

Live&Learn

NEWS, VIEWS AND INITIATIVES FROM ACROSS THE ETF COMMUNITY

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A portrait of Madlen Serban, a woman with short brown hair, smiling and wearing a brown jacket and a patterned scarf. She is holding a black folder or bag.

**Madlen Serban -
New ETF director
will combine vision,
pragmatism and
team work**

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Letter from the editor A NEW POLITICAL SEASON

The 2009 European elections are over. Some 736 new and re-elected MEPs will be moving to Brussels shortly to take up their new, busy term. Many pressing challenges lie ahead for the new Parliament. First, and foremost, is the need to find a way out of the financial crisis, and a focus on how to ensure future growth through research, education and flexible labour markets.

The EU cooperation and neighbourhood partnerships can facilitate the creation of more jobs and strengthen EU efforts to promote peace, democracy and prosperity inside and outside Europe. The role of the newly elected European Parliament is to maintain and further develop the programmes and instruments to support these developments.

Education and training are key to all the EU external policies and it is important to keep developing human capital by focussing also on entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation.

The ETF looks forward to contributing to the work of the European policy makers on these issues by further strengthening the


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relationship with the Parliament in the Ecoming years. Our new liaison office based in Brussels is one element in communicating closer with the MEPs, their committees and secretariats.

Also, the new ETF mandate includes an important, human bridge between the political debates in the Parliament and the operational work of the ETF

by including three experts designated by the European Parliament to take part in the work of the ETF's Governing Board.

Furthermore, the new ETF Director Madlen Serban, is very attentive to the expectations of the MEPs and looks forward to actively "support policy action", as she states in the

interview in this issue of Live&Learn.

A new, political season in Europe has begun.

by Bent Sørensen
Head of ETF Communication



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International Summer School on migration in Turin, Italy

Graduates and young professionals from across Europe are invited for the second edition of the international summer school on "Migration – Challenges and Opportunities for Europe" in Turin, Italy, from 28 September - 9 October 2009. The summer school is jointly organised by the University of Turin, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the EU's European Training Foundation (ETF) with the support of the Compagnia di San Paolo.

The summer school offers an intensive programme to study migration policies, skills development for legal migration and the legal status and rights of migrants. It aims to provide participants with specific information about emerging global challenges from a United Nations and European Union perspective.

The final deadline for applications for the Turin International Summer School is 21 July 2009. Further information can be found on the Summer School website: <http://iuse.it/summerschool>.

/// I WILL LOOK FOR WHAT IS NEW IN THE LIFE OF THE ORGANISATION ///

NEW ETF DIRECTOR WILL COMBINE VISION, PRAGMATISM AND TEAM WORK

Recast regulation confirms strategic choices of the ETF

Madlen Serban explains how a life spent wearing many professional hats has brought her to become the new director of the European Training Foundation and what her vision for the organisation will be.

Photo: ETF/EUP Images



Madlen Serban is aiming for continuity rather than radical change following her taking up the top job at the ETF on 1 July. "I am not someone to go for radical change if it is not necessary. I will look for what is new in the life of the organisation as a result of the recast regulation in December 2008 and I will be keen to ensure that the ETF can respond to any new requirements from the European Parliament and work with the European Commission in the best way possible," says the ETF's new director.

She sees the recast regulation as confirmation that strategic choices made by the ETF back in 2003 were the right ones. This was when the organisation confirmed its move away from hands-on project management towards becoming a centre of expertise that facilitates the process of other peoples' policy learning. The new regulation broadens the ETF's scope to include human capital development with a greater emphasis on lifelong learning and a sharper focus on the interplay between education and training and the labour market. Ms Serban will also be attentive to the

expectations of the ETF's new partner, the European Parliament, currently reforming in the wake of the recent European elections.

Impact

Under Ms Serban's lead, the ETF will not only encourage policy learning, it will actively support policy in action - the implementation of change - and policy evaluation - measuring the impact of change. "Evaluating the effect of policy is sometimes neglected in partner countries," she says, "but gathering feedback and measuring impact is all part of the cycle of quality."

The ETF will continue to focus on getting people to work together. "I have seen just how good the ETF is at getting different donors and organisations all moving in the same direction," she says, "on the one hand, empowering governments to be able to identify their needs and defend their interests and, on the other, helping donors to act in a co-ordinated manner in order to really benefit partner countries."



Madlen Serban will work with EU institutions in the best way possible

ETF triumvirate: Madlen Serban (left) introduced to ETF staff by Governing Board chair Odile Quintin (centre) and former director Muriel Dunbar

Peer learning and peer review are extremely useful tools as “they avoid people having to reinvent the wheel.” While no advocate of a copy and paste approach to reform, Ms Serban believes that seeing policy and innovation in practice is one of the best ways of learning. “The joy of peer learning is you go to a country you think is comparable in terms of the degree of social and economic development and you try to figure out how it works there,” she says.

Team player

Madlen Serban defines herself as hard working and a pragmatist, someone with vision but above all a team player. “I am very much aware that as director of the ETF I am ultimately accountable, but I have always felt myself to be a member of a team,” she says. Her softly-spoken unassuming exterior can be misleading. It masks a woman who has determinedly worked her way up through the ranks - from a teacher of VET to a leader of VET reform with many stages in between - and who has a wealth of experience of taking forward change in her native Romania and supporting it in others.

Originally trained as an engineer, Madlen Serban quickly moved onto teaching VET, before becoming a deputy director of one VET school and establishing and managing another in Craiova in southern Romania. In 1996, she joined the Ministry of National Education (MNE) where her duties included supervising some of the first EU-funded reforms of VET under the Phare programme and helping Romania negotiate EU accession including chapters on education and training, free movement of people, regional policy and SMEs. In 1999, Ms Serban set up Romania’s National Centre for TVET, the specialised



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

agency serving the initial VET system, an organisation she has headed until the present.

Ms Serban is a consummate multi-tasker used to wearing any number of hats at the same time. She has spent the last ten years as chair of the Taskforce for Human Capital Development in South Eastern Europe. She has also been Romanian Liaison Officer for Cedefop, Director General for Human Resources at MNE and President of the National Adult Training Board, Romania’s tripartite policy body for continuing education.

Expert

From 2001, she began working as a short term expert for a wide range of international organisations including UNESCO, USAID, DG Research of the European Commission, OECD, the British Council, the World Bank and last but not least, the ETF. These assignments have lead her to either visit or write about Iraq, Turkey, Belgium, Moldova, Russia, Chile, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Tajikistan. During this period, she has found time to complete her PhD on the subject of social dialogue and produce more than 60 articles, reports and books.

“It has always been my idea that I can always do more,” says Ms Serban, “but it is more a case that I can put myself at the disposal of others rather than that I have all of these wonderful capacities.” And it was this desire to do more that led her to put herself forward as a possible head of the ETF.

No stranger to the organisation, Ms Serban first came into contact with the ETF when she was director of the PHARE VET projects in Romania in 1996. She has been Romanian observer on the ETF Governing Board from 1998 to 2007, after which she became the Romanian representative of Cedefop’s Governing Board and most recently helped out by providing input on quality assurance and helping prepare a regional Central Asian conference held by the ETF in Dushanbe, Tajikistan last November.

“The ETF is an international organisation. It covers many countries I have already been involved with so although I am not saying I am a connoisseur, I am certainly not starting from scratch,” she says, “What is more, the ETF’s thematic basis is very close to the work I have done till now so I am confident these years of experience will allow me to make a contribution.”

//LEARNING FROM OTHER COUNTRIES IMPROVES
YOUR OWN PRACTICE//

MUTUAL LEARNING PUTS POLICY MAKERS IN THE DRIVING SEAT

ETF launches new self-build project

Sixty-five education specialists from Turkey and the Western Balkans came to Turin in early May to help the ETF launch a three-year project on mutual learning. The initiative will give policymakers the chance to learn from each other and from EU developments in the areas of adult learning, quality and quality assurance and post-secondary VET.



So far so good, you may say. But what makes the mutual learning project really stand out from the crowd is the amount of freedom it gives participants to set their own agenda and get involved in only those areas which are of interest to them or big priorities for their countries.

This approach is based on the EU's Open Method of Co-ordination or OMC, a tool used by the European Commission to set the policy agenda and encourage convergence between Member States in areas such as education or employment. These are areas where the ultimate power of decision remains with national governments and the EU has little or no legislative powers. It typically makes use of soft means of persuasion such as guidelines, indicators, benchmarking and the sharing of good practice to encourage change. An official review of OMC in 2008 produced a positive verdict; "it has shown itself to be a good way of stoking the debate on employment, education and training and creating the awareness that learning from other countries is a good way of improving your own practices," said the ETF's project leader Arjen Vos.



Thus the first move at the launch event was to split into three groups and start discussing the priority areas for action. Participants were also asked to suggest in what order they would like to tackle their group's to do list and which tools and methods they want to use to get there. "This policy learning puts you firmly in the driving seat," said ETF Head of Operations Peter Greenwood during the opening session, "although the ETF will help, it is critical that you define which actions are most relevant to your countries and which activities will be most helpful for your process of reform."

Photos: ETF/A. Ramella



Katarina Popovic (top) and Rame Likaj at the mutual learning event held in Turin this May

Peer learning

Putting this tool to use in its work with countries outside the EU is a logical step for the ETF which has been experimenting with different ways of facilitating learning since it adopted the policy learning approach in 2003. It builds on the ETF's experience of conducting peer reviews and more recently peer learning whereby relevant people from different countries are brought together to compare notes and learn from each others' real life experiences of what makes for successful reform. "This approach is not about competing against benchmarks, it is about helping each other make progress," said Rosita van Meel, post-secondary VET team member.

As the first day of the launch event wore on, it became clear the participants do have plenty to teach each other about VET reform.

Working with the Roma National Council, Serbia's Adult Education Society (AES) has come up with a new model for basic education. Designed with Roma adults in mind, "we are now negotiating with the Ministry of Education to use this model to replace the adult learning model for the whole population," said Katarina Popovic, President of AES.

Self-assessment

Participants were interested to hear about the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's ongoing experiments with

self-assessment in schools. "I do believe we have a lot to share because when it comes to quality there are big differences between countries," said Ismail Rushiti, a teacher of VET in Tetovo. He is keen to learn from the examples of Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania on this issue; "it makes sense to learn from countries who are not that far from us," he said, "the gap between a country like Germany and us is just too great."

Several of Turkey's higher VET schools enjoy a degree of financial autonomy and have started generating income, according to Omer Acikgoz, a member of Turkey's Higher Education Council. "They are very engaged with the local labour market and can earn their own money by producing materials," he said, citing schools in Konya which produce furniture or undertake metal work on cars. Turkey, with its extensive experience with post secondary VET, was a source of inspiration, at the launch event in particular, for countries that are considering developing such a pathway and is to host the first workshop on post-secondary VET in late 2009.

Albania and Kosovo¹ are taking the idea of cooperative mutual learning very seriously indeed. Participants working on post-secondary VET found they have much in common; "we both need a joint labour market study, support for curricula and teaching materials and to share best practices from both countries and from the ETF," said Rame Likaj, professor of Mechanical Engineering and Education at Kosovo's

Prishtina University. They have decided to opt for shared solutions and are planning to use the mutual learning project to draft a joint strategy for post-secondary VET, carry out joint training programmes and even share training provision by encouraging students to move between the two countries.

Mutual learning activities are due to start in autumn 2009. In the interim period, the ETF will be busy sorting through the many ideas for action generated at the May event and deciding on the best tools to support them. It will also start building three Communities of Practice - self-managing communities of professionals working together on a specific topic - to act as vehicles for work on each of the themes.

Mutual learning heralds a move from outside help to mutual help. Whether it succeeds will depend as much as anything on the sense of ownership and commitment it manages to foster in the project participants. The project is in its infancy, but the signs are encouraging; "we like this approach as it works from the bottom-up and lets us set the priorities" said Rame Likaj. ■

FIND OUT MORE:

Open Method of Coordination -
http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/coordination/coordination01_en.htm

by Rebecca Warden, ICE

¹ As defined by the UN Security Council Regulation 1244

//TAJIKISTAN WILL HAVE A MUCH HEALTHIER LABOUR MARKET AND ECONOMY//

ETF LABOUR MARKET REPORT - HELPING TAJIKISTAN DEVELOP A NATIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Subhon Ashurov, Tajik Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Protection, welcomes groundbreaking ETF research

An ambitious new national labour market and employment strategy due to be launched by the Tajik government in October 2009 will draw heavily on unique research carried out by the European Training Foundation.

The detailed ETF survey of Tajikistan's economy - which is characterised by very high unemployment and mass economic migration of skilled workers to Russia - Tajikistan Labour Market Review, is the first comprehensive study of labour market dynamics carried out in the Central Asian state.

The 110 page report, which was presented at the international conference Labour Market in Tajikistan:

Performance and Challenges held in partnership with the International Labour Organisation in Dushanbe in June, provides Tajik government ministers and officials with a detailed source of information, statistics and analysis to help inform policy decisions as they develop the new employment strategy.

The Tajik government campaign - designed to tackle key challenges in an economy ravaged by the collapse of the Soviet Union and a bitter civil war between 1992 and 1997 - is being developed with European Commission backing under the new Development Cooperation Instrument that in Central Asia is replacing the earlier TACIS technical assistance programme.

Comparative analysis

Subhon Ashurov, Tajikistan's Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection, said the report was a rich source of reliable comparative analysis that was an essential foundation for addressing key structural challenges in the country's labour market.

"The Tajik government is prioritising improving the quality of our labour market and educational strategy; this report will help us create policies to develop the economy of the country. The new state strategy will be built on these principles," Mr Ashurov told Live and Learn.

The report addresses key questions, such as how capital investment could be attracted to the Tajik economy and ways to develop the labour market to attract such investment, along with the role education and training could play in this.

Addressing the current state of Tajikistan's vocational education and training system, quality issues and how it could be reformed to address the training needs of adults were also critical challenges covered by the report.

Migration

Although labour emigration acts to cushion domestic economic hardship - the money sent home by economic migrants is a key source of income for families and communities - it also serves to destabilise family life and the state

Photo: Information Research Center "SOCSERVICE"



Tajik Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Subhon Ashurov

lacks effective means for regulating it.

With the vast majority of Tajik migrant workers going to Russia to work, Tajikistan's economy remains vulnerable to political and economic shocks far beyond its borders.

This makes it even more important to create jobs in Tajikistan itself.

The impact of the economic crisis in Russia - by the end of last year it had cost large numbers of Tajik economic migrants their livelihoods, forcing them home to join the ranks of the Tajik unemployed - has been a strong wake up call for Tajik government officials.

Improving the Tajik economy - which currently needs to create a minimum of 150,000 new jobs annually just to keep up with the growth of the labour market - must include efforts to convince economic migrants to return, bringing new skills with them if economic development is to be sustainable in the long term, Mr Ashurov said.

"Migrant workers can make a real contribution to improving the economy in Tajikistan; so the state is working on a professional training strategy aimed at attracting these people back and keeping them in the country."

"Adult education is a key part of the new national approach to rebuilding the labour market; it will be aimed at both the unemployed and migrant workers."



Better future

Using the ETF research and analysis as a tool for helping develop labour market policies can contribute to a better and more stable future for the Tajik economy, according to Mr Ashurov.

"I foresee a much healthier labour market and economy in Tajikistan in five or 10 years' time; I believe we have the capacity and capability to do this. The quality of labour resources and professional development can be supported through the vocational education and training system. By teaching new skills and talents, we shall be contributing towards building an economy that supports the whole country."

Although much hard work remains to be done, his optimism is echoed by both Tajik and international observers who took part in the June seminar in Dushanbe.

Azizbek Sharipov of the Tajik Union of Employers said he found the analysis in the ETF report "very useful, but the conclusions of this study must be used by the policymakers and not just stay in their desk drawers."

Tomoko Matsuzawa, a Programme Officer from ILO headquarters, said that job creation had to be prioritised at a time when the Tajik labour force was growing as without that economic migration would only increase. VET reform had a key role to play in improving the employability of the Tajik workforce.

Franca Crestani, ETF Country Manager for Tajikistan, who worked with Ummuhan Bardak, the ETF team leader for the study, said: "The quality of the ETF study was appreciated by participants in the Dushanbe seminar and everybody expressed satisfaction at its comprehensiveness."

The report Labour Market Review in Tajikistan will be available to download from the ETF website from July 2009: www.etf.eu.

by Nick Holdsworth, ICE

COUNTRY FOCUS: KYRGYZSTAN

EDUARDA CASTEL-BRANCO: A WEALTH OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Eduarda Castel-Branco (right) at work in Kyrgyzstan

Eduarda Castel Branco brings a breadth of experience in supporting economic and social development to her job as European Training Foundation country manager for Kyrgyzstan that is truly global.

A Portuguese national born in Mozambique, Ms Castel Branco speaks six foreign languages - English, French, Russian, German, Spanish and Italian - besides her mother tongue and took her first degrees in Soviet times at universities in Moscow and the Kuban.

With a higher degree in history and ethnography from the Classical University of Lisbon and an MBA in international finance from the private European University in Antwerp, she has the academic credentials to match a wealth of project experience gained working in training and development support for international organisations over the past 20 years.



Photo: ETF/N. Holdsworth

A tireless traveler whose work for the ETF and organisations including Germany's sustainable development agency GTZ has taken her from Armenia to Africa and many points between, Ms Castel Branco brings passion to her work.

One of her most recent projects - facilitating a skills development for poverty reduction programme in Central Asia that helped transform rural vocational schools into flexible centres for skills training - involved the production of a documentary film on the project.

For a woman who was once involved in a GTZ project in Angola to ease the

social and professional reintegration of demobilised military forces, the challenge in Kyrgyzstan is nothing unusual.

"Young Kyrgyz farmers are lining up to attend the future courses organized by the VET school in their villages. It is not for a scholarship or other benefits of the kind - but for the future return on this investment. The examples of their peers in the first villages that benefited from this training are the best advertisement," she says. ■

by Nick Holdsworth, ICE

//DEVELOPING PEOPLE'S RESOURCES AND TALENTS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES//

KYRGYZ TRAINING TO GO FURTHER AFIELD

UNESCO helps spread lessons from ETF skills for poverty reduction project

An innovative European Training Foundation pilot project that took adult training in Central Asia out of the classroom and - literally - into the fields to try and reduce poverty in rural areas is now being extended in Kyrgyzstan thanks to a grant from UNESCO.

Temirkul Tilemishov with
members of the Skills
Development for Poverty
Reduction team



Photo: ETF/N. Holdsworth



COUNTRY FOCUS: KYRGYZSTAN

Photo: ETF/A. Martin



The ETF's Skills Development for Poverty Reduction (SDPR) project - based at rural vocational schools in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan - was a flexible, locally-based scheme designed around the needs of small farmers who wanted to move beyond subsistence and set up profitable small businesses.

The five-month courses - designed with input from students who identified areas where they lacked knowledge - helped them devise business plans and provided micro-loans to help launch their businesses. It was backed by the VET schools concerned, government educational agencies, local authorities and banks.

Now the Kyrgyz stakeholders are taking the project a step further with backing from UNESCO and have formed a seven-strong team of trainers to take the message to other rural VET schools.

Temirkul Tilemishov, the 63 year-old former principal of VET School No. 15 in Kochkor, has embraced the flexible new training with gusto and heads the new group.

"There is great interest in our project from many in the regions - people have heard how effective the training has been here in Kochkor and want to use the same methods to address the issues and problems in their own regions."

The key to the enthusiasm for the project and the way it is spreading throughout Kyrgyzstan with the help of progressive VET school heads is because local people have taken ownership of it, he added.

"People are very excited by the potential of such a flexible programme that addresses their needs; it is easy for them to feel ownership of such a project," he said.

The three-day training courses for 30 teachers from two VET schools in each area are due to start in September in four or five of Kyrgyzstan's seven administrative regions, including Naryn, Talas, Ysyk-Kol and Osh. Regional resource centres are planned to enable the Kochkor-based group of trainers to give top-up training from time to time.

A local, Kyrgyz version of the ETF documentary about the project (the international version is entitled The Kyrgyz Ice-Cream Seller - Training for Change in Central Asia) will be shown at the training sessions. The film, shot on location in Kochkor last autumn, shows what can be achieved using small-scale, targeted adult training for agricultural workers.

"The project shows us a path to the future by using adult education as a tool for developing the resources and talents of people in local communities throughout the country," said Tilemishov.

"It is easy to show how this project can make a difference to peoples' lives. It can quickly be used to address key challenges faced by people living in rural areas where the economy is struggling," he added.

Although the ETF is not directly involved in the dissemination scheme - its involvement in the SDPR will end later this year with a seminar on lessons learned and options for future involvement with other donors such as the International Labour Organisation and the UN - ETF Kyrgyz country manager Eduarda Castel-Branco welcomes it.

"The big success factor of the Kochkor method has been the dynamism of the community and local administration," she told Live and Learn, "this is not merely a training project, it is a local development project in which training is playing a twofold role as both a service and motivating factor." ■

FIND OUT MORE:

SDPR -
http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Skills_for_poverty_reduction_EN

by Nick Holdsworth, ICE

EUROPE IS IN TURIN. TURIN IS EUROPE

This year's Europe Day celebrations saw the ETF organise a photo exhibition and gala concert in Turin. In the build up to the occasion the ETF had held a photographic competition, with the winning entry - Europa, made in Torino, by Marco Carulli - being displayed on a banner in Turin town centre on 9 May.

The concert in the evening, held in the Gianni Agnelli Auditorium concert hall, saw the Teatro Regio orchestra, conducted by Gianandrea Noseda, perform Beethoven's 9th symphony to a packed house...



1. Europe Day is popular with children
2. Winning photographer Marco Carulli with the ETF's Bent Sorensen
3. Valentino Castellani, former mayor of Turin and head of 2006 Olympic Committee addresses ETF staff
4. The photo exhibition graces Turin's town centre
5. & 6. Teatro Regio orchestra conducted by Gianandrea Noseda

//PUSHING EMPLOYMENT UP THE POLICY AGENDA//

ETF REPORTS SHED LIGHT ON THE LABOUR MARKETS OF MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE

First two of six Black Sea labour market reviews

Finding a decent job is not always easy in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine. Although in the years leading up to the current global economic crisis the six countries experienced strong growth, there were still serious challenges in terms of employment.

The decline of traditional industries has thrown many people out of work and most new jobs are low-paid service jobs, often in the informal economy. High unemployment is forcing many to look to small-scale self-employment or subsistence agriculture in order to get by. In this context, the ETF is conducting a review of all six labour markets, looking at what these countries have in common and what sets them apart. The review covers sources of data and demographic trends, human capital and the transition to work as well as changing patterns of employment, the impact of migration and employment policy over the past decade. The first two reports on Moldova¹ and Ukraine² are now available.

These are the first instalment in a series of six reports which will be used to produce a cross-country analysis of the region by the end of 2009. The aim is



Photo: ETF/A.Ramella

to provide national policymakers with up-to-the minute information and analysis. "Good analysis is essential if you want to make sound policy," says Ummuhan Bardak, the project's team leader, "our contribution at the ETF is to create some momentum for more proactive policies by raising awareness

and pushing the topic of employment up the policy agenda."

ETF knowledge

The second group of readers is people at the European Commission (EC). As the new Communication on "Eastern

¹ Available for free download at [http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/EmbedPub_EN?OpenDocument&emb=/pubmgmt.nsf/\(WebPublications%20by%20yearR\)/A2814FF077774EDAC12575C20036B090?OpenDocument](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/EmbedPub_EN?OpenDocument&emb=/pubmgmt.nsf/(WebPublications%20by%20yearR)/A2814FF077774EDAC12575C20036B090?OpenDocument)

² Available for free download at [http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/EmbedPub_EN?OpenDocument&emb=/pubmgmt.nsf/\(WebPublications%20by%20yearR\)/8BFA5F3C935F93DBC125755F00452A81?OpenDocument](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/EmbedPub_EN?OpenDocument&emb=/pubmgmt.nsf/(WebPublications%20by%20yearR)/8BFA5F3C935F93DBC125755F00452A81?OpenDocument)

Partnership” unfolds, EC officials working in external relations and employment have a growing need for information on this part of the world. The project will also help the ETF add to its growing stock of knowledge on a region of increasing strategic importance.

The regional dimension has been built in from the start by means of systematic gathering of information on significant neighbours such as Russia or Turkey. Data on Poland and Bulgaria provides comparable EU benchmarks. Historic affinities have also been accommodated; “it wouldn’t make sense to look at Moldova for instance without taking into account its special relationship with Romania,” says Bardak, “we also wanted to see whether there is really a regional space in terms of patterns of trade or migration or the challenges facing employment.”

All of these countries except Azerbaijan suffer from population decline but the problem is particularly acute in Ukraine. The report describes the country as “on the verge of severe depopulation” and notes that premature mortality of men, often due to avoidable causes, is of particular concern. “The psychological burden of the transition has been particularly tough on male bread-winners; most of the jobs that were destroyed were full time industrial jobs that usually employed men,” says Bardak. Government policy on demography is aiming in the right direction, according to the report, but it has not yet achieved the expected impact.

Human capital

The following chapter seeks to gauge to what extent the relatively high stock of

human capital inherited from Soviet times has eased the transition towards a market economy. In the case of Ukraine, the report finds a positive record in terms of educational enrolment and completion rates, but indirect signs that could indicate low quality. Other positive aspects, such as the speed with which young people find their first job and high employment rates, tend to mask problems such as poor working conditions and a growing skills mismatch. “The legacy of the communist education system is impressive and makes for a very good starting point,” says Bardak, “but it doesn’t have the impact on employment that you would expect - there are not enough jobs for higher education graduates.”

In Moldova patterns of employment have changed dramatically over the past ten years. The major shift has been from agriculture to trade and construction, partly driven by shocks such as the drought of 2003 or the Russian embargo on imports of Moldovan wine from 2006. Between 1999 and 2007, 340,000 people either moved from agriculture to these two sectors or migrated.

International migration has shot up in recent years - during 1999, 99,300 migrants left Moldova to work abroad but in 2005, the total was 394,500. Initial expectations that returning migrants could help modernise the local economy have proved unfounded as most Moldavians are employed in low-skilled jobs while abroad and tend to return without having acquired new skills or accumulated capital to invest. However the remittances they send back do make a major contribution to the Moldovan economy; by 2007, they were officially estimated at almost

US\$1.5 billion, more than a third of Moldovan GDP, and played a significant role in alleviating poverty in receiving households.

In mid 2008 the EU and Moldova signed a mobility partnership to facilitate legal circular migration to interested EU countries. “It aims to provide better support for public employment services, prevent illegal migration and promote a better deal for Moldovan migrants,” says Bardak.

For Moldova, the question remains how to make the country a more attractive place for business. Successive governments have elaborated plenty of employment laws and plans, but most have had little real impact. In Ukraine, the report concludes that the strong economic growth observed until recently has more to do with factors such as demand for Ukrainian exports or booming domestic consumption than the effect of official policies. The need for structural reforms to improve the climate for investment remains in both countries. “What we are saying is that we need a holistic approach towards the economy, the labour market and education and training,” says Bardak, “decisions taken in one area have a big impact on the others.” ■



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

by Rebecca Warden, ICE

// EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PUTS GREATER FOCUS ON INTEGRATION //

EUROPEAN UNION LOOKS TO THE EAST

Stronger EU relations with Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus

May 2009 saw the launch of the Eastern Partnership, a new framework for EU relations with six countries of Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus. The ETF is keen to see what it can contribute to this new venture.

A major new agreement is set to broaden and deepen the European Union's relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Eastern Partnership, signed on May 7 in Prague, will provide tangible support for democratic and market-orientated reforms in the six countries as well as strengthening their political and economic links with the EU. Areas to be covered include free trade, governance, labour mobility, energy security and the environment.

The agreement enshrines the principle of regional cooperation - Partnership countries will be encouraged to work with and learn from each other as well as the 27 Member States of the EU - an approach which is very much in line with the ETF's way of working. From now until 2013, it will provide €350 million of funds in addition to those already provided for the six under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The Eastern Partnership will provide an overarching framework for EU relations with the East in the same way the Union

for the Mediterranean (formerly the Barcelona Process) has done with the countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. This is something many EU countries have long desired. "At the ENP launch conference, many Member States were calling for stronger relations to the East" says Eva Jimeno-Sicilia, the ETF's Deputy Head of Operations for ENP, "they were concerned that without structured multilateral dialogue, these countries would miss out on important opportunities for regional cooperation particularly with their neighbours to the south".



How will the Eastern Partnership work?

Meetings of 27 + 6 heads of state will take place every two years, while foreign ministers will meet every year to review progress and provide more detailed political input. Four platforms on democracy, good governance and stability, economic integration and convergence with EU policies, people to people contacts and energy security will bring relevant senior officials together at least twice a year. The first meetings are scheduled for June 2009.

The European Commission will play a key role in this multilateral framework and will develop institution-building programmes to provide more targeted support for reform in individual countries.

Economic integration

The architecture of the new partnership and its spirit of facilitating regional cooperation and exchange are similar to that of the Union for the Mediterranean, but Jimeno-Sicilia detects a difference in emphasis. "With the Barcelona Process, political and security issues had a high profile from the start, but with the Eastern Partnership there is a greater focus on economic integration," she says. She also believes that the fact the Eastern Partnership countries are served by just one EU financial instrument - the ENP Instrument - should make initiatives easier to administer.

The Eastern Partnership has only just begun, but it is likely to bring far-reaching changes to the EU's, and the ETF's, relations with the six countries. It is significant that Belarus, currently a dormant member of the ENP, has been included in the new arrangement, although the country's active participation is still conditional on showing greater respect for human rights and democracy. In late 2008, the ETF decided to include Belarus in its ongoing Black Sea labour market reviews which already covered the other five countries. In future, Jimeno-Sicilia believes we may see EU methods and approaches such as the Open Method of Cooperation or international benchmarking applied in the Partnership countries. "Above all it is a confirmation of something the ETF has been saying for a long time - that regional cooperation is fundamental if you want to make progress," she says.

European Neighbourhood Policy provides cohesion

Rutger Wissels has been Director of European Neighbourhood Policy Coordination at DG External Relations for the last five years and is the newly appointed Commission representative to the ETF's Governing Board.

His work on the ENP began at a time when it was still called Wider Europe. "The origin of the ENP itself was the 2004 enlargement" he explains. "It changed the political geography of Europe."

Something new needed to be invented to work with the countries now bordering the EU. This wasn't about them joining the EU, but about deeper integration on issues such as trade, taxation, customs, transport, etc. The ENP began with neighbouring countries to the east and soon spread to those in the south.

Despite obvious differences between east and south, there are good reasons why the same policy was adopted by the EU for both regions. "EU internal cohesion is important. Having one policy means that all Member States have an interest in all ENP countries" says Mr Wissels. "Any other way and there would be a subset of member states interested in the south and another subset interested in the east."

The one policy approach has also helped with funding allowing for an increase of some 30% in real terms in the 2007-2013 budget compared with 2000-2006.

The result is that the Eastern partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean are of interest to all EU countries. "This situation avoids special interests coming to the fore and allows greater policy content to be delivered, bringing these countries as close as possible to the EU without them being members" affirms Mr Wissels.

The reform tools developed to improve the policies are often the same as those for the enlargement and candidate countries. "The technical, as opposed to political, nature of much of what we do with ENP still does a lot to bring countries closer to the EU in terms of democracy, human rights or gender equality" explains Mr Wissels.

"We hope to help ENP partners meet the significant challenges involved in adapting and developing their training systems to meet future skill needs. In this respect, we see the ETF's work as very useful in terms of consolidating education, training and labour market observatories with a view to improving the collection and harmonisation of qualitative and quantitative sector information. This would not only help reform-related decision-making at country level but equally assist the EC in defining and negotiating sector support programmes. Other areas of interest would be the ETF's work on social dialogue, qualifications frameworks (as far as this fits with policy needs) and lifelong learning."

All three are essential complementary actions to larger EC sector reform programmes under ENP, highlighting aspects of reform which require ongoing or added policy attention.

The extension of peer learning on human capital development to ENP partners would be a valuable departure in the context of implementation of the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



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

by Rebecca Warden, ICE

// COOPERATION WITH EUROPEAN PARTNERS HAS MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE //

JOINING MINDS FOR ARMENIAN EDUCATION

Reform initiative sees Danish seeds sprout in Armenia

Lagging behind university education, Armenian vocational education has received a tremendous boost in recent years. Since a strategy for the sector was put together with EU support, great strides have been made to develop the framework that is needed to adapt the system to the needs of a modern economy. Dedication and commitment from education authorities are bearing fruit. Their zeal is about to be translated into financial support from the EU.

Armenian VET schools, their curricula and their textbooks were developed for a different age than that of today. In their heyday, they enjoyed recognition as the training ground for workers in the centrally planned production systems of the Soviet Union.

But, during the transition years, privatisation without effective taxation drained the spending power of the

central governments of the newly independent states and public funding dwindled. Higher education took priority. Vocational education, designed to serve a planned economy, could not deliver the goods and, rather than receiving the necessary funds to restructure and prepare for a critical new role, was punished for it.

The tide began to turn in the middle of this decade, when an ETF-supported strategy laid the foundations for a long overdue overhaul of vocational education. In 2004 the first pilot projects were launched to test different setups in the Armenian context. EU Tacis support was used for much needed equipment upgrades and curricula at selected institutions were modularised to give more flexibility.

National authorities

In 2006 the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument took over. It heralded a move from project support to

budgetary support, giving much more responsibility to the national authorities.

Deputy Education Minister Aram Avetisyan acknowledges the role the ETF has played in getting so far so fast.

“Without exaggerating I can say that our cooperation with European partners has made a huge difference,” he said.

One of the key decisions the Armenians had to make was which model to use in order to develop a VET system that could cope with the needs of a labour market in constant flux. A high level mission researched the options and eventually set its sights on Denmark.

So when one of the key building blocks of the new Armenian VET system - a National Council for Vocational Education and Training Development - gathered for the first time in the Armenian capital Yerevan in June 2009, the assembled representatives of national education authorities, teachers

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



Armenia's cooperation with European partners has made a huge difference

In Soviet times, Vanadzor lived off its huge chemical plants

associations, employers organisations and trade unions were met by a large delegation from the small Scandinavian country that included Danish ETF experts as well as contracted trainers and even a group of Danish journalists, keen to report on local seeds being sown in the faraway foothills of Mount Ararat.

One of the people helping the national council on its way is Roland Østerlund of the Danish Ministry of Education. In 2007 he hosted a study visit for a delegation from the Armenian ministry “A mere two years later and I meet a national council for VET. They’ve truly moved on,” he said.

Traditions

Østerlund presented the gathering with an overview of the Danish system of VET governance and practice. He warned that the VET systems of European countries are rooted in traditions that have evolved over decades, sometimes centuries. Ergo sum: don’t expect miracles, this needs time.

The council will be the country’s platform for social dialogue. One of the beauties of the Danish system is that its tripartite governing structure is replicated locally at technical colleges. Following this model, two Armenian schools will pilot the development of their own tripartite governing board,



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

with local employers and workers represented.

A hundred odd kilometres of rolling green hills and snow-capped mountains to the north of Yerevan lies Vanadzor, the third largest city in Armenia.

In Soviet times, Vanadzor lived off its huge chemical plants. The collapse of the Soviet economy was hard felt here. After 1991, new industries developed but employers found it difficult to find workers with the right skills because the main source of graduates, Vanadzor State Technical College, was struggling with old textbooks, antiquated machinery, no computers and poorly paid teachers.

But over the past five years the college has modernised and modularised its curricula and upgraded its facilities. It will soon be one of the first two schools in Armenia to be governed by a tripartite board.

The new board received its first training sessions from ETF, Danish and national experts on 11 and 12 June. A manual based on their experience will be produced to support a nationwide introduction of the new governing structures at a later date.

School director Hovhannes Tadevosyan has high expectations of the revitalised links with local industry.

“So far, work experience for our students has been the biggest gain from cooperating with Vanadzor’s employers, but in due course we also hope to be able to recover some of our expenses and so put ourselves on a sounder financial footing,” Tadevosyan said.

Hasmik Julhakyan, head of a local garment factory, is a member of the new tripartite board. She takes the majority of her new recruits directly from the college. Her view is slightly different.

“What I need most is graduates who can start work immediately without the need for much retraining. That is my greatest hope from closer cooperation with the college.”

Even though some serious fine-tuning of stakeholders’ expectations still lies ahead, their collective motivation and commitment are top notch. The authorities have the will. There is money and there will be more of it soon. The outlook for Armenia looks bright indeed.

by Ard Jongsma, ICE



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

//DON'T GIVE PEOPLE FISH - GIVE THEM THE TOOLS
TO CATCH THEIR OWN FISH//

TRANSFORMING CENTRAL ASIA'S VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Turin event launches School Development project in Central Asia

Putting Central Asia's vocational schools at the centre of lifelong learning - taking them beyond traditional roles and into an innovative and more expansive future - is at the heart of a new European Training Foundation programme.

The School Development in Central Asia launch event in early May at Turin's Arsenale della Pace that houses Sermig - a social and educational training centre - brought together more than 40 school leaders, government officials and social partners.

The event was a first step in enabling ETF partners in Central Asia to take stock of their current experiences and perceptions of school development and begin creating instruments for effective change during a three-year project that will roll out between now and 2011.

Peter Greenwood, ETF Head of Operations, said vocational training schools in Central Asia had a key role to play in adapting and changing as their societies and economies continue to undergo massive transformation.

"The economic and financial crisis represents a huge challenge for all countries that intensifies the pressure on education and training systems to reflect the sort of skills and



Photo:ETF/A.Ramella

competencies to help economies and societies back to strength in the future."

It was a message that was reinforced by speakers from other countries that shared a Communist past with the former Soviet republics of Central Asia.

Professor Andras Benedek of Budapest Technical University has more than

The economic and financial crisis represents a challenge to all countries

30 years' experience of the Hungarian system of vocational education and training that bridges the Communist and post-Communist eras.

Professor Andras Benedek of
Budapest Technical University



Photo: Fotolia

Benedek - an engineer who spent three years studying in Moscow in Soviet times - said reforms begun in the mid 1980s had laid the groundwork for a mixed network of 7,000 public and private vocational schools in Hungary.

Economic growth and social changes over the past ten years had led to a decline in numbers of students entering vocational schools - take-up of apprenticeships had dropped from 50% in 1989 to just 15% today, with dire consequences for the labour market, Benedek said.

"Ironically although most young people now opt for higher education, it is those with good technical qualifications who have no difficulty finding jobs."

Experience of vocational school stakeholders in three Central Asia countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - that participated in a two-year ETF-backed Skills Development for Poverty Reduction (SDPR) pilot project that concluded last year, demonstrates just how expansive a vision can be created for schools, particularly those in rural areas with little or no adult education facilities.

The results of the project amply demonstrate that school development for lifelong learning is within the reach of those prepared to grasp the opportunity.

Stakeholders in Kazakhstan recognised adult training as the key activity for schools; in Kyrgyzstan project schools were transformed into the focal point for trainers and new ideas that took training to rural farmers; in Tajikistan - which struggled to find strong support

from central authorities for the project - schools began to see themselves as focal points for the 'trainers of people.'

As Aisulu Daldybayeva, a chief expert of the Kazakh education ministry's Department of Technical and Professional Education, noted during the session on the SDPR project: "Poverty begins where there is no access to education and training."

Kyrgyz participant, Temirkul Tilemshev, the former head of Kochkor's VET School No. 15, said a lesson of the project had been "don't give fish to the people; give them the tools and skills to catch their own fish."

Experiences of school development and change from Estonia, Portugal and Serbia gave delegates a chance to understand that despite the unique challenges they faced in each of their countries there was no need to reinvent the wheel.

The programme included visits to two training schools housed at the Arsenale dello Pace, including the Steiner school, one of three in Italy that teaches cinematic arts, and a tour of banking group Unicredit's innovative management training centre in Turin.

At a final brainstorming session, groups of the three key stakeholders in vocational schools - staff, policy makers and social partners - engaged in heated, but good natured, exchanges.

"Give schools the freedom to be creative," Tuyun Karimov of Tajikistan's National School of Tourism told the policymakers. "Check us by all means, but allow us to work freely."

A cacophony of voices from the policymakers agreed - provided schools accepted full accountability for their work.

Amangeldy Davletaliyev, Vice President of the Kyrgyz Chamber of Commerce and Industry, representing social partners, urged school staff to have "business spirit and initiative" and policymakers to provide the "framework and rules" within which school development could take place.

But above all he cautioned that schools must provide graduates qualified for the labour market - and this in a fast changing world where many of the key jobs that will be in demand in five years' time do not yet exist. ■

by Nick Holdsworth, ICE

NEW EDITORIAL BOARD TAKES AIM



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

A new ETF editorial board convened for the first time on 25 and 26 May in Turin. It includes nine external experts from among and beyond the ETF's traditional partner countries as well as three members of the agency's staff.

The composition of the board embodies current developments in the work of the agency whose new mandate has not only extended its geographical scope but will also see it direct its activities into the broader field of lifelong learning.

ETF publications and their role in the ETF's communication with its peers and partners have been under intense review since 2003, when paper output peaked and a first editorial board was established to sharpen the focus. This board coached staff through the process of publishing knowledge and expertise accrued at the ETF. During its five-year lifespan, an internal peer review system was developed as a way of guaranteeing the quality of information the ETF produces to support policy learning and development in education and training.

The core publications of the ETF now comprise six or seven annual policy briefings and a handful of key publications. Staff regularly contribute articles to professional journals and the second issue of volume 45 of the *European Journal of Education*, due to appear in 2010, will be guest edited by the ETF. A commercially published book is also in the pipeline.

In the years ahead, these will be submitted to critical external review by the new editorial board. It has a broader membership than the previous one both in number (twelve instead of six), institutional background and geographic coverage.

Several new members, including Jason Laker, Esther Kibuuka-Sebitosi, Steve Bainbridge and Ahmet Aypay, are experienced editors. Others were brought in because of their specific expertise on issues that are priorities for the ETF for the coming years or with partner countries or organisations. Ibrahim Elnur is a specialist in issues of war and migration, Ana Maria Marhan works with e-learning and Raimo Vuorinen is a lifelong learning and guidance expert. Steve Bainbridge of Cedefop, Olga Oleynikova of the Russian Centre for Vocational Education and Training Studies and the World Bank's Juan Manuel Moreno will contribute with expertise and viewpoints from their own organisations. ■

by Ard Jongsma

The ETF Editorial Board

External members:

Ahmet Aypay - Associate Professor, Department of Education Administration and Policy, Faculty of Education, Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey.

Steve Bainbridge - Senior expert from Cedefop, Greece.

Ibrahim Elnur - Associate Professor and Coordinator of Professional Development, Political Sciences Department, the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

Esther Kibuuka-Sebitosi - Associate Professor at the Centre for African Renaissance Studies of the University of South Africa.

Jason A Laker - Associate Vice-Principal and Dean of Student Affairs at Queen's University, Canada.

Ana Maria Marhan - Senior Researcher in Psychology of the Romanian Academy of Sciences. Currently Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Juan Manuel Moreno - Senior Education Specialist leading the Education Team for Bulgaria, Armenia and Azerbaijan at the World Bank.

Olga Oleynikova - Director of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training Studies, Russia.

Raimo Vuorinen - Coordinator of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network at the Finnish Institute for Educational Research, Jyväskylä University, Finland.

From the ETF:

ETF Senior Experts **Pasi Sahlberg** (Chair) and **Evelyn Viertel**, both from the Operations Department, and **Joanna Anstey** from the External Communication Unit.

PUBLICATIONS



INFORM Issue 01: Innovative training for poverty reduction in rural Central Asia

This policy briefing examines the experience gained through an ETF funded project focussing on VET supported income generation activities. The approach to poverty alleviation builds on existing vocational training structures in rural areas of Central Asia.

Available on paper and in electronic form from the ETF website in English and Russian.

Coming soon

INFORM Issue 02: Key competences. July 2009

INFORM Issue 03: Observatory Function. September 2009

EVENTS

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



September 01-03 2009, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Workshop on analysis of employment guidance and counselling in Kyrgyzstan.

September 09-11 2009, Ashgabad, Turkmenistan

National workshop on VET and Labour market.

September 15 2009, Ankara, Turkey

Seminar on recognition of the professional status of care for the elderly.

September 19-19 2009, Brijuni Island, Croatia

Regional seminar on intercultural dialogue and social inclusion of ethnic groups through education and training in Western Balkan countries.

NEW FACES



Judith Novak, ETF Governing Board member representing DG Enlargement



Tarja Riihimäki, ETF Governing Board member from Finland



Jordi Curell, Director Lifelong Learning: horizontal Lisbon policy issues and international affairs, DG EAC

Photos: ETF/A. Ramella

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