

Central Asia Education Platform NEWSLETTER

Newsletter #2 June 2016

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Editorial

Dear Colleagues,

In this newsletter issue we can look back on a **very successful conference on "Qualification Frameworks in Central Asia Countries: Current Developments and Cooperation Perspectives" in Riga in April this year**. It was a truly unique experience for the CAEP team and the representatives from all five Central Asia countries, Latvia, Poland, the EU and the World Bank alike, to exchange relevant experiences from the EU and Central Asia countries on National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs). **Please allow me here to express our gratitude to the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science who hosted and greatly contributed to the success of this conference!**

Over the past months, we have also been able to observe some **remarkable developments in education in Kazakhstan** which we would like to share as part of this special newsletter issue on Kazakhstan. We will place a similar focus on all other CA countries in our next editions.

Last but not least, we will briefly inform you about the **start of the fourth round of the ETF led Torino process**, which provides a policy analysis of VET systems in Central Asia and beyond.

We hope that this second issue of our CAEP newsletter will again find your interest, and that you will also visit us on our CAEP project website at <http://www.caep-project.org>.

We are always looking forward to receiving your comments at <http://www.caep-project.org/contact-us/> on how we could still improve!

Best regards,

Christian Wagner
CAEP Team Leader



Regional Conference on Qualification Frameworks in Riga addresses latest policy developments in Central Asia countries

"National Qualification Framework matter – for education providers, students, employers and society alike": this could have been the subtitle of the Regional Conference taking place in Riga from 20 to 22 April 2016, jointly organised by CAEP and the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science, and financed by the European Union.

More than 60 education experts, ministerial officials, representatives from employers' associations, and state-run agencies for VET and HE from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan came together with colleagues from Latvia, Poland, the European Commission, the European Training Foundation (ETF), European External Action Service (EEAS) and the World Bank, to discuss the role and contribution of National Qualification Framework (NQF) for "making education systems fit for the 21st century", as Michael Graham, ETF, outlined in his keynote speech.

Prior to the conference, a team of CAEP experts had prepared a **stock-taking report on NQF in Central Asia**. One of the report's main findings was that the renewal of qualifications according to

the learning outcomes approach and in cooperation with employers' representatives, is recognised to be a key element, with growing importance, in the national strategy to modernise education and ensure the quality of education provision. In Central Asia, the formal and substantial implementation paths are nonetheless partly still in their early phases.

The report is currently being updated and will be soon available for download at <http://www.caep-project.org/useful-content/studies-and-reports/>.

In this issue:

Regional Conference on "Qualification Frameworks in Central Asia Countries" in Riga



Kazakhstan: Recent Developments in the Education System



ETF: Fourth round of Torinoproces started



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In the following two days, the participants exchanged views in lively discussions in plenary and workshop sessions on the current status of NQF implementation to introduce similar systems in Central Asia. Experiences at national level in Central Asia were put into relation to the reforms undertaken by Latvia and Poland in the last 15-20 years to introduce qualification frameworks. These reforms addressed the challenges to be overcome and the benefits gained both for employers, students and society as a whole for developing clear and transparent educational standards. Furthermore, the World Bank presented first lessons learned from their major involvement in the "TVET Modernization" and the "Skills and Jobs" projects implemented in Kazakhstan.

The final day of the conference offered all participants a unique opportunity to share good practice from the Latvian experience, by visiting education administration bodies, universities, vocational secondary schools and enterprises, in the cities of Jelgava and Valmiera.

"In the end it was not only a meeting, we had fruitful, useful and effective discussions among our colleagues from all the Central Asia countries and our European partners where we could raise relevant issues and questions and received very informative answers, being relevant for our practical work on NQF", stated Ms Elena Zigangirova on behalf of the Kazakh Delegation.

National Meetings and Peer Learning on NQF planned to start up in September 2016

Following the Riga conference, CAEP will organise national meetings on NQF in all five Central Asia countries, in close cooperation with its Central Asia partners, starting in September 2016. Furthermore, CAEP is planning to continue mutual learning and the exchange of good practice by facilitating a series of peer learning events. These will involve NQF experts from the region and the EU Member States and EU services.

Republic of Kazakhstan – Country Brief

Population: 17.500.000 (2015 estimate by UN)

The Republic of Kazakhstan is the world's largest landlocked country, and the ninth largest in the world, with an area of 2.724.900 square kilometres. While generating 60% of the region's GDP, primarily through its oil/gas industry and due to its vast mineral resources, Kazakhstan had a GDP of roughly 218 billion USD in 2014 (World Bank). In the period 2011-2015, Kazakhstan spent some 12.6% of total government expenditure on education (World Bank/UNESCO).

Education

Minister of Education and Science: Mr. Sagadiyev Yerlan Kenzhegaliyevich

The HE system consists of 125 HE institutions and universities with more than 455,000 students, of which roughly 27,400 are studying in master courses and 2,000 are undertaking their Ph.D. The courses are provided by more than 40,000 faculty and teaching staff. Kazakhstan became a Bologna signatory country in March 2010.

The VET system comprises 807 VET colleges and training institutions (462 of which are state colleges) with more than 500,000 VET students in more than 180 professions and 465 qualifications. The professional education is provided by more than 43,000 technical-pedagogical teaching staff.

Ministry of Education and Science: www.edu.gov.kz

National Erasmus+ Office: www.erasmusplus.kz

Information on HE system in Kazakhstan:

http://tempuskaz.belight.net/downloads/kazakhstan_review_of_higher_education.pdf

FOCUS ON KAZAKHSTAN: "Free TVET for ALL"

In his "Address to the Nation" on 30 November 2015, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, announced a new project, "Free Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for ALL", to be started in 2017. The goal is to provide free professional education to the Kazakh youth.

The project aims at

- creating the necessary positive framework for young people, who want to start a professional education;
- providing the necessary financial means to enter VET;
- updating the content and improving the quality of VET training and education provided

Finally, the overall number of young people entering VET shall also be increased by means of enhancing the prestige of VET professions in society.

The details of the project are currently being worked out in detail.

Kazakhstan strengthens cooperation between VET sector and enterprises by adopting a dual system approach

Although many graduates enter the Kazakhstan labour market every year, their skills mix does not match the needs of a diversifying and modernising economy. In recent years, the number of graduates from vocational institutions has met only around 30-40% of demand in the labour market.

The Kazakh Government has therefore undertaken enormous efforts to modernise the VET sector and in 2012 started to introduce elements of a so-called "dual system" in VET education, where periods in an educational institution or training

centre are combined with practical training in a company. It is expected that this type of work-based learning and a closer cooperation between VET training institutions and the entrepreneurial sector will contribute to a better match between needed skills at the work place and the training provided.

The "Free TVET for ALL" initiative of the Kazakh government also fits into this context.

Following intense discussions and piloting activities in various Kazakh regions in the following years – involving the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan "Atameken" and the German GIZ – **in January 2016, the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science developed and approved a regulation for organising dual education in VET.** It foresees, amongst others, that up to 60% of all education content should consist of practical training, ideally provided by companies participating in the dual system approach.

At present, **dual training has been introduced at 314 colleges with the participation of 1,137 companies. This involves 17,500 students in 11 priority sectors** (chemical, metallurgical, agricultural, energy, oil and gas construction, medical specialty) and is covering 95 specialisations and 180 qualifications. The dual training is based on tripartite and quadripartite memoranda, and cooperation agreements



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and contracts between VET organisations, departments of education areas, enterprises and the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs. The main partners are large enterprises, such as JSC "Ust-Kamenogorsk Valve Plant", JSC "Condenser Plant", JSC "Arcelor Mittal Temirtau", "Kazakhmys Corporation", JSC "Pavlodar Machine Building Plant", and JSC "Pavlodar Electricity Distribution Company".

Kazakhstan and international partners join forces to strengthen VET and to develop new curricula, occupational and educational standards in VET and HE

At international cooperation level, **GIZ Germany** is providing support in implementing the roadmap to introduce the dual system. This will include the legal and institutional framework and piloting in regions for priority professions and capacity building for VET staff. Furthermore, the **German government is supporting a Public Private Partnership initiative, "developPPP.de"**: While HeidelbergCement is establishing a training course for industrial mechanics at a construction college in eastern Kazakhstan, Class Global Sales and John Deere International are advising the Transport College in Kostanay on establishing a dual training course for agricultural mechatronics. Evonik Industries AG is promoting training for electronic engineers and electronic technicians for automation technology at Temirtau Polytechnic College in the Karaganda region.

At the same time, **the European Training Foundation (ETF) will liaise with VET stakeholders** (Ministry of Education and regional education departments, Kasipkor, the Chamber of Entrepreneurs and individual businesses, as well as VET providers) at regional and national level, to reflect which policies and practices could foster the further development of education/business cooperation in the different socio-economic regional contexts, and at national level.

On 14 March 2016, the **World Bank and the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan** officially launched the "Skills and Jobs Project" aimed at improving employment outcomes and skills of those in need of training.

The Skills and Jobs Project is designed to diminish this mismatch and make skills



available in the workforce more relevant to market needs, as the country transforms from a still highly natural-resource-dependent economy to a knowledge-based one. The US\$137 million project, expected to be completed in 2020, aims to improve employment outcomes and skills of the current workforce, and also the relevance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education programmes.

The project will improve public employment services, enhance the capacity of training centres and institutions to provide skills development programmes that are aligned to labour-market demand, and establish and implement a demand-driven skills enhancement training programme targeted at unemployed and underemployed people, as well as those already in the workforce. In addition, it will also put the national qualifications system in line with labour-market demands, focusing in particular on occupational standards, educational standards and curricula, and qualifications assessment and certification. (For further information:

<http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P150183?lang=en>

Two universities in Kazakhstan form one major education and research centre

Satpayev Kazakh National Technical University (KNTU) and Kazakh British Technical University (KBTU) in Kazakhstan have joined together and now form one large education and scientific-research centre. The **new university is named Kazakh National Research Technical University (KazNITU)**, after academician Kanysh Satpayev, the founder of geology as a science in Kazakhstan. The university will prepare highly qualified specialists in engineering and technical fields that the country currently needs.

Kazakh National Technical University (KazNTU) was founded in 1934 and has 11 institutes. KBTU was founded in 2000 and has 9 departments. KBTU has been ranking top of the national technical university



league tables for six years in a row. Both universities are located in Almaty.

"In the future, each university will have a specialisation. Kazakh National Technical University will be specialising in oil and gas, geology and chemistry – and Kazakh British Technical University, in economics and IT. All current students will receive the diplomas of the university they applied to. Restructuring of departments and layoffs of staff are not envisaged", said Takir Balykbayev, former Vice Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

"The new educational holding will be much stronger in its chosen field. The model will be optimised and the focus will be placed on quality rather than quantity", said Vice Chancellor of KazNITU Iskander Beisembetov in his speech.

The joining of two universities opens up new perspectives for EU Kazakhstan collaboration, namely:

- increased numbers of successful applications for joint research projects in engineering and technical fields;
- closer links with HEIs in European countries, as international partners of both institutions will be able to use synergies;
- complementarity of expertise and specialisations of researchers, faculty and students of KBTU and KazNTU.

The merging is a clear indication of the interest of the Kazakh Government in strengthening Kazakhstan's research capacity and competitiveness.

ETF Torino Process moves into its fourth round

The designated Torino Process coordinators of 22 European Training Foundation (ETF) partner countries met on 10-11 February 2016 at the ETF in Turin, Italy, for the start of the fourth round of the Process. The Torino Process is a holistic VET policy analysis exercise, launched by the ETF in 2010. It has been taking place every two years. Over time, more and more partner countries have opted to carry out the analysis as a self-assessment exercise involving key VET stakeholders. A number of countries have also started to use the Process to monitor national VET policies and reform and to reach consensus on future development actions. The Russian Federation, Tunisia and Ukraine have started, as an additional step, to implement the Torino Process at sub-national level, in order to better monitor developments in very diverse regional contexts.



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The 2016 coordinators' meeting was organised to support peer learning and make good use of the experience gained in implementation by many partner countries over the years. It provided an opportunity to introduce coordinators to new features of the Process and agree on a roadmap for the 2016 round.

Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have been active participants in the Torino Process from the very beginning, while Turkmenistan has taken part in discussions at regional level on a regular basis. Representatives of all five countries took part in the coordinators' meeting in Torino.

In 2014, Kazakhstan was the first Central Asian country to carry out a full self-assessment. Dana Kalenova, the director of the VET Department of the Ministry of Education and Science in Kazakhstan, stressed how useful the 2014 report had been to her department for understanding where Kazakhstan stands in terms of developments in VET. The Department used the 2014 report recommendations to review actions planned up to 2019. For the 2016 round, Kazakhstan intends to strengthen the involvement of VET stakeholders, while reviewing the progress made, and possible future actions. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, the government has tasked and resourced the Information Analytical Centre with the overall implementation of the process.



Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic are in the process of setting up working groups in order to progress towards

self-assessment with ETF assistance. Both countries intend in the medium term to progress to full self-assessment and have a strong commitment to stakeholder involvement. Both countries have decided to use the Torino Process as an opportunity to explore issues that they see as particularly important. In 2014 Tajikistan was already paying special attention to the situation outside the capital city, by holding consultation meetings with regional actors. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the overall responsibility for the Initial and Secondary VET sub-sectors was assigned to the Ministry of Education and Science in autumn 2015. The VET Agency, under the Ministry of Education, has therefore decided during the Torino Process implementation to concentrate especially on questions concerning the internal efficiency of the VET system. The VET Agency is committed to carrying out a self-assessment for this important topic.

Recently, Turkmenistan has been more widely sharing the Torino Process methods in its institutions and ministries. ETF is standing by to assist with further reflections on how the Torino Process could be of value to the reform and modernisation of VET in Turkmenistan.

It is expected that country reports will be finalised by autumn 2016 and presented for validation during national Torino Process conferences. The reports of the previous rounds can be found on the ETF website under

http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Torino_process_-_publications_EN

"Save the date": Next CAEP events

16-18 November 2016

Cracow, Poland

Regional Conference:

"Enhancing cooperation in Higher Education between Central Asia countries and the European Union"

September 13, 2016 (to be confirmed)

*National NQF Meeting Tajikistan
Dushanbe, Tajikistan*

September 20, 2016 (to be confirmed)

*National NQF Meeting Uzbekistan
Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

September 27-28 (to be confirmed)

*Seminar on Bologna Reform Principles
Ashgabad, Turkmenistan*

September 29, 2016 (to be confirmed)

*National NQF Meeting Turkmenistan
Ashgabad, Turkmenistan*

September / October (to be confirmed)

*National NQF Meeting Kazakhstan
National NQF Meeting Kyrgyzstan*

October 2016 (to be confirmed)

*Kick-off Workshop
"Data collection methodologies"*

In the next CAEP Newsletter Issue #3 (September 2016):

1. Internationalisation of Higher Education
2. Country Focus Kyrgyzstan
3. Erasmus+ in Central Asia

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