



TURKEY

ETF COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2017-2020



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A. COUNTRY CONTEXT

Political and socio-economic situation

Turkey is an upper middle-income country, the 17th largest economy in the world with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$799.54 billion. Turkey is a member of the OECD and the G20, and an increasingly important donor to bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Turkey is a European Union (EU) accession candidate country. The EU accession process has been a significant anchor for reforms in Turkey. The EU is Turkey's largest economic partner, accounting for around 40 percent of Turkish trade and 70-80 percent of foreign direct investment into Turkey is coming from the EU. Turkey has benefited significantly from deepening integration with the EU through the growing sophistication of both exports and imports and access to financing. The economy expanded 4.8 percent in the first quarter January-March, 2016, higher than foreseen, however slowing from a 5-year high of 5.7 percent growth in the previous period. The economic slowdown is affected by three factors that need to be taken into account in any overall picture of the Turkish economy: (i) outside competition affecting sectors previously considered to be safe for Turkish production (e.g., textiles); (ii) the contraction in the influx of foreign tourists due to security situation (however temporary that may be); (iii) problems related to the influx of foreign refugees.

Turkey is witnessing positive developments against the EU2020 targets. Considerable progress has been made especially on the EU 2020 twofold target on education (i.e. reducing the early leavers and increasing tertiary attainment) and adult participation in lifelong learning (albeit from relatively low levels).

National and international studies and surveys confirm that acquiring the right skills remains a challenge in Turkey. This is strongly corroborated by employers' organisations. Nearly 46% of adults attain only Level 1 or below in literacy (well above the OECD average of 19%) and half attain Level 1 or below in numeracy (OECD average is 28%). Some 38% of adults in Turkey indicated that they had no prior experience with computers or lacked basic computer skills, compared with an average of 15% in the countries participating in the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), and about 35% score at or below Level 1 in problem solving in technology-rich environments. Workers in Turkey use information-processing skills at work and in their daily lives much less than workers in other countries. Adults are considerably less likely to read, write, work with mathematics, solve problems and use computers in their jobs and in everyday life than is the case across other participating OECD countries. However, the match between workers' literacy skills and the literacy demands of their jobs is similar to that observed in other participating OECD countries. Some 13% of workers in Turkey are more proficient in literacy than their job requires (over skilled) while 2.5% of workers are less proficient than their job requires (under skilled). By comparison, across OECD countries, an average of 11% of adults are over skilled in literacy and 4% are under skilled. The educational attainment and literacy proficiency are not associated with labour market status. The employment rate remains well below the OECD average, despite a rise from its pre-crisis level, while the unemployment rate remains well above the OECD average. However, the returns to education in Turkey are high, with an increase of one standard deviation in duration of schooling (around 3.4 years) associated with a 20% increase in wages.

Turkey's rising prosperity has been shared. Between 2002 and 2015, the consumption of the bottom 40 percent increased at around the same rate as the national average. Over the same period, extreme poverty fell from 13 to 4.5 percent and moderate poverty fell from 44 to 21 percent, while access to

health, education and training and municipal services vastly improved for the less well off. In less than a decade, per capita income in the country has nearly tripled and now exceeds \$10, 5001.

However to realize its underlying growth potential, Turkey needs to accelerate structural reforms in education and training and employment and improve trust in its institutions. Turkey's Economic Reform Programme, covering the period 2015-2017, and other related HRD national, EC and international strategic documents, all recognise the need for structural and governance reform in the HRD sector. In particular, Turkey is advised to upgrade and make better use of its human capital through the pursuit of the education agenda and the deepening and widening of labour market reforms. Specifically, the qualifications of low-skilled workers should be improved through training; female labour force participation should be stimulated through flexible working conditions. In order to address these challenges Turkey is invited to implement strategies to align education and training policies with labour market needs.

Relations with the EU

Turkey's accession negotiations began in October 2005, though progress has slowed in recent years in the face of a number of political obstacles. Although significant progress has been made since accession negotiations started more than eleven years ago, a clear timeline for accession has not been set yet. As EU documents reflect, Turkey's accession to the EU is a "long-lasting and open-ended process", meaning that membership is not automatically guaranteed.

In September 2014, EU and Turkey relaunched their efforts to regain momentum, with a focus on economic cooperation, in particular the modernization of the Customs Union and energy relations. Turkey was able to open a new accession negotiation Chapter thanks to the unblocking of Chapter 22 on regional policy. Turkey's EU bid and the crisis in Syria have accelerated the discussions on both sides, with an intensive work by the technical groups. There is a "political momentum" after high-level discussions in April 2016 to widen a 20-year customs union to cover services and agriculture. Reform efforts are resolutely continuing and within the harmonization work with the EU acquis in some of the key economic sectors.

On the 30th of June 2016, the EU has opened a new chapter in Turkey's EU membership talks, covering budget contributions to the bloc. The newly opened Chapter 33 on financial and budgetary provisions is the 16th chapter to be opened with Turkey out of 35.

The "**New EU strategy of Turkey**" aims to establish new communication channels between Turkey and EU and accelerate the reform process. The "**National Action Plan for the Accession to EU**" and its Roadmap was submitted to Commission services in March 2016². It reflects the willingness of the government to sustain and strengthen the political reforms in Turkey and the on-going socio-economic transformation.

Turkey prepares on an annual basis the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) and the EU – Turkey high-level policy dialogue followed by technical dialogue take place twice a year each.

Turkey vis-à-vis the EU2020 targets in education and employment

Turkey is one of the few countries witnessing positive developments against the EU2020 targets and where all indicators are in green (see table below).

¹ World Bank, April 2016: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/overview>

² Turkish National Action Plan for EU Accession: <http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/5%20Ekim/uepkitapcik2016-2019-EN.pdf>. It lists the actions to be undertaken from 2016 until 2019 in order to align with EU legislation. This is the key document for our work in the country and to be referred to.

EU2020 targets in education and employment		TURKEY		EU		EU2020 targets	
		2010	2015	2010	2015		
Headline targets	Early leavers from education and training (%aged 18-24)	43.1	36.4	13.9	11	< 10	
	Tertiary educational attainment (% aged 30-34)	15.5	23.6	33.8	38.7	≥ 40	
	Employment rate (% aged 20-64)	50	53.9	68.6	70.1	≥ 75	
Other targets	Participation in training (% aged 25-64)	2.5	5.5	9.1	10.7	≥ 15	
	Underachievement (% aged 15)	Reading	24.5	21.6	19.7	17.8	< 15
		Mathematics	42.1	42	22.3	22.1	< 15
		Science	30	26.4	17.8	16.6	< 15
Employment rate of recent graduates (% aged 20-34)	59.8	61.9	77.4	76.9	≥ 82		

Considerable progress has been made especially on the EU 2020 twofold target on education (i.e. reducing the early leavers and increasing tertiary attainment) and adult participation in lifelong learning (albeit from relatively high/low levels). Progress in tackling the underachievement in reading, maths and science is also impressive but will have to be confirmed with the release of the latest PISA results by the OECD at the end of 2016.

B. VET AND SKILLS IN THE COUNTRY: OVERVIEW, PROGRESS AND MID-TERM PRIORITIES

Turkey has a relatively young population with one in five people (21.5% in 2014) aged between 15 and 24 years. However, it has one of the lowest educational attainment rates for young adults (25-34 year-olds) with more than one in two young adults not attaining upper secondary education. Despite the positive developments in the past years, there are still many young adults who are not benefiting from the expansion of education. Recent evidence from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) reveals that, in Turkey, as many as one in three people [31%] between the ages of 16 and 24 are not in education and have not attained an upper secondary degree.³ This may reflect low participation rates in formal education after the age of 16, leading to a sizeable vulnerable group further encountering serious consequences on their skills proficiency levels and labour market status (see next section)⁴.

The difference in attainment rates between generations is remarkable: in Turkey, nearly 80% of the 55-64 year-olds have below upper secondary as their highest level of attainment but far smaller proportions (only 50%) of younger adults (aged 25-34) have only this level of education (2014).⁵ This improvement was the result of significant reforms affecting participation in education in the past years.

The unemployment rate decreased to 10.6 % (2015). Data for Q1 2016 show this further decreasing to 10.1% from 10.6 percent a year earlier with no improvements for women. The employment rate (15-64) increased to 50.2%, with women employment increase of only 1% recording a gender gap in employment at 42.7 %. The youth unemployment rate (15-24) was 7.7% in 2015, while NEETs share

³ OECD (2016), *Skills Matter: Further Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*, [Country Note](#)

⁴ Educational attainment is frequently used as a proxy measure of the skills associated with a given level of education and available in the population, and to the labour force. Higher levels of educational attainment are associated with several positive individual and social outcomes (see also OECD Education at a Glance, 2015)

⁵ OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance*, [Indicator A1](#)

(15-24) was 24%. Agricultural employment rates continue decreasing to 18.3% and non-agricultural employment increased 20.2% in industry: 6.7% employed in construction and 54.8% in services. More than 50% of the employed population in Turkey work in mid to low-level occupational groups (service and sales workers; skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers; craft and related trades workers). Since 2009, the shares of people employed as professionals (ISCO group 2) and Service and sales workers (ISCO group 5) have been on increasing trend. VET related occupations (ISCO groups 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8) have been increasing, still, the share of people employed in elementary (unskilled) occupations is low at about 14% (Turkstat, 2016). It is expected that the ongoing education and training reform, which prominently focus on increasing the education attainment and the economic shift towards value added, innovation and highly technology areas, would change this occupational outlook.

Recent findings from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) indicate that, compared with adults in the other participating OECD countries, adults in Turkey show below-average proficiency in all three domains assessed (literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments). Adults in Turkey score 227 points in literacy, significantly below the OECD average of 268 points whereas the mean score in numeracy among adults in Turkey is only 219 points, well below the OECD average of 263 points. The low average proficiency in literacy and numeracy reflects the relatively low levels of educational attainment among adults in Turkey. Nearly 80% of 55-65 year-olds and over 50% of 25-34 year-olds in Turkey have not completed upper secondary education.

Large proportions of adults in Turkey have poor literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills. Nearly 46% of adults in Turkey attain only Level 1 or below in literacy (well above the OECD average of 19%) and half attain Level 1 or below in numeracy (OECD average 28%). Some 38% of adults in Turkey (compared with about 15% of adults in all participating countries/economies) indicated that they had no prior experience with computers or lacked basic computer skills, while about 35% score at or below Level 1 in problem solving in technology-rich environments. Substantially more adults in Turkey either were not able to take the computer-based assessment or opted out of it (17.7%) compared to the OECD average (9.9%). This means that, in Turkey, considerably fewer adults with limited ICT skills took the computer-based assessment compared to similarly proficient adults other OECD countries⁶.

Turkey's National Action Plan for EU Accession presented to Commission in March 2016⁷ lists the actions that authorities are planning to take from 2016 until 2019 in order to align with EU legislation and continue the reform agenda in education and training and skills agenda. Turkey's commitment for progress in relation to the Accession agenda (Chapter 19), resulted in the signing of the Riga Declaration June 2015 and joining the European Alliance for Apprenticeship in June 2015 as well by active contribution to EU debates with regular participation in DGVT (Director General for Vocational Training)/ACVT meetings and EU 2020 working groups. Turkish Ministry of National Education refers to the strategic plans Vocational and Technical Education Strategy for 2014 -2018, National Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper for 2014 -2018 and National Employment Strategy of Turkey 2014-2023 that are the frameworks in which the Ministry is committed to implement and monitor the Riga five MTDs. There is a commitment to benefit from the Instrument for Pre- Accession (IPA II) funds beside national contribution to implement the policy options under each Riga MTD. Applications for the ERASMUS+ programme has increased in quantity focusing on implementing the Riga MTDs.

Following **Turkey's signature of the Riga Declaration and Alliance for Apprenticeship** in June 2015, Turkey's authorities have been actively contributing to EU debates with regular participation in meetings of the DGVT (Directors General for Vocational Training) and ACVT and EU2020 working

⁶ OECD, Skills Matter: Further Results from the Survey of Adult Skills (Country Note)
<http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills-Matter-Turkey.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/5%20Ekim/uepkitapcik2016-2019-EN.pdf>

groups. Turkey ACVT/DGVT has worked closely with the ETF and asked in 2016 for the ETF's support to provide expertise and support to the Riga process with a focus on the ex-ante assessment of the policy choices under two priority Riga MTDs (1 and 5). This resulted in including the five Riga MTDs in the "National Action Plan for the Accession to EU" and the Roadmap, submitted to Commission services in March 2016.

Following the above developments, on 2 June 2016, the Turkish Ministry of National Education had the first hearing in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on the **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** Legislation changes. It is expected that proposed changes in the Regulations and Legal framework regarding Vocational and Technical Education and provision of WBL⁸ will be approved in 2016. The purpose is to strengthen apprenticeship by including it in the education system (becoming formal instead of non-formal). Incentives are being proposed for small businesses who take on apprentices. A recent amendment in the Active Labour Market Services Regulation allows ISKUR to fund traineeships for secondary VET students out of its own budget. Responding to the needs for integrated and better data analysis on WBL (at the moment collected by ISKUR, MoNe and TURKSTAT), Turkish Statistical Institute launched in 2016 an Official Statistical Program (RIP)⁹ aiming at integrated WBL statistics for monitoring purposes.

Turkey's MoNE recognises the challenges faced concerning VET teacher and trainer professional development by choosing as second priority Riga MTD 5. In 2016, ex-ante assessment and workshops have been organised to consider evidence and hold discussions to develop consensus for policy choices on CPD for VET teachers and trainers. It is included in the National Action Plan for the Accession to the EU 2016-2020 with the aim to follow the reform needed in the coming years and supported by ETF and Turkey government funding. In the Turkish strategic document National Action Plan for the Accession to EU, it is clearly stated in the Roadmap that the focus for the 2017-2020 period will be to finalise the Draft Teacher Strategy Document and implement corresponding action plans by identifying internal and external resources to support the implementation of the Teacher Strategy Document¹⁰.

Turkey has increased its number of applications under EU and Member State programmes requiring transnational partnerships. It participates regularly in all the EU Education and Training 2020 Working Groups, in the education and youth programme Erasmus+, and many other EU and Member State bilateral exchanges in education and training. There is a high level of exchange, implementation and learning, which is very well disseminated and shared. However, Turkey's central structures are not well organised and strategic enough to build on all these developments/learning from their peers in EU MS and mainstream them in the Turkish education and training system.

Turkey participates actively in the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ECAVET platform) with the aim to revitalise the **quality assurance** of the VET teaching and learning process in Turkey. In May 2016, the Turkish Ministry of National Education, member of ECAVET, was awarded a grant from ECAVET to further develop and implement norms, processes (at this stage only on a small scale) for internal and external evaluation of schools, and establish adequate mechanisms to engage social partners in VET QA.

Turkey has gained momentum in reforming its **qualifications systems**, specifically focusing on how to develop and implement a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). The 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document of the MoNE strongly focuses on the validation processes and promotes extensive use of validation. The EU funded LLL II Project has been launched in 2016 with the aim to extend the provision, quality and enhance the institutional set up and mechanisms for

⁸ Laws no. 3308, 3795, 5510, 1739 and Decree Law no. 652

⁹ Official Statistical Program (RIP) is developed every five-year period based on the Turkish Statistical Law no. 5429. The new RIP covers the period 2017 -2021.

non-formal and informal learning. DG LLL is still to present the draft law, prepared under LLL-I Project to the parliament. Turkey's Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning has been finalised in May 2016 (an update of 2014). It will be part of the compendium of the 2016 European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning. Turkey participates in PIAAC for the first time. The results published on the 28th of June 2015. The findings will be widely discussed in Turkey, followed with a policy document on the 2020 Action Plan. All led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Turkey's NQF has a major role to play in narrowing the gaps.

Turkey's qualifications framework (TQF) has been developed through joint work of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA), the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) and other relevant ministries and public institutions, chambers of industry and commerce, labour and trade unions, professional institutions, NGOs and academics. The regulations on the TQF are based on the decree 29537 and amended national occupational standards and qualifications regulation published in the Official Gazette 29507, dated 19 November 2015. Another legislative development is the amended regulation on assessment and certification - number 29503 – approved on 15 October 2015. In 2016, VQA has been working on the qualification certificate for the 40 dangerous and hazardous occupations. The VQA has signed 102 protocols with employer organisations, trade unions, higher education institutions, professional bodies and NGOs with the aim to develop national occupational standards. The system of assessment, evaluation and certification has led to the establishment of 41 authorised certification bodies. Two new VocTec Centres have been opened in Ankara and Gaziantep in May-June, 2016.

Turkey already presented to the EQF Advisory Group the so-called State of Play of its referencing process in December 2014. The process required for approved changes in TQF regulation, which came in force in October 2015. The draft referencing report was adapted accordingly and the formal consultation process was launched on 3 June 2016. As mentioned above also Vocational Qualification Authority has been affected by recent changes of the management (President and Vice President).

Entrepreneurship in VET in Turkey is the most developed in the EU pre-accession region (2015 Small Business Act (SBA)¹⁰. The results of the Turkey SBA country profile will be widely discussed in Ankara, September 2016. The VET Strategy 2014-2018 features elements of the entrepreneurship key competence, such as creativity, as well as more developed start-up skills. This chimes well with the Riga recommendations for key competence promotion in VET. Vocational internships within enterprises could be extended beyond occupation-specific skills to include business skills such as business planning or finance.

Turkey requires a more co-ordinated approach to sharing good practice in entrepreneurial learning at all education levels. This is important to support policy makers in determining what works well, and at what cost. Expertise developed through Ministry of National Education, Turkey Small and Medium Business Agency (KOSGEB) and Higher Council of Education (YÖK) and VET and university start-up training could be harnessed for the wider VET and higher education network. TÜBİTAK's Entrepreneurial and Innovative Universities Index is an excellent example of how universities benchmark performance on entrepreneurship promotion. It can be established also for the VET schools. The capacity is there.

The role of **VET in providing skills for the underperforming groups** in Turkey is widely discussed and a policy concern. Inequalities in accessing education, persistence of high levels of early school

¹⁰ SME Policy Index Western Balkans and Turkey 2016- Turkey Country Report (European Commission, SEECEL, ETF, OECD, EBRD).

leaving, low level of participation in training and lifelong learning by adult population and high NEETs¹¹ figures create a situation that effort is needed to provide citizens with new and equal opportunities.

In Turkey, the percentage of students who participated in vocational programmes was 45% of all students enrolled in upper secondary education (2013). The distribution of 15-19 year-olds (i.e. students at typical age group) was similar, with only 5% of students aged 20 years and older following a vocational programme at this educational level.¹² These numbers go hand-in-hand with the above findings from PIAAC, reflecting the lower participation rates in formal education after the age of 16.

Turkey has witnessed positive developments in the main statistics reflecting school to work transition (i.e. the young people aged 15-24 who are neither in employment nor in education and training - 'NEETs'); the rate was 24% in 2015, down 8% compared to 2010. OECD data¹³ also shows that Turkey (together with Greece and Italy) were the only OECD countries where more than 30% of 20-24 year-olds were NEETs in 2014. Turkey still had the highest proportion of NEETs, but it is also the only country among these three to show a decrease between 2005 and 2014 (from nearly 50% to 36.3%). At this age group, in 2014, only 20% of young people in Turkey were NEETs (compared to 30% in Spain and Italy) whereas 9.5% were unemployed and 11% were inactive, reflecting the positive trends on reducing the proportion of young people in this vulnerable group.

In Turkey, VET graduates from upper secondary education (ISCED 3-4 combined)¹⁴ are highly employable and their employability is higher than that of graduates from general secondary programmes. In 2015, 59.3% of graduates from VET programmes were employed (compared to only 47.4% of graduates from general upper secondary programmes); this is positive, though it is still relatively low compared to EU average of 73%. The gender-related difference in the employability of VET graduates in Turkey is also important: males have better employment prospects (71.4%, close to EU average of 75% in 2015) than women (47.5%, EU average 70.6%).

These numbers show that, on the one hand, in Turkey (as in the vast majority of other countries¹⁵), VET graduates have better employment prospects than their counterparts from general programmes. On the other hand, it also shows that, in a period of severe economic downturn, countries (including Turkey) with relatively high numbers of graduates from vocationally-oriented programmes, succeeded in reducing the risk of unemployment amongst a sizeable group of vulnerable young people (i.e. those with upper secondary education as their highest attainment level)¹⁶.

Among the prominent labour market problems, one can underline the low levels of qualification among the labour force, gender inequalities, unregistered employment, high number of economically inactive persons at working age and deficient enforcement of labour legislation. In terms of the social situation, the distribution of income is still unequal and some segments of the population are especially vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion.

Most institutions are equipped with adequate human, financial and technical resources. The absence of mechanisms to ensure intra departmental/institutional coordination, accountability, and the continuous disruption of implementation undermines administrative performance. The recent changes in the government followed by changes in the management and administration of Turkey's key central and provincial education and training institutions have created uncertainty in delivering the long

¹¹Of the OECD countries where data is provided, despite large falls Turkey still had the highest NEET rate for 15-19 year-olds and 20-24 year-olds at 2015.

¹² OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance*, [Indicator C1](#)

¹³ OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance*, [Indicator C5](#)

¹⁴ Aged 20-34, no longer in education or training, 1-3 years after graduation. Source: Eurostat on-line database (edat_lfse_24)

¹⁵ Cedefop (2012), [From education to working life. The labour market outcomes of VET](#)

¹⁶ OECD (2013), *Education at a Glance*

promised reforms for the renewal of skills agenda in Turkey. These changes and lack of intra departmental/institutional coordination hinder also the on-going efforts to provide basic education and vocational training to the high percentage of Syrian refugees.

C. EU AND OTHER DONORS SUPPORT IN VET AND SKILLS

Turkey has been receiving substantial funds from the EU since 2001. The funding provided through IPA for HRD issues is and will remain substantial (474.7 m€ IPA 1, 435m€ IPA II¹⁷). In order to ensure continuity with the first phase of IPA, “Employment, Education and Social Policy Sectoral Operational Programme” referred to as “Human Resources Development Sectoral Operational Programme (HRD SOP)” is crucial in supporting Turkey’s government to address some of the key above-mentioned challenges. For more detailed on the three pillars and programme pipeline for the period 2014-2020 approved Resources Development Sectoral Operational Programme (2014-2020) published on the site of the Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security: <http://www.ikg.gov.tr/en-us/ipa/ipaii.aspx>.

Human capital development remains high on the agenda of the 2014-20 programming period of EU external assistance to Turkey. The financial allocation to the area of employment, social policies, education promotion of gender equality and human resources development it is up to 25% in the bilateral IPA II 2014-20 allocations.

Turkey’s High Planning Council is the supreme inter-ministerial coordination structure and the decision making body for national development policies financed by national, EU and other donor funding. The Economic and Social Council is the highest policy making and monitoring structure related to the HRD sector. Ministry of Labour and Social Security Directorate of European Union and Financial Assistance is the leading ministry in managing the pre-accession financial assistance- Human Resources Development Operational Programme (HRD OP) and the lead institution to liaise and collaborate with the donors.

Under the Prime Ministry’s leadership, Turkey’s Treasury Undersecretary plays the key role in coordinating the EU funds, loans and grants from donor institutions such as IFIs, funds, governments, development banks and private banks. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security, as the lead institution, will continue to liaise and collaborate with the donors, as was the case in the first IPA period. Under IPA I the Sectorial Management Committee (SMC) is in operation since 2006. This Committee has been in charge of the monitoring of the HRD OP from 2007 onwards. It comprises all relevant stakeholders, including the European Commission (DG Employment), National IPA Coordinator or his/her representative, National Fund, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, other relevant public institutions, social partners, regional/local representatives, NGOs, think tanks and academic bodies. EU Coordination Units have been established within 81 Provincial Governorships to support EU-related work at the local level.

The ETF’s collaboration with the several IFIs and bilateral agencies active in HRD happens within this framework. The key international/donor institutions active in Turkey are European Investment Fund (EIF), European Investment Bank (EIB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), World Bank, KfW - Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, and Agence Française de Développement. In addition to the financial donor institutions, other international organisations contribute with their own funding or implement projects funded by pre-accession financial assistance- Human Resources

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey/index_en.htm

Development Operational Programme (HRD OP). The key UN organizations: ILO, UNDP, UN Women, UNICEF etc.

The EU is delivering one of the key elements of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 on refugees support in Turkey. The European Commission Facility for Refugees in Turkey is financing actions in the field of health, education, socio-economic support as well as humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees. It is implemented in cooperation with partners on the ground. The total amount of funding allocated under the Facility now stands at over € 2.2 billion, with over € 1.2 billion already awarded via concrete contracts. Of this, € 467 million has been disbursed to the implementing partners. The balance will be paid progressively as the implementation of the projects advances

On the 22 of February 2016, the ETF signed a strategic partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), with the aim to increase the role of the private sector in supporting young people, especially young women, to integrate into the workforce. In the case of Turkey, the ETF and EBRD have identified three priorities: (1) the development of technical and vocational education and training skills standards, as well the geographic expansion of facilities for testing vocational skills, as part of Turkey's National Qualifications Framework and reform and in order to reach out to youth and women; (2) increasing the availability of high-quality work-based opportunities for learning, including apprenticeships and (3) supporting youth employment through career guidance with private sector involvement and implementation of the youth guarantee.

Turkey's government invites the ETF to the IPA Sectorial Management Committee, which meets twice a year. The ETF's participation to DG NEAR lead Sub Committee meetings has been ad hoc.

D. ETF MID-TERM INTERVENTION STRATEGY IN THE COUNTRY

Turkey's commitment to progress in relation to the Accession agenda (Chapter 19), resulted in the signing of the Riga Declaration June 2015 and joining the European Alliance for Apprenticeship in June 2015 as well by active contribution to EU debates with regular participation in the meetings of the DGVT (Directors General of Vocational Training) and ACVT and the EU2020 working groups. The Turkish Ministry of National Education refers to the following strategic plans: the Vocational and Technical Education Strategy for 2014-2018, the National Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper for 2014 - 2018 and the National Employment Strategy of Turkey 2014-2023, which are the frameworks in which the government is committed to implement and monitor the five Riga MTDs. The draft findings of the ETF-Riga-Ex-Ante Impact Assessment (WBL, VET TT) and the 2016 five RIGA MTDs progress reporting confirm these priorities.

The ETF intervention strategy has been drawn up on the assumption of continuity in

- the priority given to the country in terms of EU external assistance,
- the level of political, economic and social stability;
- the high level of commitment in the country among key stakeholder from the national and regional authorities and among civil society to take forward the reform process in line with the national vision and strategy for human capital reform in particular in the selected areas of intervention;
- engagement and ownership of the country in the ETF Torino Process and according to the principles of evidence based, participatory, holistic policy making.

Particular assumptions, or conditions for the achievement of impact from ETF interventions where relevant are included under the specific objectives below.

Rationale: The ETF's work in Turkey is determined by the Turkish National Action Plan for EU Accession presented to Commission in March 2016 in order to align Turkey's structural reforms in HRD sector with EU legislation, followed by sustained implementation, and inspired by the EU Education and Training 2020 priorities, the Bruges and Riga MTD follow-up and the new EU Skills Agenda. The ETF's work with its Turkish counterparts and the EU will be focused on Chapter 26 - Education and Culture and Chapter 19 - Social Policy and Employment. In this sense, there is continuity with the previous period 2014-2016 in that the specific thematic areas covered by ETF support are selected in accordance with Turkey's overarching goal of closer integration with the EU: Qualifications (with an increased focus on validation of informal and non-formal learning and recognition of professional qualifications) and VET provision and quality assurance, as part of the follow-up of the Riga conclusions. The topic of Employment and employability will have in 2017 lower priority, unless the Economic Governance process gives it an increased priority in the policy agenda.

Objective: Education and training reforms are driven by Turkey and inspired by and aligned with the EU Education and Training 2020 and Turkey's ongoing commitment to the Bruges process, the Riga MTD follow-up including the new Skills Agenda.

Expected outcomes: Advanced implementation of education and training and skills reforms driven by Turkey/EU and inspired by and guided from the EU education and training frameworks and the New Skills Agenda.

1. Processes and implementation in Education and Training driven by Turkey/EU

- **Roll-out/implementation of the policy choices** of the two priority MTDs (as a follow up of the ex-ante assessment):
 - Promote Work based learning in all its forms (MTD1);
 - Introduce systematic approaches and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school and work based settings(MTD5)
- **Implementation of the Turkish National Qualification Framework (NQF):** i)referencing NQF with European Qualifications Framework(EQF); ii) recognition of professional qualifications, including validation of non-formal and informal learning; iii) quality-assured transparency of qualifications, inventory of the professions regulated at national level; (iv) strategy and roadmap for the complete establishment of the country wide/sectoral and cross-sectoral vocational qualifications, accreditation of institutions/organisations offering training based on fully-fledged national qualifications. Some of the interventions will be supported by EBRD (within the cooperation agreement signed between ETF and EBRD on February 2016). Regarding the latter, the focus will also be on the refugee response programme. Two areas have been identified in the initial phase:
 - Skills mapping exercise to be carried out with stakeholders (Marmara Union of Municipalities, Turkish Federation of Business Associations-TISK): EBRD inclusion team is developing the Terms of Reference for skills mapping study. The ETF's expertise and contribution will be focused on developing the methodology for mapping the qualifications and skills as well as on the implementation/pilot phase of this exercise. The expected time frame to start this assignment is Q3 2016;

- Supporting the expansion of Turkey's skills qualification and testing centres. EBRD has adapted the approach to build on Turkey's existing framework for qualifications. Further to the support of the establishment of new Voc-test centres in the most affected regions, with the assignment of the ETF's international expert, the ETF and EBRD will explore jointly a number of best practices/methodologies for the "Validation of Non-formal Informal Learning" of refugees in other countries and present them for the adaptation to the Turkish context.

Outputs:

- Implementation plan for upscaling recognition of professional qualifications¹⁸ (including validation of non-formal and informal learning)
 - Conclusion of the referencing processes to the EQF
 - Provision of content and methodological expertise to EU DEL and Turkish authorities on EU project implementation; IPA II NQF support to start in 2017
 - Expertise input, thematic discussions on the VOC Test Centres jointly funded by employers, IPA funding and Turkey's budget. EBRD has committed to support the existing VOC Test Centres, new ones in the economic sectors EBRD provides financial support in the period 2017-2020.
- **RIGA reporting and monitoring**, in particular to support i) the monitoring and analysis of progress towards the achievement of the Midterm deliverables; and (ii) the institutionalization of national networks for collecting and processing information related to the monitoring of the system and of the MTDs in particular.

The ETF will support participation of Turkish actors in European platforms and dialogue processes, including DGVT/ACVT meetings, ET2020 working groups, and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA).

The assumptions for the ETF support in this objective until 2020 are:

- Willingness of Turkey to continue accepting and adapting EQF principles and Advisory Group recommendations;
- Progress in the implementation of the actions corresponding to the defined qualifications development stage;
- Progress in the implementation of actions for the achievement of the Riga MTDs.

2. Turkish participation to ETF regional and corporate Initiatives

In the context of the ETF's **corporate initiatives** ETF will continue involving Turkey in the **Torino Process**: the system wide policy analysis and monitoring progress exercise implemented by the ETF on a periodic basis. The 2017-2020 period will cover the closure of the 2016 round and the implementation of the fifth round in 2019. The specific modalities for national implementation in 2019

¹⁸ From Turkey EQF Referencing report (draft): In Turkey there are also some vocational/professional qualifications outside the scope of MoNE, CoHE and VQA. For these qualifications, private laws or international agreements set out the responsible bodies and institutions such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transportation, Maritime Affairs and Communications, Turkish Armed Forces, Turkish Confederation of Craftsmen and Artisans, Union of Chambers of Certified Public Accountants and Sworn-In Certified Public Accountants of Turkey, Notaries Union of Turkey and etc.

will be agreed according to the 2016 results and the specific development of the monitoring processes in the country.

In the period 2017-2020, the ETF will continue to support DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG Grow) with analysis and reporting on the country's progress on the human capital pillars of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA). The next assessment takes place in 2017 and focuses on entrepreneurial learning, women's entrepreneurship and SME skills. The entrepreneurial learning dimension will be assessed in line with the new Entrepreneurship Competence Framework¹⁹. Customised support to the country on human capital policy areas will depend on specific requests from the government. The ETF's SBA assessment work will be accompanied by further identification of good practices in training whose objective is to support countries the implementing of the ETF's SBA policy recommendations. More specifically, in 2017 a dedicated good practice call for the pre-accession region will focus on training for SMEs who are trading (or have the potential to trade) with the EU Single Market. The assumptions is that the SBA assessments (2017, 2019) record progress in the implementation of actions following the recommendations from previous assessments.

Turkey will also participate in ETF regional actions such as the ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in VET as well as the ETF virtual platforms for work-based learning, continuing professional development of teachers and trainers in VET and digital skills and online learning in VET.

3. EU Support

In addition to activities related to the specific objectives of the ETF mid-term intervention strategy 2017-2020 in Turkey, the ETF will support EU external assistance and bilateral policy dialogue regular and ad-hoc requests from the EUD or Headquarters.

External assistance

- **Expertise input** to EU monitoring of the IPA II funded programmes on: Turkey's national qualifications system, VET provision, accreditation, quality assurance, lifelong learning, and entrepreneurial learning in VET;
- Expertise input to the combined country/EU Delegation/TAIEX request for ETF thematic input to all the EU IPA II/TAIEX funded and organised thematic workshops.

EU-Turkey bilateral policy dialogue

- Support to the EU-Turkey high-level policy dialogue on progress in education, employment and social inclusion through sub-committee meeting and EC Progress Reporting, the assessment of Turkey's Economic Reform Programme (ERP);

Expected results by 2020

1. The relevance of EU interventions in the partner countries in human capital development is enhanced with the ETF's support to programming and project design;
2. The efficiency and effectiveness of EU interventions in the partner countries on human capital development is enhanced with the ETF's support to implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
3. EU policy dialogue on HCD issues is enhanced in partner countries through ETF policy and thematic contributions.

¹⁹ Joint Research Centre, EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, JRC Science for Policy Report, EC, 2016.

E. 2017 ACTION PLAN

In qualification systems, the ETF's assistance to Turkish authorities will range from EU project content monitoring, to VNFIL implementation, to EQF referencing, so that the country broadens scope of its NQF and links it to the EQF. Our interventions will aim to:

- Advise authorities on measures to include in TQF professional/occupational qualifications, including via informing piloting of such qualifications and inform plan to expand VNFIL procedures to accommodate VET qualifications; function: capacity building of institutions to manage broader inclusion of qualifications; output: progress report;
- Provide content advice to the EUD and Turkish authorities in implementing EU projects; function: EU support; output: set of recommendations;
- Guide completion of EQF referencing report; function: capacity-building; output: ETF advice in national report;
- Facilitate event for VOC Test Centres, supporting capacity development in issues including auditing refugee skills; function: capacity building; output recommendations.

With respect to provision, the ETF will follow through its support for Turkey's policymaking and implementation of policies serving MTDs 1 and 5 of the Riga Conclusions:

- Support professional development of vocational teachers and trainers and coordinators of professional development through virtual and face-to-face networking and the sharing of good practice and materials;
- Support a demonstration Project which involves training vocational teachers or vocational trainers and which simultaneously provides a model for appropriate professional development in Turkey.

Activities are expected to include:

- Training event for professional development coordinators in schools;
- National event to review progress, disseminate innovative practice and sustain networks for CPD;
- Pathfinding for virtual networking for CPD.

With respect to Work Based Learning, activities include:

- Policy advice and support to the development of a quality Assurance framework for internships for VET students.

In 2017, the ETF will continue its support to the monitoring and implementation of the Riga Mid-term deliverables and contribution to the strengthening and consolidation of the monitoring system in the country. Specific support will be given in 2017 to the reporting function for the RIGA reporting cycle and the establishment of a reporting mechanisms within the national own institutional framework. Actions will include the follow up to the ex-ante impact assessment carried out in 2016 for MTD1 and 5.