

T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
AVRUPA TOPLULUĞU ENSTİTÜSÜ
AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ SİYASETİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI

**THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
TRAINING POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:
A CASE STUDY OF SVET PROJECT**

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İstanbul, 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”

Excerpt from 'Ulysses' by Alfred Lord Tennyson

ABSTRACT

Today education is considered as a prominent factor in building a Europe of knowledge and it is at the heart of the European Union's (EU) economic and social strategy for 2010. As a candidate country, Turkey is at the crossroads in terms of reforming its vocational education and training system. As the world economy is displaying a consistent tendency towards a high skilled economy with high value products, the types of jobs that are now concentrating in Turkey tend to require a higher skills input. It is now coming to be accepted that these types of jobs require a more efficient and a more productive VET system in order to keep up with the rapid pace of change. With the projects, such as Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System in Turkey (SVET), Modernization of Vocational Education and Training Project (MVET), Turkey is attempting to reach the level of vocational education and training systems in the EU member states. This thesis attempts to examine the development of vocational education and training concept in the European Union and Turkish VET experience. Then, it tries to scrutinize the drawbacks of the existing VET system in Turkey. It goes on with analyzing the expectation and requirements for a better modern system. Subsequently, this study makes use of an ongoing project in Turkey, SVET, to explain the effects of EU regulations on policy making process in Turkey and tries to outline the institutional capacity developed in this framework in order to improve Turkey's capacity to implement the Acquis Communautaire. Then, it critically traces ways to interpret these developments from a political perspective. As a consequence, it attempts to define some obstacles in the implementation process of the project.

ÖZET

Günümüzde eğitim politikaları bilgiye dayalı bir Avrupa kurmanın önemli bir faktörü olarak görülmekte ve Avrupa Birliği'nin (AB) 2010 yılında ulaşmayı hedeflediği ekonomik ve sosyal stratejilerinin merkezinde yer almaktadır. Türkiye ise AB üyeliğine aday bir ülke olarak, mesleki ve teknik eğitimini yenilemesi açısından bir yol ayrımındadır. Dünya ekonomisi katma değerli ürünler üreten ve yüksek beceri seviyesine sahip bir ekonomi olma eğilimi sergilemekteyken, Türkiye'de gelişen yeni iş alanları da daha yüksek beceri seviyesini gerektirmeye başlamıştır. Ve artık günümüzde bu değişimin hızına yetişebilmek için çok daha etkin ve çok daha üretken bir mesleki eğitim ve öğretim sistemine sahip olmak gerekliliği her kesim tarafından kabul görmektedir. Mesleki Eğitim ve Öğretimin Güçlendirilmesi Projesi (MEGEP) ve Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Modernizasyonu Projeleri (MTEM) ile, Türkiye de mesleki eğitim öğretim sistemini AB üyesi ülkelerin seviyesine çıkarma girişiminde bulunmuştur. Bu tez bir yandan Avrupa Birliğinde mesleki eğitim ve öğretim kavramının tarihi gelişimini incelerken, diğer yandan da Türkiye'nin bu alandaki tecrübesini mercek altına almıştır. Daha sonra, Türkiye'deki sistemin sorunlarını masaya yatırmış ve daha iyi bir mesleki eğitim sistemi için beklentileri ve gereklilikleri belirlemeye çalışmıştır. Akabinde halen devam etmekte olan MEGEP projesini ele alıp, AB düzenlemelerinin aday ülkelerin politika geliştirme süreçlerine etkilerini açıklamaya çalışmış ve Türkiye'nin Topluluk Müktesebatına uyum kapasitesini arttırmak için bu proje çerçevesinde geliştirilen kurumsal kapasitelerin ana hatlarını çizmiştir. Ardından, tüm bu gelişmelere politik açıdan bir yorum getirmeye çalışmıştır. Son olarak, bu tez projenin yaygınlaştırılma aşamasında karşılaşılabilecek, göz önüne alınması gereken muhtemel engelleri tespit etmeye çalışmıştır.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAT	Change Agent Teacher
CC	Curriculum Coordinator
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
COMET	Central Coordination Meeting
DİSK	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey
EC	European Commission
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EEC	European Economic Community
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESC	Economic and Social Committee
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
HAK-İŞ	Confederation of Right Trade Unions
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISKUR	Turkish Employment Agency
LLL	Life Long Learning
LLLWG	Life Long Learning Working Group
LMNA	Labour Market Needs Analysis
MEKSA	Vocational Training and Small Industry Support Foundation
METARGE M	Vocational and Technical Education Research and Development Centre
METGE Project	Vocational and Technical Education Development Project
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
MVET	Modernization of Vocational Education and Training in Turkey Project
NCC	National Coordination Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
QAS	Quality Assurance System
QMS	Quality Management System
RAC	Regional Advisory Committee
SEA	Single European Act
SEDOC	Register of Occupations and Professions in International Exchange
SVET	Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System Project
TAT	Technical Assistance Team
TESK	Turkish Confederation of Craftsmen and Tradesmen
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TİSK	Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations
TOBB	Turkish Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Maritime Trade and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
ToR	Terms of Reference of the SVET Project

TQM	Total Quality Management
TSE	Turkish Standards Institute
TURK-IS	Confederation of Trade Unions of Turkey
TUSIAD	Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VQA	Vocational Qualification Authority
VQS	Vocational Qualification System
YODGED	Management Evaluation and Development Department
WG	Work group
YÖK	Higher Education Board

I. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning when the European communities were developed and planned as a multinational project, the educational aspect of the EEC was not taken into consideration. Since the *raison d'être* of the European Union was to increase the mobility of people, ideas and products within its Member States, it is hardly surprising that in the early years when people talked about education, what they often had in mind was the equivalence of diplomas or the reception and schooling of the children of migrant workers i.e., the prerequisites for the freedom of movement of workers. Almost 20 years had passed when the education was first included in the European integration as the education ministers adopted the first action program in the field of education. Today education policy is considered as a prominent factor in building a Europe of knowledge and it is at the heart of the EU's economic and social strategy for 2010, which proves it to be an important part of the *Acquis Communautaire*.

As a candidate country, Turkey is at the crossroads in terms of reforming its vocational education and training system. As the world economy is displaying a consistent tendency towards a high skilled economy with high value products, the types of jobs that are now concentrating in Turkey tend to be higher up the value chain, and to require a higher skills input. Even in traditional industries such as textile, there is a drive towards higher value products. These require a more skilled workforce. It is now coming to be accepted that these types of jobs require a more efficient more productive VET system in

order to keep up with the rapid pace of change. The national training effort needs to be considerably developed if Turkey is to reach even the average level of training performance in the EU.

The skills level of the Turkish workforce today is largely the product of the output of the Turkish education system. Large numbers of workers in today's labour force have either low or no qualifications. These are the people who are in greatest danger of unemployment in the case of development of a high skilled economy in Turkey. Tomorrow's long term unemployed may well include some of today's youngsters who are being tempted into low skilled jobs at the expense of completing their education.

On 3 March, at the European Employment Strategy conference in Ankara, ETF director Peter de Rooij maintained that "demographic figures and the young population create an exceptional window of opportunity for the future of Turkey"¹, while presenting the result of the ETF Background Analysis on Employment in Turkey. According to this analysis, Turkey's demographic figures show that the working age group is now 65% of the total population and it is expected to reach 69% in 2020. While in Europe the age group of those aged between 15 and 65 (working age) is constantly decreasing, Turkish figures exhibit an opposite trend. This situation gives the country a window of opportunities. But on the other side, education and vocational training indicators show that Turkey's investment on human capital is still low. The average education is 6.8 years for males and 5.3 for females, and the GDP investment in education (4%) is below EU average (5%). The difference between the percentages might seem close. However, considering the much smaller volume of Turkish GDP compared to EU average makes the differential more obvious.

¹ This information was retrieved on 25 July 2006 from http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/5761D8D14FE9E20BC1256E4B00312B02_EN?OpenDocument

Given the above demographic figures, Turkey's economic success in the EU cannot be taken for granted. As Peter de Rooij puts it; "Considering these data, it is evident that Turkey will be able to take the demographic opportunity only if it increases its investments on human capital, namely general education and vocational training. The importance of investing in people is even stronger in a country whose demography creates such a big competitive advantage."²

The National Programme for the adoption of the *acquis* sets out ambitious targets to move Turkish levels of training to near European best practice, and to reach these targets is only possible if Turkey adopts an educational and training policy which is in accordance with its employment strategy. Key to maintaining this economic success will be increasing the skills of those in work and ensuring better training opportunities for those who are in the mainstream education and training system. This presents challenges to all the parties, not least because it means delivering learning to new groups in new ways. For the Turkish economy of today, initial VET, lifelong learning and workplace learning are not luxuries, they are necessities.

EU's need for qualified workforce is a fact and that it will be greater in the near future is obvious. Turkey's young population will be a must for the EU if it is to sustain the economic power that it enjoys today. EU's Lisbon Agenda concerning the goal of being the most competitive knowledge based economy in 2010 is another driving force behind the motivation of Turkey to improve its VET system.

The approach towards the analysis of governing structures in this thesis begins with the links between education, training and employment. It is assumed that a solid VET analysis necessitates an in depth observation of historical development of VET concept in the EU

² *ibid*

and Turkish VET experience. As a consequence, this study makes use of an ongoing project in Turkey, SVET, to explain the effects of EU regulations on the candidate countries policy making process and tries to outline the institutional capacity developed in this framework in order to improve Turkey's capacity to adopt the Acquis.

This thesis not only tries to explain the developments in VET in the European context but also tries to scrutinize the drawbacks of the existing VET system in Turkey. It goes on with analyzing the expectation and requirements for a modern system and proposes ways to establish this. Finally, it attempts to define some obstacles in the implementation process of the SVET project.

There are few long-term studies in which the recent developments of vocational education and training in Turkey are scrutinized, and those which cover this topic are mainly self-reports of the actors and bodies in the field. There are only two recent academic studies. They cover a wider topic, namely public education and vocational training systems. Present study differs from the aforementioned works in that it tries to strengthen the analysis of the documents by interviews with key informants.

The purpose of this study is to promote a better understanding of present day developments in VET system in Turkey by referring to the historical developments both at the EU level and national level. The study also gives an account of the role VET has had on European integration and the effects of European Policies on national VET system and seeks to encourage future research in the field.

This thesis investigates European Union (EU) vocational education and training policies in the light of the evolving Lisbon agenda on improving the competitiveness of the EU. The paper argues

that, in the wake of the Lisbon agenda, the legal basis for EU activities has been substantially extended by intergovernmental agreements. The discourse on the concept of economic competitiveness has changed the formulation of new EU policies in education and training, exemplified by a strong emphasis on educational indicators, benchmarks and quality controls. This has resulted in a new wave of EU initiatives in the field, sometimes updating or recycling activities that had not been successful in the past. The slow progress regarding the Lisbon goals for education and training seems to indicate, however, that the impact of EU programmes and projects for educational provisions in the Member States remains limited. In short this thesis tries to answer the following questions;

- a. How do the EU vocational education policies affect Turkish VET system?
- b. How do participants or key persons perceive the meaning of the project and the effects of SVET on Turkish VET?

This paper has been divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 begins by laying out the foundations of education in the early treaties of the EEC and the ESCS and then briefly describes the development of education and training in the EU with particular references to VET, focusing on their legal basis, underlying principles, main forms of implementation. Finally, it covers recent developments and key concepts in the EU Agenda and their impact on national education and training systems.

Chapter 2 first gives a brief overview of the initial conceptions of the methodology. As for the methodology, this thesis will mainly be a case study. Chapter 3 scrutinizes the position of VET in Turkish education system. Initially it describes the historical development and policies on the subject. Later, it attempts to explain

the drawbacks of the current VET system.

Chapter 4 carries the core analysis to a specific project in Turkey, namely SVET. It sets out with a detailed illustration of how the project is functioning and management. It then focus on the innovations it has brought into Turkish VET system highlighting the diversity of instruments and approaches and clarifying their relevance and contribution to the VET system. Lastly, it critically traces any drawbacks of the system or gaps in the system.

The last chapter intends to clarify the contribution of SVET project to the policy learning process and its relevance to the VET system, draws lessons and questions from experiences arising from the implementation of SVET projects, and analyse the context and opportunities created by the new instruments for Turkish VET system. Further interpretations concerning Turkey's EU candidacy and its capacity regarding the future membership will be made.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Qualitative Inquiry

This study made use of a qualitative approach to research design. Since SVET has not been completed yet, there are not many substantial quantitative outcomes apart from projections of return. According to Ary et al (2006), qualitative studies are a distinctive type of research in education and the social sciences that can produce vivid and richly detailed accounts of human experience as well. This study will also attempt to draw conclusions considering the experiences of an ongoing project.

A qualitative design was chosen because it is the appropriate method for investigating the problem as it helps to examine a phenomenon in rich detail. As Ary et al state (2006); “the ultimate goal of this kind of inquiry is to portray the complex pattern of what is being studied in sufficient depth and detail so that someone who has not experienced it can understand it.”

Maxwell (2005) highlights the openness and flexibility of the qualitative inquiry. A researcher can modify his or her study during the research to understand new discoveries and relationships.

“From the outset of the first interview or observation, the qualitative inquirer is reflecting on the meaning of what he or she heard and seen, developing hunches (working hypotheses) about

what it means, and seeking to confirm or disconfirm those hunches in subsequent interviews or observations. It is a process of inductive data analysis; it proceeds from data to hypotheses to theory. "(Ary et al, 2006)

Qualitative research shows concern for context and meaning. Therefore, it is always bounded by a particular context or setting. Qualitative inquiries usually study very small numbers of individuals or situations because it is necessary to understand the particular context within which the participants act, and the influence that this context has on their actions. It is important to figure out how unique circumstances shape the actions and attitudes of participants or events (Maxwell, 2005). The focus is on the process rather than outcomes.

A successful qualitative research should be coherent and insightful. The strength of a qualitative inquiry is measured not by described cause and effect relations; qualitative studies employ multiple forms of evidence, and they persuade by reasons (Eisner, 1998).

2.2. Case Study

Case studies help explore the origins of the projects and programs, and tell the stories of the people and organizations behind the projects. (Frechtling & Sharp, 1997), (Yin,1993) They also help answer why and how questions, explain roles and goals, investigate project dynamics, track progress, measure outcomes. In this research, the researcher tried to determine the objectives of the SVET project,

and why they are important for the development of the VET system in Turkey. Later, the study attempted to explore the design through what these objectives would be reached. It tried to describe the progress of the project towards these objectives by identifying the application and implementation of the developments. It also attempted to explore the organizational pattern and management practices of the SVET project.

Case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). Case studies have been used in varied investigations, particularly in sociological studies, but increasingly, in instruction. Even when the study is a quantitative one, the data collection and analysis methods are known to hide some details (Stake, 1995). Case studies, on the other hand, are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data.

Yin (1993) has identified some specific types of case studies: *Exploratory*, *Explanatory*, and *Descriptive*. Stake (1995) included three others: *Intrinsic* - when the researcher has an interest in the case; *Instrumental* - when the case is used to understand more than what is obvious to the observer; *Collective* - when a group of cases is studied. Exploratory cases are sometimes considered as a prelude to social research. Explanatory case studies may be used for doing causal investigations. Descriptive cases require a descriptive theory to be developed before starting the project. In all of the above types of case studies, there can be single-case or multiple-case applications.

The unit of analysis is a critical factor in the case study. It is typically a system of action rather than an individual or group of individuals. Case studies tend to be selective, focusing on one or two issues that are fundamental to understanding the system being examined.

Case study is known as a triangulated research strategy. Snow and Anderson (cited in Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991) asserted that triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies. Stake (1995) stated that the protocols that are used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations are called triangulation. The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes. In case studies, this could be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 1994).

Denzin (1984) identified four types of triangulation: *Data source triangulation*, when the researcher looks for the data to remain the same in different contexts; *Investigator triangulation*, when several investigators examine the same phenomenon; *Theory triangulation*, when investigators with different view points interpret the same results; and *Methodological triangulation*, when one approach is followed by another, to increase confidence in the interpretation.

In this thesis, data source triangulation was chosen as a method of ensuring validity. The current study used two different sources of evidence, namely documents and interviews.

Single cases may be used to confirm or challenge a theory, or to represent a unique or extreme case (Yin, 1994). Single-case studies are also ideal for revelatory cases where an observer may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible. These studies can be holistic or embedded, the latter occurring when the same case study involves more than one unit of analysis.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

Yin (1994) identified six primary sources of evidence for case study research. The use of each of these might require different skills from the researcher. Not all sources are essential in every case study, but the importance of multiple sources of data to the reliability of the study is well established (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). The six sources identified by Yin (1994) are:

- documentation,
- archival records,
- interviews,
- direct observation,
- participant observation, and
- physical artifacts.

No single source has a complete advantage over the others; rather, they might be complementary and could be used in tandem. Thus a case study should use as many sources as are relevant to the study.

Documents could be letters, memoranda, agendas, study reports, or any items that could add to the data base. The validity of the documents should be carefully reviewed so as to avoid incorrect data being included in the data base. One of the most important uses of documents is to corroborate evidence gathered from other sources. The potential for over-reliance on document as evidence in case studies has been criticized. There could be a danger of this occurrence if the investigator is inexperienced and mistakes some types of documents for unmitigated truth (Yin, 1994). Thus, in doing a

qualitative content analysis, the researcher has to consider the meaning of the text from different perspectives, including those of the author and intended audiences. As Gall, Borg & Gall (2002) put it;

“To fully understand a document or a record, therefore, the qualitative researcher needs to study the context in which it was produced – the author's purpose in writing it, the author's working conditions, the author's intended and actual audience, and the audience's purpose for reading it.”

Archival records could be useful in some studies since they include service records, maps, charts, lists of names, survey data, and even personal records such as diaries. The investigator must be meticulous in determining the origin of the records and their accuracy.

According to Ary et al. (2002), interviews provide information that cannot be obtained through observation, or they can be used to verify the observation. Indeed, interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information. In an open-ended interview, the researcher could ask for the informant's opinion on events or facts. This could serve to corroborate previously gathered data. Oppenheim (1997) states that the purpose of the depth interview is to collect percepts and ideas and to improve the conceptualization of the research problem.

According to Oppenheim (1997), we should wish to interview a judgement sample, a sample that is typical of the respondents and sometimes we might conduct depth interviews with 'key informants'. As stated by Frechtling & Sharp (1997);

“A key informant is a person (or group of persons) who has unique skills or professional background related to the issue/intervention being evaluated, is knowledgeable about the project participants, or has access to other information of interest to the evaluator.”

In this research, additional data was collected by asking three members of the SVET project's steering committee – a management group made up of representatives from the participating organizations. The researcher used open-ended interviews as recommended by Yin (1994) to expand the depth of data gathering, and to increase the number of sources of information. Open-ended interviews are characterized with the free talks of the participants on the topic. Interviewees can talk in a relaxed atmosphere in their own terms. They do not have to answer pre-set questions; therefore, the interview is not constrained by fixed-answer questions, which lead to narrow information. (Coolican, 2004). An interview guide was used to conduct the interviews. It was formed to ensure the same basic line of researched topics was discussed with each interviewee. According to Patton (2002), an interview guide provides a comprehensive and systematic way of interviewing in a limited time. The researcher does not have to follow the same order for each interview, since the aim of using an interview guide is simply to provide a checklist for the interviewer. An interview guide is also offered when the interviewer is free to explore the topic and free to build the conversation within the subject area and also focus on a particular subject (Patton, 1990). The interview guide is contained in Appendix 1.

This study was enhanced by interviews of key individuals so as to acquire information that might not have become available through the document analysis. The interviews were conducted according to the interviewee's schedule and availability, as suggested by Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991).

III. DEVELOPMENT OF VET POLICY IN THE EU

In spite of the absence of education dimension in the original Treaty of Rome in 1957, there were several direct and indirect references made to vocational education and training (VET). Indeed, the history of Community cooperation in education was closely linked to developments in vocational education and social policy. This chapter attempts to lay out the developments which have marked the history of Community cooperation in education with special reference to vocational education and training.

Two possible approaches were identified; the first being a thematic approach and the second, a historical approach. The second approach was preferred here since dividing the history in key phases would help to gain a better understanding of the progress in VET in the EU.

In building up key phases this study adopts a historical division previously designated by Ertl (2003). In order to provide a clear picture of different emphases of EU education and training policies at different times, the development of provision in the field of education and training will be presented in a chronological account and in five distinct phases and current initiatives.

The first phase is the Initiation Phase which will cover 1951 and 1963. It starts with the treaties of Rome and Paris and its effects on education and training. The second phase is the Foundation Phase which is marked with the general principles of 1963 for VET and the

Education Action Programme. The development of programmes and the concept of a European Dimension in education and training characterize the Expansion Phase. Consolidation Phase studies the Treaty on European Union and its consequences. After the Consolidation Phase, developments beyond Maastricht Treaty such as Lisbon Agenda and Copenhagen Process are scrutinized in detail. Lastly, current initiatives in the VET are examined.

3.1. Initiation Phase (1951 – 1963): The Treaties of Paris and Rome and Their Impact on Education and Training

Although there were initially mostly informal attempts at cooperation in education and training between European countries immediately after the end of World War II, this account starts with the first formal agreements laid down in the founding Treaties of the European Economic Community. (Ertl, 2003)

The legal basis of the original European Community rests upon three treaties: the Treaty of Paris (1951), which set up the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and the two Treaties of Rome (1957) which set up the European Economic *Community (EEC)* and the *European Atomic Energy Committee (Euratom)*.

It can be stated that the EEC Treaty provided a solid legal base for a Commission initiative directed towards establishing a common policy on vocational training for the workers of the Member States. According to Ertl (2003);

“Vocational training featured in the Treaty of Rome of 1957, where it was closely bound to the

basic aims of creating a common market for goods, services and capital.”

Article 128 of the EEC Treaty signed in Rome in March 1957 stated that the Council of Ministers of the Community would lay down, based on a proposal of the Commission and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee (ESC), ‘general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market’. In this article it was clearly stated that a common vocational training policy was a responsibility of the Commission.

Article 118 also included basic and advanced vocational training as one of the matters for which the Commission was given the task ‘of promoting close cooperation between Member States’.

Article 41 specifically referred to vocational training in the agricultural sector, stating that there should be ‘effective coordination of efforts in the spheres of vocational training ... (that) may include joint financing of projects or institutions’.

These were followed by a series of measures such as Article 57 which, without explicitly mentioning the adoption of a common policy, could be regarded as indirect legal sources for Community competence in matters of vocational training such as mutual recognition of qualifications.

Articles 118 and 128 proved to be of central importance in the long term, for they would constitute legal basis for a number of decisions by the Commission and the Court of Justice. However, Field (1998) asserts that in the short term, the priorities of creating a common market did not include education and training.

3.2. Foundation Phase (1963 – 1976):

General Principles for Vocational Training and the Education Action Programme

The European Council apparently carried out the instruction stated in Article 128 (EEC Treaty) in 1963 when it agreed on ten general principles for setting up a common policy for vocational education and training (Decision 63/ 226 of 2 April 1963)

According to Ertl (2003); most importantly, the principles contained the commitment to give all people the opportunity to receive adequate training in order to be able to exercise free choice of occupation and place of work, and to reach new and higher levels of employment.

In a second decision reached on 18 December 1963, the Council approved the statutes of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training. The Committee consisted of 36 members, i.e. 2 government representatives, 2 union representatives and 2 employers' representatives per Member State. It was chaired by a representative of the Commission.

In May 1965, after consulting the Advisory Committee, the Commission adopted the Action Programme, which was submitted to other Community institutions for consideration. However, Commissions plans came up against strong opposition from the Governments due to the political and financial implications of the programme. If it became reality, it would be the first concrete Community measure in vocational training to be implemented by common funding. Petrini (2004) argues that Member states opposed to the programme 'for the very reason of ruling out any Community competence in what was regarded as the

sole domain of national governments'. As a result, the programme was shelved.

While Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome very clearly states that a common policy for vocational training should be developed, this policy has never come to fruition. This is largely due to resistance from Germany and France, which already possessed highly developed vocational training systems.

As most Member States did not consider the ten general principles of 1963 legally binding, joint action in the field of vocational education and training was very limited. This trend was reinforced by the fact that training did not have a high priority in the six Member States. (Ertl, 2003)

In general, the member states were reluctant to allow a common policy to take control of what they considered as discrete and autonomous fields of national policy. (Field, 1998). As Petrini (2004) puts it ;

“The failure can also be attributed to the clash between the centralising forces of European development, revealed by the Commission’s attempts to take the lead in financing common policies, and the opposing government forces that seek to limit the Commission’s ambitions and defend their sovereignty. As a result, attempts to formulate a common policy for vocational training have been abandoned.”

3.3. Expansion Phase (1976 – 1992):

The Development of Programmes and the Concept of a European Dimension in Education and Training

It was not until the early 1970s that the situation changed. This was due to a number of interrelated reasons. According to Ertl (2003) there were two main reasons for the increased interest in education and training at the time; firstly, it was the discussions on 'new European citizen of the future'. The second and more tangible reason was the difficult economic situation of 1970s. Youth unemployment rose all over Europe due to the severe depression, initially caused by the oil crisis of 1973. The recognition of the fact that many young people entered the labour market with no qualifications after leaving school at the age of 16 or less caused a reconsideration of the role of education and training, not only at the national, but also at the Community level. (Field, 1998)

The new relationship between general and vocational education was stipulated for the first time by the Janne Report. The Report, entitled For a Community Policy in Education, influenced the discussion in the field of education because it stated clearly that the division of general and vocational education was a major obstacle to a common policy in both fields. According to the report, there was a need to develop a coherent strategy aiming at harmonisation of the educational policies of the member states.

In a Council Resolution in 1974, the Community agreed on a Social Action Programme in which the development of full employment was the main priority. In this context, vocational training was considered to be a crucial element of a strategy for economic

recovery. It was the economic pressure of the time that made a new relationship between general and vocational education possible. In this resolution, the Ministers of Education robustly reminded the Commission that education was far more than the economic domain and that each member state had its own policies and systems which must be respected. According to Field (1998), this proposed for the first time that any measures should take place on the legal basis of co-operation between the member states in a field where they held unquestioned authority, rather than as a formal EU measure under the terms of the Treaty of Rome. Another result of the Council Resolution was the establishment of an Education Committee. This new body was composed of the Member States' Ministers of Education and of the European Commission. It initiated several programmes of permanent action and co-operation in the field of general education.

It was only in the late 1970s that closer educational co-operation between the Member States was introduced. At the centre of this was the 1976 action programme for co-operation in education, which besides introducing measures for the schooling of migrant workers' children, and for more intensive exchanges of information, sought to improve foreign language teaching and bring about closer co-operation in university teaching. They mainly comprised pilot projects, studies, visits, etc. The aim was to foster greater mutual understanding, more correspondence and closer connections between education systems at all levels, mainly through exchanges of information and experience. A 'continuous comparison of policies, experience and ideas in the Member States' and the addition of a 'European dimension' to educational system were the core objectives. (Commission, 2006)

Ertl, on the other hand, claims that the significance of the 1976 Action Programme lies not so much in these comparatively

modest aims, but in the fact that education was legitimised as an area of policy by the Council of Ministers for the first time. The Programme triggered off an increasing number of related initiatives and projects that can be seen as the forerunners of today's EU framework programmes in education and training (Field, 1998).

The establishment of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Education (CEDEFOP) in West Berlin in 1975 was another product of the Resolution of 1974 and it was given a central role for the new initiatives. The Centre saw its role in the analysis of systems of vocational education, in the development and recognition of qualifications and in the co-ordination of information and communication between Member States (CEDEFOP, 1997). In retrospect, it can be said that CEDEFOP substantially increased the research capacity in the field by disseminating publications, running a documentation centre and funding research groups. Furthermore, it provided a focus for exploring various policy options, a function which can be seen as decisive for the Commission's policy in the late 1970s and 1980s. Vocational training thus gained a clearer status, especially as of the early 1980s. (Commission, 2006)

The decisions of the European court of Justice in the 1980s encouraged the Commission and the Council to organise a new wave of projects and programmes in all areas of education from the mid-1980s onwards. (Commission, 2006) The first of these new programmes was Comett (European Community Action Programme in Education and Training for Technology), established in 1986. In the field of higher education, the basis for Erasmus (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) was established in 1987.

A number of programmes in the context of vocational education were also developed, providing a wide range of opportunities for institutions

and individuals. The most important programme in the field of vocational education and training was Petra, launched in 1988. Petra supported the Member States in providing the opportunity for all young people to attend vocational training for at least one year after compulsory schooling. The validity of Petra was challenged by several Member States (including the UK and Germany) on the grounds that it permitted the European Commission to supplement the activities of the Member States to promote a common vocational training policy. However, The European Court of Justice once more ruled in favour of the Commission stating that the general principles on vocational education and training of 1963 gave the Commission the permission for such a programme (Sellin, 1999).

Further Community actions in education and training around the mid-1980s included the introduction of five Community-wide levels of vocational qualifications and certificates (EC Decision 85/ 386 of June 1985). These levels constitute the framework for mutual recognition and transparency of qualifications in the Member States (Commission, 2006), (Versori, 2004). In order to make the system operable, CEDEFOP initiated a comparability exercise which resulted in SEDOC (Register of Occupations and Professions in International Exchange), a register of more than 200 comparable occupational activities. CEDEFOP developed SEDOC in co-operation with experts from all Member States. The register contains descriptions of occupational profiles and the basic requirements of occupations for the award of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of qualifications recognised by the respective Member States. In 1993, 209 occupational profiles were unanimously agreed upon by the EU Member States in co-operation with the associations of the social partners at European level. Descriptions of the occupational profiles and comparative tables outlining training paths and qualifications have been published in the Official Journal of the EU. SEDOC was further

developed in the EC Programme Comparability of Vocational Training Qualifications. (European Council, 1985)

In the field of general education, the concept of a European dimension in education was widely discussed. This concept is frequently proposed as a way forward with regard to the discussions about the integration process in Europe. Although the term first appeared in the Janne Report (Janne, 1973) and then in the EC Education Action Programme of 1976, the concept of a European dimension was not further specified until 1988, when the Council of Ministers agreed on a formal definition (Resolution 88/ C177/ 02 of 24 May 1988: Enhancing the European Dimension of Education). The general aims of this concept are to enhance young people's awareness of their European identity and to prepare them to take part in the economic and social development of the Community, to create awareness of the advantages of and challenges to the Community, to improve knowledge of the Community as well as of the individual Member States, and to emphasise to them the importance of co-operation with the wider international community. This concept found its way into the Treaty of Maastricht (Art. 126(2)) and was further developed in the 1993 Green Paper on the European Dimension of Education (Commission, 1993).

Single European Act, signed in 1986, was a major breakthrough which initiated a new dynamism within the Community. Its preamble reiterated the broad objective - the creation of a European Union and it also laid down the legal framework for establishing a single market by 1992. Many action programmes were launched in the late 1980s in order to prepare the way for the training of the human resources needed to achieve this objective. These included programmes such as COMETT, ERASMUS, EUROTECNET, and PETRA.

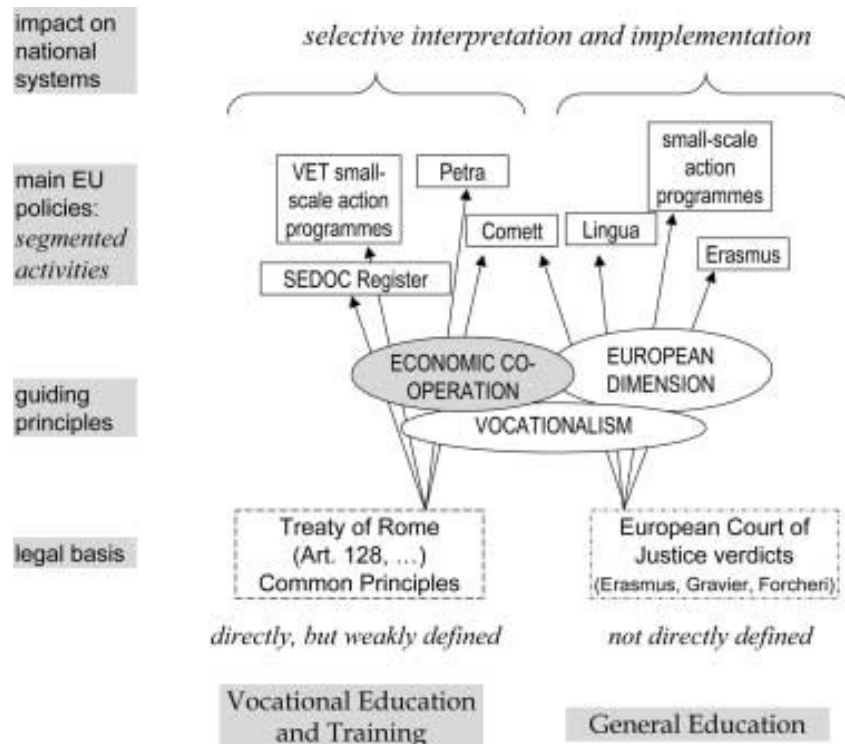


Figure 1. European Community policy model in education and training: pre-Maastricht (Ertl, 2006)

As a preparation for the Single European Market, which was agreed on in the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986 and came into effect on 1 January 1993, the education and training programmes mentioned above were reorganised and restructured. The primary aim of the SEA was to complete the internal market, an objective which had already been present in the Treaty of Rome. The Single European Act does not explicitly refer to education.

Ertl (2003) notes that it was broadly agreed upon at the time that the challenges of an internal market as a space without internal frontiers also had to be faced in the field of education. In fact, there was wide ranging discussion among EU institutions and European

educationists about the consequences of the Act for the educational sector:

[...] the removal of barriers has led to an interest in education together with training within the economic, financial, social, political and technological processes of internal market change which are under way' (Brock & Tulasiewicz, 1994).

3.4. Consolidation Phase (From 1992):

The Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty) and Its Consequences

The next major event in the development of the European Union which was to directly have an effect on education was the signing of the Treaty on European Union in Maastricht in 1992. The long-lasting misinterpretations resulting from uncertainties of the Articles in the treaty of Rome necessitated a stable legal basis for education and training in Community law. From the outset of the treaty of Rome to Maastricht every Commission proposal was faced with assertions of sovereignty by the member states, usually acting through the Council but sometimes resorting individually to legal challenges to the Union's proposals (Field, 1998).

Therefore, Maastricht Treaty or 'the Treaty on European Union (TEU) dealt with vocational education and training (Art. 127, which replaced Art. 128 of the Treaty of Rome) and, in an explicit way

for the first time, with general education (Art. 126). Both Articles are included in the new chapter 3 of the Treaty, entitled 'Education, Vocational Training and Youth', under Title VIII ('Social, Education, Vocational Training and Youth Policies'). In the field of general education, the role of the Community is limited to supporting and supplementing the actions of, and encouraging co-operation between, Member States:

Article 126 of this Treaty introduces new competencies in the field of education which means that now there exists a legal framework which allows the Community to propose co-operative action in this area even though the subsidiarity principle still does apply to education.

The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action [...] (Art. 126(1) TEU).

In contrast, the Community's competencies in vocational education go further:

The Community shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States [...] (Art. 127(1) TEU).

It can be argued that the competencies of the Community were substantially extended by the TEU. General education was explicitly considered neither in the 1957 Treaty of Rome nor in the SEA of 1986. According to Field (1998), the ratification of the Treaty on European Union marked the adoption of a more radical approach seeking to promote the concept and practice of the learning society by the EU.

For vocational education, Article 128 in the EEC Treaty gave the Council the right to '[...] lay down general principles[...]', but Article 127 TEU entitled the Community to '[...] adopt measures to contribute to the achievement of the objectives [...]'. These measures can be understood as '[...] legally-binding regulations, directives and decisions, or non-binding recommendations and options'. The EU policy in vocational education enjoys a strengthened position as a result of its changed Treaty status.

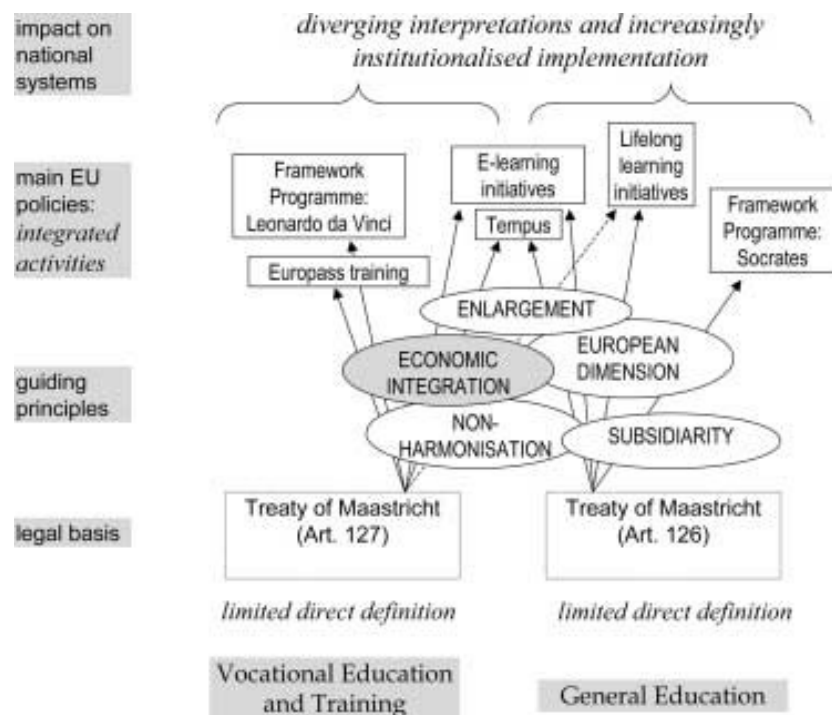


Figure 2. EU policy model in education and training: post-Maastricht (Ertl, 2006)

In spite of the different treatment of general and vocational education in Articles 126 and 127 of the TEU, both Articles are similarly structured and extremely cautiously formulated. They explicitly exclude '[...] any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States' (Art. 126(4), Art. 127(4) TEU) and both state that the Community '[...] fully [respects] the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems' ['of vocational training'] (Art. 126(1), [127(1)]). These clauses mirror the principles of subsidiarity (as established in the Maastricht Treaty and reinforced in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997) and cultural autonomy as laid down in the TEU and apply them to education.

According to the principle of subsidiarity, the Community's competences are strictly limited to areas in which the Treaty explicitly authorises such actions and in which the intended aims cannot be attained sufficiently by Member States independently.

3.5. Beyond the Maastricht Treaty

In the 1990s, after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, ten Central and Eastern European countries applied to the Union for membership. This turned into another driving factor for developing EU policies in education and training since it was a challenge for the Union both economically and socially. Introducing the western economic principles into these ex-communist countries by expanding the common market was regarded as an opportunity for the European

economy. However, cooperation in the area of education was regarded as a must since it was necessary to improve the living conditions and social standards before achieving this aim and started almost immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

While the EU focuses on the importance of the VET system for economic performance, it appears to also emphasise the notion of social inclusion. The Lisbon (2000) and Copenhagen (2002) Declarations and the Maastricht Communiqué (2004) all called for enhanced cooperation between the member countries on VET issues and for each country to move national policy toward the adopted European Commission policy, for example on national qualification frameworks and on pathway issues to improve skills mobility across the EU.

3.5.1. Lisbon Agenda

In March 2000, the European Council of Heads of State or Government introduced the new strategic aim for the European Union '[...] to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' in Lisbon (Council, 2000). For the following ten years, a comprehensive strategy for most sectors of EU policy was announced to react to the challenges posed by '[...] a quantum shift resulting from globalization and the challenges of a new knowledge-driven economy' (Council, 2000).

Three main objectives for Europe's education and training systems were prescribed by The Lisbon Conclusions:

- the development of local learning centres,
- the promotion of new basic skills, in particular in the information technologies,
- increased transparency of qualifications' (Council, 2000).

These EU policies based on the Lisbon Conclusions (often referred to as the Lisbon agenda) were described as a 'turning point' of educational policies in Europe;

"Throughout the 1990s, the Union continued its emphasis on the 'programme approach', initiating cooperation and a certain degree of convergence in education and training by offering project funding."
(Ertl 2006)

As Hingel (2001) puts it ;

"The Lisbon conclusions implicitly give the Union the mandate to develop a 'common interest approach' in education going beyond national diversities as can already be seen in the demand to ministers of Education to debate common objectives of educational systems."

This would lead to an increase in the European dimension of national educational policies which would, in turn, affect the candidate countries policy planning processes. In 1995 Socrates for general and higher education and Leonardo da Vinci For VET started in 1995 for a five-year period. These programmes were merely a new framework for extended EU activities, formerly supported by the programmes such as PETRA, COMETT, ERASMUS and LINGUA.

Meanwhile there were other EU initiatives in the field of education and training in the 1990s which were focused on two

objectives: the promotion of new technologies in learning processes and the increase of mobility within the EU.

At the end of the 1990s, the EU project in the areas of education and vocational training was dominated by the restrictions posed by subsidiarity, the principle of non-harmonization and the 'programme approach' was criticized for ineffective administration and disproportionate bureaucracy (Ertl, 2003).

In this situation, the Lisbon Council of Heads of EU Governments set out a new method for cooperation. In order to achieve the overall aim of becoming '[...] the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world' by 2010 (Council, 2000), the Conclusions attribute specific objectives to a number of policy areas. For education and training, the Lisbon Conclusions define a number of targets, including increasing investment, halving the number of young people with only lower secondary education, defining basic skills for the lifelong learning agenda, creating more transparency in the recognition of qualifications and periods of study and training, and developing a common format for CVs (Council, 2000).

In its ambition and also in the consequences we have witnessed so far, the agenda of change set out by the Lisbon Conclusions can be regarded as a turning point. The Treaty of Maastricht explicitly excludes any harmonization in education and training. Therefore, it is not surprising that the agenda set in Lisbon is accompanied by intergovernmental activities and agreements. (Ertl 2006)

The notion of economic competitiveness is the driving force behind the Lisbon Conclusions. Ertl (2006) argues that economic

pressures have come to the aid of those in the EU who are in favour of closer cooperation in education and training.

The Council Resolution concerning an action plan for mobility was the major driving force behind the objective of increased mobility. This action plan introduced no fewer than 12 objectives and 37 measures, ranging from general plans such as improving guidance on mobility and increasing the numbers of and resources for exchange activities, to concrete intentions such as setting up summer universities and introducing a European university calendar (Council, 2000).

Establishing greater mobility brought the mutual recognition of professional qualifications to the scene along with the discussions on the transparency and comparability of the outcomes of education and training systems across the EU.

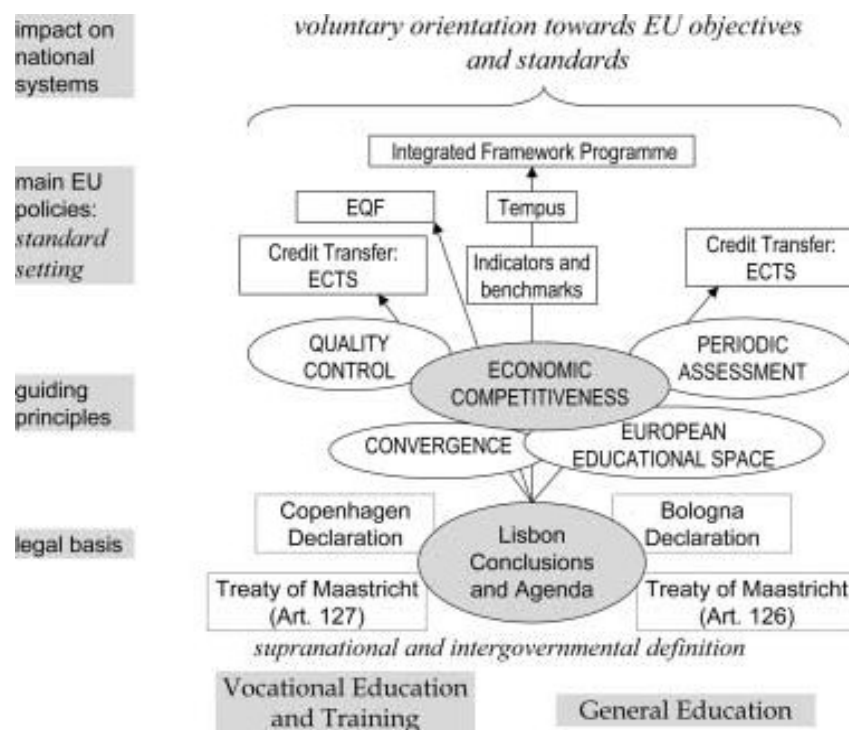


Figure 3. EU policy model in education and training: post-Lisbon. (Ertl, 2006)

This ambiguity in the pressure for a more harmonized system on the one hand and the insistence of the Member States on national autonomy on the other was striking. By promoting the mobility of European citizens, the EU increased the pressure for education and training systems that allow movement from one national context to another. The convergence of the national systems is a necessary consequence of this strategy. By promoting e-learning at a European level, the EU facilitated the establishment of European education opportunities that are no longer bound exclusively to national provision. In more general terms, this phenomenon could also be observed in the cooperation at the European level initiated by the EU programmes for education and training (Ertl, 2003).

3.5.2. European Council's Meetings in Barcelona

In Barcelona in 2002, European Council set an additional objective of making education and training a world quality reference by 2010, in particular through better insight into learning demand as the basis for a lifelong learning strategy. Many fundamental elements of quality – including strengthening the status and roles of teachers and trainers, quality assurance systems, information, advice and guidance systems– have not been implemented on a large scale in most European countries. (Tessaring & Wannan, 2004)

In Barcelona, besides setting an aim for European education to be of the highest quality in the world by 2010, an agreement was made about a follow-up system to follow and report on the development. This is the so called “follow-up process of the education systems”, to which eight work groups have been set. The process for its part will increase comparable information about education and its

development in various European countries. The Copenhagen process is integrated to be a part of this follow-up system.

Ministers of education agreed on three major goals: *to improve the quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems, to ensure that they are accessible to all; to open up education and training to the wider world.* They decided to implement the necessary changes through the “open method of coordination”, by sharing experiences, working towards common goals and learning from what works best elsewhere.(Masson & McBride, 2006)

3.5.3. The Copenhagen Process

In Bruges in 2001 a meeting of vocational general directors started a process with the purpose of increasing the quality and general appreciation of vocational education. In November 2002, by EU Ministers of Education a resolution was agreed on, aiming to increase European cooperation, and in December 2002 Ministers of Education and representatives of labour market organisations from the member and applicant states signed in Copenhagen a declaration, which in practice included the aims of the resolution.

The goal of the Copenhagen process is, through increasing cooperation, to

- 1) improve the quality of vocational education,
- 2) increase the attractiveness of vocational education and
- 3) improve the mobility of those in vocational education or graduated from vocational education.

The principal aim is to boost the implementation of current partner projects and improve their impact. The Copenhagen declaration has eight points of emphasis;

- Strengthening of the European dimension of vocational education
- Increase of transparency
- Development of the transferability of studies
- Development of sector-specific competencies and qualifications
- Development of common quality criteria and quality assurance systems
- Strengthening of European dimension through guidance and counselling
- Recognition and crediting of non- formal and informal learning
- Paying attention to the further training needs of teachers and instructors

The main points are closely connected. Mobility is supported by an increase in the transparency of vocational education. When education is transparent, it is easier to develop common training, which then could lead to transferability. To enable the development of common training and credit studies completed abroad, the quality of education has to be established in various countries. In addition, teachers and instructors must be trained to be better able to face the new challenges of working life. And the proficiency of teachers increases the quality of vocational education.

Through close sector-specific cooperation it is possible to chart the competencies of working life and further develop vocational education to correspond with the needs of working life. Furthermore, ways to recognise, assess and credit learning outside school have to be developed in order for the education systems to better support lifelong learning. All in all, the overall aim of the main points of emphasis is to strengthen the European dimension of vocational education.

The Commission has established three European level work groups regarding the Copenhagen process, to which representatives from labour market organisations and authorities have been appointed from Finland.

The first work group discusses how the current Europass could be expanded to a European trademark and how to improve its usability. The Europass would be expanded to include most of the existing devices (appendix of degree certificate, language proficiency certificate, European CV), with which it is possible to increase the transparency of degrees and support mobility.

The second work group aims to create a transfer system of vocational studies called ECVET. With ECVET, studies completed elsewhere could be credited in the students' own educational institution more easily. ECTS (European Credit Transfer System), which has functioned successfully in institutions of higher education, is used as a model in the development of the system.

The third work group aims to develop European quality criteria for vocational education. The quality criteria alleviate employment and studying in different countries, since common criteria increase mutual trust. The quality work group does not focus on the competencies of individual educational sectors but discusses the

quality criteria on a system level. When applicable, the issue of quality assurance is also approached from the viewpoint of the institutions offering education.

The aim of the Copenhagen process is not to harmonise structures but to increase voluntary cooperation, mutual trust, transparency and, through these, mobility.

The Commission, on assignment for the meeting, prepared a draft about the concrete future aims of the education systems. The aims mentioned in the draft were the improvement of quality and impact of education systems in the EU, facilitation of admission into education institutions and approximation of education systems into the surrounding environment. The three strategic aims are further divided into 13 sub-goals. The aims were approved in Stockholm, 2001.

3.5.4. The Maastricht Communiqué

On 14 December 2004, at a conference in Maastricht, ministers from 32 European countries, together with the European Social Partners and the Commission, agreed on the Maastricht Communiqué. It sets out new priorities and strategies in vocational education and training until the end of 2006. This communiqué updates the Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced co-operation in VET which was adopted in 2002. The Maastricht Communiqué focuses on implementation at national level and ensuring the full contribution of national VET systems to achieving the Lisbon goals. National priorities are agreed in areas where action is considered most urgent for

example, meeting the training needs of people and groups at risk, updating the skills of ageing workforce, developing open and flexible systems and pathways, improving the quality and relevance of the systems and learning environments.

On European level, the Maastricht Communiqué focuses on the development of an open and flexible qualifications framework (EQF), on the development and implementation of the European credit transfer system for VET (ECVET) and on the examination of the specific learning needs and changing role of vocational teachers and trainers.

The Maastricht Communiqué sets the following topics as the necessary reforms and investment that should be focused particularly on:

- the image and attractiveness of the vocational route for employers and individuals, in order to increase participation in VET.
- achieving high levels of quality and innovation in VET systems in order to benefit all learners and make European VET globally competitive.
- linking VET with the labour market requirements of the knowledge economy for a highly skilled workforce, and especially, due to the strong impact of demographic change, the upgrading and competence development of older workers.
- the needs of low-skilled (about 80 million persons aged between 25-64 years in the EU) and disadvantaged groups for the purpose of achieving social cohesion and increasing labour market participation.

3.5.5. The Helsinki Communiqué

Maastricht Communiqué on future Priorities of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training, issued on 14. December 2004, stipulated that "Another Ministerial meeting will be held in two years, to evaluate implementation and to review priorities and strategies for VET within the Education and training 2010 work programme."

This Ministerial meeting was organised in December 2006 during the Finnish Presidency. During the meeting a Helsinki Communiqué was issued, preceded by Council conclusions, and approved in the Education Council 13-14 November.

At the Helsinki meeting (on 5 December 2006), the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission have decided that priority should be given to the image, status and attractiveness of the VET system in all EU member states.

The Helsinki Communiqué sums up the current and future challenges for VET in Europe. It carries the priorities of the Maastricht Communiqué (2004) forward. Aiming at improving the overall performance, quality and attractiveness of VET in Europe, the Helsinki Communiqué, sums up the challenges facing VET and outlines the priorities for the 'Copenhagen Process' on European cooperation in VET.

The Communiqué's urges the need to develop common tools supporting the mobility of students and workers and improving transparency and recognition of vocational qualifications. It sets 2010

as the target year. These common tools include the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) improving the comparability of European qualifications and the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET), the testing of which will be the focus of the upcoming work. Another important tool is the EUROPASS, which is already in use and which will be further developed.

In addition, the Communiqué sets as a goal to lay a solid foundation for comparable statistics in VET by the next follow-up meeting of the process in 2008 since statistical knowledge would establish a solid base for the interpretation of the developments in the area.

With the adoption of the Helsinki Communiqué, the Copenhagen Process is moving to an implementation phase. The Communiqué emphasises that it is crucial to the success of the process that all stakeholders take part in it. This has introduced a new stage - putting the process into practice and involving the VET providers and institutions.

The Communiqué highlights four priority areas:

- Policy measures to improve the attractiveness and quality of VET
- Continued development and implementation of voluntary common EU tools
- The process supports More systematic, strengthened approach to mutual learning through the open method of co-ordination; and further development of statistical information so that progress can be evaluated
- Active involvement of stakeholder

3.6. Current Initiatives

3.6.1. A European Qualification Framework (EQF)

The Joint Interim report of the Council and the Commission (February 2004) on the implementation of the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme gives priority to the development of a European Qualifications Framework as an essential contribution towards the Lisbon strategy. The report states that such a framework could stand as a common reference enabling and promoting transparency, transfer and recognition of qualifications and competences. The EQF would be implemented on a voluntary basis and not require legal obligations.³ The EQF would be structured around a number of well-defined common reference levels relevant to all levels of formal qualifications as well as to all levels of competences acquired through various combinations of formal, non-formal and informal learning. These reference levels, however, would need to be complemented and supported by a range of common principles/guidelines and by a set of common, citizen-oriented instruments and tools. The EQF would be underpinned by a set of common reference levels for qualifications described in terms of learning outcomes and expressed in competences. The common reference levels would refer primarily to

³ This information was retrieved on September 5, 2006 from http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html

learning outcomes rather than to specific education and training arrangements or institutions. Common reference levels would provide a kind of 'reading grid' making it possible to relate different learning outcomes to each other.

During the last couple of years, and notably as a result of the Copenhagen, Bologna and Objectives processes, considerable effort has been made to develop European principles and frameworks which provide a common direction for future developments and a basis for mutual trust. The practical relevance of the EQF for citizens, employers and providers will be strengthened by a range of instruments such as the new Europass framework for transparency.

3.6.2. A European Credit Transfer System and ECVET

The concrete aim of the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is to facilitate the mobility of individuals during their vocational education and training - within a national system or between different national systems. Accordingly, the system will enable individuals in constructing and realising their individual learning careers as well as attribute value to the knowledge and competences they have acquired, notably through mobility. The system encourages furthermore co-operation based on mutual trust between authorities and other stakeholders responsible for

VET systems - on an international, national as well as on a cross border basis.⁴

Since the end of the Eighties, a European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was developed gradually in higher education, initially within the Erasmus programme. ECTS is a system primarily based on student workload and knowledge required to achieve the objectives of a programme of study.⁵ The specificities of VET, more particularly the close and direct links which exist between VET, the labour market and real occupations, require a credit transfer system that it is fully, from the outset, a competence based system. ECVET is a system for progressively obtaining credit points, based on the competences acquired by an individual along a vocational learning route, whatever the modes of it. These credit points will be accumulated, capitalized, recognised and validated in particular in the context of the mobility of the individual learner.

Furthermore, ECVET will allow everyone to: ·accumulate and value acquired learning outcomes - converted into credit points - within an entire individual education and training route or career and transfer acquired learning outcomes from one education and training setting to another, from one formal national system to another, from one level to another and from a non-formal to a formal learning context.

⁴ This information was retrieved on September 9, 2006 from http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/index_en.html

⁵ This information was retrieved on September 9, 2006 from http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html

3.6.3. Europass

One of the major activities in VET has been the development of the 'Europass Training', which was introduced on the basis of a Council Decision adopted on 21 December 1998 (Council, 1999). It aims to certify a period of training completed by a person undergoing work-linked training as part of their training in another EU Member State, complying with a number of quality criteria. The 'Europass Training' was introduced to serve as an information document for these training phases and this possibility has been available since 1 January 2000 (Commission, 2000).

On December 15, 2004, the European Parliament adopted the Europass, the single EU dossier for transparency of skills and qualifications. The single dossier will allow Europeans to be better placed in applying for work and study in all EU Member States, facilitating comparisons and hence the mobility of students and workers in the EU. The Europass decision comes into force on 1 January 2005 and the Europass itself will be officially launched at a special conference on 31 January and 1 February, under the Luxembourg Presidency.⁶

Europass is designed to encourage mobility and lifelong learning in Europe. It aims to help the citizens make their qualifications and skills easily understood throughout Europe by 2010. Europass brings together into a single framework of several existing tools for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences. Helping citizens to better communicate and present their qualifications and skills throughout Europe, Europass will promote both occupational

⁶ This information was retrieved on September 15, 2006 from http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/europass/index_en.html

mobility, between countries as well as across sectors, and mobility for learning purposes. It consists of five documents, available in all official EU languages; Europass CV, Europass Mobility, Europass Diploma Supplement, Europass Certificate Supplement, Europass Language Portfolio.

IV. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM IN TURKEY

In any attempt to measure the progress of reforms and the situation of vocational training systems in the acceding and candidate countries, the following issues must be taken into account; the historical development, legal basis, recent developments, and current situation in terms of restrictions and outputs.

4.1. Development and Legal Basis

The apprenticeship system in Turkey dates back to the 12th century with the Ahi associations which came out as a tradesmen organization. As Akpınar highlights (2004); these guilds had both economic and social responsibilities including organising the general and vocational training of the workers. She further claims that today's apprenticeship system is a descendant of this system.

However, it was not until the 20th century that vocational education schools in the modern sense were introduced. In the initial years of establishment these schools were established, financed and managed by local administrations without any intervention from the central administration. (Akpınar, 2004) And these were only restricted

to one or two cases, since there was not a strong local industry. As a result, Ottoman Empire did not have a vocational-technical education tradition. Moreover, general academic education was valued more over the vocational and technical education because of the fact that most available jobs were clerical in the government bureaucracies (Karlı & Olkun, 1995). After the birth of the modern Turkish Republic more importance was given to industrialization. Thus, a need for skilled work force arose. This rapid state owned industrialization process brought about a need for vocational education. Meanwhile, many famous western scientists were invited to scrutinize the education system of the time and to suggest reforms to meet the challenges it was exposed. Şimşek & Yıldırım (2000) claim that as part of general reformation of education under the new leadership, vocational schools were redesigned to enable students gain more vocational skills and knowledge. Soon after the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic, nine vocational schools were opened between 1923 and 1927 with a total of 1060 students.

After the birth of the Republic, due to the economic conditions before the outbreak of Second World War, there was a great attempt to centralize every field of politics and educational policy was no exception. The laws concerning the educational policy led to the central control of the training and working conditions of apprentices and mastership. Long before the introduction of the first law concerning artisans and training in 1977 as the Law of Apprenticeship, Journeymanship and Mastership Number 2089, there were various attempts to develop and strengthen vocational aspect of the education system.

Starting in the last years of the 1940s, importance was placed on the training of skilled labour force with the setting up of vocational courses. The public training centres are the main institutions offering non-formal education services. These institutions which became wide spread in the 1960s were given the responsibility of

providing services for the development of the society. In this respect, public training centres have organised social and cultural courses with emphasis on literacy courses and assisted those with low educational attainment levels in acquiring a skill through vocational courses.

Later in the 1960s, it is observed that in addition to vocational courses, 1-2 year practical trade schools to which primary school graduates could attend gain substantial importance.

Vocational high school in the 1960s was established as schools of 5 year duration after the completion of 5 year primary schools. The duration was later put up to 6 years. In the 1970s 4 year technical high schools were also included into the system.

With the introduction of the Basic Law on National Education no. 1739, the system was restructured (Akpınar, 2004) The Law no. 1739 stipulated that the objective of vocational and technical education is to prepare individuals for an occupation, higher education or life and labour market, and it states that vocational and technical education comprises of two different pathways; “formal” and “non-formal” education.

Curriculum reform started with the Law of 1977 no. 2089, which included the apprenticeship training into the system. According to Unluhisarcikli (2005) this law was the first law concerning the apprenticeship training. It enabled the acquisition of a profession through apprenticeship training within Turkish national education system, defining the status of apprentices, journeyman, and masters; regulations for the work hours and work conditions; and social security and payment.

“The vocational training model for apprentices is adapted from the German educational system, providing training for the working youth of 14 to 18 years of age. The educational planners in the Ministry of Education have pinpointed three different types of education: Apprenticeship training; vocational education in the enterprises; vocational

education and orientation courses in educational centers.”
(Unluhisarcikli, 2005)

However, the expected developments of apprenticeship training could not be obtained and from 1977 to 1986, only some 20 thousand apprentices were provided with contracts in line with the regulations, whereas about 1 million apprentices and their masters did not apply for a contract. Thus, 98 percent of the apprentices in Turkey were working informally (Erder, Koksall and Lordoglu, 1993).

Failure of this law led to the preparation of another one. In 1986 the Law of Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Number 3308 was passed to organize apprenticeship, formal and non-formal vocational and technical education in an integral system. The law was amended in 2001 and the name of the law was changed to the Vocational Education Law.

The Law on Vocational Education no.3308 enacted in 1986, a system integrity including all “formal”, “non-formal vocational education” and “apprenticeship training” was introduced to initial vocational education.

Law on Vocational Education no. 3308 enacted in 1986 rearranged vocational and technical education as;

- Formal secondary vocational and technical education,
- Apprenticeship training,
- Post secondary vocational and technical education.

Social partners have been given important roles in the planning, implementation and evaluation of formal, non-formal vocational education and apprenticeship training with this Law. For this purpose, Vocational Education Council at national level and Provincial

Vocational Education Councils at provincial level have been established. In spite of the existence of these provincial councils, the system was still highly centralised in nature.

Social partnership tradition in the field of education and training in Turkey goes back to the founding years of the republic. The National Education Council (SURA), which meets every three years, was established as early as 1926 as the highest advisory body of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to promote quality in the Turkish national education system. The Vocational Education Council was established in accordance with Law No 3308 enacted in 1986 as the highest platform for decision-making on the planning, development and evaluation of all types and levels of formal and non-formal VET provided by all schools and institutions (including enterprises) and to provide comments on specific subjects to the MoNE.

In addition, provincial vocational education councils were established in accordance with Law No 3308. The provincial councils have the task of assessing whether VET provision meets local labour market demands and addressing related recommendations to the MoNE, which makes the final decision as regards the introduction or discontinuation of VET programmes. In particular, according to Article 6 of Law No 3308, provincial VET councils were established to make decisions on the planning, development and evaluation of VET schools, institutions and enterprises and to provide the provincial governor with their opinions and advice. The provincial director of National Education chairs them and the members are representatives of the MoNE and of public and non-governmental organisations of the province. The decisions of the Provincial Council of Vocational Education and Training are implemented with the approval of the governor.

A fund was established in 1986 with the aim of pooling together public and private resources to finance formal and non-formal VET. However, following the 2000 economic crisis, the government

took the decision to transfer any type of fund to the general budget and, consequently, the VET fund was abolished. Apparently this decision was also influenced by complaints from the social partner organisations concerning their lack of involvement in management decisions related to the fund and a lack of transparent payment procedures. However, following the economic crisis in 2000 the government decided to transfer all types of fund to the general budget and, consequently, the VET fund was also abolished. Apparently this decision was also influenced by complaints from the social partners' organisations concerning their lack of involvement in managerial decisions of the fund and the lack of transparent disbursement procedures.

The article no.42 of the Vocational Training Act.No.3308 also established a Vocational & Technical Education Research and Development Centre (METARGEM), governed by the governing board constituted by the participation of non-governmental organisations. The Centre gives services to the ministry and the industry with its following departments:

Research and Planning Department; conducts researches, assesses manpower requirements for trade and industry and prepares annual development plans,

Curriculum Development Department; prepares, develops and evaluates vocational and technical training curricula, especially in new technologies; develops in-service training programmes for teachers regarding new curricula,

Project Design Department; designs projects for vocational and technical education systems, including machines, tools and equipment specifications,

Testing and Evaluation Department; designs, improves and tests measurement and evaluation instruments,

Education Technology Department; prepares and evaluates materials of the education technology; organizes seminars on education technology,

Technical Publications Department; publishes and disseminates research findings and plans; prepares, translates and publishes technical periodicals, books and other teaching materials.

Since the early 1980s, vocational-technical high school graduates have a right of taking the university entrance examination like a general high school graduate. Şimşek and Yıldırım claims that since then, vocational-technical education in Turkey has had a dual purpose, both general/academic preparation for university entrance examinations and vocational-technical preparation for the world of work. In general, most observers of the system agree that, until 1986, a school-based vocational-technical education became dominant with less industry training and work-based experience. To a great extent, the 1986 Law of 3308 altered this philosophy. The 3308 Apprenticeship and Vocational Education Act substantially reduced the time spent in school in favour of practical experience in industry settings. Students spend three days a week in the industry for practical training and two days a week in school for general academic or theoretical preparation. Since the initiation of the Act, the cooperation between vocational schools and the industry has slightly improved in terms of internships, teacher and resource exchanges, teacher training, and technology transfer.

“Law No. 4702 amending the Law on Higher Education, Law on Apprenticeship and Vocational Training, Law on Primary Education, Basic Law on National Education, Law on Organization and Tasks of Ministry of National Education, Law on Financial Measures Regarding Several Valuable Papers and Transactions,” entered into force after its publication in the Official Gazette No. 24458, dated 10 July 2001.

New opportunities were created for the vocational and technical secondary education graduates to continue in higher education with the Law No. 4702 that came into force in 10th July 2001, and with the changes made in the Higher Education Law No. 2547.

Vocational and technical secondary education programs are re-arranged so as to prepare students for careers and higher education, working life and fields of work. Law No.4702 entitles graduates of vocational and technical schools to continue their education in vocational higher education institutions (2-year courses) without having to enter the university entrance examination so long as they remain in the same field: up to 10% may then have the opportunity to transfer from these 2-year courses to university. Vocational and technical secondary education institutions provide the necessary career guidance to their students about the higher education programs they can attend.

Furthermore, with the aforementioned legal regulation, it was aimed at providing a systematic continuation between the vocational and technical secondary education institutions and the higher vocational school programs, encouraging the programs of the vocational and technical secondary education institutions and higher vocational schools to be opened in line with the manpower demands of that region and generalization of the education opportunities

In particular, amendments regarding the Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Law and the Law on Higher Education are compatible with the Council Decision of 2 April 1963, laying down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy. (National Programme) Law No. 4702 is aimed at orienting more students to vocational training and provides the basis for students to progress to 2 year vocational higher education institutions that are inline with the students' prior education, without taking the university entrance examination. The Law envisages the establishment of

vocational and technical education regions consisting of vocational and technical secondary institutions and vocational higher education schools. The Law grants the right to foundations to establish vocational education institutions provided that they will not be profit-seeking organizations, and requires the enterprises, which fall within the context of this Law to employ people who have vocational training relevant with the nature of the business.

4.2. Recent Changes

Two important regulatory arrangements regarding vocational and technical education were made in 2004. The first one is the annulment of the two articles of the Law no. 3308 and the second one is the new arrangements made in the TOBB Law regarding vocational education.

Provisional Article 1 of Law no. 3308 allowed 'the direct issuance of mastership certificate to those who own a company or those working as a master in a company in one of the recognised occupations and provinces in apprenticeship training on the date when they were recognised'. However the Constitutional Court annulled this law and new legal situation required taking an examination to get mastership and journeymanship certificate. The annulment decision has ended the debates on people receiving certificates without having the necessary knowledge and skills (Akpınar, 2004).

It was only in 1990s that the importance of participation of social partners in the vocational education system was recognised. It was the arrangements in the Law on Tradesmen and Craftsmen no.

507 made in 1991 that gave the right to deliver apprenticeship training and issue certificates in unrecognised occupations to TESK and its sub-organizations. A similar arrangement was made in The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) Law regarding vocational education, which is the largest employer organization with regards to their production and employment capacity in Turkey.

The arrangements made related to vocational education in the Law on Turkish Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry on 1 June 2004 is summarised below:

With the enactment of the new law, Chambers of Commerce and Industry active at provincial level would be able to open vocational courses or assist the already existing ones with the permission and under the supervision of MoNE. In addition, working on the development and direction of vocational and technical education has become one of the duties of these organizations. Certificates in unrecognised occupations under apprenticeship training (those not recognised under Law no. 3308) at companies of their members would be issued by Chambers of commerce and industry.

Article 56 allowed TOBB to establish universities, post secondary education schools, vocational and technical education institutions or establish partnerships with existing ones to train skilled labour force required by the industry.

Another important development took place in 2004. Agriculture vocational education schools, which were connected to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and health vocational education schools which were connected to the Ministry of Health were placed under the Ministry of National Education. One particular difficulty VET systems faced was their division among many ministries responsible for a range of schools dedicated to a specific branch of the economy. Therefore, any VET reform had to involve a number of

different ministries depending on the country. With this regulation to overcome such a drawback, almost all vocational education high schools have been gathered under the Ministry of National Education.

Previously the social security premiums of those who started apprenticeship training at the age of 19 and over had to be paid by the worker and the employer. As of April 2004, with the legal arrangements made, these premiums are being paid by the State. It is believed that this arrangement will encourage participation in apprenticeship training.

Another important development observed under secondary vocational and technical education is the "Follow-up of Vocational and Technical Education Graduates Project". The objective of the project which started in 2004 and ended in 2005, is the regular follow up of vocational and technical education graduates using modern information communication technologies. The quality of the education provided, level of reaching the targets and the suitability of the programmes to labour market needs will be evaluated in this regard.

4.3. Current Situation in VET System

4.3.1. General Framework

The National Education Principle Law No: 1739 divides the Turkish National Education System into two main parts, namely, "Formal Education" and "Non-formal Education".

a. Non-formal Education:

Non-formal Education covers the education-training system that provides an occupation opportunity for the citizens. These people could be those without any formal education, or are at any level of

formal education or have left formal education.

b. Formal Education:

The school system is named as the formal education. It comprises of four levels:

1. Pre-school Education.
2. Primary Education.
3. Secondary Education.
4. Tertiary education.

4.3.2. Vocational and Technical Education

In the existing vocational training system, the educational sector and workplace learning are involved in initial training of its labour force and this fact is also articulated by the law, defining the system as 'dual'. In principle, this school-enterprise relationship creates a promising basis for the development of vocational education and training within its real context, that is, world of work. These two main dimensions reflected in Vocational training policies and activities are mostly carried out by the MoNE within the framework of Law No. 3308 which was amended by the Law No.4702 in 2001, establishing new and strong links of co-operation with industry and commerce in consideration of the difficulties met in the application.

The vocational education system includes:

- Vocational and technical high schools providing training in more than 130 occupations and giving access or leading to the qualification of specialized worker and technician;
- All vocational education centres offer

apprenticeship training, which is a combination of mainly practical training provided in enterprises and theoretical training provided in vocational education centres;

- Informal education can be provided primarily through vocational education centres.(ETF, 2006b)

Initial vocational education in Turkey starts after 8 year compulsory basic education. Students complete their compulsory education at 13-14 years of age. The entry age to formal vocational and technical high schools is 14-15. Under normal circumstances, students graduate from these schools at 16-17 years of age.

Until very recently, formal vocational and technical education institutions were divided into two categories, namely, 3 year vocational high schools and 4 year technical high schools. These schools implemented vocational and technical education programmes. In addition there were 3 year general high schools that implement both general education programmes. However, in attempts to meet the international educational standards, MoNE arranged the system with some regulations which stipulated that all high schools regardless of their type would be 4-year schools. These regulations also increased the entry level of apprenticeship training to the age of 18 which was previously 15. Students who had completed their compulsory education before turning 15 were accepted into apprenticeship training as candidate apprentice.

Apprenticeship training is given at vocational education centres. Completion of compulsory basic education is also a requirement for entry to non-formal vocational education. However, those who have left compulsory education before graduation may enter non-formal vocational education once they are out of formal education age. Non-formal vocational education services are offered at

institutions established for this reason such as Public Training Centres. These services may also be offered by formal education institutions when the need arises.

Furthermore there are vocational and technical education centres where formal, non-formal vocational and technical education as well as apprenticeship training is given.

The number of vocational education high schools operating under other ministries is only 8. The number of vocational and technical education high schools belonging to the private sector in the 2006-2007 academic year is 21. When we take into account the fact that there are 4244 vocational and technical education high schools offering education in the same academic year, the place of other organizations other than MoNE and the private sector could better be understood.

Individuals who successfully complete vocational and technical high schools get a diploma. This diploma gives the person the right for transition to work life or to higher education. In apprenticeship training “journeymanship certificate” and mastership certificate” are given so as for them to work as journeymen or masters in their related field.

The Ministry of National Education executes its duties concerning formal vocational and technical education through the following three main service units established within the Ministry:

- ◆ General Directorate for Boys’ Technical Education,
- ◆ General Directorate for Girls’ Technical Education,
- ◆ General Directorate for Commerce and Tourism Education.

Programmes of 4 year duration are implemented in the vocational and technical high schools. The first years of these programmes are common to all.

The Law on Vocational Education no.3308 provides for the skills training of secondary vocational and technical education students at enterprises and the necessary infrastructure for this purpose has been prepared. The period allocated to skills training in the last grade of vocational high schools is in general 24 hours per week. Thus, students are given the opportunity to receive their skills training three days a week at enterprises.

Vocational and technical high schools provide full-time education. However, vocational and technical education services are also provided through open education institutions.

In Turkey, secondary vocational and technical education has two main objectives. These programmes prepare students for two pathways; higher education, and work life.

Vocational and technical high schools in principle are structured in a way that allows them to implement different vocational programmes. In practice it is observed that some schools have become sector specific (construction vocational high school, chemistry vocational high school, textiles vocational high school etc). For example, those implementing only textile programmes take the name textile vocational high schools. However, the textile programme implemented in a textile vocational high school and a vocational high school implementing more than one programme is the same. On the other hand the school-sector cooperation in sector specific schools could be said to be more effective.

In the vocational and technical education at secondary level at least 19 different kinds of schools can be identified, including vocational education centres, open education and special education.

Notwithstanding the fact that some of those institutions are under the rule of other ministries, MoNE is responsible for the supervision off all jurisdiction.

Even though vocational technical schools for boys and girls are managed under separate directorates, officially they offer a co-educational system. However, since they are designed by considering gender differences or social roles, the attendance level of the other gender are considerably low. According to Mone statistics of 2006-2007, under the Directorate of Boys' Technical Education there are a total of 498,269 students however, only 60,933 of them are girls. Similarly, under the Directorate for Girls' Technical education, there are 222,787 students of which only 44,806 are boys.

Open Education High Schools render services to students who cannot attend formal education for any reason, who are over the age of formal education, and who wish to be transferred to open education high schools while attending a formal high school.

4.3.3. The Status of Vocational Education and Training

In its attempts to meet the goals of 8th Development Plan, Turkey is far below the desired level in terms of vocational education enrolment. Compared to the Government's goal of 65%, today only 36.7% of total students at secondary education attend at vocational schools. (MEB, 2007) Vocational and technical high schools constitute 53.5% of all schools but only 36.7% of the enrolment. This clearly displays the large number of comparatively low-enrolment in vocational schools. This enrolment trend is also reflected in the percentage of

teachers working at vocational high schools; 45%. This suggests that neither the level of enrolment could be raised to the level, nor the number of schools has been reduced to reflect enrolment declines over the past decade.

In terms of gender equity there is still a long way to go. At general high school 46% of the students are girls, which is rather close to the number of boys. On the other hand, less girls attend vocational high schools; 38.8%. Although vocational-technical education is officially co-educational, only a small percentage of boys attend girls' vocational or technical schools and an even smaller percentage of girls attend boys' schools.

Secondary education enrolments increased significantly (43.3%) over the period from 2000-2001 to 2006-2007. In spite of the efforts of the Government to reverse the trend (for example, through the changes promulgated through Law No. 4702), general secondary enrolments increased 44%. Similarly, there was a 42% increase in the enrolments in vocational and technical education. In the same period, however, the overall gender imbalance between girls and boys actually decreased from 1.41 to 1.30 boys per girl. Similarly, the ratio in general secondary schools decreased from 1.28 to 1.17 and in vocational and technical education it decreased from 1.67 to 1.57.

4.3.4. The Need for Reform

According to projections by TUIK (Turkish State Institute of Statistics), current population in Turkey is almost 74 million and about 20 million of this population is between the ages of 0-14. Turkey's demographic figures also show that the working age group is

continuously rising. However, in Europe the age group of those aged between 15 and 65 is constantly decreasing. This situation not only gives the country a window of opportunities but also constitutes a major challenge in terms of human resource development. Education and vocational training indicators show that Turkey's investment on human capital is still low. The increase in working age population represents a unique opportunity for Turkey for both economic and social developments, if there is a considerable investment in education and training in order to maintain a substantial increase in human resources development. If the recent acceleration of economic growth continues, there will be an increase in the need for medium and highly skilled workers. ETF (2006b) in a country analysis focusing on Turkey proposes that improving the quality of education and increasing educational attainment particularly at primary and secondary levels as well as amongst the adult population, are the overriding priorities in education.

When Turkey was given the status of candidate country for EU membership at the Helsinki Summit which met in December 1999, Turkey has accepted the obligation to improve its VET system to the level of VET practices in the EU and establish a level of coherence between national and EU policies. This has been stated among the aims in the VIII. Five Years Development Plan and Turkish National Plan on Undertaking the EU Acquis Communautaire. The integration of the VET implementations in EU states with those in our country will be assured and therefore, the trained labour force, which is a part of EU Acquis Communautaire, will increase. (Simsek & Gok, 2005) This demanded certain adjustments in economic, social and political fields. As a consequence, there were attempts aimed to evaluate and develop vocational training and education system in Turkey.

Many of the below drawbacks or problems we face today are

somehow interrelated. However, the main problem is the attractiveness and image of the VET system in Turkey. Neither the students nor the employers are content with the current situation of the system. As a result, low demand to the system does not provide the necessary condition for the competition and development in the system. The foremost important reason for lack of attractiveness is the low effectiveness and efficiency of the system. According to the employers (ITO, 2007) this supply-led VET system does not respond to the needs of the labour market. To reach a demand-led VET system requires more collaboration and cooperation on the part of the social partners and other stakeholders. Law of 1986 provided grounds for this participation. However, the short-sighted employers did not show the necessary interest for the implementation of the law. This is partly because the quality of the education and reliability of the outputs is relatively low and partly because the management of the VET system is too centralized. Critical reviews of VET system were conducted by different bodies both Turkish and EU revealed the issues at stake;

a. Administrative Problems

The system has its own structural deficiencies. One of them is above mentioned centralised management system. The system is designed and regulated in detail at national level. (Şimşek & Yıldırım,2005) illustrates the concept with the analogy of an enormous octopus with little tentacles unable to move, sense and exercise control. Despite the impressive size of the octopus itself, little tentacles are impoverished although they are the only points of touch and sense for the whole system. This just leads to the feeling of the extreme pressure of a heavy bureaucracy and centralized control of the Ministry of Education on the part of the individual schools.

Another significant structural problem is the lack of flexibility in terms of mobility in the system. A flexible structure integrating formal

and non-formal education systems could not be established. Moreover, the system does not allow students to make a choice between general and vocational education once they are enrolled in one.

b. Curricular Problems

As one of the participants indicated, the curricula in the areas such as metal industry are too old. In some other areas, business needs were not taken into account while developing the curricula. As a result they do not respond to the realities of the market. When the students graduate they do not transfer enough abilities and skills from their academic lives to the world of work. Moreover, in the vocational education and training system, there was not a training standards system until the introduction of the NQS in 2005, which posed an obstacle for developing proper curricula. Curricula design is poor and serve an administrative purpose, have limited or unclear description of objectives, do not identify levels to be achieved.

c. Educational Methodology

In addition to the structure of curricula, methods of teaching did not provide the necessary integration of knowledge or the development of either key or occupational competences. The curricula have a 'teacher oriented' approach, and do not show any flexibility. The content is often a list of topics to be taught without any indication of levels required at the start and the level to be achieved upon completion. Guidelines for assessment of students are lacking, and the technology referred to is often outdated. Teaching methods applies are incompatible with students' learning styles. A different teaching approach – with stronger training support – is needed. Educational technology resources cannot be utilised adequately.

d. Involvement of Employers and Social Partners

VET responsiveness to employers' needs was quite low and related adjustment time too long. Almost all the studies done in Turkey indicate that the relevance of vocational and technical education in schools to the realities of the job market is not well established. Employers also find the graduates of these schools incompetent and outdated with respect to the labour market needs.

In other words, there is a huge gap identified between the educational system and the labour market.

According to a recent research conducted by ITO (2007), most firms are complaining that they cannot fill the vital vacant positions due to lack of qualified applicants. Although the Vocational and Technical Education Act 3308 legislated in 1986 laid the foundation for an effective school-industry cooperation and collaboration, in practice the links are frequently insufficient, the effectiveness of the system varies enormously from region to region and the distribution of roles between schools and enterprises in what regards the actual content of training has not yet been sufficiently clarified. Simsek & Yildirim (2005) reaches the conclusion that sending students to industry three days a week does not reflect the whole spirit of the Act.

e. Lack of Cooperation between the Governmental Bodies

Another cooperation deficit is the one between government bodies which act in the education arena. Specifically, one such case is

the one between YOK and education ministry. Most of those interviewed indicated that the clash between YOK and MoNE and lack of cooperation is one of the obstacles in front of the attractiveness of VET system in Turkey.

f. Vocational Orientation, Information and Counselling

There is not enough work done about career awareness. Counselling at basic education level is insufficient. Job placement services and consultation and collaboration mechanisms are not at a desired level. As a result, young people at the point of choosing a career do not have the chance to observe the practices of many professionals. (Akkok & Watts, 2003)

g. Assessment and Certification

A testing system based on occupational standards does not exist. According to the interviewees a relationship with international standards were not developed and the work done by TSE failed to take the relationship between occupational standards and certification systems into account. The vocational education and training sector in Turkey does not apply any training standards system

h. Teachers

Like principals, teachers are not perceived as professionals, they are just given the curriculum to follow, exams to administer, topics to teach by the central education authority. Teachers do not have enough contact and experience with companies. The teachers have no opportunity to improve their skills to the level of the market needs.

They have no access to professional development. Geographical distribution of teachers in the country is unbalanced.

i. Other Problems

- Along with lack of necessary vocational skills, graduates of vocational schools do not have necessary computer skills, technological aptitude, and foreign language.

- There is no room for school administrators for resource use, new resource generation, authority to hire and fire staff, professional development and staff appraisal just stays with the central education authority, the Ministry of Education.

- Teachers find these development activities ineffective and somewhat useless. The leadership skills of administrators make a difference no matter how centralized or bureaucratic the system is. (Simsek & Yildirim, 2000) They are more or less entrepreneurial in their dealings with the employers and industry. They have managed to create a positive school culture that breeds collaboration, innovation and partnership.

- The graduates of vocational and technical high school may either enter work life or continue their education at universities. The continuation of vocational high school graduates to higher education is an issue that has been debated for many years now. Along with people who believe that vocational high school graduates should enter work life, there are those who believe that higher education should be open to them without any restrictions. In the recent years important steps (transition without examination) have been taken to encourage the attendance of vocational high school graduates to post-secondary vocational schools (PSVS) that are in the continuation of their fields. However, there are still obstacles in their transition to certain faculties that are

the continuation of their fields.

- Another deficit of the educational system in Turkey is the unequal allocation of educational opportunities. Major regional disparities continue to exist. These inequalities are also reflected in the Student Selection Examination, with eastern and southeastern regions continuously performing worst.

- The last but not the least insufficiency is the lack of modern equipments that meet the realities of the labor market, along with the teaching materials that will accompany the training for these equipments.

In summary, until today, in the studies regarding Vocational and Technical Education, responsibilities have not been adequately shared with the labour market. In connection with this, educational programmes were planned, developed and implemented without sufficiently taking the needs of the business world into account. The programmes were directed to narrow expertise areas within a traditional approach and it was observed that those who graduated from this system did not possess a wide range of basic skills and information. However, in practice the links are frequently insufficient, the effectiveness of the system varies enormously from region to region and the distribution of roles between school and enterprises in what regards the actual content of training has not been sufficiently clarified.(ETF, 1999)

The key challenges raised on education and training in the Lisbon strategy and on VET policies in the EU in the Maastricht Communiqué are fully in line with the challenges above, even if other specific challenges have to be considered and specific solutions have to be identified and implemented. This is why Turkey have embarked on ambitious and systemic reforms of VET systems in the framework of EU assistance.

V. PAVING THE WAY FOR AN EU-LED VET REFORM IN TURKEY

“European assistance in the field of education and training has been constant and gradual, progressively incorporating elements of European policy developed in the EU. “

Jean-Raymond Masson pronounces, in his work called 'Thirteen Years of Cooperation and Reforms in Vocational Education and Training in the Acceding and Candidate Countries', which was prepared on behalf of ETF in 2003, while describing the last enlargement process and its effects on these countries' VET systems. He goes on to underline the phases which characterizes this process of cooperation and reforms. In the initial phases much of attention was focused on the ex-communist countries which were in the enlargement process.

At its meeting in Copenhagen in June 1993, the European Council declared its expectations which were to be met by the central and eastern European countries before accession stage and set up the obligations of membership each country would assume, the so called 'Copenhagen criteria'.

These requirements were:

- 'the achievement of 'stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for the protection of minorities';
- 'the existence of a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union'; and
- 'the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union'.

Although it was not explicitly mentioned, when referring to the 'capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union', the second criteria required a clear priority for human resource development and combating social exclusion. With the introduction of Copenhagen criteria, VET is seen as a tool for economic and social development and integration in the EU countries and it is expected to fulfil this role in Turkey as well. ETF report on Turkey (2006b) emphasizes the importance of the developments in education and training;

“Consolidating, expanding and evaluating the reform initiatives already underway in the field of education, training and employment should be the main priorities for EU investment in the period 2007-2013. Progress in education and training will contribute to Turkey’s social and economic development as it prepares for accession.”

When Turkey acquired the formal status of a candidate country for accession to the European Union with the Helsinki Declaration in 1999, the interest on Turkish Vocational Education system increased as well. In the second half of 1999, European training Foundation which was set up in Turin (ETF) prepared a report on Turkish VET called 'An Overview of Vocational Education and Training'. In short, the Community programmes particularly Leonardo da Vinci, were made available to the candidate countries

Another stage began with the Barcelona Council in March 2002 and this was supported and strengthened, in particular, by the Copenhagen Declaration on Vocational Training of November 2002. The candidate countries were now fully involved in the process of enhanced cooperation in employment and education policies. At the same time, Phare continued and intensified its support on preparation for the structural policies as well as for the education and employment

policies with particular emphasis on lifelong learning, especially in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. (Masson, 2003)

Participation in the Community programmes Leonardo, Socrates and Youth started in 2004. Other programmes have been financed by the EU in the field of vocational education and training.

Apart from the EU funded programme for “Strengthening of Vocational Education and Training” (SVET) which started in September 2002, another programme for “The Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training” started in July 2003 and ended in December 2006. The objective of this programme, which was complementary to the SVET programme, was to strengthen the capacity of Turkish authorities to be able to organise and deliver a modern and efficient system of pre-service and in-service teacher training. New competence-based modular curricula were developed in order to improve flexibility in the teacher training system. In the framework of this programme, the training standards for vocational teachers were defined. A fourth component of the programme were addressing the strategic aspects of developing these teacher faculties in line with EU trends within the overall context of reforming higher education.

The EU Programme on Active Labour Market Strategy implemented by ISKUR came to an end in March 2006. It was a large project aimed at promoting active employment measures, such as training, vocational guidance.

The following part on SVET project is based on two main sources of data. One of them is the interviews conducted with key informants, and the other is document analysis. As for document analysis, the researcher made use of mainly the projects web page, project reports, published and unpublished documents and green papers developed as outcomes of the project. Some of the documents

mentioned above were acquired during the researcher's visit to the project center in Ankara.

5.1. Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training System in Turkey Project

In September 2002 the EC funded programme for "Strengthening of Vocational Education and Training" (SVET) started with the aim of assisting the Turkish Government through the Ministry of National Education in the process of modernisation and adaptation of the VET system to the socioeconomic needs of the country and to the principles of lifelong learning. SVET is a five-year project and has a total budget of € 58.2M. The programme will end in September 2007. The project aims at strengthening Turkey's VET system rather than imposing an alien structure, which was confirmed by all the participants interviewed. One participant explained the situation by claiming that EU has no agreed upon policy in the field of VET. Instead, there are different pathways to excellence and ensuring the quality and attractiveness. In this regard, Turkey will find its own pathway to strengthen the current VET system with SVET project.

The emphasis on cooperation and learning from each other in the 'Copenhagen Process' is also reflected in the project activities. Interviewees asserted that with SVET Turkey is also integrated into this process through partnerships and study visits and this is a way of integrating Turkish institutions into 'European way of thinking'.

According to the interviewees, in spite of the resistance to change by some actors, the political will was behind the project and

authorities declared their support to the SVET team and the project in general, since they were aware of the needs of the system.

5.1.1. Objectives

According to Masson (2003); the pursuit of reforms in VET implies a deepening of the following issues:

(i) the development of the prospect of vocational training qualifications and research;

(ii) the accelerated establishment of qualification and certification systems and curricula;

(iii) the promotion of transparency and recognition of qualifications;

(iv) the improvement of quality;

(v) and the encouragement of all individuals as regards training.

In line with these issues and considering the needs of the existing VET system in Turkey, three main objectives, which were to be reached by the year 2007, were determined by the SVET project team;

1. Quality and relevance of the VET system is improved through the implementation of a national reform, which includes the development of national qualification system.

2. Institutional capacity at national, regional and local level of public administration, social partners' representatives and companies is strengthened.

3. The process of decentralization of the system is speeded up by involving local actors in the implementation of the process of reform.

5.1.2. Organizational Structure

A Consortium of consulting companies, which was formed to be able to address all the different areas of attention in the project with a superior level of expertise and experience, was granted the project after a tendering phase. DHV, a Dutch consulting company, is the leading contracting firm. Besides DHV, seven firms and institutions participate in the project, each addressing separate elements of the terms of reference; Fontys University of Professional Education, The ATC International, ABU Consult, Cambridge Education Consultants (CEC), Helsinki Consulting Group, RR Bilimsel ve Teknik Hizmetler Ltd, Çagdas Yasami Destekleme Dernegi

A project organization derived from eight different participating firms and organisations requires a clear outline of specific and overall responsibilities, and excellent understanding of the relevant backstopping arrangements. It is the responsibility of the consortium, and particularly of the lead firm, DHV, to satisfy the need for overall coordination and backstopping.

a. Institutional Bodies

An important body at the central level is the National Coordination Committee, which is responsible for discussing general policies and guiding principles. This committee was established in December 2002 and held its first meeting in January 2003. Consistent with the Terms of Reference, the membership of the Committee includes 8 members from public institutions, 8 members from employers and employees, 2 members from non-governmental organisations, and 6 members from the regions. The representatives of the European Commission's Delegation in Ankara and the Undersecretariat of Treasury participate in the Committee as observers. The Committee meets twice a year and is chaired by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of National Education.

In addition to the National Coordination Committee, there is also a Management Committee, which includes two representatives from the Ministry of National Education, two representatives from social partners, and the team leader of the SVET Project. The Committee meets once a month under the chairmanship of the Deputy Undersecretary for Projects at the Ministry of National Education and discusses strategic matters and practical approaches reflecting their institutional sensitivities. There are six Regional Advisory Councils at the regional level for monitoring and coordination. They guide regional policies and practices and their responsibility will be consultative in nature. All the stakeholders are represented on these boards. In order to provide coordination among the six regions, meetings are held on a quarterly basis. Representatives of technical assistance teams, regional advisory councils, the Ministry of National Education, and social partners attend the Central Coordination Meeting (COMET). The Representation of the European Commission is also invited to the monitoring and coordination meetings.

The Project activities are organized at three levels: central, regional, and local levels. The central management office is located within the Projects Coordination Unit of the Ministry of National Education in Ankara. The central project team includes a total of 20 staff (5 key experts, 5 counterparts, 5 assistants, 5 support personnel). In addition to this permanent staff, representatives from the related units of the MoNE and social partners also contribute to the Project activities as needed.

Regional activities are carried out by regional offices that were established in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Antalya, Gaziantep, and Trabzon. In each region, three staff members act as a regional technical assistance team; a regional manager, a policy adviser, and a management assistant. The regional technical assistance teams are supported by two staff members appointed by the Ministry.

After the identification of six regions, thirty pilot provinces were identified based on their geographical location, demographic variables, socio-economic indicators and educational statistics. These provinces are distributed as 4 from Marmara, 4 from Aegean, 4 from Mediterranean, 4 from Central Anatolia, 4 from Black Sea, 4 from South-eastern Anatolia, and 6 from Eastern Anatolia. Regional distribution and rules used in selecting these provinces were approved by the National Coordination Committee and actual identification was endorsed by the Management Committee.

ANKARA

(Ankara, Eskişehir, Karabük, Kayseri, Konya, Zonguldak)

İSTANBUL

(İstanbul, Bursa, Tekirdağ, Kocaeli)

GAZİANTEP

(Gaziantep, Adana, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, Malatya, Mersin, Muş)

ANTALYA

(Antalya, Isparta)

TRABZON

(Trabzon, Samsun, Erzurum, Van, Kars)

İZMİR

(İzmir, Denizli, Manisa, Muğla)

Initially, 105 pilot institutions were selected for local project activities, and all of them were vocational schools. Later, 40 general high schools were added to the list. An interviewee explained this inclusion of general high schools as a way of allowing students to have a choice at the end of the 9th grade to continue in the VET stream or to move to general secondary education. These institutions were selected based on their micro project proposals. The selection criteria for pilot institutions were approved both by the National Coordination Committee and the Management Committee. Evaluation criteria for micro projects were the same as those that are employed by the European Union for similar projects or grant applications. The Technical Assistance Team, along with the Ministry of National Education, evaluated micro project proposals and make recommendations to the Representation of the European Commission, which is the final authority to decide which projects to support.

b. Staff

There are five key experts in the SVET Project. They are: (a) the team leader; (b) publicity and marketing expert;(c) labour market expert; (d) teacher training expert; and (e) administration and finance expert. Each key expert has an assistant, in addition to the VET Information Centre assistant. From the Ministry side, there are five co-experts assigned to the Project. They are: (a) co-director; (b) teacher training counterpart; (c) labour market counterpart; (d) policy development counterpart; and (e) quality assurance counterpart. In addition to the permanent team members, a pool of short term Turkish

and EU experts have been available as short-term experts to contribute to the components of the Project. The short-term experts have already been involved in activities related to the national qualifications system, training and curriculum development. Several other experts were invited to contribute to general VET policies, labour market, and decentralisation.

5.1.3. Actions

In order to reach the project's objectives, various actions were determined. The overall development process of these actions can be described as follows;

Firstly, the performance requirements for a certain occupation based on skill needs analysis were described. This resulted in an occupational profile processed in accordance with the appropriate occupational standard. Secondly, an educational profile in accordance with the valid training standards was described. Thirdly, a curriculum was developed for the specific situations. And lastly, a specific training or learning programme was designed and implemented. This development process has linkages with other activities of the project such as trainer training, curriculum development, occupational standards, selection of micro projects and training standards.

5.1.4. Achievements and Developments

a. Labor Market and Skill Needs Analysis

Labor Market and Skill Needs Analysis Survey was conducted with 5651 enterprises with 10 or more employees. The research was done in 31 provinces in cooperation with the Turkish Employment Agency, İŞKUR. 175 personnel took part in the study (115 from MEB and 60 from İŞKUR).

The survey stresses the following subjects: developments in employment, problems in finding staff for vacancies, the perception of the economic situation, the capacity utilisation rate by companies, skill problems of staff, employee training and assessment of VET graduates, apprentices and interns. As a result, substantial data concerning the market structure in these provinces, popularity of the occupations and their future was gathered.

This cooperation between MoNE and employment agency İŞKUR has significant importance since it was the first of its kind. Finally, a handbook was prepared for local labour market analysis for the needs of VET institutions and the provincial MoNE directorates.

b. Occupational Standards

In the case of occupational standards, one of the participants concluded that there was a need to modernize occupational standards to the international level. In SVET, the existing occupational standards were tested in micro-projects and the results were reported to relevant bodies in order to improve and implement the new procedures and standards. The interviewees pointed out that 8 level approach of EQF were taken as basis. 1347 enterprises and 28 social partner

organisations, universities and institutions were involved to contribute to the finalisation of the occupational standards. As a result of this process;

According to ISCED 97 classification system, between 2004 and 2005, 576 occupations in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th level were identified in 51 Occupational General Areas;

4. Level	245
3. Level	253
2. Level	78

Total	576

In accordance with the recently developed methodology, 65 occupational standards are ready for use. Until the end of 2007, 150 occupational standards in total will be ready for use.

c. Training Standards

In accordance with the appropriate occupational standards, occupational profiles were processed, and then in accordance with these educational profiles, the valid training standards for 192 occupations at the 4th level were designed and piloted.

d. National Qualification System

The main strategy for a project to strengthen the VET system must be to build on the existing national arrangements and contribute to their ability to adapt to an international context. This means that VET qualifications must be internationally intelligible; VET qualifications must address international as well as national, regional

and local requirements; and VET teaching and training institutions, and the programmes offered, must be of international quality in order to retain students of their own nation and to attract students from other countries. Considering these facts, SVET project aimed to develop an institution, train staff and implement a national framework for assessing, grading and certifying vocational qualification.

The Law on Vocational Qualification Authority of 5544 was passed and published in the Official Gazette dated October 7, 2006. The objectives this Law describes are 'to determine the basis of national qualifications in technical and vocational fields based on national and international occupational standards, to establish the Vocational Qualification Authority in order to establish and execute the national qualifications system necessary for performing the activities concerning supervision, assessment, evaluation, documentation and certification, to determine its principles and to assure the arrangement of the issues related to National Qualifications Framework.'

With the introduction of VQA, training process and certification process will be separated. The school will be offering the training while the assessment and certification will be done by the VQA. According to the interviews, this ensures the accountability of the vocational qualifications.

e. Revision of Existing Curricula

The reason for developing a modular competence/output based curricula in accordance with the National Qualification System is to define conceptual linkages between general and vocational education and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of actors in teaching and learning.

In preparation for the revision of the existing curricula, a National Curriculum Policy Group was established. Subordinate to the

policy group, a National Curriculum Development Work Group was formed with 36 members. A comprehensive study of existing curricula has been carried out.

The curriculum development work is conducted in line with ISCED 97 education classification system. During the continued development work, further adjustments were made and the future VET will comprise 42 job families and 194 occupational profiles. SVET pilot schools cover 17 job families and 64 occupational profiles and pilot projects started at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year. Training modules for grade 10 were printed and distributed at the beginning of the school year 2005-2006. 518 modules for 11 and 12 graders were printed and distributed before the 2006-2007 school year started.

Accordingly, work continued along two parallel avenues related firstly to the development of training modules for pilot schools in 17 job families and 64 occupational profiles, being the task of the project, and secondly, to curriculum and training module development for the remaining job families and profiles, being the task of the Ministry.

During the second quarter of 2006, training modules for grades 11 and 12 within the original 17 job families and 64 profiles were completed by the module writers. Currently, academicians are carrying out quality control of these modules and making the required amendments. The number of modules to be reviewed is 1,323. The quality control and revision is expected to be completed by the end of July, 2006.

All curricula for formal education within 42 job families and 192 occupational profiles were completed and approved by the Board of Education decision no 269 dated June 2, 2006, and it started to be implemented in VET institutions all over Turkey starting with 2006-2007 school year.

272 training modules for grades 10 within the original 17 job families and 64 profiles were printed and distributed to the pilot schools. 594 training modules for grades 10 within 42 job families are ready for printing and published on the SVET website and on the websites of related directorates.

There are 5436 modules for grades 10 -11-12 within 42 job families in the programme.

1481 training modules within 42 job families are ready for printing.

Writing process of 2366 modules for grades 11 and 12 within 42 job families is completed. Currently, academicians are carrying out quality control of these modules and making the required amendments

The appointment process of the teachers who will write 1589 modules within 42 job families is going on.

The MoNE announced in June 2005 that the SVET model of 4 year education in vocational and general secondary high schools with a joint orientation grade is to be disseminated to cover the whole country. All the participants interviewed agreed that this means a significant achievement in terms of project objectives of VET reform.

f. Development of Life Long Learning Concept for Turkey

Upon examination of alternative Life Long Learning (LLL) systems and legislation for Turkey, Life Long Learning Working Group (LLLWG) set out to develop a white paper to promote integration of different levels of formal education into a Life Long Learning system for Turkish citizens. The result was the policy paper named "Driving Force for the Success of Turkey, Lifelong Learning Policy Paper" On the basis of strategic priorities of the stakeholders the white paper contains

a more detailed work programme for LLL policies in Turkey. The seven key areas of priority setting for LLL in Turkey were accepted (SVET, 2006b);

- System, Infrastructure and Funding of Lifelong Learning
- The Collection and Use of Data for Monitoring and Decision-Making
- Decentralisation and Devolution, Civil Society and Collaboration
- Information, Advice and Guidance to Learners, and a Culture of Learning
- The Development of Staff Capacity
- International Co-operation
- Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Nine programme areas are considered to be the priority of lifelong learning stakeholders in general and of the new Lifelong Learning Council in particular. (SVET, 2006b) These are:

- Basic life skills and literacy training for adults
- Rural development programmes for lifelong learning
- A comprehensive basic skills and key competencies development strategy
- Involving and supporting civil society in implementing of lifelong learning
- Enterprise training
- Standardisation and certification of skill levels, and wider provision
- Comprehensive training and retraining of practitioners
- Information and awareness campaignMedia and lifelong learning

g. Quality Assurance System

The EU is very active in the further development and introduction of quality assurance in VET in its member states. The VET system should ensure the development and implementation of a new quality assurance mechanism in Turkey that guarantees consistency and transparency in the VET system.

During the inception phase, key organizations and institutions relating to the existing quality assurance system in VET were visited. It was concluded that while substantial progress has taken place in the introduction of TQM at ministry and school level, there is a need to develop a new and broader QAS concept for VET in Turkey which takes into account the current development especially in the European Union member states, in view of the accession process. In this framework, the QAS working group worked in close cooperation with YODGED (Management Evaluation and Development Department). The strategic approach to the development of quality assurance within VET aims at implementing a comprehensive, relevant and fully operational Quality Assurance system within the education sector.

For the training of pilot school principals and vice principals, 12 modules were prepared. The objective of the training is to prepare the ground on all levels for the piloting of the quality assurance system under development by the project.

The following areas were covered:

Human Factor in TQM, Team Working in TQM, TQM in Education, Improvement Through Self Evaluation, Planning for Quality, Kaisen Applications, ISO 9000 QMS, ISO 9000-2000 QMS, Implementing TQM within the Education Field, Self Evaluation of the “Road Map” learning experience.

The project group made a study visit to UK. In this period it was decided to implement the study visit in April 2005, but later postponed to autumn upon request of the MoNE.

In collaboration with YODGED and In-service Training department of the MONE, TQM Assessor Trainings were carried out in four pilot provinces. In the sessions held in Ankara, section directors and the heads of the departments participated in the trainings.

Teachers from the pilot provinces participated in these trainings. They were trained to be master trainers and they were granted "master trainer certificate"

QA working group held a separate meeting to work on the criteria and standards for the VET schools. The objective was to prepare a handbook for the evaluators and these were included in the "Assessors' Handbook"

As a part of the MoNE TQM Awards, Quality School of the Year and Quality Team of the Year were selected. Two of the SVET pilot schools received awards. Tophane Anadolu Teknik Lisesi- Teknik Lise ve Endüstri Meslek Lisesi BURSA received the first prize in the Quality Schools category. Mazhar Zorlu Anadolu Teknik ve Plastik Endüstri Meslek Lisesi Bornova/İZMİR got the second prize in the category of Quality Teams.

h. Training Actions

Teachers' and trainers' training and retraining is a crucial aspect to be improved, both at pre-service and in-service levels. To set up a teaching workforce able to adapt to the modernisation of the curricula and to be permanently updated in enterprise needs is a precondition for the success of the vocational training reforms. This has implications also for the teachers, who should become more familiar with the world of work and try to establish co-operation with local enterprises. The participants expressed their satisfaction with the level

of the trainings and the dissemination activities resulted from the distribution of the curricula nationwide.

Training of school and training centre managers

Managers and Assistant Managers of 145 Pilot Institution, a total of 290 people were trained in 6 modules;

Module 1: personal leadership style and management tools

Module 2: strategy development and financial management

Module 3: team leadership and teamwork

Module 4: coaching as a management approach

Module 5: project management

Module 6: action learning presentation.

Trainer training

Change Agent Teachers and the Curriculum Coordinators of 105 Pilot Institutions were trained to be trainers. The CATs are especially involved in the micro projects and the link with the social partners, while the CCs are responsible for the introduction of the new curricula.

In this framework 210 people were trained in 5 modules;

Module 1: introduction to the modular system

Module 2: educational planning and teaching

Module 3: learner centred learning methodology and guidance

Module 4: learning environment arrangements and media production

Module 5: evaluation procedures.

Practical training

In accordance with the competence based modular programme developed for SVET, 262 teachers working at pilot schools received practical training in industry.

Curriculum development and modularization training

2500 teachers were provided training on curriculum development and modularizing the curricula.

Dissemination training

210 master trainers conducted dissemination trainings to 14.772 teachers in 1216 schools in 30 provinces and their districts.

Approximately 4000 school principals were reached through General Directorate for Boys' Technical Education, General Directorate for Girls' Technical Education, General Directorate for Commerce and Tourism Education.

1409 people received training on various subjects; TQM, Project Development, NQF, Preparing Occupational Standards, Developing Training standards, Decentralization. These trainees were mostly the personnel of MoNE, İŞKUR, Social Partners, etc.

A total of 23.443 people received training in SVET framework.

i. Role of social partners in VET governance

In order to contribute to the development of the social dialogue, an analysis of the role of the social partners was carried out, concentrating on: the present Turkish situation, a presentation of at least two different EU models, the view of the social partners, and a

financial overview. (SVET, 2006a) Based on the analysis, recommendations for improvements of the tripartite structures for VET were discussed between the social partners and at a national conference. The participants emphasized the value of the role of the social partners in terms of sustainability of the system and highlighted the introduction of a new level of social dialogue within the scope of SVET.

One of the priorities of this project is to analyse and specify responsibilities, consultative roles and power of decision making of social partners at different levels of the VET system (national, provincial and local level). The Project developed a number of activities and initiatives which led to a new level of involvement of social partners in VET in Turkey. Social partners take actively part in the implementation of the SVET project on national, provincial and local level.

The activities at central level were organised through the establishment of a working group with representatives from the social partners and relevant ministries. (TOBB, TÜSİAD, TESK, TİSK, TÜRK-İŞ, DİSK, HAK-İŞ, MEKSA)

In the overall decision making process for SVET, social partners played a crucial role by attending to both National Coordination Meeting and Monthly Management Meetings.

A Policy and Strategy Work Group has been formed in which the MoNE discusses and agrees priority issues of VET development in Turkey. The results were summarised in a green paper on VET reform in Turkey. It is based on common positions regarding VET.

Representatives of social partners also attend meetings of work groups formed under the project like curricula development, occupational standards, life long learning and quality assurance. Social

partners play also an active role in the development of a national qualification framework including a law on the establishment of a vocational qualification agency.

A wide range of activities have been implemented under the SVET project to strengthen the capacity of social partner organisations. Social partners have conducted study visits to their corresponding institutions in EU countries to study experience on involvement and procedures of these organisations related to governance of VET.

At regional level, workshops were organised addressing social partnership, social dialogue and tripartite mechanisms governing VET. Training activities were organised for key actors at all levels, and who, in turn, will be utilised in a cascade of training programmes

Regular Regional Advisory Council Meetings (RAC) have been organised with the participation of the social partners from the regions, where they have discussed the policy related issues in their regions and provinces. According to the outcomes of those meetings, project activities and approaches have been adjusted. International Conferences have been organised considering the issues related with social partners and the issues which have been raised by social partners.

A 'green' paper was one of the outcomes of the working group and contains recommendations for the future role of the social partners in relation to the VET system.

Also the Communication strategy in order to promote the SVET project and in general importance of vocational education, has been prepared together with the social partners.

A VET Information Centre was established in Istanbul in close cooperation with social partners. Meetings have been organised in order to promote the various occupations and the social partners representatives have been invited to make speeches.

Pilot Projects

A grant scheme of 4 million EURO has been launched in order to strengthen the capacity of social partners. 34 projects were supported involving social partners and training institutions. Most of these pilot projects were vocational training projects aimed at fighting unemployment and most of them proved to be very successful. Each had budgets ranging from €50.000 to € 200.000. 24 of the projects were applied for twelve months and 10 projects lasted for 18 months. The projects started in April, 2005 and all were completed on January 7, 2007. Final reports of the pilot projects are still under evaluation.

j. Public information campaign

The participants strongly disagreed with the idea of low publicity of SVET project during the interviews. At the start of the project a public information campaign was started, providing information on the overall programme objectives. The campaign was directed at the stakeholders. Creating public awareness and support to the reform programme were key factors for success.

In a discussion/ brainstorming workshop lasting two-days held at an early stage of the project, ideas for a strategy were developed, leading to a strategy paper for communication activities. The plan identified a number of target groups and included alternative strategies for promoting the project to these specific groups.

For the promotion of the project two different audiences were identified, first the primary audience including students, teachers, school administrators, education specialists, employers, etc. These groups are supposed to benefit from the project directly. The secondary audiences may comprise groups interested in the project activities indirectly. These groups include relevant public institutions, local authorities, political parties, employment agencies, the general public, etc.

Complementary to the media oriented work, a project newsletter was published to disseminate information about activities, procedures, accomplishments, and announcements on project events. The newsletter was produced on a quarterly basis and distributed to major stakeholders at different levels including public, non-governmental, and private organisations.

For scientific studies and for encouraging publications on the VET system and the project, information was made available to researchers, therefore the creation of a digital information database was created.

As foreseen in the ToR, a National VET Information Centre in İstanbul and one in Trabzon were established, with the aim of providing information to those requesting it. Meanwhile, there were various publications on VET systems and organizations and various workshops, seminars and conferences.

k. Decentralization

The activities in the component “3.2 Management functions in a decentralized VET system determined” are delayed upon request of the MoNE due to the fact that “The Basic Draft Law on Public Administration”, has been amended and resubmitted to Parliament. The law rearranges the duties, powers and responsibilities of the

central government and the local administrations and was presented to the Turkish National Assembly on December 29, 2003. The draft was approved after some of the articles and the name were amended. “The Law No. 5227 on the Basic Principles and the Restructuring of Public Administration” was partially vetoed by President Ahmet Necdet Sezer on August 3, 2004. In spite of the delays stemmed from the rejection of the law, the pilot projects and workshops are going on.

The interviewees verified that since the law still has not passed the parliament, the system is still centralized in many aspects. One of the interviewees asserted that decentralization is not a European requirement, but a flexibility issue, since both centralized and decentralized structures exist in the EU.

Management functions in decentralized VET systems

A group of key actors was established to work on VET management reform. Study visits were organized to Scotland/UK and the Netherlands with the participation of the provincial directors of the pilot provinces and the MoNE representatives and led by deputy undersecretary of the MoNE. Decentralized institutions and implementations have been analyzed. A report has been prepared at the final session indicating the challenges and solutions for a decentralized VET system in Turkey. A new draft management framework and monitoring tools for pilot projects designed; this decentralised VET management was piloted in regions and evaluated. As a result of their work, The Policy Paper on Decentralisation of the VET system in Turkey was drafted and submitted to Policy and Strategy group.

Another task was to develop and implement training plans. This plan includes the training of the Task Force in the methodology of strategic planning for educational sector reform; training in organisational audit methodology; skills needs analyses for

decentralisation and TNA according to new duties on all three levels; preparation of training plans; training and support for implementation at local level. These trainings are still going on.

The partnership and twinning component is seen as a facility to support the capacity building (Europeanization in a decentralised/regional perspective) at all three levels. Therefore, partnership or twinning arrangements with EU VET institutions and schools were established.

Strengthening decentralised VET system governance

With decentralisation the greater autonomy passed on to the school would include activities such as: staff selection, financial control, curriculum development, etc. These activities at school level are non-existent in the present system.

Strengthening the VET system requires regional capacity building for internalising the ideas and procedures for a successful reform. The regional technical assistance teams established in the 6 regions have an important role to play in training MoNE representatives on policies, objectives, activities, financial procedures, monitoring, and reporting of the project. The regional team is also involved in a school mapping exercise to identify the regional resources of delivery, and an exercise in identification of the general demand for VET. At a later stage the team will be involved in a study on forecasting future training needs.

At the regional level institutional contacts are developed with pilot institutions, directors, as well as regular contacts with CATs in the pilot institutions. Through the regional offices progress in the micro projects is monitored and guidance and training, if needed, organised. This is all in close consultation with the project office.

The regional TAT has also specific responsibilities to establish collaborative networks with the regional employment services, government authorities, municipalities, and managers of key enterprises.

VET Information Centres

VET Information Centres in İstanbul and Trabzon were established, with the aim of providing information to those requesting it and of promoting the decentralised regional VET Reform and to coordinate labour market information, data collection, certification of candidates, and dissemination of successful practices from within the project and related EU and international VET activities. The overall purposes of the National Information Centre for Vocational Education is to collect, produce, and disseminate information for vocational education and training. The Centre will establish a library for vocational education in general and the SVET Project specifically.

As a result of the workshops conducted in all 30 provinces, SWOT analyses were finalised. Work on a final report summarising experience from the provincial SWOT analysis of VET was completed. The report supports the exchange of experience of regional VET analysis and planning for the pilot provinces. Along with the Green Paper, this work will be one of the pillars of the strategy plan which will be shaped at the final stage of the project.

Empowering schools and training centres and their managers to promote a decentralized VET system

The new functional job descriptions are the basis for the identification of skill needs for the decentralised management of the pilot institutions. At the beginning, the skill needs for managers,

administrators and board members were identified. After that training needs analysis within the pilot institutions followed. Finally, a training programme for managers was defined.

Training modules were competence-based modules with action learning components. One of the modules addresses the topic of partnership or twinning, giving the participants practical skills in establishing strategic partnerships with either local or international partners. In conclusion, new partnerships and twinings were established.

The regional offices played a crucial role as facilitators of the partnership arrangements as well as delivering back up services.

Another module of the training programme was developed to train selected teachers as curriculum design officers. This training focuses on the skills and competence needed at local level in order to make cost effective provision of courses to local stakeholders. The module is product oriented and includes aspects from skill needs analysis, TNA, curriculum design, development of material and costing.

A minimum of 100 pilot institutions, which will act as catalyst in the process of VET reform and active in promoting decentralisation of the system, have established partnership agreements with EU schools and training centres. 1452 local actors participated in study visits abroad and “twinning” arrangements with foreign VET schools and training arrangements with foreign VET schools and training centres are established.

School and training centre business plan developed in collaboration with local partners

Partnership agreement signed with representatives of local social partners to define details of a future co-operation on a bi-yearly base.

Training of civil servants at ministerial and regional levels

Much of the training of the civil servants is linked to the decentralisation of certain functions to lower levels in the hierarchy. Therefore, training activities have been organised on different subjects related to institutional strengthening at central level and regional level for higher level civil servants in the ministry. There was a policy learning level for decision makers and high level staff in the Ministry, who should become familiar with EU VET systems, decentralisation and financing. Once the training was completed a handbook was produced on educational management.

A working group on Decentralisation was proposed to support the Management Committee. Members of this group come from the pilot regions, and undertook a two-week internship in six EU member countries in groups of two to study the different ways of management of a decentralised VET system.

In addition a Master's Programme will be developed in decentralised VET governance. This programme aims at developing management and supervision competencies in civil servants responsible for decentralised VET practices. The programme will be offered through distance education and will last 18 months under normal conditions. After finalising the programme a M.Ed. degree will be awarded. This programme is still under consideration.

I. The Green Paper; Reform of the Vocational Education and Training System in Turkey

This Green Paper analyses the Turkish vocational education and training (VET) system and provides findings and recommendations for the reform process. The paper presents a common analysis of the situation and requirements of the Turkish VET system with a strategy

for reform, main objectives and steps agreed upon between all stakeholders in VET in Turkey. The Objective of the paper is to strengthen Turkey's vocational and technical education in particular in the process of accession to EU. This policy paper also builds upon concepts prepared within various components of the SVET Project related to Life Long Learning, Involvement of Social Partners, Development of a National Qualification System, Quality Assurance, Decentralisation, Labour Market Needs Analysis, and Financing of VET which were addressed by separate work groups comprising stakeholders and experts.

VI. POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

When it was initiated and planned by Jean Monnet and his colleagues, the EU was a peace project aiming at welfare and prosperity of the Europe as a whole. When this project turned into a giant economic market, the member states could not ignore the main actor in this project, its people. The unemployment wave produced by the oil crisis of the 1970s was considered partly as the result of the link between qualifications and employability. Then, VET was started to be seen as the main tool to fight the social disturbance and imbalance caused by unemployment. Indeed, VET was regarded to be a concept which is directly related to the issues like employment, social inclusion and welfare of the society. Thus, it has gained more significance in internal politics.

Today, the European Commission plays a crucial role and has a major responsibility in emphasizing the role of the vocational training systems as key components of any strategy aimed at increasing the human capital, and supporting adequate strategies aimed at preparing for the knowledge economy and the knowledge society as expressed in the Lisbon conclusions.

The goal of becoming 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' is an ambitious statement (Council, 2000). To reach this goal the EU planned a ten-year-long strategy to react to the challenges

posed by '[...] a quantum shift resulting from globalization and the challenges of a new knowledge-driven economy' (Council, 2000).

This new strategic aim for the European Union announced by the European Council of Heads of State or Government in March 2000 clearly describes the aspiration to be one of the super powers of the world, at least in an economic sense.

An important pillar of Lisbon conclusions is greater social cohesion in the Union. The decision to enlarge to include the Eastern European countries created a considerable concern about the social welfare of the Union. Basing their work on the conviction that education and training can make a fundamental contribution to increasing prosperity, creating sustainable growth and encouraging social inclusion in developing economies, EU initiated a series of VET reform projects throughout the Eastern Europe before the enlargement of 2004. ETF, the EU agency which supports education and training in countries surrounding the EU, played a leading role in this process.

These projects have confirmed that a gradual and carefully managed policy creates a win-win situation for both existing members and countries that are joining. Integration of new members into the EU expands and strengthens the area of peace, stability, and democracy in the continent; it stimulates economic growth and re-enforces the role and influence of the European Union in the world.⁷

In order to attain the super power role described by the Lisbon Conclusions, the EU made some other agreements to extend and project European values to other partner countries. These agreements with its partners around the globe cover not only trade and traditional financial and technical assistance but also economic and

⁷ This information was retrieved on April 24, 2007 from http://ec.europa.eu/world/what/enlargement/index_en.htm.

other reforms as well as support for infrastructure and health and education programmes. They also provide a framework for political dialogue and contain a clause which enables the Union to suspend or cancel trade or aid if the partner country violates human rights. To illustrate, in 2003, the EU decided that all new agreements must include a clause in which its partners commit themselves to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.⁸

The EU signed an Association Agreement with Syria in 2003, which covers political, economic, social and cultural relations. With its assistance to education, the EU puts emphasis on higher education and vocational education and training. A project called 'Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training', which would improve the responsiveness of the VET system to labor market needs, was initiated. On the political side, the agreement provides 'a framework to conduct regular political dialogue consultations on international issues of mutual interest, fostering mutual understanding and promoting the convergence of views.' In particular, the agreement includes critical provisions on 'a) respect for the democratic principles and fundamental human rights established by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, b) cooperation to counter the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their means of delivery, in line with the conclusions of the November Foreign Affairs Council; and c) Anti-terrorism: exchange of information and joint efforts to prevent and fight against terrorism, including as regards implementation of relevant UN resolutions. '⁹

Through such agreements, EU started to export this approach not only to Syria but also to the other peripheral countries since it does not want a strand of unstable countries around its borders

⁸ This information was retrieved on April 24, 2007 from http://ec.europa.eu/world/what/external_relations/index_en.htm

⁹ This information was retrieved on April 24, 2007 from <http://www.eurunion.org/news/press/2003/2003079.htm>

because this will in turn disturb the stability in the EU itself. Therefore, it tries to overcome this unstable atmosphere by educating their young population supposing that VET leads to employment which, in turn, fights social exclusion.

EU attempts to use this particular policy to influence the peripheral countries by exporting its educational concepts and objectives and thus forming a framework for its political interests. This is particularly important because this can be interpreted as the EU's struggle to become a super power. Unlike United States, EU is trying to reach its goals as a civilian power. US does not refrain from bullying other countries into accepting his own terms, as in the case of its relations with Syria, whereas EU tries to establish good relations with countries ranging from Tunisia and Syria to Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine through peaceful bodies, such as ETF. This shows a dramatic difference between the ways super powers exert their influences on other countries.

As it is seen here, EU has an agenda with multiple aims for its relations with other countries. As for Turkey and SVET, this is one of the interpretations of the current relations with the EU, but it can not be explained by a single approach. Turkey has a totally different position with regards to its relations with the Union. As an acceding country, Turkey means a lot more to the Union. Therefore, EU has to consider the effects of the accession of Turkey as well and what scares EU in this picture is the unemployment and migration of unskilled workforce into the EU. In this regard, SVET acts as a preventive measure in that it aims to decrease the unemployment level in Turkey by educating its youth and providing them with necessary skills. However, with VET reforms in Turkey, the EU is not trying to produce the workforce that it will need in the future. Rather than opening up doors for a wave of immigrants, it is trying to introduce new

approaches to the employment regulations into peripheral countries, so that their qualified workforce will not be willing to immigrate to the EU member countries. For the EU, it is a way to control the inner welfare and balance of the EU market since it is aware of the fact that immigration produces chaos and disturbance in many respects.

As for Turkish politics, SVET has triggered three important changes. One of them is the discussions on decentralization of the public governance in a unitary state. The centralisation and rigidity in the decision-making process in educational administration has been the subject of debates for years. School autonomy and its importance especially in VET have been neglected, and this inflicted a lack of trust between central state authorities and local actors. Decentralization in VET and capacity building at all levels is a key issue. However, in its attempts to establish a new, decentralized structure for VET, the government has chosen a more difficult path. Instead of making some amendments to the laws related to administration of educational activities, it employed a wider view and tried to introduce a decentralized public administration policy. This caused a great disturbance in the country and there rose a major opposition from various parties and actors of the political scene. Many people described the law as a threat to unitary structure of the country.

Nevertheless, “The Basic Draft Law on Public Administration”, was prepared and submitted to Parliament. The law rearranged the duties, powers and responsibilities of the central government and the local administrations, and was presented to the Turkish National Assembly on December 29, 2003. The draft was approved after some of the articles and the name was amended. “The Law No. 5227 on the Basic Principles and the Restructuring of Public Administration” was partially vetoed by President Sezer on August 3,

2004. The result has crippled the attempts to decentralize the VET system, which was a failure on the part of the government.

Another influence on the Turkish political system was the introduction of the 'Green Paper' concept, which is a discussion document released by the European Commission intended to stimulate debate and launch a process of consultation, at European level, on a particular topic. A green paper usually presents a range of ideas and is meant to invite interested individuals or organizations to contribute views and information.

The paper is produced by policy makers of stakeholders in VET in Turkey governing the reform process, including MoNE, ministries, state institutions, NGOs and social partners. It builds upon achievements of reform of VET in Turkey reached during the last years which gained momentum during the last 3 years also through achievements of the EU projects SVET, MVET and SBEP (Support to Basic Education Programme).

Introduction of 'green paper' approach into Turkish politics might prove to be a controversial issue in the future since it is an evidence of EU's exporting its way of policy making process. Indeed, this obviously reflects EU's influence on policy making processes in the candidate countries. Even though there might be some skeptics who might be willing to reject such approaches exported from the EU, it might be a constructive mechanism since it elicits the participation of all the stakeholders in the country, and thus, creates an atmosphere in which every interest group has an opportunity to say his thoughts about a certain issue.

Through such instruments and initiatives, SVET project have also led to a new level of involvement of social partners in VET in Turkey. Until very recently, due to the lack of a tradition of cooperation

and consultation between government and social partners, Turkish politics were government-led and even the agenda of tripartite structures were mainly driven by public administrative priorities and interests. However, the Green Paper prepared by MoNE and social partners with the technical assistance of the SVET Project within the VET Policy and Strategy Work Group established within the policy component of the SVET Project is a noteworthy step towards change.

In SVET, social partners take active part in the implementation of the project on national, provincial and local level. In the overall decision making process for SVET, social partners played a crucial role by attending to both National Coordination Meeting and Monthly Management Meetings. Regular meeting and consultations with social partners have been conducted on different levels. The limited interest, knowledge and capacities of social partners in contributing to technical aspects related to training and employment issues were overcome by certain actions of the programme in which social partners were supported by the project in developing their capacities in preparing own project proposals.

Overall policy of Turkey has been to increase the number of students in vocational and technical education especially in secondary education. Almost every government in past forty years have stressed on the importance of vocational education in their programmes. 16th Educational Council organized by Ministry of Education has discussed the reconfiguration of vocational education and training in secondary education. At the same time, 8th Five-Year Development Programme has determined increasing student rate up to %65 in vocational and technical education as a goal in secondary education.

Law no.3308 has determined the framework of our vocational education and training system, especially the apprenticeship system. With this law, provincial vocational education councils, in

which social partners took place, have been established; an opportunity has been provided for vocational and technical school graduates to perpetuate their education in universities; cooperation for internship has been a requirement between schools and enterprises; and a fund has been established in which deductions from employers were transferred to support vocational education.

In short, there has been a barrier of prejudice to SVET as an EU-led project both among the project participants and other actors in the field, as the interviewees confirmed. Yet, cultural and social obstacles to change persist in every country. These obstacles are particularly powerful in the minds of most populations and are blocking the 'culture of training' which is needed to pave the way for a developed country. Both global competition and Lisbon objectives of European Union require a qualified vocational education system in Turkey. However, it is unnecessary to be cynical about this project and its actions just because it is funded by the EU. In fact, what SVET project proposes is just a rewording of the reforms we have been trying to do in the last 40 years.

VII. CONCLUSION

“The EU is not imposing anything on Turkey; rather it encourages Turkey to find its own pathway towards reaching an attractive VET system which responds to the needs of the labour market.”

This utterance clarifies the main question of how the EU policies affect Turkish VET system. In the EU there is no single way or any kind of agreement on how the VET system should be, rather there are different practices and EU is not trying to describe the ways but the ends. It just demands an attractive, flexible and transparent VET system, which is in line with the principle of free movement of workers.

Therefore, the need for Turkey to develop its VET system is not a legal demand from EU since there is no agreed upon policy regarding VET. One of the interviews confirmed this, describing the situation as soft criteria and emphasizing that there is no hard criteria; that is, a legally binding issue, Turkey has to adopt in terms of VET and claimed that Turkish economy must be prepared before accession and that is why EU is interested in VET system in Turkey.

The analysis of interviews with key informants and existing documentation identifies a number of obstacles hindering the development of an effective implementation and dissemination of SVET project as part of overall VET development in Turkey. Among them the following can be mentioned:

- the centralisation and rigidity in the decision-making process accompanied by a widespread feeling of division and lack of trust between central state authorities and civil society/local communities;
- the lack of a tradition of cooperation and consultation between government and social partners;
- the agenda of tripartite structures mainly driven by public administrative priorities and interests;
- the limited interest, knowledge and capacities of social partners in contributing to technical aspects related to training and employment issues;
- the lack of a culture of accountability within the system;
- decentralisation and school autonomy are often hampered by an insufficient transfer of public funds for education to the local level, but also by the insufficient capacity of local actors. This has led to increasing disparities. Capacity building is a key issue at all levels including social partners;
- the problems between governmental bodies such as MoNE and YOK impedes the development of an attractive VET system;
- cultural and social obstacles to change persist in every country. These obstacles are particularly powerful in the minds of most populations and are blocking the 'culture of training' which is needed to pave the way for the Lisbon objectives.

Against the background of the above barriers, the numerous examples of good practice such as study visits to EU member states and development of training modules for trainers are meaningful experiences, which deserve to be multiplied or used as reference for building trust as well as enhancing and expanding cooperation with the partners involved;

- the example of a cooperative protocol signed between the Provincial Education Council in Istanbul and some sectoral organisations to boost flexible provision of initial and continuing VET;

- practical training arrangements, an apprenticeship training system and a non-formal education supply based on agreements between training providers and employers;

- initiatives of some employers to provide vocational training to their employees;

- stakeholders' participation in employment issues;

- bipartite partnerships in leading economic sectors such as construction, the steel industry, banking, insurance and textiles.

- curricula for general education have been revised and the process is ongoing for vocational pathways;

- a unified qualification framework and national certification systems has been developed and thus, transparency, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation are no longer substantial challenges.

SVET and other projects which are related to the field of vocational education, training and employment, could represent an

additional unique opportunity for strengthening the VET system on specific issues. It is therefore recommended to strengthen their capacities and impact on policy development and implementation, namely, through:

- the full application of the current legal framework through the elaboration of a short-term work plan by the various councils, committees and bodies, identifying priorities, responsibilities, working methodology and indicators of achievement;

- the establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including impact assessment of decisions taken (feedback mechanisms and corrective action to be developed to improve efficient application of legislation);

- the active involvement of social partners in the design of the key aspects to be included in the policies and related legal framework, such as funding, testing, assessment, certification of VET provision.

- the need to move from policy development to policy implementation

- the resources which governments intend to dedicate to vocational training would reflect the degree of priority they allocate to this

- In using the pilot school approach, only a very limited number of institutions and sectors are directly involved in the project itself and the sustainability and overall impact depends on the ability and willingness of the authorities to accept, disseminate and use the

new curricula in a national context. Otherwise they remain localised and of little systematic value.

- better inter-ministerial and administrative coordination are needed, as well as the active involvement of the social partners at every level of development of education and training systems.

- The implementation of the project will certainly require increased administrative training at every level.

- Mobilisation and the proper coordination of ministries of education and employment are essential, but given the importance of the challenges and the resources needed, there must be awareness at the highest levels of government.

- the dialogue between the State and the new regional authorities must be strengthened on matters of vocational training and in particular prospects, resources, the school charter and the optimisation of their networks. The dialogue, based on a coherent national framework, must also promote quality, deal with the question of disparities between regions and implement corrective measures.

- The introduction of new curricula must be speeded up, but in a situation in which the support measures for teacher training, equipment and partnerships with businesses are implemented simultaneously, otherwise the effects could be counter-productive.

- An active partnership between the state and universities must be established on vocational training issues, in particular as regards the development of short higher education level vocational courses, and the basic and continuing training of teachers in

secondary-level vocational education and of continuing training trainers.

- A dialogue should be initiated with teaching unions on the question of promoting the profession in conjunction with the modification of teaching practices using in particular information and communication technologies (ICT).

- Schools should be encouraged to get involved in continuing training and ensure that the teaching innovations achieved in this domain are also applied in initial training.

- A systematic partnership between schools and businesses should be promoted in relation to alternate work/training schemes, teacher training, training content and methods connected with qualification needs, technical equipment and communication technologies, and the employment of young people.

- The dialogue must be reinforced with the social partners on issues relating to the development of continuing training of employees, and incentives for individuals and businesses must be introduced.

- Campaigns to promote awareness of the role of human capital and the development of human resources in economic and social development strategies, particularly with respect to the Lisbon objectives, should be launched with all the partners involved, including the media and the NGOs concerned.

- The role of the social partners in these changes should be improved by developing the appropriate training actions and by reinforcing institutions.

- Quality in training should be promoted by developing pertinent criteria and flexible methodologies based in particular on self-evaluation mechanisms rather than on the implementation of bureaucratic controls.
- Advantage should be taken of experiences acquired in EU programmes, for instance in the context of the action plan on the development and evaluation of the Leonardo da Vinci community programme.
- The social partners must be fully involved in all the measures proposed above.

The key challenges raised on education and training in the Lisbon strategy and on VET policies in the EU in the Maastricht Communiqué are fully in line with the challenges above, even if other specific challenges have to be considered and specific solutions have to be identified and implemented. This is why Turkey started ambitious and systemic reforms of VET systems, usually in the context of wider education and training reforms in the framework of EU assistance or with the support of other donors.

The recent EU policy developments in education and training have raised a growing interest among policy makers paving the way for an effective policy learning process. However, there is little evidence that a symmetric learning process has been developed in the EU from developments in the partner countries. (Masson & McBride, 2006)

Following the signing of the Copenhagen Declaration, as well as the implementation of the programme on specific education and training objectives and the very recent employment guidelines, the acceding and candidate countries are fully involved in closer cooperation on vocational training and the implementation of the

Lisbon objectives. Thus, Turkey will take part in a series of working groups dealing with some of the key issues analysed above and will share its experience with these issues.

SVET project is just a pilot project with a budget of €58 Million. Considering the budget of MoNE, it is a drop in the lake. Turkey has to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the project with great care and create a road map of VET development and apply it to the VET institutions across the country without losing time.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Interview Guide

- Needs of VET system in Turkey.
- Progress & success of the project
- Drawbacks faced
- Lessons learnt
- Future challenges and sustainability of VET?
- Cooperation between key actors; governmental bodies, social partners.
- Cooperation with other projects in the field of education and labor market.
- The requirements of developments in the VET in the European context
- The impact of the Copenhagen process on VET system in Turkey
- Consequences / Results
- Sustainability and Implementation

Appendix B. PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Project title: in Turkey	Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training System
Project number:	DG1A-D/MEDTQ/04-98
Country:	Turkey

Project objectives	1	Quality and relevance of the VET system is improved through the implementation of a national reform, which includes the development of national qualification system
	2	Institutional capacity at national, regional and local level of public administration, social partners' representatives and companies is strengthened
	3	The process of decentralization of the system is speeded up by involving local actors in the implementation of the process of reform

Actions	1.1	Setting up the bodies needed for VET reform
	1.2	Labour market needs analysis
	1.3	Development of occupational standards
	1.4	Development of training standards
	1.5	National Qualification System
	1.6	Revision of existing curricula
	1.7	Development of Life Long Learning concept for Turkey
	2.1	Quality assurance system
	2.2	Training of school and training centre managers
	2.3	Trainer Training
	2.4	Role of social partners in VET governance
	3.1	Public information campaign
	3.2	Managing function in decentralized VET systems
	3.3	Strengthening the decentralized approach to VET system governance
	3.4	Empowering schools and training centres and their managers to promote decentralized VET system
3.5	Training of civil servants at ministerial and regional level	

Project Tasks	1.1.1	Selection of pilot institutions
	1.1.2	Management of the Project
	1.1.3	Setup and support core policy and strategy group
	1.1.4	Review of and advise to reform of VET financing
	1.2.1	Identify methodology for obtaining information on labour market and its dissemination
	1.2.2	Design and pilot qualitative labour market surveys in six pilot regions
	1.2.3	Dissemination of survey results

1.3.1	Test existing occupational standards in micro-projects
1.3.2	Report the results to relevant bodies
1.3.3	Support relevant bodies in improving and implementing the new procedures and standards
1.4.1	Design and pilot the use of training standards for curricula
1.5.1	Develop an institution, train staff and implement a national framework for assessing, grading and certifying vocational qualification
1.6.1	Design, pilot and monitor modular competence/output based curricula in accordance with the National Qualification System
1.6.2	Define conceptual linkages between general and vocational education
1.6.3	Clarify the roles and responsibilities of actors in teaching and learning
1.7.1	Examine alternative Life Long Learning systems and legislation for Turkey
1.7.2	Develop a white paper to promote integration of different levels of formal education into a Life Long Learning system for Turkish citizens
2.1.1	Develop and implement a new quality assurance mechanism ensuring consistency and transparency to the VET system
2.1.2	Identify and test milestones in the process of implementation of quality mechanism
2.2.1	Organize training courses for school and training centre managers in management techniques
2.3.1	Organize and implement training courses for selected trainers in each pilot institutions to take leading role in the introduction of the new curricula and training approach
2.3.2	Train the best trainers to become trainer of trainers and ensure dissemination
2.3.3	Train selected trainers to become change agents in the VET reform at local level
2.4.1	Analyze and specify responsibilities, consultative roles and power of decision making of social partners at different levels of VET system
3.1.1	Develop public information on overall project objectives
3.1.2	Disseminate information to stakeholders in multiple ways
3.2.1	Establish key actor's group on VET management reform
3.2.2	Draw up training plans
3.2.3	Establish partnership or twinning arrangements with EU VET institutions and schools

	3.3.1	Develop a regional technical assistance team capacity
	3.3.2	Support the early establishment of the National VET Information Centre based in MoNE
	3.4.1	Train managers and administrators on operational autonomy in the decentralized resource allocation system
	3.4.2	Train trainers to function as curriculum design officers
	3.5.1	Train senior administration staff of MoNE on educational management in a decentralized VET system
Project starting date	30 September 2002	
Project duration	5 years	

Appendix C. Programme Organization

