Enterprise.



Radmil Polenakovik is Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Director of the Business Start-Up Centre at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University. He began preaching the entrepreneurial gospel ten years ago and his centre has already produced 20 graduate start-ups and aims to help launch 40 more in the next two years.

course on how to start a business. Recent initiatives include a competition for new business ideas which attracted over 800 ideas from 27 different faculties nationwide and plans to train 30

academics in entrepreneurial methods. "The easiest people to convince about entrepreneurship are the students," he says, "changing the mindset of education officials is more of a problem." ■

Photos: ETF/A. Ramella



Photo: Purdue

FIND OUT MORE:

NGCE -
www.ncge.com/

University of Sfax -
<http://www.uss.mu.tn/>

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University -
<http://www.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?lan=en>

by Rebecca Warden, ICE

IS THE NEW UNDERSTANDING OF SKILLS REFLECTED IN WAYS OF MEASURING HUMAN CAPITAL?

Siria Taurelli, ETF country manager for Moldova and project manager for knowledge management



Photo: ETF/A.Ramella

Siria Taurelli is ETF country manager for Moldova and project manager for knowledge management. She recently returned from a thirteen-month secondment to the World Bank in Washington where her work focused on how to measure human capital. While education policy thinking is constantly evolving, the same cannot be said for the ways of measuring human capital. In this article, Ms Taurelli looks at this mismatch in detail and explains why organisations such as the ETF should strive to back up their innovative policy thinking with equally innovative data, statistics and indicators.



Photo: Fotolia

A decade ago skills were usually defined as a narrow set of technical and vocational abilities. Today other abilities are also seen as important; people in the workplace are expected to describe problems and identify solutions, train their peers, deal with clients and cope with the unexpected. These softer skills

are becoming indispensable as they can contribute to people's effectiveness just as much as job-specific capacities. By describing this broader skill-set as competences, educationalists are providing a more precise definition of the many abilities people need to master in their work and their lives.

But while the shift from skills to competences represents an improvement, there has been no equivalent progress in the capacity to measure and compare competences.

In current literature, skills tend to be described in terms of the contribution of human capital to economic growth. Scholars often measure human capital by means of the educational stock available in a given country, using proxies such as enrolment rates, educational attainment and, more recently, scores obtained in

international standardised tests. These indicators are a good way of assessing a country's achievements or comparing one country to another and can help policymakers set targets for their education systems.

However as the OECD points out, the correlation between education and skills is imperfect, especially if one uses the broader meaning of competence: there is a substantial gap between the skills and knowledge acquired during formal schooling and the sum total of skills and knowledge people possess. Other authors have come to this same conclusion by observing the marked variations between what different students manage to learn during the same number of years of education.

It looks as if current statistics do not adequately measure the wide range of abilities conveyed by the word

Soft skills are becoming indispensable in the workplace



competence. This is probably due to the complexity of capturing the multiplicity of human skills and talents within a single set of indicators.

The human capital approach has many advantages, but it confines itself to a limited range of aggregate statistics. The educational approach has the advantage of providing a more holistic view. For the term competence to comprehend the full range of abilities a person needs to be an active citizen, become a responsible and fulfilled individual, to perform in a variety of working environments or to learn. Recent changes to education laws in Europe reflect this new perspective. But educationalists have yet to come up with a satisfactory alternative to the somewhat limited ways of measuring human capital.



Photo: Fotolia

Universal definitions of competences will always be generic and this adds to the difficulty of identifying indicators which can be applied to all countries. But while a degree of imprecision cannot be avoided, there is clearly a need for educationalists, economists

and statisticians to find more refined ways of using indicators.

by Siria Taurelli, ETF



THE ETF YEARBOOK 2008 IS NOW AVAILABLE!

Taking the theme of policy learning as its basis, the new ETF yearbook looks in depth at a number of ETF and other education and training projects.

Internal and external authors contribute to this thought-provoking study on the active engagement of national stakeholders in developing their own policies and implementation plans. The challenge for local policymakers and international assistance is to find the right balance between the urgency of policy development and the necessary time for learning and informing policies.

Hard copies can be obtained directly from the ETF by sending an email to info@etf.europa.eu, and the electronic version can be downloaded from www.etf.europa.eu

ETF ATTENDS EU DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Major European annual forum brings together all actors in the field of development

European Development Days is the EU's major annual open forum that brings together everyone working in the field of development; administrations, governments, local authorities, civil society, international organisations, academics, development agencies, the private sector and the media.

This year's event took place in Strasbourg on 15-17 November. The ETF was present in the event

exhibition and presents this photo-montage, giving a feel of the atmosphere of the event.



Photos: ETF/Maria Arnó



FIND OUT MORE:

EU Development Days -
<http://www.eudevdays.eu>

by Andrew Martin and
 Mara Arnó, ETF

PUBLICATIONS



Helping people develop through learning

This publication, which looks at the key activities of the ETF grouped around six key themes included in the recast regulation, illustrates the achievements of the ETF. It provides support to European initiatives in skills development in fledgling free market economies and highlights the importance of helping our neighbours develop the basic conditions for peace, stability and prosperity: education and training. The publication is available now in English, on paper and electronically, and will be translated into French and Italian.



Career guidance in EU neighbouring countries: comparative analysis

This report looks at demand for career guidance services in European Union (EU) neighbouring countries and provides a comparative analysis as well as policy and practice examples of career guidance in a number of selected EU neighbouring countries in different geographical regions. Available this spring in English in both paper and electronic formats.

EVENTS

March 23-24 2009, Glasgow, UK

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework international conference on breaking barriers and crossing boundaries: the role of national qualifications frameworks in promoting learner mobility.



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

February 26-27 2009, Podgorica, Montenegro

E-portfolio training workshop within the three-year ETF LEARN project which aims to strengthen networks and national institutions in order to develop and spread new ideas and innovation across the South East European region.

NEW FACES



Katerina Molnarova, ETF Governing Board member for the Czech Republic



Timo Summa, ETF Governing Board member representing DG Enlargement



Keith Holmes, ETF country manager for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and member of community of practice on education and development

Photos: ETF/A. Ramella

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