

## State of the art of VET systems in Albania and Kosovo - Observations and Comparisons

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### Abstract

*Like many other countries in the world, South East European and Balkan countries are experiencing a changing economic and social context, tinged by the effects of globalization, that includes rapid technological change, economic interdependence, a move towards free market economies, international migration movements, increasing calls for public accountability, and aspirations to active citizenship. More than ever, VET systems are expected to fulfill a dual role in supporting sustainable development. Their economic role is to support growth and competitiveness by providing relevant and high-quality skills; their social role is to contribute to inclusive societies by educating young people and enabling adults to gain additional skills, and by providing them with the key competences and values needed to ensure their employability and active citizenship. The countries selected to be introduced in this document are Albania and Kosovo. We will have a close look in their socio-economic and political backgrounds by sketching their dynamics, good practices as well weaknesses and challenges, priorities and future aspirations. They have both similarities, common aspect and correlations with each other, as well as specific contexts, individual features and differences. For example Albania is a post-communist country and similarities are to be found in terms of former centralization and planned economies with a former Yugoslav country like Kosovo. The last one is consider post-conflict country and despite that, has also inherited several common features from the previous common system yet particular in its national backgrounds. Albania is a candidate country for EU accession, Kosovo have submitted its official request to become such. The common walk that both countries have done or will still do towards the EU integration and their efforts for enhancing the role and effectiveness of VET remains the main subject unifying them.*

Keywords: State of the art of VET

Introduction

### 1. EU policies and objectives on VET

#### 1.1 VET emerging in the context of European Community

Historian Hermann Heimpel claims that what makes Europe so European is that its history, is the history of nations. However, this perception of nations as the building blocks of European history acknowledges that they not only established themselves during their gradual development processes but also depended on their relationships with one another as productive partners and competitors (Zernack, 1994; p. 17).

The most influential factor governing the genesis of vocational training systems for the working masses is undoubtedly the Industrial Revolution or the general industrialization of the European nations. It not only triggered far-reaching economic and technological change, but also profoundly altered the structure of society, social interaction, lifestyles, political systems, types of settlement and landscapes<sup>1</sup>.

Education systems are as varied as the histories of European States. They have inscribed within them the various different paths to modernization taken by the different States. Most significantly, it is the divergences in national labor markets and

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<sup>1</sup> Cedefop publication: Towards a history of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe in a comparative perspective. Volume I - The rise of national VET systems in a comparative perspective Proceedings of the first international conference October 2002, Florence. p 17.

forms of labor-market regulation that ensure the continuing particularity of education and training systems. Each of the national systems remains unique. 'But at the same time they show distinct regional affinities, most notably in the German-speaking States, Mediterranean States and Nordic States.

In Western Europe the emergence of EC/EU social policies has had further consequences for VET in Member States, while, at the same time, existing education and training systems have presumably influenced the shaping of EC/EU policies.

First provisions on vocational training in Europe are to be seen in the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), signed 1951. Later on in 1957 the Treaty of Rome paved the road to greater developments of VET policies in the united Europe. The next section provides a more thorough look on these developments.

## 1.2 Policy overview of VET in the European Union<sup>1</sup>

### Treaty of Rome (1957)

This treaty established the European Economic Community (EEC). Although the six Member States acknowledged that a common VET policy would contribute to harmonious development of national economies and the common market, it was only in 1963 that the European Council laid down how it wanted to reach this common policy. They then established the *Advisory Committee for Vocational Education* (ACVT), in which the social partners obtained a special role.

Until the mid-eighties, VET policy was limited to a series of non-binding resolutions. The *European Centre for the Development of Vocational Education* (CEDEFOP), however, was created in 1975 to promote the exchange of information and the mutual comparison of training standards. In addition, a series of promotion programs were launched: COMETT, ERASMUS, PETRA I and II, LINGUA, FORCE, EUROTECNET, and Helios I and II.

### Treaty of Maastricht (1993)

In 1993, the now twelve Member States signed the *Treaty of Maastricht*. Concerning the policy the consequences of the Treaty was the application of the principle of subsidiarity to European VET: This principle means that action at EU level will be taken only if it is more effective than taking it at national, regional or local level. Each Member State is still responsible for the organization and the content of its own VET. Hence the European VET policy is of a supportive nature. The 1995 Commission White Paper: 'Teaching and learning – towards the learning society' specifies this. To turn policy into action, funds became available through the Leonardo da Vinci I (1995 – 1999) and II (2000 – 2006) programs for VET.

### The Bologna Declaration (1999)

Twenty-nine countries confirmed in Bologna their willingness to strive towards a European space for higher education. The most important undertakings are that every country commits itself to basing its higher education on the bachelor's-master's system, transparency and the start of the introduction of a system of quality assurance.

### The Lisbon Strategy (2000)

The next important milestone was reached in Lisbon. European leaders – the EU now had fifteen Member States – expressed their ambition to make Europe the most dynamic and competitive region in the world. To achieve this requires a well-educated and highly versatile labor force. Knowledge is evolving at an increasingly rapid pace, and people must keep up with this evolution throughout their lifetimes. To reach their goals, European leaders decided to apply the open

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1.2 compiled based on sources: [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu); [www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu) Lipinska, Patrycja, Schmid, Eleonora, Tessaring, Manfred, Zooming in on 2010 – Reassessing vocational education and training, Cedefop.

method of coordination. This approach gives more leeway to European leaders to take their own initiatives and to achieve the objectives at an unequal pace.

The open method of coordination consists of four elements:

- to formulate guidelines for medium and long-term objectives;
- to fix qualitative and quantitative indicators and benchmark topics;
- to translate common guidelines into national policy objectives;
- to assess activities periodically as a mutual learning process.

#### **Important results achieved since 2002:**

- Europass: a single framework for transparency of qualifications and competences. The *European Qualifications Framework* (EQF) was adopted by the European Parliament and Council on 23 April 2008. The EQF will relate different national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. The EQF will cover all educational sectors, general and vocational, and all education sectors. Most European countries are developing or revising their qualifications frameworks to be compatible with the EQF.
- In April 2008, a Commission proposal for a Recommendation on a *European Credit System for VET* (ECVET) was adopted. This system will facilitate the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences gained by individuals in different learning environments or through periods of VET abroad.
- In April 2008 a Commission proposal for a Recommendation on a *European Quality Assurance Reference Framework* was adopted. It is designed to support Member States to promote and monitor quality improvement in VET. It provides a common basis for further development of quality principles, reference criteria and indicators.
- Council Resolution on strengthening policies, systems and practices in the field of guidance throughout life, which brings a coherent approach to this topic across education and training sectors at Community and national levels.
- Council Conclusion on the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning endorse a set of common European principles to help develop confidence and trust in this rapidly emerging sector.

As well as a means to drive the Lisbon agenda forward, VET policies are affected by the socioeconomic challenges Member States encounter in their attempt to increase Europe's competitiveness worldwide. Significant demographic change with serious impact on social cohesion, sectorial changes, fast-evolving technologies, globalized production and distribution processes constitute some of these challenges that call Europe for immediate action.

## **2. VET systems in Albania and Kosovo**

### **1.1 Albania**

#### **Profile**

Capital: Tirana  
Population: 3.194.417 (2009 – INSTAT Albania)  
GDP per Capita PPP: 8.373 (2009 - World Bank - WDI database)  
Employment rate 15+, Total %: 46 (2009 – ILO, Kilm database- Trends Estimation Model (TEM))  
Youth employment rate 15-24, Total (%): 32.7 (2009 - ILO - Kilm database- TEM)  
Compulsory education: 9 years  
Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education (%): 72.36 (2009 - UNESCO)  
Vocational and Technical education in upper secondary (ISCED 3) (%): 16.31 (2009 - UNESCO)  
Students/Teachers ratio in secondary (%): 14.66 (2009 - UNESCO)  
Enrolment in technical/vocational programmes:  
Vocational training as % of upper secondary enrolment: 15%

## Socio-economic context

Albania lies in Southeast Europe situated in the western part of Balkan Peninsula bordering Ionian and Adriatic Sea on the south and west, Greece, FYROM, Montenegro and Kosovo.

After experiencing 45 years of isolation, political repression and poor economic development under the communist regime, the country is currently struggling with the long transition process of overcoming the past and building a new and stable democratic system. During the past 19 years of democracy, Albania has experienced large political, institutional and socio-economic changes.

**Albania is a demographically young** and ethnically homogeneous country. Albania is demographically one of the youngest countries in Europe as a result of its relatively high birth rate. However, Albania's population has been declining steadily since 1990 and stood at 3.19 inhabitants in 2010 (INSTAT). According the same official source life expectancy is 76.6 years and the current average population age is 32.2 years. Unemployment rate is officially estimated 13.52% (2010) although other reliable sources such as ILO-KILM 2008 estimations indicate 22.7% unemployment rate in Albania<sup>1</sup> which is quite above compared to EU average (7%). According to the same source, Albania shows high activity rate (59%) and good women employment rate (34.4%) compared to other countries in the region but this is mainly due to the large agriculture activity in the country (58% of the Albanians employed in the agricultural sector).

The capital Tirana, is the country's largest city, with close to 800.199 inhabitants in 2009 (ibid) more than three times as many as in 1990 (250.000). Compared to other countries in the Western Balkan region, Albania is ethnically relatively homogeneous, with 95% of the population being Albanians. The rest are Greeks, (3%), and Aromanians (Vlachs), Roma, Serbs and Macedonians, who together account for the remaining 2%<sup>2</sup>.

Official estimations of the Albanian Ministry of Labour Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO),<sup>3</sup> state that since 1990 around 1.1 million Albanians have emigrated out of the country on a either temporary or permanent basis. The reasons for migration often include poverty, the lack of jobs, low income and poor working conditions in Albania, as well as political instability linked to lack of prospect for rapid positive improvements of the living conditions in the country. Emigrants tend to be young, male and better educated (IOM and Government of Albania, 2008). Preferred migration destinations include Greece (50%) and Italy (25%) because of their proximity and traditional cultural links, as well as the USA, UK and other European countries (25%). Besides considerable external migration flows, there have been high levels of internal migration. People migrate from the poor mountainous or rural areas in the northern or northeastern part of Albania to the capital and coastal areas, primarily Tirana and Durrës. Internal migration affects males and females alike (Dragoti, 2008<sup>4</sup>). Brain drain is another concern of Albanian government(s) during the past years. It is estimated that around 20% of Albanians, who have attained tertiary education have left the country.

**The Albanian economy** is based on free initiative and per capita incomes today are almost twenty times higher, than they were in 1992<sup>5</sup>. Since 1990 Albania has managed to achieve remarkable levels of economic growth. With a GDP per capita of EUR 2.785 (estimate for 2008), Albania acquired lower-middle-income country status. Officially estimated real GDP growth rates averaged 7% a year during the period 1998–2008, the highest in the region. Migrants' remittances are an

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<sup>1</sup> ETF- Human Capital and Employability in the 14 countries of the Union for the Mediteraneaen, Informal background paper to the Union for the Mediterranean – Euromed Employment and Labour High level Working Group Meeting, Brussels 26-27 November 2008, P 14

<sup>2</sup> Albania Review of Human Resources Development, ETF 2010, p 15.

<sup>3</sup> National Strategy of Migration 2005-2010, Strategy of Reintegration of Returned Albanian Citizens 2010-2015

<sup>4</sup> Albania Review of Human Resources Development, ETF 2010, p 15

<sup>5</sup> Albanian National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013, p 9, March 2008.

important contribution to the economy, making up around 9% of GDP (Bank of Albania, 2010) which is well decreased compared to earlier years due to global crisis. Foreign direct investments (FDIs) have been at moderate levels for a long time, reflecting relatively low levels of integration into the global economy. However, the past few years have seen a considerable change in this respect. In 2007 the level of FDIs was 6.2% of GDP, around 88% higher than in 2005 (Ruli, 2008). This was mainly as a result of government efforts to continuously improve the business climate, the privatization of public enterprises, the extension of public-private partnerships and the implementation of the "Albania 1 Euro" initiative. The interest of foreign investors has increased, primarily in the areas of energy, mining, banking, tourism and infrastructure (Council of Ministers, Republic of Albania, 2008).

Albania is a member of several United Nations and European Organisms<sup>1</sup> and since 2009 member of NATO. Albania's biggest aspiration for the future is its full integration in the European Union. This is an ongoing process and relationship between Albania and the EU marked by extensive cooperation and support given by the EU in different sectors. Albania is an official candidate for accession to the European Union since June 2014.

### **VET System**

Public expenditure on education fell from 3.7% of GDP in 1996 to 2.5% in 2001 reaching an all-time low percentage (World Bank, 2006b). Since then it has been increasing once more, reaching 3.2% of GDP in 2005 and 3.5% in 2008. While this figure represents a major improvement, it is low compared to those for other fast-growing economies. It is also below the government's own target of 5% of GDP. Education as a percentage of the state budget declined from 11.4% in 2005 to 10.8% in 2008. Secondary VET receives the smallest share at 5.9%<sup>2</sup>. Secondary education is severely underfunded, and this affects VET in particular, for which the budget made available does not reflect real costs. However, while the share allocated to general education has risen slightly over the past two years, the share for VET has again been reduced. Thus, the total budget allocated to VET in 2010 remained below the target planned in the Strategy for Pre-university Education 2008–13 (MoES, 2008b). Due to the financial and a complexity of reasons, VET clearly lacks attractiveness and appreciation. The rate of enrollment in VT education in the upper secondary according to 2009 UNESCO estimations is 16.31%.

Currently there are 41 VET schools operating in the country instead of 308 in 1990. This is explained by the lack of demand for vocational education after the change of the political system as well because of the large offer as well demand in attending higher education in Universities, particularly easily offered as an opportunity to the students by the newly flourished private universities in Albania during the past 7 years.

**The Guiding philosophy** of the VET Albanian system is still more driven to general education with no remarkable focus on employability and no systemic orientation to the labor market. The latter issue has however gained more discussions and awareness by local policy makers and actors in the past years, mostly agreeing that the better orientation to the labor market and the cooperation with the private business is of vital importance for the long run of VET in Albania. European standards, guidelines as well models play though a decisive role. The Albanian Qualification Framework in light of the EQF has already become part of the binding VET policies, though a concrete implementation has not taken place yet.

**The Inputs** influencing the VET are generally also not favorable factors for quality assurance of vocational education in Albania. VET Schools are in general poorly equipped, and teaching is mostly theoretical. Teacher entitled to offer practical training has usually only theoretical background and lack practical experience. Beside the many challenges of the vocational schools (Ministry of Education and Science) there is a sharp division in the institutional and functional basis while offering

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<sup>1</sup> World Trade Organisation (WTO); South East Europe Cooperation Process; Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe (COE).

<sup>2</sup> Data refer to the 2010 state budget for education according the Albania Review of Human Resources Development, ETF 2010, p 25.

Vocational Training by the Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) under the responsibility of Ministry of Labor. In practical terms in the case of Albania there is no direct organization, linkage and cooperation among the two VET sub-sectors.

**The Learning process** is mainly school-based. Private enterprises have usually just a marginal function, in the best cases often only as providers of internships. Even these examples are fragmented and not systematically organized in all 41 schools. VET system is currently financed by the public funds only with no other parties contributing for or having a playing an important role in the system.

**Outputs.** Albania has the lowest level of VET participation in the upper-secondary education compared to other countries in the region of 16.31%. This is again an issue addressed and recognized by both local actors and international donors acting in the country.

The Albanian VET system clearly belongs to the category of the bureaucratic school model. As a synthesis of the above mentioned steps one cannot discuss about coherent and effective transfer of learning in the employment and labor market and **outcomes** generated by the system. The concept of Career Guidance is being piloted in selected VET school by contribution of German donor project and introduced in all compulsory education system. It is still young in its offspring and a clear system of career paths doesn't yet exist. Periodical tracer studies are lacking and therefore can't be brought based evidences on the employability of VET graduates. A tangible fact is that the role VET systems should in principle play as engine of greater economic and human resources development has still a long way to go in the case of Albania.

## 1.2 Kosovo

### Profile<sup>1</sup>

Capital: Prishtina
Population: 1.8-2.2 Mio (official estimation)
GDP per Capita PPP: 6.600 USD (2010 est.)
Unemployment rate %: 45.4 (2010 Republic of Kosovo)
Employment rate 15+, Total (%): 1805000 (2009 - World Bank - WDI database)
Youth employment rate 15-24, Total (%): 23.2 (2009 - Republic of Kosovo)
Compulsory education: 12 years
Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education (%): not available
Vocational and Technical education in upper secondary (ISCED 3) (%): 56 (2010 Republic of Kosovo)
Students/Teachers ratio in secondary (%): 7.5 (2009 - Republic of Kosovo "Results of the labour force survey 2009")

### Socio-economic context

Kosovo is situated in southeast Europe between Albania, FYROM, Serbia and Montenegro. Kosovo after the World War II was one the autonomous provinces of former federal Yugoslavia. After decades of struggling and war conflicts for gaining its independence, Kosovo is officially starting from 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2008 the newest independent state in Europe and wider.

According to official estimation of the Kosovo government, the total number of **population** is about 2.2 million, among ethnic Albanians comprise 88%, ethnic Serbs 7% and other ethnic groups 5% of the total population.

Kosovo has the youngest population in the region and a population that is growing faster than any other in Europe. Around 32% of Kosovo's population is under the age of 15, with only 6.5% over 65 years of age.

<sup>1</sup> Kosovo country data compiled based on source: (1)Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016, Republika e Kosovës, Ministria e Arsimit Shkencës dhe Teknologjisë; (2)Torino Process 2010, Kosovo under UNSCR 1224, ETF.

Kosovo has emerged from the **post-conflict and transition** phases, and its first efforts at nation building have focused on establishing its legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks. Its economy has managed only very modest growth; it continues to be uncompetitive (IMF, 2010). The informal ('grey') sector of the economy is a serious problem in Kosovo and represents up to 50% of the economy.

Kosovo remains one of the **poorest country in Europe** with a GDP per capita of €1,760 (World Bank, 2010). Remittances and pensions from abroad, form a significant source of income for Kosovars in general, and Kosovo Albanians in particular.

Kosovo has one of the highest **unemployment** rates in southeastern Europe. According to Public Employment Service (PES) data, approximately 45.4% of the population is unemployed. The problem of unemployment in Kosovo is characterized by high rates among young people (for the age group 16-24), among women and very high levels of long-term unemployment and higher unemployment in rural than urban areas. Out of the total number of registered unemployed two thirds are considered as un-skilled and out of the remaining one third, half (approx. 60,000 job seekers) are considered semi-skilled or with out-dated skills which means with major skill deficits and skill mismatches.

The socio-economic and demographic background described above indicates several important issues related to human capital in Kosovo which have a big impact on education and employment policies and related expenditure throughout the system. In this context, the education and training system, labor supply and labor demand also require an appreciation of general economic growth patterns, changes in trade and investment, regional markets, the role of the informal economy, and the new nation's initial steps on the road to European Union membership.

### **VET System**

In the last two years the Government of Kosovo, and particularly its Ministry of Education and Science and Technology (MEST), have taken major steps towards developing a unified education and training strategy, covering areas such as initial VET, adult education and non-formal education. A key initiative supporting systemic reform is the introduction of the sector-wide approach in the education sector and the drafting of the Comprehensive Strategy for Education 2011–2016<sup>1</sup>.

VET in Republic of Kosovo serves a high proportion (56 %) of the upper secondary student population. This is seen as an opportunity to increase relevance and impact of the sector in the lives of young people. Even though not adequately represented in the public budget, it has received over one third (38%) of the total development partner support in education.

All upper secondary vocational education programs of the MEST are classed at ISCED Level 3. The Ministry, through the division of Vocational Education has under its auspices 57 vocational schools which are spread in 26 main towns of Kosovo, in 6 main regions.

**The guiding philosophy of VET** system in Kosovo and all the other relevant elements building the system such as **input, learning process** etc. are currently subject of major reforms and transformation. With respect to quality and attractiveness of VET the large school-based system with little interaction with the business world continues to be the norm. The quality and provision of professional skills is low. The attractiveness of the VET system to both individuals and enterprises is currently quite limited, owing to its 'bad' image and very limited resources and capacities.

Current reforms involve improved access for VET, integrating the new modular curricular system for all streams and profiles in schools, providing more coherence between market needs and profiles and streams offered in VET schools, the development of the *National Qualifications Framework (NQF)* in compliance with the European Qualifications Framework as well as accrediting and licensing VET training programmes progressing. Management capacity is being enhanced at all levels of VET with the intention to build a systematic approach to training of VET teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016

Primary and secondary education in Kosovo is mainly public, though the participation of private education is growing. Public secondary education is financed by public funds transferred to the municipalities. At present the VET sub-sector has no specific budget line in the Ministry of Education budget. Good practices are already done in cooperation with donors for a significant number of students, whom has been given opportunity to carry out the practical part of their schooling in various production companies or services practical training. This co-operation is expected to increase further in the years to come. VET centers of competence are planned to be constructed/transformed as a key initiative to raise the attractiveness and prestige of VET.

As per its **output, transfer and outcomes** for individuals, VET currently does little to upgrade skills, support gainful employment, foster active citizenship and personal development, or promote equal opportunities on the labor market. For employers, critical skills mismatches and shortages hinder Kosovo's economic competitiveness.

Alongside these gaps, the lack of active involvement by social partners in the steering and management of the system remains a major issue for the VET system, even though some employers' organizations and trade unions occasionally take part in policy discussions. The reactivation of the CVET represents good, although insufficient, progress on this front.

Overall reforms are in progress, but Kosovar authorities themselves emphasize that there is still great scope for improvement. They are aware and admit also in the policy documents that the capacities and institutional culture of policy evaluation are not up to the declared strategic goals. Administrative capacity for policy making in the public institutions remains one of the most serious concerns weaknesses. The policy-making process is distorted even more in an environment, such as Kosovo's, in which there are many international donors and aid agencies, all of whom, though well-intentioned and committed, have their own views on what to reform in the given sector and how to do it.

We should not forget that Kosovo must be seen as a post-conflict transition country with aspirations to European integration. For decades the education and training system has experienced deep crises and post-conflict traumas, where the logic of planning first and then implementing evidence-based policies is displaced by the need to tackle urgent issues, such as getting students into schools, reducing shifts from three to two (and ideally to one) and ensuring that all students have textbooks.

As stated in the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016, consequently the process of policy making cannot be anything else but both rational and non-linear.

### **3. Observations, comparisons and conclusions**

Both reviewed countries are affected by globalization, technological changes and recent economic crisis in particular. While demographic changes and population aging is already a European feature, countries like Kosovo sign the youngest and a fast growing population in Europe (only 6.5% over 65 years). This fact rises at the same time more concerns in terms of employment and risk for higher unemployment rates (especially for youth and women) which is quite high in Kosovo. Migration and brain drain is another phenomena affecting negatively the demography and the human resources in particular Albania.

From both countries it is evident that education particularly VET and better employment, are key determinants of social and economic development and social cohesion. Employability remains the key word for a healthy interaction between education and training systems and labor markets.

Technical vocational education and training (TVET ISCED 3) exists in both countries, the levels of participation vary: Kosovo have a good to high enrolment in TVET, while Albania has the lowest enrolment in the region (16%). The link between TVET and the labor market is also very weak in Albania. In any way Albania seem to have the lack of attractiveness and of

good image for VET linked to its prestige and quality. Many VET students especially in Albania continue to higher education after being graduated in a VET school.

Both countries in their national policies, express high ambitions for the role of vocational education and training, in supporting growth and employment. They both have made and are still doing efforts to reform the VET system, to adapt governance models, modernize qualifications and curricula, create professional institutions to support the change processes and, and have a better and systemic link with the private sector.

However, these reforms have not yet had a large-scale impact on the quality of VET. Both Albania and Kosovo are plagued by limited budgets and weak institutional capacities that leave public education sector unable to guarantee quality and sustainability particularly in VET system, and confront the shared challenges of high youth unemployment, large informal sectors and the global economic crisis.

Career guidance is weak in terms of coverage and systematic approach throughout Albania and Kosovo. In both countries, despite the different starts and stages public opinion is that VET needs to be better aligned with the needs of learners and enterprises.

Continuing vocational training as a core element of adult learning still shows deep gaps and low percentages in particular in the western Balkan non EU countries. In general the main scope of reforms in has been secondary VET, with little consideration being given to post-secondary or higher VET.

Donor organizations have made important contributions to education reform including VET reform in both countries. EU is one of the most active donors in this sector considering the fact that both countries are pre-accession or candidate countries and EU assistance is an additional political incentive for alignment with the principles of EU policies Other together important contributors in the region are the World Bank, and bilateral organization including GIZ, KulturKontakt, Swisscontact, USAID, CIDA etc.

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