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# Live and learn

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## *Education is a Window to Freedom*

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# WHERE WILL WOMEN BE IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN 2010?

How much equality do men and women enjoy in the spheres of education and employment? What are the barriers to full equality and what can be done to remove these barriers? These are the questions that brought 50 young men and women from 24 different countries to Turin on 6–7 March 2006 to attend the first ETF conference entirely devoted to gender issues. Held on the eve of International Women's Day, the theme of the conference was Women in Education and Employment 2010.

Organising this conference was a departure for the ETF in more ways than one. The participants – a mix of people from training centres, universities, women's business associations and NGOs – were aged between 20 and 35, giving a younger profile than is usually the case at ETF events. The format chosen was a dynamic one, putting the accent on the personal as well as the professional and allowing time for informal discussions and brainstorming sessions as well as plenaries and presentations. The aim was to generate a wealth of new ideas for action to feed into the ETF's work in Turin and in the field. It was hoped that the participants would also benefit from useful pointers and suggestions to put into practice in their work as well as the chance to network with colleagues from around the world.

## Choice of subjects is critical

Women are far more likely to receive a decent education today than was the case 30 years ago, but their chances still vary from one country to another. In a minority of ETF partner countries, the participation rate

of girls still lags behind that of boys. In Morocco, for example, indicators show that only 55% of girls finish their primary education compared with 67% of boys. In the majority of partner countries, equality of access is no longer such a problem and the critical issues are more about how many young women finish basic education or which subjects they study. Serbia's education system shows a

reasonable degree of gender equality in participation rates, but a high degree of gender segregation in terms of subjects. 'This is something seen all over Europe,' says Prof. Mieke Verloo, lecturer in gender studies at Nijmegen's Radboud University in the Netherlands. 'Women tend to cluster in those "soft" subjects where the job prospects are poorest.'



Young participants at the Turin conference were involved in workshops using innovative techniques for group work.

Photo: ETF

**If a family cannot afford to send all its children to school, it is often the girls who are kept back.**

Photo: ETF



ETF staff ran the workshops which focused on economic and social issues affecting women in today's society.

Of all the root causes of inequality in education, economic problems are perhaps the most obvious. If a family cannot afford to send all its children to school, it is often the girls who are kept back. In rural areas, long distances to school can make the problem worse. 'Women in rural areas of Kosovo do elementary education and some of them finish secondary school, but very few make it to higher education,' says Mirlinda Kusari, president of women's business association SHE-ERA in Gjakova, Kosovo. 'Some families support the women, but in poorer families, priority is usually given to the boys.'

Unstable conditions can also affect the equation. 'Families in rough areas of Albania do not send their daughters to school because they are afraid they could be trafficked or kidnapped,' says Eglantina Gjermeni, president of the Gender Alliance for Development Centre in Tirana. 'When they see they are reaching puberty and starting to look like women, they are afraid for them.' These reactions reached a peak after the unrest following the collapse of pyramid-saving schemes in Albania in 1997, although the security situation has since improved.

### **Lack of positive role models**

Social pressures and fixed ideas of what is appropriate for

women have a big influence on gender inequality in education everywhere. Young women may lack positive role models. Women make up the majority of teachers and lecturers in the schools and universities, but head teachers, heads of departments and rectors are still most likely to be men. Families may not support a young woman's desire to continue her education or society may not approve. Rola Chbaklo is currently combining her work as head of support and development at Lebanese NGO Social Welfare Institution with studying for her second Master's degree. 'People ask me – why are you going for a second Master's degree?' she says. 'They tell me I'll never be able to get married because I'll be better educated than my partner.'

Government attitudes can also be part of the problem. There is usually a big gulf between official commitments to equality and the situation on the ground, but politicians are often reluctant to admit that the disparity exists. 'When you talk to the leaders in Arab countries, they all say our laws make no distinction between girls and boys so there is no difference,' says Mostefa Boudiaf of the International Labour Organization's International Training Centre in Turin. 'Their intentions are good, but this attitude is counterproductive because it doesn't address the disparity between girls and boys in schooling,' he adds.

### **Include a gender perspective throughout**

Bringing the politicians on board is therefore seen as essential. The delegates believe that they must be asked to include a gender perspective in all measures affecting education and training. This should cover monitoring the effectiveness of policy as well as designing it. 'It is important that civil servants are trained to spot the gender aspect of things,' says Mieke Verloo, 'but this kind of expertise is not usually considered important within state hierarchies.'

Another idea that came through strongly was the need for data to be disaggregated by gender. Without this basic information, the delegates stressed that it was impossible to measure the extent of the problem or monitor progress towards greater equality. It was therefore vital that international organisations such as the ETF always work with data that can be broken down by gender.

Teachers have an important role to play in their institutions. Not only can they try to ensure that a gender perspective is built into the curriculum, but they can also act as positive role models for their students. 'This means including gender issues in the way I teach and trying to promote a deeper awareness of the need for equality,' says Alessandra Bonezzi, a vocational trainer from Reggio Emilia, Italy.

There is also a need for better career guidance for girls to ensure that they do not make the wrong choice of subjects early on. 'In Egypt, it is not so much a question of increasing access to education, it is more a question of the quality of the education girls receive, and especially the counselling mechanisms that guide them throughout,' says Eman El-Hadary, a research assistant at Cairo's American University. 'There is no clear guidance for boys or girls, but this particularly affects girls because they will often make the wrong career choices.'

## No simple explanation for pay gap

When women finish their education and start work, the gender gap widens. In more developed countries, professional women come up against a glass ceiling which allows them to climb only so far up the career ladder. And in spite of equal pay legislation, women still routinely earn less than men. A recent report from the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup> found that the pay gap was not simply a matter of women being paid less than men for doing the same job. The problem is that women tend to make the wrong choices at school and in the early stages of their careers. Once women have children, their earnings drop sharply and do not recover when they return to often part-time jobs after their children have grown up.

In transition countries, working women get much more of a raw deal. A recent report by the United Nations Development Fund for Women found that millions of women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia lost their jobs in the transition process as state industries were privatised or closed down. Many others are in low-paid work and tolerate a high degree of job segregation, while only an elite have been able to take advantage of the new economic opportunities.

## Time is the most precious resource

No matter where they live, the one thing that conditions all working women's lives is the fact that they have children and that most women are still more involved in looking after their children than are most men. This means that women have shorter working lives than men and can offer less flexibility in terms of availability to work overtime or travel. It also means that they have less time to devote to those extracurricular networking activities that can help to

advance their careers. It is no coincidence that the delegates identified time as one of the most precious resources and something that decisively conditions women's position in the labour market.

Discrimination against women with children often takes place in an unofficial way, making it more difficult to challenge. Serbian employment law shows a strong formal commitment to gender equality, but according to Sanja Popovic-Pantic, president of the Association of Serbian Businesswomen, multinational companies in Serbia operate according to another set of rules. 'It isn't legal but I've heard of young women being asked at job interviews to promise that they won't have children for at least three years,' she says.

Many delegates believe that the state must take some of the care burden off women's shoulders by providing more facilities for looking after children and the elderly. There was also talk of the need for fathers to take on more responsibility for looking after their children and for employers to make this possible. 'If men could stay at home, look after the kids and do

a part-time job without it damaging their career, then maybe things could change,' says Paola Carburlotto of Turin's Association of Women Entrepreneurs.

## Women entrepreneurs need support

A second point raised by many people was the need to positively engage employers in improving women's position in the labour market. Melham Mansour, a freelance trainer from Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, mentioned the Spanish government's recent decision to impose quotas of equal numbers of male and female employees on all large companies, but not many thought this was the best way to go. Zhibek Karamanova, a law student from Almaty, Kazakhstan, believes that the carrot is better than the stick. 'The state must offer incentives to employers,' she says. 'This could be tax breaks or something that small businesses are interested in. You can't just force companies to employ 50% women.'

**Discrimination against women with children often takes place in an unofficial way, making it more difficult to challenge.**



*Working women in transition countries get much more of a raw deal than men.*

1 *Shaping a Fairer Future*, Women and Work Commission, February 2006.



## SHIRIN EBADI: EDUCATION IS A WINDOW TO FREEDOM

Women should never underestimate the value of education, according to Shirin Ebadi, 2003 Nobel prizewinner. 'Knowledge is a window to freedom because an educated woman will never accept oppression,' said the lawyer and human rights campaigner from the Islamic Republic of Iran in her keynote speech at the conference. In her country, women have made so much progress in this respect that they now make up more than 65% of university graduates. But this achievement does not translate into equal success in the labour market as Iranian women are three times as likely to be unemployed than men. 'Although education can play a big role in empowering women, if it doesn't help them find work, it just becomes a luxury,' she said.

Governments should also think carefully about how labour law can affect women's job prospects. In Iran, new mothers have the right to three months' maternity leave and workplaces employing more than ten women are obliged to provide childcare. However the fact that the government expects employers to bear the full cost of these nurseries makes them reluctant to employ women. 'Laws that were designed to protect women are actually having the opposite effect,' said Ebadi.

Shirin Ebadi has first-hand experience of discrimination. In 1969 she became Iran's first female judge and later became president of bench 24 of Tehran's city court. In 1979, in the wake of the Iranian revolution, Ebadi and her female colleagues were dismissed from their posts and given clerical duties due to the belief that women could not be judges under Islam. Ebadi's application to practise law was turned

down and she was unable to work until 1992, when she managed to obtain a licence to begin private practice. She has since become one of the most respected voices of Iran's reformist movement and has taken on many of the country's most politically sensitive cases, sometimes at personal risk.



Photo: ETF

The need to support women entrepreneurs was another common theme. Encouraging women to start up small businesses is seen as a good way of boosting female employment, especially in transition countries.

Nevertheless, women need help such as entrepreneurship training or confidence-building to adapt to this new and demanding way of earning a living. Access to start-up capital is also a major stumbling block in many partner countries. The Association of Serbian Businesswomen is currently in talks with the Serbian finance minister on how to make the government's budget more gender sensitive. One of their demands is for banks to provide better credit conditions for women entrepreneurs.

### Breaking out of the informal economy

Every effort should be made to make sure that women entrepreneurs do not find themselves operating outside the formal system. Kusari reports that many women are setting up micro-businesses in rural areas of Kosovo, but prevailing conditions mean that nearly all are in the informal sector. International organisations as well as government have a role to play in this. Hala Ayoubi, secretary general of the Young Entrepreneurs' Association in Amman, Jordan, believes that EU programmes have had only a limited success in creating jobs for Jordanian women over the past ten years. For Ayoubi, the projects adopt too much of a welfare-oriented approach, such as micro-financing for cottage industries that women run from their homes. 'These kind of industries have very little capacity for growth,' she says. 'I think we should concentrate on training in the formal sector and avoid welfare-orientated programmes, which always link women to the issue of poverty.'

By the end of the two days, the delegates had produced a

Photo: EuropeAid



Women entrepreneurs need more support to start up small businesses.

long list of practical suggestions for further action both in their own lives and for the wider arena. For the ETF, this fresh input will be used to feed into its daily work with partner countries and to push forward its commitment to promoting gender equality. However the organisation is keen for this first major event on gender to have a more lasting influence. On 3 May, the ETF presented the recommendations of the conference to the European Parliament at the request of the head of the women's committee, Anna Záborská. It has now been asked by the parliament to provide expertise on a new report looking at the issue of women and migration.

#### Find out more:

SHE-ERA - <http://www.cipe.org/programs/global/partners/dispPartner.php?id=214>  
Gender Alliance for Development - <http://www.gadc-al.org/index.php?lang=en>  
Association of Business Women in Serbia - <http://www.poslovnezene.org.yu/e/index.htm>  
Association of Women Entrepreneurs, Turin - <http://www.aidda.org/aiddaweb.nsf/index.html>  
Autobiography of Shirin Ebadi - <http://nobelprize.org/peace/laureates/2003/ebadi-bio.html>



# NORWAY: NEVER TOO EARLY TO START ENTREPRENEURSHIP LEARNING

*Norway has built up a considerable amount of expertise in what makes for good entrepreneurship learning. Elisabeth Rønnevig is a vital part of that equation. For the past twelve years, she has been actively involved in entrepreneurship in education in a variety of roles, working as project leader on national and international projects. Today, in her job as adviser at the Norwegian Directorate for Education, Training and Work at the Ministry of Education and Science, she is part of a team reviewing Norway's pioneering national strategy for entrepreneurship in education. Here she shares with Live and Learn some insights into what makes for successful entrepreneurship learning.*

Entrepreneurship learning is a lot more than just a current buzzword in educational circles. Although some people may try to confine this approach to narrow definitions or goals – such as training young people how to start up their own business – it is actually something much more ambitious and far-reaching. “It is not just a matter of how to support would-be entrepreneurs, but also how people who are employed can adopt an entrepreneurial attitude in their jobs or even how people can be good citizens and be innovative in their society as a whole,” says Elisabeth Rønnevig. It is also about fundamentally changing the way teachers teach and students learn and firmly embedding schools, universities and training centres in their local communities.

But for Rønnevig, entrepreneurship learning is above all a question of encouraging and developing a certain set of personal qualities and attitudes in individuals. These could include the ability to take initiatives, innovation and creativity, the willingness to take risks and, most importantly of all, a degree of self-confidence. “So then it becomes a question of what can the education system do to support these qualities and attitudes,” she says.

## Co-operation goes both ways

Rønnevig is a firm believer that it is never too early to introduce an element of enterprise into the classroom, although different methods may be appropriate at different ages. Accordingly the Norwegian directorate has come up with a series of manuals to give teachers some guidance on how to go about this. In primary schools, entrepreneurship learning can be a matter of encouraging children to find out more about their immediate surroundings and where they fit into that broader picture. “This could be learning about how a community works and seeing the value in that local community,” says Rønnevig.

She cites the example of a recent initiative in Norway's Telemark county where a local farmer was looking to set up a small guesthouse on his farm, catering mainly to families. “We got some very young students to work with him looking at what possibilities there were on his farm for activities that would be fun for children,” she says. The students came up with the idea of a floating platform on a lake which could be used for swimming and fishing. The farmer decided to follow their

advice and build the structure. While the question posed stimulated their creativity, planning the platform provided good practice in maths and drawing skills.

## COOKING UP SOME NEW IDEAS

Last year Norway celebrated one hundred years of independence after its union with Sweden was dissolved in 1905. In amongst the celebrations marking this historic separation, one innovative project was busy investigating what brings Norway and Sweden together. This was PERSIKA, a three-year project aimed at promoting entrepreneurship learning and co-operation between 45 primary and secondary schools in the border regions of Hedmark in Norway and Värmland in Sweden.

A part of the project, students and teachers from three schools straddling the border began work on a cookery book containing traditional Swedish and Norwegian recipes. They drew on existing expertise as two of the schools taught cookery as part of the curriculum while the third taught graphic design. “Producing this book gave the students a lot,” says Rønnevig. “Not only did they improve their cooking and graphic design skills, they also had to really look into their culture and history and come up with old recipes from the border areas.” The book has now been published and was used as a gift at a major international conference on entrepreneurship learning held in Norway last May.

**Higher education provides opportunities for more sophisticated forms of interaction between students and businesses.**

However, perhaps the biggest pay-off from this exercise was in terms of the boost to the childrens' self-confidence. "They saw how they could be useful to the wider community as they had knowledge that the adults didn't," says Rønnevig.

At secondary school level, typically students can come into more direct contact with the workplace. An example from Norway is that of a local bed factory which wanted to produce beds which were especially attractive to young people. "So young people were involved in designing the beds," says Rønnevig, "we also tried to put in tasks which supported their learning plan at school, so they were using maths to calculate the exact measurements and using Norwegian and a second language to describe the beds." She stresses that for an initiative like this to work, the students must feel that their contribution is of real value to the local business concerned. "It is very important to set up two-way co-operation," says Rønnevig, "you don't want the students to simply visit the factory, see the production line and then go back to school, they must get actively involved."

Higher education provides opportunities for more sophisticated forms of interaction between students and businesses. One example is when students set themselves up as specialised consultants,

carrying out specific jobs such as market research for local companies. When entrepreneurship learning appears in adult education in Norway, this usually takes the form of specific training on how to set up a business. "These may be people who have an idea or a particular product that they want to go out and sell but they lack the know-how of how to draw up a business plan or how to design a marketing campaign," says Rønnevig.

### Different partners but a common vision

While the Norwegian experience can provide a wealth of individual examples of innovative practice, it also has plenty to teach about the rights and wrongs of policy design. Norway's first attempt to develop a national framework for promoting entrepreneurship in education began in the mid 1990s. In 1997 seven ministries led by the ministry of education began work on a national strategy but they soon found that they were all working to different agendas. The lack of a common vision made the strategy extremely difficult to put into practice and so it failed to take off. When a second attempt was made in 2004, just three ministries were involved – education, trade and regional and local government with a leading role given to the latter. While the motivation of one ministry may be different from the next – regional and local government may be interested in promoting local development in rural areas for instance, whereas trade and industry may be keen to boost overall employability - all three managed to agree on an overriding objective. This was defined as ensuring that the education system "contributes to value creation, the founding of new businesses and innovation in Norway." The Norwegians stress that ensuring the different policy-makers share a common vision is a key ingredient for success.

The strategy, known as "See the opportunities and make them

work," functions on two levels; nationally and locally. The national government sets the agenda with input from the social partners. At local level, education authorities, schools and business associations work together to design and carry out the activities. "This is an activity which has to be built on networks and partnership as it is just not possible for a school or a business to achieve much on its own," says Rønnevig.

### Delivering benefits to all participants

The main employers' organisation in Norway now has a certain number of staff working as entrepreneurship learning liaison officers and has drawn up special partnership contracts to regulate the agreements between schools and businesses. Rønnevig has found that many Norwegian companies are happy to get involved in entrepreneurship learning activities, although, as always, larger companies tend to be more receptive than SMEs. "In the end it does come down to what is in it for them," she says, "in the local area, involvement with schools can generate a lot of goodwill, it can also help with recruitment as a student may later on become a good employee." Rønnevig believes that, if done well, entrepreneurship learning can deliver benefits to all of the participants, producing a win-win situation and building durable links.

In the case of schools, where time and resources are always at a premium, it usually takes the efforts of what Rønnevig calls "burning souls" or a few enlightened individuals to get the ball rolling. However the benefits for the institution can be substantial. "When schools come out of their shells, they not only gain more relevant knowledge, but they also become a more important part of society by opening up to the local community and inviting in more people from other walks of life," she says. Involvement with the local people and businesses in

Photo: Purdue



Entrepreneurship learning can deliver benefits to all participants.



# WESTERN BALKANS TRIES ITS HAND AT ENTREPRENEURSHIP LEARNING

Entrepreneurship learning is an area which is still in its infancy. Exact definitions in this field are still up for debate and there are no hard and fast rules about how it should be done. However three countries from the Western Balkans have been steaming ahead in these uncharted waters.

With advice from the ETF, Albania, FYR Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro have been attempting to inject a dose of entrepreneurship learning throughout their education systems by setting up national partnerships over the past three years. "They are trying to make all the different parts of the system, including work-based learning, relate better to entrepreneurship," says Anthony Gribben, ETF's entrepreneurship learning expert. This experience has shown them the need for an all-encompassing strategy which can get all the players that have an impact on business working together.

The ETF's work with the Western Balkan countries forms part of a wider multi-agency approach to support enterprise development in partnership with the European Commission (DG Enterprise), the OECD and the EBRD. In particular, the ETF has developed a series of performance indicators which will be used to measure how well each country's education and training system is delivering entrepreneurship learning. "Performance indicators provide a mini road-map for policy and practice for each country and allow for regional benchmarking," says Gribben.

The region has already produced several examples of best practice such as the changes afoot at the faculty of mechanical engineering at St Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, FYR Macedonia. The faculty had seen enrolments falling steeply and most of its links to industry disappearing during the 1990s as big companies were closed down. In 1996-97, faculty leadership came up with a turn-around strategy drawing on the experience and ideas of a group of younger lecturers who had recently returned from change management training in the US. The changes included revamping the curriculum with an emphasis on SMEs and entrepreneurship training, putting in place means for technology transfer, offering non-formal training to SMEs and a marketing drive to all Macedonian secondary schools to revive student interest in mechanical engineering. Entrepreneurship modules were designed for one programme and have since become compulsory for all students at the faculty

This strategy has produced good results and its influence is now being felt throughout the university. The entrepreneurship learning modules developed by the faculty are now being offered to students of other faculties while staff from engineering are helping train other lecturers. In 2007, the entrepreneurship training materials will be made available online to all staff and students. The university is now planning to set up an incubator centre to support students wishing to turn innovative ideas into working businesses.



Entrepreneurship learning helps students to turn innovative ideas into working businesses.

Photo: ETF

this way can give teachers more self-confidence and status in their community. The links that grow up between schools and businesses can produce unexpected spin-offs.

"Businesses will sometimes realise that the local school has other resources to offer such as language courses or computing," says Rønnevig. In one case where a school got involved with local businesses, some of its students ended up providing computer training for local business people, she reports.

## Boosting young peoples' self-confidence

Nevertheless, surely the best measure of the success or failure of entrepreneurship learning has to be the impact it has on the young people involved. Does it encourage them to adopt a more enterprising outlook on life? Can

it help them to deal more creatively and productively with the challenges they will face in the future? Can it equip them to cope with the high degree of uncertainty which seems so much a feature of 21<sup>st</sup> century living? Entrepreneurship learning is still too young an area to have generated a solid body of scientific research and so it is not yet possible to provide clear cut answers to these questions. But the signs from Norway are encouraging.

A recent study by Trønderlag Research and Development Institute<sup>2</sup> aimed to assess the impact of entrepreneurship learning on upper secondary school students. It found that within ten years of completing this kind of learning, 17% of graduates had gone on to set up their own businesses. This compares to an average of around 7.5% of the Norwegian population in general. Drawing on her own personal experience, Elizabeth Rønnevig is convinced

that entrepreneurship learning can make a big difference to young people. She sometimes invites graduates of entrepreneurship learning to speak at conferences. "I can see this kind of activity has a big impact on their self-confidence" she says, "when I ask them what they learnt from this activity, they often say – first of all, if I hadn't done this kind of training, I would never have been capable of standing up in front of 100 people and talking about it - so you can really see that they are growing."

### Find out more:

Telemark County - <http://osloregion.org/english/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=43>  
Trønderlag Research and Development Institute - [www.ntforsk.no](http://www.ntforsk.no)  
St Cyril and Methodius University - <http://www.ukim.edu.mk/index.php?lan=en&pon=>

*The links that grow up between schools and businesses can produce unexpected spin-offs.*

2 Young Enterprise and Entrepreneurship 2005, Trønderlag Research and Development Institute, [www.ntforsk.no](http://www.ntforsk.no)

# ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

## ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND LABOUR MARKET

by Anastasia Fetsi

**At the request of the European Commission, the ETF has undertaken a study on ethnic minority access to education and the labour market. The European Academy in Bolzano, Italy, was commissioned to carry out the study, which was implemented by a team of researchers from the Western Balkan region under the guidance of Prof. Joseph Marko. Based on desk research, it collected available quantitative information and interviews from stakeholders, resulting in a series of country reports and a synthesis report. This article outlines the main findings of the research.**

### Ethnic minorities in the Western Balkans

The ethnic composition of the Western Balkan countries is very diversified. Population censuses in early 2000 in Montenegro, Serbia and Croatia showed that the population belonging to a minority ethnic group accounted for 57%, 16% and 7.5% respectively. The number of ethnic groups encountered in each country is often high. In Serbia and Croatia there are more than 20 ethnic groups. In Montenegro there are six. In Kosovo, the United Nations Development Programme estimates that ethnic minorities account for about 11% of the total population.

The most ethnically homogeneous country in the region is Albania in which, according to the 1998 census, six ethnic minorities account for about 2% of the entire population. This percentage, however, is not fully agreed. A World Bank study arrived at 7.5% and in recent elections the minority parties received around 4% of the votes. The ethnic minority mostly exposed to uncertain numbers are the Roma because of their nomadic lifestyle as well as the fact that births are often not registered.

It is important to note that there are differences in the political position of various ethnic groups within some Western Balkan countries. One dividing line is the extent to which an ethnic group has the status of ethnic 'minority', or 'state-forming nation' or 'people' in a country. In this respect Bosnia and Herzegovina is a specific case. Although none of the Bosniac, Croat or Serb ethnic groups make up the absolute majority of

the population, in the Dayton Constitution of 1995 they are described as 'constituent peoples' enjoying institutional equality. This means that they have equal rights to make political decisions. The other 17 ethnic groups in the country are estimated to account for about 2% of the entire population and have received the status of ethnic minorities. To date, more importance is given to the rights of such constituent peoples than to the rights of other minorities.

In the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where, according to the 2002 census, Albanian-Macedonians make up 25% of the entire population, their leaders do not consider them to be an ethnic minority but a constituent people. Although it did not create a binational state, the Ohrid Agreement of 2001 provided for enhanced language rights, equitable ethnic representation for the civil service and devolved powers to the local authorities through decentralisation. In this respect the status of the Albanian ethnic group in Macedonia is different to that of other ethnic groups such as the Bulgarians, Serbs, Turks or Roma. The latter account for about 10.6% of the entire population.

All countries have constitutional and legal provisions and institutions that protect minority rights such as representation, access to education and other civic rights. These rights, however, are not appropriately monitored or implemented.



Photo: ETF

### Education and ethnic minorities: supporting cultural diversity and promoting social cohesion

Providing children access to education in their mother tongue, at least during primary and lower secondary education, has proved an effective way of enhancing their educational outcomes and school performance while at the same time preserving their cultural and ethnic identity. However, two arguments are often put forward to counterbalance the above position. The first is linked to the economic efficiency of maintaining an education system having to care for a large number of ethnic minorities. This is particularly relevant for populations of ethnic groups which are small or dispersed in a country and would need very small classes or schools.

The second argument is linked to the need for promoting ethnic reconciliation and enhancing social cohesion together with the right to ethnical and cultural identity. Closed parallel education systems and strong institutional separation can endanger the objectives of building a united society and reduce the social capital of a country. This argument is particularly relevant for the region, as all Western Balkan countries except Albania have witnessed recent ethnic conflict and wars.

All Western Balkan countries have fully fledged public education systems at all levels and provide for the constitutional guarantee of free access to education for every individual. They also have legal provisions for the education of ethnic



minorities in their mother tongue and culture. However, the implementation of those provisions varies.

In Albania, for example, national minorities are constitutionally guaranteed public education in their mother tongue. Yet only the Greek and Macedonian minorities receive it and only within the areas traditionally inhabited by these minorities. Other minorities have no mother tongue education at all. In Montenegro, education in minority languages is organised only for Albanians, not for the other minorities. Nor is provision made for delivery of classes on the history and culture of the other minorities.

In the legal systems of these countries there is often a threshold requirement, linked to the percentage of children from ethnic minorities in a class, for the organisation of minority language education programmes. This works to the disadvantage of small ethnic minorities. Roma children have the least opportunities, if any at all, to receive education in their mother tongue and culture. Generally, Roma children need to attend classes in the language of the majority population in proximity and rarely receive supplementary assistance to overcome language or other gaps. Often Roma children are inserted in special schools for children with learning difficulties, which is a violation of their basic human rights.

The issue of *how* minority education is provided also plays a role in achieving the double objective of preserving ethnic and cultural identity, thus ensuring social cohesion and intercultural exchange. There are several modalities of ethnic minority education provision in the region that could be schematically presented in three broad models (see inset). Generally numerically, economically or politically stronger ethnic groups – often with a kin state nearby – are granted education according to the first model, always at primary and very often at secondary level. This is, for example, the case in Croatia for Italians, Hungarians, Czechs and Serbs; in Serbia in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina for Hungarians, Slovaks and Romanians, in the region of Sandzak for Bosniacs and in South Serbia for Albanians; in Macedonia for Albanians and Turks.

The second model, encompassing the so-called submersion programmes, is generally used for weaker minorities. The effectiveness of this model, both in terms of educational outcomes and preservation of ethnic and cultural identity, is contested in international literature.



Roma children rarely receive education in their mother tongue.

The third model covers bilingual education and is the rare exception rather than the rule in the region. It is generally used for stronger minorities in, for example, Croatia and Vojvodina-Serbia.

Another issue concerns the existence of closed mother tongue education cycles from preschool to university education and the institutional separation of education for certain ethnic groups. A clear example of this can be found in Bosnia and Herzegovina where constituent peoples have full responsibility for their separate education systems. Institutional separation is strong and there are examples of two schools under one roof in the Federation where children of the different ethnic groups attend nationally segregated classes using different wings and different entrances to the building. Others use the same building and classrooms but have different attendance hours. Also in Kosovo, there remains an ethnically segregated education system for Albanians and the Serb minority at all levels of education.

Conclusively, it seems that the Western Balkan countries face a double challenge. At one extreme, minorities that face ethnic assimilation do not receive adequate protection. At the other extreme, institutional segregation in education serving stronger ethnic groups is hampering social cohesion. Accordingly, countries in the region will need to work to ensure that all minority children have a firm command of their mother tongue through primary and lower secondary education and see the preservation of their language and culture as an added value instead of as a deviation from the norm. They will also need to give more thought to the potential of bilingual education, where both majority and minority languages and cultures are taught to children, as an opportunity to develop a multicultural and cohesive society and work against institutional segregation and closed mother tongue education cycles.

## Models of provision of minority education in the Western Balkans

- **First model:** the entire curriculum is taught in the minority language in separate schools or classes. Educational programmes of this model could be called language shelter programmes and are delivered in almost all countries for the more numerous among ethnic minority groups.
- **Second model:** the regular school curriculum is taught in the majority language while students from the minority groups attend additional classes (often in history and culture) in their language. These educational programmes could be called submersion programmes and address smaller minority groups throughout the region.
- **Third model:** bilingual education is provided – the main subjects of the curriculum are taught in both the minority and majority languages for all participating students, regardless of their ethnic affiliation, in the same class. There are several forms of bilingual education.



In Albania, ethnic minorities make up just 2% of the population.

## Educational outcomes of ethnic minorities

It is difficult to find hard evidence of the actual participation rates of each ethnic group at each education level in the countries of the region. However, piecemeal existing information and anecdotal evidence leads to the conclusion that the educational outcomes of ethnic minorities are generally below national averages. There are exceptions to this pattern. The Macedonian, Croat and Hungarian minorities in Serbia and the Greek and Macedonian minorities in Albania seem to reach average participation in education, or even exceed it.

Roma populations all over the region present a huge deficit. The percentage of Roma people who have not completed primary education ranges between 50% in FYR Macedonia to 62% in Serbia and 82% in Albania. The majority of Roma children abandon school prematurely while some of them never enrol in education at all. The weaker educational outcomes of ethnic minorities are occasionally attributed to their cultural values or relative socio-economic position. They can also be attributed to the quality of the education delivered in the language of the ethnic minority. But the main question that arises is the extent to which authorities care and take actions to counteract cultural or other disadvantages and increase participation rates of those ethnic minorities lagging behind. An example of good practice is FYR Macedonia where Albanian, Vlach

and Turkish participation rose dramatically after the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement.

## Labour market and ethnic minorities

In theory, anti-discrimination laws govern labour market participation in the region. In practice, employers do not always follow suit. The problem is that labour market discrimination is not monitored and therefore not sanctioned. There is scope for better monitoring and for better legal and institutional provisions to which discriminated individuals could have recourse.

The general quality of labour market data in the countries of the Western Balkans is very low and does not permit cross-country comparisons. Evidence in the form of basic labour market indicators broken down by ethnic group is also hard to find. Labour market surveys, establishment surveys, registers of unemployed, or small and medium-sized enterprises, do not collect information on ethnicity. Even data on public employment by ethnic group are not collected. It is therefore difficult to document the relative position of ethnic minorities in the labour market. The Roma are the most documented group but only because special surveys have been conducted. Available evidence demonstrates that in their case the employment outcome gap is huge. Their low educational attainment, together with discriminatory practices,

creates a vicious circle for Roma people and it will take time and effort until this circle is broken.

Ethnic minorities are often concentrated in specific geographical areas. A regional distribution of employment or unemployment levels can therefore offer clues on disparity across ethnic lines. Although this is a gross proxy, it does show that some geographical areas in which there is a high concentration of ethnic groups are particularly hit by low employment levels. These are also characterised by a high degree of informal activity. Examples are the region of South Serbia where the Albanian minority is concentrated and the region of Krajina in Croatia where the Serb minority is concentrated. On the other hand, there are also regions with large numbers of many different minorities that are more developed than the rest of the country, such as Vojvodina-Serbia.

So what is the cause of the poor labour market outcomes of those regions with a high concentration of ethnic minorities? Is it the adverse economic situation of the region itself? Is it the lower educational and skill levels of the local minorities in these regions? Or is it the mere fact that they are inhabited by ethnic minorities?

Probably there is a cause and effect circle but the main issue is the extent to which national policymakers actually care for and invest in the development of the regions where ethnic minorities are settled. Also relevant is the type of actions taken to enhance the employability of individuals from ethnic minorities – for example through targeting of active labour market measures. For the moment very little is done in that direction and most interventions in regional development are donor-driven. Special attention, however, is given to the Roma through the development of national action plans for the integration of Roma people in all countries. In these plans specific measures targeting the employability of Roma people and increasing their opportunities to find a job are included together with other areas of intervention such as housing, health and education. Although the implementation of these plans is in its early stages, some countries, such as Albania, have already launched active labour market measures for the Roma.

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### Find out more:

European Academy Bolzano - <http://www.eurac.edu/index>



# SKILLS FOR PROGRESS - THE KEY MESSAGES

## Advisory Forum 2006 plenary meeting

On 7 June, the ETF launched its second triennial advisory forum in Turin. The theme for the 2006 forum was Skills for Progress and the agenda was packed with encouragement to reflect on progress since 2003 and challenges in the uncertain but exciting years ahead. On the following pages, *Live and Learn* offers an overview of the main themes and sessions of the 2006 conference.

Three years ago, policy learning was the guiding theme for the Learning Matters forum. Policy learning as a concept was launched in response to faltering systemic reform following a decade of local and often ad hoc innovative measures. Encouraging results in small projects often caused as many problems as they solved because it appeared difficult to spread results from the relative isolation in which they operated into mainstream education and training. More coherence was required, as was increased local ownership of reform initiatives.

Since 2003, strategies for the reform of education and training have become increasingly integrated and now take account of a multiplicity of interests from diverse areas. An evolving policy approach incorporating employability, adaptability and continuing learning over the past decade has extended education and training beyond its historical institutional boundaries of school, apprenticeship, training, adult education and higher education to create new relationships between these traditional forms of learning.

Employment strategies place greater emphasis on deepening the skills of the labour market and include education and training as a key element in achieving social cohesion through the development of employment pathways for disadvantaged groups. Similarly, enterprise development is perceived as relying on the ability of companies to combine knowledge and insights from the education sector with their practical needs

to enhance competitiveness. Education and training contribute to the development of human resources and add value across a broadening range of policy areas, including economic growth and poverty reduction.

The multiple contributions of education and training present policymakers with both opportunities and challenges. The opportunities arise from the potential of education and training to serve a range of interrelated policy goals and economic and social purposes; the challenges relate to the coordination and governance implications of this multiple contribution and the capacities necessary for its realisation.

An approach to the preparation of policy strategies that relies mainly on technical and specialist expertise seems insufficient. Experience suggests that effective reform is as much a social process as a technical one and that it is not possible without building partnerships and collaboration between different groups interested in the process – national, local and international.

Seen in this light, the continuing focus on policy learning is perfectly in line

with the theme that ran through all discussions at Skills for Progress: the new EU instruments for external assistance (see inset). With these new instruments, to be launched in 2007, the European Commission intends to bring greater coherence to external assistance. Common denominators of the three instruments include a human resource development perspective, the use of sector-wide approaches to mitigate fragmentation of assistance and promote greater local ownership and management, and focus on cooperation, both with the EU and among partner countries.

Skills for Progress investigated the implications of the new external assistance instruments for partner countries. It reflect on experience and developments since 2003, and drew conclusions to take the concept of policy learning a step further.

Following the conference the ETF hopes to be able to produce



recommendations that make a strong argument for a central role for human resources development in the new instruments through partnership in the broadest sense of the word.

'Cooperation and partnership is the way forward. Policy learning in partner countries will be improved with support instruments that facilitate cross-country and cross-regional learning between the EU and partner countries. Emerging European approaches to education and training in particular offer a valuable reference point for partner countries in their examination of possible policy options,' says Vincent McBride of the ETF Directorate, who was one of the key ETF staff members behind the event.

**Find out more:**

Advisory Forum 2006 - <http://www.af2006.etf.eu.int/>



Cooperation and partnership between the EU and the partner countries will facilitate cross-regional learning.

Photo: ETF

## New directions for external assistance

In 2007, the European Commission will introduce a series of new instruments to support external assistance programmes for EU partner countries. The regional programmes will be replaced by a new suite of three instruments designed to create greater coherence in external assistance:

- Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA)
- European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)
- Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument (DCEC)

IPA and ENPI are intended to support activities that promote closer integration with the EU and contribute to stability while facilitating economic growth. Central Asian republics currently covered by the Tacis programme will in future be covered by DCEC.

IPA will provide support to Turkey and the existing candidate countries of South-Eastern Europe, as well as the remaining countries of the region.

ENPI integrates two regions associated with ETF work previously covered by MEDA and Tacis – the Mediterranean, and Eastern Europe including the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the southern Caucasus. Russia will operate within the scope of the policy but will participate within a specific framework of four common spaces with the EU.

Neighbourhood objectives are based on mutual financial and policy commitments made through individual action plans for each country. Progress is to be monitored periodically.

The anticipated DCEC programme adds a third dimension to changes in external assistance, covering the full range of countries incorporated in the OECD's Development Assistance Committee list. It differs from the other two instruments in that its actions are governed by EU development policy and the Millennium Development Goals rather than by the possibility of closer integration with the EU.

The instruments are to be interpreted broadly to allow many policy issues to be addressed. A key challenge identified is the need to ensure coherence between the internal policy themes of the EU and the assistance needs of partner countries as defined in country reports, strategy reports and action plans.

## Employment policy

An effective labour market policy is a key condition for both international competitiveness and social justice in any country today. The trouble is, however, that opinions differ quite widely on what constitutes good labour market policy. There is general agreement on some of the key ingredients: support for a responsive education and training system, a socially just welfare system, a drive towards equity. But what all these different parts consist of and how exactly they relate to each other is a hotly debated issue, both within the EU and in ETF partner countries.

In the past decade, EU Member States have amassed impressive experience in this field. Employment policy has dominated the EU agenda since the introduction of the European Employment Strategy in 1997. In 2000, the Lisbon agenda proposed specific measures such as structural economic reforms in product and capital markets, investment in education, innovation and research, labour market and social policy reforms, and environmental reforms. A mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy later proposed refocusing efforts on two main goals: delivering stronger, lasting growth and more and better jobs. This marked a complete revision of the European Employment Strategy.

These policy approaches are of relevance to ETF partner countries. However, their economic and policy contexts differ substantially from those of the EU in many ways. In their different contexts, employment policy measures



that may be effective are also likely to be different.

Within the new Member States and candidate countries, transition has taken or is taking place with the objective of accession and integration into EU economic and social structures. However, in other ETF partner countries the situation may be very different and the transition process could lead in a different direction. Flexible labour markets with different kinds of short-term employment activities might be the standard labour market model for the foreseeable future and employment policy interventions must be adjusted to these developments and situations.

The objective of the thematic workshop on employment policy at the Skills for Progress advisory forum was to increase understanding of how an efficient employment policy could be designed in ETF partner countries. The starting point was current developments in the EU, with a particular focus on the discussion around the Lisbon agenda.

The ETF is stimulating debate and exchange of views on employment policy issues, such as the question of how jobs are created, what kind of jobs and by whom. The workshop moderators also tried to identify policy measures that have proved to be effective in various EU Member States and ETF partner countries.



*Henrik Huidfeldt, moderator of the Employment Policy workshop.*

## Entrepreneurship learning

Increasing global competition requires new forms of learning and new skills within the EU as well as in the ETF's Partner Countries. One of these new forms of learning that is drawing increased attention the world over is entrepreneurship learning. No longer the exclusive province of MBAs and other types of business education, entrepreneurship is increasingly deemed a core competence that can provide answers to the growing problems of rigid skills training and resulting chronic employment problems in fast changing labour markets.

*Photo: ETF*



*Anthony Gribben, moderator of the Entrepreneurship Learning workshop.*

The entrepreneurship learning model, however, is not an add-on to existing forms of education. Embracing it has far-reaching consequences and these must be understood. Effective entrepreneurship learning requires unconventional approaches, in particular in terms of policy partnership. Authorities must work in sync with employers, trade unions and the whole of the education system. Governance of education must be reviewed. And changes are not limited to later parts of the education system. Also early parts, where receptiveness to the concept of entrepreneurship is likely to be strongest, are affected.

Moreover, national partnerships must be mirrored by local partnerships for effective delivery of the policies set at national level. Effective entrepreneurship learning therefore depends on close interaction among all stakeholders in education and a sense of ownership among all parties.

Perhaps one of the hardest nuts to crack is a change in the mindset of educators. These must be drawn onboard, but not by force. They must be convinced that entrepreneurship is indeed a key competence and that self-employment is not a culture that runs in families but one that can be taught. Recent ETF research also suggests that, particularly in transition countries, academics are still insufficiently prepared to accept the benefits of adopting a more entrepreneurial spirit at their institutions and inspiring a more entrepreneurial attitude in their students.

Entrepreneurship learning is a new field that is evolving all the time. Its design and delivery methods are still underdeveloped. This makes it an interesting, but also a challenging field in terms of policy learning. It is not only ETF Partner Countries that are learning here. Entrepreneurship learning as a broad education concept is still in its infancy even in EU countries.

Anthony Gribben, the ETF expert in entrepreneurship learning believes this makes it a particularly attractive field of work for transition countries. "ETF Partner

Countries represent a unique community of transition and middle-income nations. They all have to respond urgently to competitive forces. Working singly or in cooperation with other countries on strategic lifelong entrepreneurship learning are options which Partner Countries may take as a step forward in ensuring the education world contributes to meeting the competitiveness challenge."

In this regard, ETF also views the issue of entrepreneurship learning as a promising subject of regional cooperation and one recommendation to the Advisory Forum workshop on trans-regional cooperation therefore seeks to address this through the sharing of policy intelligence, with Partner Countries developing policy models together and exchanging better practice.

## Learning from diversity



*Jean-Raymond Masson, moderator of the Learning from Diversity workshop.*

European education and training systems are rooted in different traditions. These traditions have shaped very different models. Yet in recent years they have converged on some very crucial issues, in part through the Bologna Process (higher education), in part through the Copenhagen Process (vocational education and training), and in part simply because of closer European integration.

These processes and the lessons learned through them can be of tremendous value to ETF partner countries, not least because the much-promoted concept of policy learning builds on developing tailor-made policy with the help of existing good practice.

First and most obviously, partner countries can draw on the variety of experience available in the EU, taking home the quintessential lesson that no single system offers a panacea.

But secondly, and perhaps less obviously, because countries can learn from the experience built up in these different harmonisation processes which

*Photo: ETF*

*Photo: ETF*

elements of their education and training systems are best calibrated and adapted to international standards (and to what international standards) and which are best left to the discretion of each individual country.

Instruments aimed at increasing attractiveness and effectiveness, at promoting education for all, at improving governance and involving stakeholders, at greater transparency, increased mobility, flexibility and quality, are key instruments that contribute to facing the national challenges of globalisation and the knowledge-based economy and society. They are therefore relevant to other countries too.

There are several conditions for successful implementation of EU methods in partner countries. This has been amply demonstrated through ETF projects and initiatives. Policy learning needs commitment, expertise, administrative capacity and adequate resources. To ensure responsiveness to local contexts and ownership, partnership is crucial at all levels, between participants and particularly social partners, but also between local actors and their EU partners.

Vocational education and training policies must be considered within the wider economic and social agenda. National economies and labour markets, particularly of neighbouring countries, must also be seen as increasingly interdependent with the EU. Each measure is linked to others as part of a global strategy for lifelong learning and must be considered for both its immediate benefits and for its systemic dimensions aimed at contributing to changes in mindset.

The thematic workshop on learning from diversity at the Skills for Progress advisory forum considered how partner countries use common approaches, such as in qualification frameworks, quality assurance and learning outcomes. It reviewed EU policies and instruments promoting vocational training within the EU and provided case studies of experiences in partner countries to demonstrate successful adaptation and innovation, with particular reference to lifelong learning applications. It assessed the relevance and applicability of common EU approaches to partner countries and explored ways for them to learn from each other and from EU Member States.

### Skills development for poverty reduction

Among international donors, skills development is increasingly receiving the

Photo: Purdue



The Advisory Forum 2006 brought skills development for poverty reduction into focus.

recognition it deserves as a tool to reduce poverty. For a long time the focus of poverty reduction strategies had been on primary education but lessons from the past decades have clearly demonstrated that primary education is no guarantee for work.

This has brought vocational education and training back into focus for, among others, the EU, the ILO, UNESCDO, the UNDP and the FAO. Sipke Brouwer, of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Development recently wrote: "For too long donors have concentrated only on how to teach African children reading and writing skills. We need to be more ambitious, as we need to provide African young people with the skills, knowledge and 'can-do' values to recreate their cities and rebuild their social belonging. [...] Therefore the EU is going to put a greater emphasis on vocational education and training in connection with job markets. This will help turn the current brain drain into a brain gain for the whole continent".

So far, however, it has been unclear how this revived recognition should translate into new education strategies and policies in the ETF Partner Countries.

The ETF has promoted the need to align the debate on skills development in international aid with the practice of systemic reforms in vocational education and training in transition countries for some years now. Supported by experience from Central Asia and the Mediterranean region and own research for the 2006 edition of its Yearbook, the ETF has brought up skills development for poverty reduction as one of the four key issues of the Skills for Progress conference.

At the conference, ETF Expert Peter Grootings will introduce the subject asking the key questions the ETF hopes to make progress with in Turin. He sums up the long list of open issues as: "What kinds of skills are crucial for poverty

reduction? How can people be assisted in developing the skills they need? Do they only need skills? What kind of policies should poor countries pursue and how can the donor community contribute?"

"As always," he says, "answers to what and how questions are very much interrelated and depend on why skills development is found to be important for poverty reduction in the first place. And before we can even begin to answer the what and how questions, we need to clarify what we are talking about. What does skills development really mean? What does the concept of poverty reduction encompass? And what is the link between skills development and poverty reduction?"

Although a clarification of concepts is urgently needed, Peter Grootings acknowledges that this cannot be an end in itself. "Knowing what we are talking about should ultimately serve another clarification: What would be the role that the ETF can play? The answer to this is of course the key contribution we have sought from the delegates at Skills for Progress."



Peter Grootings, moderator of the Skills Development for Poverty Reduction workshop.

Photo: ETF



## Regional meetings round up thematic debates

The results of the thematic sessions at the ETF's Skills for Progress advisory forum in June will have different implications for the various regions in which the ETF operates. The ideal approach to all issues at stake will vary depending on the environment for which it is designed, as the backdrop against which education and training take place in the individual partner countries is immensely different.

Poverty, for example, is an entirely different topic in the countries of Central Asia than in the candidate countries.

Employment policies take the current situation as a starting point. This 'current situation' is quite different in all regions. In the transition countries of Eastern Europe, for example, governance, qualifications and the mismatch between education and the labour market are some of the most pressing issues, while in the Mediterranean region, these issues could be demographic pressure, gender equality, and the informal labour market.

The relevance of EU developments in vocational education and training is of a different nature in candidate countries that must reform their systems for alignment with European policy, than it is in neighbouring countries that aspire to no more than closer ties with the EU.

For these reasons, the ETF chose to follow the thematic discussions with an afternoon session of regional meetings on the second day, in which delegates from the different regions were able to discuss results and priorities for the future.

The regions concerned are the 'pre-accession region', made up of all candidate and potential candidate countries, the 'development cooperation region' which among the ETF partner countries constitutes the countries of Central Asia, and the 'neighbourhood region'. For obvious reasons, the latter was divided into two groups: the Mediterranean subregion and the Eastern Europe and Caucasus subregion.

These four groups took the results of the thematic sessions into regional discussions to identify priorities and opportunities for vocational education and training reform in partner countries in the context of the new European external assistance instruments.

They also made the necessary linkages between the thematic groups. Issues at stake in vocational education and training are broad and closely intertwined. Delegates who attended one thematic session must have a chance to hold the results of these had to have



*Sandra Stefani, host of the Regional Sessions.*

sessions against those of others, preferably in the light of regional specificities.

The first specific aim of the regional sessions was to place the discussions and conclusions of the thematic groups into the context of the countries in each region. This exercise was designed so as to identify the broad common priorities for human resource development in each region. The regional groups discussed whether the four themes are relevant to their countries and, if so, at which priority level. They were also invited to discuss other priorities not included in the thematic group discussions that may require attention from their regional perspective.

The second specific aim was to examine whether the new external assistance instruments can contribute to the priorities identified for the reform of education and training.

Participants were invited to discuss whether the new instruments facilitate the integration of human resource development strategies and policies into a wider socio-economic development strategy.

They were asked to review to what extent the new instruments consider human resources development a priority and discussed whether or not the measures and approaches proposed are the most appropriate for reform efforts. A topic for debate was whether the sector-wide approach (SWAP) can become a method of linking human resources development strategies with other, broader, development reforms. Or whether direct budget support is a correct approach to support ownership, institutional fitness and sustainability of reforms. Or whether institution building and increased governance are needed before engaging in SWAP-type interventions.

The third aim of the sessions was to arrive at a concise definition of the role that the ETF can play linking the priorities

identified by the countries and the opportunities brought by the new instruments. The discussion will be closely linked to the new ETF Council Regulation and its possible change of mandate: an extension of the ETF's scope of work. In this context, it will also be relevant to reflect on how policy learning has been effectively applied in the three ETF work programmes since the Turin Declaration of 2003 and on identifying the opportunities for a more consolidated extension of policy learning in the next period.

Strong emphasis on regional cooperation can be found in the regulations for the three new instruments. The regional sessions will discuss whether the accumulated experience in peer reviews and peer learning developed by the ETF can become the subject of extended application in other regions or on other topics than those covered hitherto.

Finally, the groups reviewed what has been learned from the Open Method of Coordination and how it could offer new ways of working together among the partner countries.

Reports from these regional meetings will be presented during the closing session on Friday 9 June, before the presentation of the 2006 Turin Declaration.



*Photo: Purdue*

# MEDA-ETE: PROMOTING REGIONAL COOPERATION AMONG EQUALS

*Education and Training for Employment (MEDA-ETE) is a major project aiming to improve TVET systems and boost employment in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The annual forum held recently in Turin was a chance for the participants to take stock and see how far they have come since the project launch in November 2004.*

It has been a busy six months for the MEDA-ETE project. Since the first training activity kicked off in November 2005, workshops and study visits have been organised in Belgium, Finland and Portugal. Networks of people from ten different countries have begun to work together on subjects such as how young people move from education into their first job or how e-learning can further the professional development of teachers and trainers. The building blocks have been put in place for the first EuroMed Observatory Function. Altogether, the project, whose overriding aim is to promote regional cooperation among equals, is beginning to weave a web of contacts and goodwill across borders and between people around the Mediterranean.



Photo: ETF

These all came together at the project's annual forum, held in Turin 6–7 April 2006. 140 delegates, including most of the people already active in the project, sat down together to plan the work for 2006 and review progress to date. Project leader, ETF's Borhène Chakroun, declared himself reasonably satisfied. 'The work so far has underlined the need to reinforce and improve training in our MEDA partner countries. It has also confirmed our belief that "learning from each other" is the best way of going about this,' he said.

## Engineering your own future

The project's first training activity in Antwerp in November 2005 looked at the transition from school to work. Participants were presented with CATEWE,<sup>3</sup>

a model for comparing the types of transition to be found in different countries of Europe, and given a chance to compare this with what goes on in their own countries. A three-day study visit then showed them how projects in Antwerp tackle this issue.

In the MEDA-ETE countries, youth unemployment is generally high and most people agreed that more must be done to make it easier to find that vital first job. Dan Sharon of Israel's Taub Center for Advanced Social Studies believes that the shifting nature of the job market means that young people have to be much more proactive. 'You almost have to engineer your own future, create your own opportunities, but young people don't know that,' he says. 'It's up to the authorities to plan ahead and tell them what work and life cycles there are.'

## Technology isn't everything

In December a new network of teacher training institutes held its first face-to-face meeting in Finland. This grouping aims to see how e-learning can be harnessed to boost the professional capacity of teachers and trainers in the MEDA region. Visits to Helsinki and Hämeenlinna gave the network members an overview of Finland's teacher training system and the opportunities it gives teachers to regularly upgrade their skills.

Time was made between visits for participants to discuss what they had seen. A constant topic during these debriefing sessions was what makes for effective e-learning. 'At one point people were looking at the technology as the most important ingredient, but by the end they had changed their minds,' says Chakroun. 'They had come to the conclusion that just having computers or internet in the classroom is not enough if you haven't thought about the pedagogical system behind it.' Meeting again at the annual forum, the network members discussed what can be done to establish or develop e-learning mechanisms in their own institutions.

## Galvanising people into action

In January Lisbon played host to the founding meeting of what is probably the most ambitious component of the MEDA-ETE project: the EuroMed Observatory Function. This initiative aims to produce a set of indicators that will highlight at a glance key features of each country's TVET system and labour market. This will allow for regional comparisons based on solid information for the first time. This may sound like a simple and straightforward result, but Abdul Ghani, director of planning and development at the Lebanese ministry of education, believes that the prospect of being compared with neighbouring countries will

galvanise the politicians into action. 'This is the mother of all components,' he says. Participating in the project also pushes the data-gathering organisations in each country to review what data they have available and fill in any gaps.

At the Lisbon meeting, the participants drew up an initial list of which indicators to work on. At the forum in April, they officially endorsed the choice of indicators and agreed that these should be grouped into several areas including investment in education and training, access and equity in TVET and the labour market, the involvement of social partners and the anticipation of skill needs. From now on the much harder work of gathering and processing the information begins.

## Looking for real answers to real problems

The forum gave the ETF the opportunity to inform delegates of the choice of areas for analysis and study during 2006. Thus the comparative analysis 2006 will look at how careers guidance is provided in the ten MEDA-ETE countries, while the 2006 thematic study will examine the highly topical issue of recognition of qualifications. The forum also provided a chance for the companies who will help the ETF in carrying out the activities of promoting entrepreneurship and developing e-learning to introduce themselves. Facet, a Netherlands-based company specialising in small and medium-sized enterprise consultancy, will be in charge of helping service providers in the MEDA region to introduce effective schemes to help young unemployed people in the region become self-employed and set up small businesses. Giuntilabs, a specialist in e-learning research and development from Italy, will be responsible for developing suitable e-learning applications for the training of TVET trainers.

Above all, the forum gave the participants in all the different networks and subgroups that

make up this complex project the chance to meet, exchange ideas and build working relationships for the future. ETF director Muriel Dunbar urged the participants to make the most of this once-a-year opportunity. This forum is 'the glue which binds together all of the components to make a single, large regional project rather than a series of small discrete ones,' she says.

The MEDA-ETE project is a direct response to the preoccupations and desires expressed by European and Mediterranean leaders through the Barcelona Process. It is trying to provide some real answers to the problems facing the ten partners involved by targeting education and employment. Speaking for DG EuropeAid Co-Operation Office (AIDCO), Claire Kupper, programme manager for centralised operations for Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, welcomed the progress that the MEDA-ETE project has made in its first year of preparations and six months of activities. She urged all the participants to make this project fully theirs, 'as only if this happens at each of the different levels will the project be successful'.



The MEDA-ETE project has brought together networks from 10 countries to work on education and labour market related subjects.

*... just having computers or internet in the classroom is not enough if you haven't thought about the pedagogical system behind it.'*



Borhène Chakroun, ETF team leader for the implementation of the MEDA-ETE Project.



# UNIVERSITY–ENTERPRISE COOPERATION

## Tempus study identifies best practices and key challenges for the future

Against the background of the Lisbon strategy to create jobs and growth in Europe, the need for universities and other education and training institutions to relate to the world of business has been recognised as crucial. The Bologna Process on higher education, whereby different national systems would use a common framework, fits into this broader strategy and coincides with European Commission policy.

In its various communications and educational programmes, the European Commission has promoted university–enterprise cooperation to make education more relevant to the needs of the labour market, improve graduate employability and maximise the use of knowledge.

University–enterprise cooperation has been on the agenda of the Tempus programme since its launch in 1990. In order to increase the relevance of higher education to labour market needs, many partner countries have identified this subject as a national Tempus priority. In most countries, including those with a mismatch between education offer and employers' needs, cooperation between the worlds of work and education is becoming an essential topic on the education policy agenda.

In summer 2005, the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission entrusted the ETF to carry out a study on university–enterprise cooperation in the partner countries involved in the Tempus programme. The main objectives of this study were to review trends and developments in

university–enterprise cooperation in all Tempus partner countries, and to increase understanding and promote the importance of the programme as a means of enhancing graduate employability. Particular focus was placed on underlying concepts and objectives, specific experience and recommendations for ongoing and future projects, identifying existing gaps and the means of tackling them at policy and institutional level.

Under review were the social and economic framework in each country, the policy and strategy setting, involvement in the Tempus programme and any other (inter)national programmes, as well as current activities. Questionnaires were sent to more than 800 Tempus contacts, including universities, small and medium-sized enterprises, micro-enterprises, non-governmental organisations, social partners, regional and local development agencies, technology transfer centres and continuing training centres.

In addition to the assessment of the questionnaires, desk research and field visits were carried out. Egypt, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were selected for field visits as they offered interesting examples of university–enterprise cooperation.

In April 2006 the European Commission, in cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, organised a seminar in Amman to present the preliminary findings of the study and create a platform for exchange and dissemination of existing models and best practice between the EU and Tempus partner countries.

Tempus in Touch: University–Enterprise Cooperation, as the seminar was entitled, attracted more than 170 participants from the 25 EU Member States and the 26 Tempus partner countries, including the Western Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Mediterranean region.

In his welcome address, H.E. Dr Khaled Toukan, Jordanian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, stressed the importance of university–enterprise cooperation for his country, pointing out that during recent years initiatives to create closer links between academia and industry had been set up but were not yet institutionalised.

Augusto Gonzalez, Head of the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus Unit, presented current EU policies and programmes in



the field. He referred to the key objectives of the EU agenda – the creation of economic growth and social development in line with the Lisbon strategy – and stressed the important role that education and training play in this process.

University–enterprise cooperation was the key here.

Ulrike Damyranovic, ETF, and Prof. Volker Gehmlich, School of Management, Osnabrück, Germany, then presented some preliminary findings of the study. It revealed that throughout the partner countries the current difficult economic situation, lack or vagueness of legislation or institutional strategies, and weak fiscal and regulative incentives, all constitute obstacles to a supportive environment for university–enterprise cooperation. Lack of funds was identified as a threat and lack of awareness of measurable benefits as a weakness. There were clear differences between universities and industry regarding their targets, terminology, concepts and focus on specific fields of activity. There was little regular dialogue between them, and indeed mutual understanding appeared

difficult to achieve due to their different institutional cultures. Existing models of cooperation seemed mainly based on individual initiatives and personal relationships and little had been done to institutionalise cooperation through local platforms.

Areas of common interest did however emerge from the survey, focusing on the transfer of knowledge and technology as well as the recruitment of well-qualified human resources. It was recognized that joint development of education and training for the labour market was required in order to increase employability. Technology parks and continuing training centres were considered to be important platforms to stimulate this transfer.

A variety of examples of good practice in university–enterprise cooperation were found in all regions, mainly in areas where a natural link between education and research activities already existed. The combined top-down and bottom-up approach used in Tempus was mentioned as very positive and appropriate, leading to regular dialogue and thus in turn to a better understanding of



European Commission



Directorate-General for Education and Culture

training needs. Some of the strengths of such cooperation were the formation of lasting relationships, lifelong learning opportunities and university enterprise liaison offices.

The overall recommendations presented at the Tempus in Touch seminar focused on the need for awareness-raising and dissemination activities, creation of appropriate legal frameworks, revision of relevant tax systems and support for regular dialogue to ensure sustainable cooperation.

Suggestions regarding EU-funded programmes and instruments were to actively involve enterprises and social partners in projects and partnerships, support the development of sustainable structures such as platforms and networks, and further develop opportunities for co-financing and donor cooperation in general.

Tempus in Touch workshops also addressed a range of topics such as 'Policy design and institutional measures', 'Instruments and structures at universities' and 'Labour needs and responses'. The study on university–enterprise cooperation, as well as the outcomes and key messages from the seminar, will shortly be available to the general public.

*... examples of good practice in university–enterprise cooperation were found in all regions, mainly in areas where a natural link between education and research activities already existed.*



Photo: ETF

# DEVELOPING KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

KEY COMPETENCES<sup>4</sup> CANNOT BE TAUGHT; THEY NEED TO BE LIVED THROUGH THE CURRICULUM.

by Evelyn Viertel



The discussion on key competences is not new. But interest in it has recently grown in view of the slow progress that education systems have made to prepare learners for economies requiring multiskilled, highly innovative and adaptive people and for societies in which individuals need to manage complex careers alternating more frequently between working and learning.

Empirical studies by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have confirmed the importance of literacy and numeracy in work and everyday

life. Analyses of results from the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills survey in 2003, for example, showed a direct link between numeracy and activity rate: the lower the level of numeracy, the higher the risk of professional inactivity. Obviously, however, reading and mathematical competences are not sufficient to help individuals to meet important demands today at the workplace, in the political sphere, in acting as responsible citizens, as partners, as parents and in keeping healthy.

## OECD's DeSeCo project

The starting point for OECD's Definition and Selection of Key Competencies (DeSeCo) project was the question: What competencies do people need for a successful life and a well-functioning society?

Competency was defined as:

- the ability to meet complex demands;
- a combination of interrelated knowledge, cognitive skills, attitudes, values, motivation and emotions;
- action-based and context-oriented.<sup>5</sup>



Key competences is a growing area in preparing learners for today's multiskilled economies.

4 OECD uses the word 'competencies'.

5 D. S. Rychen, Key competencies for a successful life and society: theoretical foundations, paper presented at ETF workshop, 30 March 2006.





Photo: ETF

Photo: Purdue



Reading and mathematical competences are no longer sufficient to help individuals meet demands in the workplace.

Key features of the underlying action competency model include the combination of knowledge and skills with psychosocial prerequisites, or the fact that 'reasoning and emotions are vitally connected',<sup>6</sup> as well as its context orientation.

**Key competencies** were distinguished from competencies in that:

- they 'are important for all individuals', which rules out specific competencies used only in particular occupations or walks of life, such as specific technical knowledge and skills to set up or manage a business;
- they are 'transversal';
- they require a 'critical stance and a reflective practice that goes well beyond the accumulation of knowledge and facts and basic skills'.<sup>7</sup>

The main outcome of the DeSeCo project was an overarching reference frame for the identification and clustering of key competencies, which serves as a conceptual basis, not least for OECD's international skill assessment surveys. It organises key competencies into three broad categories.

The DeSeCo project argued that everyone needs to be able to:

1. use and adapt a wide range of 'tools', including not only

- IT, but also language, symbols and text, as well as knowledge and information, for interacting effectively with their environment;
2. interact in heterogeneous groups, which includes the ability to relate well with others, to cooperate, and to manage and resolve conflicts; and
3. take responsibility and manage their own lives, i.e. to act autonomously.<sup>8</sup>

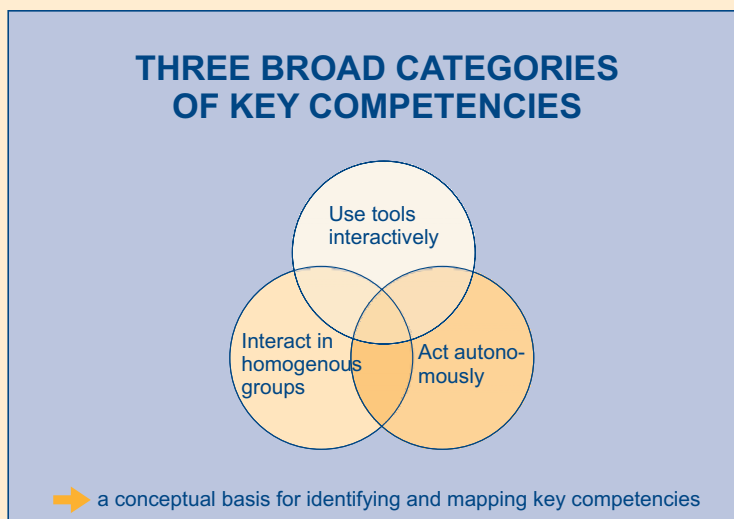
All categories require an understanding of the 'broader picture', of the context in which people operate, including value systems, as well as the ability to analyse the demands made on them, the search for suitable strategies, self-knowledge, the ability to plan, make choices, manage, etc.

### EU framework for key competences for lifelong learning

Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework<sup>9</sup> defines the following eight domains:

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in a foreign language;
- Mathematical literacy, basic competence in science and technology;
- Digital competence;
- Learning to learn;
- Interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competences;
- Sense of innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Cultural awareness and expression.<sup>10</sup>

*The main outcome of the DeSeCo project was an overarching reference frame for the identification and clustering of key competencies ...*



6 A. Gonczi, Teaching and learning of key competencies, in D. S. Rychen and L. H. Salganik (eds), *Contributions to the Second DeSeCo Symposium*, Neuchâtel, Switzerland, Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2003, pp. 119–31.

7 Rychen, op. cit.

8 Ibid.

9 European Commission, *Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning*, COM(2005)548 final, 10 November 2005.

10 A. Pirrie, Key competences for lifelong learning: a European Union reference framework, paper presented at ETF workshop, 30 March 2006.

*The teacher should act as an observer, helping the students to consider different possibilities, set and follow through their own schedules, and address their needs.*

**Creating an enabling learning environment and using effective learning strategies in schools**

The concept of key competences calls very much into question the traditional understanding of what should be taught in schools and how teaching should be organised. Employers seek people who are able to communicate within companies and with the outside world, if possible also in a foreign language. They look for staff who can confidently use a variety of computer applications, who are able to work independently and within teams, who can learn in a self-directed manner, who are innovative and have a broad cultural understanding.

The education system has been very slow to adapt. The curriculum often envisages far more work than can be done. Students only learn what the teacher takes them through. The teachers have their targeted results clearly in sight. Everyone is expected to take the same path at the same rate and with the same small steps.

**DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES**

...implies a holistic approach

- effective pedagogical strategies and methods
- an enabling environment
- learning throughout life
- education as a total experience (around "4 pillars" of learning: *learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together*)

Participants at a European Training Foundation workshop on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Turin, 30–31 March 2006) discussed what was understood by effective pedagogical (learning) strategies and methods, by a favourable learning environment and by 'education as a total experience'. Examples mentioned include



*Changes are needed to learning approaches to help individuals to acquire competences.*

learning in mixed age or ability groups, changing teacher and student roles, learning as an integral part of both instruction and free time, departure from the rigid 45-minute pattern, the use of individual portfolios with assignments through which students can work at their own speed, the fact that teaching should be less preoccupied with studying for tests, thus making

the school a 'safe haven' open to curiosity and experimentation, etc.

The teacher should act as an observer, helping the students to consider different possibilities, set and follow through their own schedules, and address their needs. Encouragement, accomplishing manageable tasks and recognition of achievements are important for students' self-esteem and further their



*Key competences call into question what exactly should be taught in schools and how.*



Photo: ETF



learning, which is why increased efforts in the forthcoming years have to be made to improve the framework conditions, school manager and teacher training and whole-school development projects.

It is also clear that life-relevant competences cannot be developed by initial education alone. Developmental psychology<sup>11</sup> confirms that competence development does

not stop at the end of adolescence, which underlines the importance of adult learning and the continuing emphasis on key competences.

Evelyn Viertel is Team leader on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning at the ETF DeSeCo Project - <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/61/35070367.pdf>

learning success. An emotional connection to the teacher is central, especially for young or adult students from little-educated families. Teaching methods need to be based on the understanding that each student is unique, that a one-size-fits-all approach is unsuitable and that individualisation is a key to teaching. To facilitate this, standards for academic achievement at the end of each grade would be more suitable than standardised curricula. Also, schools could benefit from a multitude of external partners, including social workers, parents and business people, who would bring in a sense of the real world.

In summary, changes are needed to learning approaches to help individuals to acquire competences. A favourable material, institutional and social environment is important. Competences develop through a holistic approach to teaching and



11 See for example R. Kegan, *Competencies as working epistemologies: ways we want adults to know*, in D. S. Rychen and L. H. Salganik (eds), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, Göttingen, Germany, Hogrefe & Huber, 2001, pp. 192–204.

# ETF LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE



Photo: ETF

Sandra Cavallo (right), ETF web manager, shows a colleague around the new website.

In early June, the ETF will launch its new web site. Although the site will look familiar to regular users, the changes amount to much more than just a facelift. The launch of the new site marks the move from a website about the European Training Foundation to a website about education and training in the partner countries.

In July and August last year, the ETF held a survey among the steadily increasing number of users of its website. Growth was strong in that year, with the number of users jumping by 75% compared to the previous year.

The survey revealed that many visitors came to the site in the hope of finding more specific information on education in the partner countries. The ETF responded to this by designing a new site that right from the entry page guides users to their field of interest in a much more intuitive manner than on the old website did.

The timing coincides with the change of address from [www.etf.eu.int](http://www.etf.eu.int) to [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu), but also the anticipation of the new EU instruments for support and an amended mandate for the ETF played a role in the decision to redesign the site this year.

“We wanted a website that is less connected to our internal structure while users clearly wanted more focus on the content of our work.” says Sandra Cavallo, ETF Web Manager. In the long run we want the website to be a clearing house for everything that concerns education and training in the partner countries.”

Technically, there have been major changes. “The old site, with frames, had compatibility issues with different platforms and was often slow to load,” says Sandra Cavallo. “Loading times are important for the website of an organisation whose counterparts include some less developed countries. Many of our users have no access to

The screenshot displays the ETF website interface. At the top left is the logo for the European Training Foundation (ETF), featuring the European Union flag and the text 'etf SHARING EXPERTISE IN TRAINING'. Below the logo is a map of Europe. To the right of the map are two dropdown menus: 'Countries and territories' and 'Thematic Areas'. Below these are several menu items: 'About ETF', 'Activities', 'Events', 'Publications', 'Working with ETF', and 'Press corner'. A 'Login' section contains fields for 'username' and 'password', along with links for 'Forgot your password?' and 'ETF Virtual Office (for staff)'. On the right side, there is a section titled 'The EU agency which supports education' followed by a grid of dots. Below this is an 'In Focus' section with three featured articles: 'ETF Advisory Forum conference 2006', 'A review of career guidance systems', and 'Focus on Europass'. A 'Most popular articles' section lists several titles with arrows indicating they can be clicked. At the bottom, there are logos for 'Tempus' and 'MEDA-ETE' with brief descriptions. The footer contains the text 'ETF © 1995' and a navigation bar with links for 'Contact us', 'Legal notice', 'FAQ', and 'Site map'.



## HOW TO CONTACT US

Further information can be found  
on the ETF website: [www.etf.eu.int](http://www.etf.eu.int).

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broadband connections so any progress in loading speed will be welcome to them.

“The new way of compiling the site also makes it easier to choose settings that bypass bandwidth-hungry graphics. There is a TXT button at the top of the new page that drops all graphics out of the text without significantly changing the layout of the content. This means users can have the same functionality with pure text browsing. That was not possible before.”

Other technical features include the introduction of RSS feeds, allowing users to

subscribe to a limited selection of ETF information, such as news, vacancies or calls for tender. Search functionality has been vastly improved too. The new site features searches limited to projects, publications or events, a site map, and an A-Z index of pages.

Finally, switching languages will become a breeze. A series of highlighted buttons on the top of each page shows in which language the information is available. A simple click on any of the buttons displays the page in the language chosen.

The address of the new site is [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu). Staff email addresses will also take the extension [@etf.europa.eu](mailto:@etf.europa.eu). The old URL and email addresses will remain active for some time still.

*The timing coincides with the change of address from [www.etf.eu.int](http://www.etf.eu.int) to [www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu)*

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the ETF website. It includes a search box with a 'Go' button, a 'Languages' menu with options for English, Français, Русский, Deutsch, Italiano, and عربي, and buttons for 'TXT' and 'RSS'. Below the navigation bar, there are several news items and sections:

- 006: Skills for progress**: 200 education and training specialists from the EU and 30 ETF partner countries gather for the ETF Advisory Forum. News, background papers and full information about the event are available on the website.
- Experts in the Mediterranean**: Experts from the Mediterranean region and EU experts met at the ETF in Turin on 5 May in Italy. They discussed the methodology for a review of career guidance systems in the region and agreed to launch the activity.
- Two EU "sister" agencies working on vocational training within and outside the EU**: Experts from the two organisations focused on the Europass conference on 1 June 2006.
- Job vacancies**: ETF/REC/04/58 - Experts in Modernisation of VET - TA(A\*7)
- Calls for tender**:
  - CFT/05/TMP/0003 - Framework agreement for the provision of assessors for evaluation and follow up of project applications activity reports and financial reports
  - CFT/05/ETF/0065 - express and economy mail courier service
- New publications**:
  - Financing vocational education and training in the EU new Member States and candidate countries
  - Background papers for the AF 2006 conference
- Events**: A calendar for June 06 showing the Advisory Forum Plenary meeting in Turin (Italy) from 07/06/2006 to 09/06/2006.

At the bottom of the page, there are logos for 'growth and jobs working together for Europe's future', 'DebateEurope', and 'EU | AT The Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU'.