

Central Asia Education Platform NEWSLETTER

Newsletter #5 February 2017

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Editorial

Dear colleagues,

We hope that you have all had a productive start to 2017.

At the CAEP project we are now busy preparing for the **Second Meeting of Ministers** to be held in Kazakhstan in June, where the outcomes of work carried out during 2016 will be discussed and plans for strengthened cooperation will be put into place.

The meeting will be preceded by two **Senior Official Meetings** which will be attended by high-level officials from the EU and Central Asia who will draft and finalise a Joint Communiqué to be signed by the Ministers of Education on June 23. More details can be found in our leading article.

In this issue of the CAEP newsletter we will be focusing on **developments in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training in Tajikistan**, including an overview of Tajik government priorities for education and news of recently launched donor projects to support the development of professional development for teachers in the HE and VET sectors. On page 4 you will find an announcement of two collaborative events being held in Dushanbe in June, one by CAEP and the other by the EU funded-project European Higher Education Fairs in Asia and Central Asia (EHEF).

We are delighted to say that the **new CAEP website** is being launched at the beginning of March. The new website has a modern, sleek design and improved navigation and will include a comprehensive calendar where users can find out about relevant upcoming events in the EU and Central Asia.

The improved Project Database tool will also allow visitors to research HE and VET cooperation projects in the region and will include details of funding, the organisations involved,



project objectives and activities to be carried out.

In our next issue we will feedback from the Peer Learning and Data Collection Kick-off meetings being held in Istanbul at the end of February and update you on HE and VET developments in Turkmenistan.

Christian Wagner
CAEP Team leader

Second Meeting of Ministers for Education to take place in Astana

The 2nd Meeting of Ministers will be held in the Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, on June 23, 2017.

This will lead on from the successful First Ministerial Meeting in Riga in June 2015 which resulted in the endorsement of a Joint Communiqué in which high-level representatives from both Central Asia countries and the EU agreed on beneficial cooperation in Higher and Vocational Education.

Ministers for Education from the EU and Central Asia are being invited to Astana to reflect on the results of the activities carried out since 2015 and

explore further steps in strengthening cooperation, with the aim of adopting a new Joint Communiqué during the meeting.

Participants will also have the opportunity to take a tour of Astana and attend an official dinner held by the European Commission.

The event is being organised by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan in close cooperation with the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Also in this issue:

Country Focus
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Dushanbe



EU and other donor
projects to support
developments in Tajik
HE and VET sectors



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During the Riga meeting in 2015 Ministers for Education and high-level officials from the European Commission, EU Member States and the Central Asia countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan agreed on the following priority themes:

- i. Development of Qualification Frameworks and Standards
- ii. Quality Assurance and Accreditation
- iii. Employment and Labour Market needs.

In the framework of the Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP), Ministers endorsed a CAEP roadmap, focusing on policy dialogue by organising regional conferences, national seminars, peer learning and working group meetings and by providing stock-taking reports on National Qualification Frameworks and Mobility.

Since the meeting in 2015, 2 high-level regional conferences have been held, a number of national meetings on NQF and Bologna Principles have been conducted, and 2 market intelligence reports have been published. Peer learning events and data collection workshops are also planned for the coming months.

The preferred outcome of the Second Ministerial Meeting in June is a further Joint Communiqué to include concrete steps for intensified mutual cooperation up until 2020.

In order to prepare for the Ministerial Meeting, a 3rd meeting of Senior Officials from the Central Asia countries and the EU will take place in Brussels on March 7. The 4th Senior Officials' Meeting will then be held in Astana the day before the Ministers' Meeting on June 22 to fine-tune the Joint Communiqué.

Participants at the Ministerial meeting will also be invited to visit EXPO 2017 "Future of Energy" on June 24.

The Joint Communiqué of the First Ministerial Meeting can be found at http://www.caep-project.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/20150626_Communique_roadmap_EU_CA_EN.pdf



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Country Focus: Tajikistan



In this issue we will be focusing on developments in the Higher Education and Vocational Education & Training sectors of Tajikistan and looking at some of the EU and other donor projects that have recently been launched in the country.

Ambassador Peter Burian visits Tajikistan



The EU Special Representative to Central Asia, Ambassador Peter Burian, visited Dushanbe on 23-24 January for a number of meetings with members of Tajikistan's government, including President Emomali Rahmon, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sirojiddin Aslov, First Deputy Chairman of the National Bank Jamoliddin Nuraliev, and Minister for Economic Development and Trade Nematullo Hikmatullozoda.

Ambassador Burian also met with representatives of civil society, the international donor community, international financial institutions, the OSCE, resident Ambassadors of EU Member States, and the Aga Khan Development Network.

The meetings covered a broad range of current political and economic issues relevant for the assessment of Tajikistan's challenges, goals and development plans.

During Ambassador Burian's meeting with His Excellency Emomali Rahmon at the Palace of the Nation, the two

sides discussed the current state of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and the EU and prospects for further expansion.

Particular attention was paid to cooperation in the fields of education and science, and in this area both sides stressed the need for training qualified personnel in the fields of exact sciences and new technologies.

The EU has been active in Tajikistan since 1992 and provides approximately EUR 35 million annually in development assistance. During the period 2014-2020 the EU will focus its development cooperation with Tajikistan on the sectors of education, health and rural development.

HE and VET priorities in Tajikistan being assisted through EU projects

The National Development Strategy (NDS) in Tajikistan for 2007-2015 recognised the pivotal role of education in the development of the country and emphasised the need to establish adequate mechanisms to "boost the potential of the education sector" in the medium to long term. This priority has continued in the NDS for 2016 – 2030.

The National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) which is in place until 2020, aims to create the conditions to ensure universal access to relevant and quality education and sets out 3 objectives; (i) to modernize education content; (ii) to re-structure the education system; and (iii) to improve access to quality education.

A newly launched EU funded project, "Quality Education Support Programme I", will contribute to the achievement of these aims by providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to increase the quality of education provision through improved teaching, learning assessment and education system management.

The project is being implemented by a consortium led by Human Dynamics and will run over 3 and a half years.



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Tajikistan – Country Brief

Population: 8.670.000 (2016 UN estimate)

Tajikistan is a mountainous, landlocked country in Central Asia with an area of approximately 144,000 square kilometres. It is bordered by Afghanistan to the south, Uzbekistan to the west, Kyrgyzstan to the north, and China to the east. The capital, Dushanbe, has a population of around 7.9 million people.

Tajikistan has an estimated GDP per capita of \$1,114. Approximately 47% of GDP comes from services, 27% from agriculture and 25% from industry (UN, 2014). In 2015 Tajikistan spent 16.28% of total government expenditure on education, which was 5.23% of GDP (UNESCO).

Education

Higher education in Tajikistan is provided by a total of 40 institutions, including universities (donishgoh), academies (akademiya) and institutes (donishkada). Although Tajikistan is not a Bologna signatory country, most HE institutions have now introduced 4-year Bachelor degrees and 2-year Master's degrees in line with the EU system; some 5 or 6-year Specialist Diplomas are still offered in professional fields such as medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy and engineering. In 2015, there was a 26.37% gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (UNESCO).

Since 2014 VET has been the responsibility of the Department of the Ministry of Labour Migration and Employment (MoLME). The sector currently includes 61 institutions of initial vocational education and 73 vocational training centres for adults (5 centres, 38 branches and 30 representative offices), preparing skilled workers in 96 different specialties (MoLME, 2017).

Useful links

National Erasmus+ office: <http://erasmusplus.tj/>

Overview of HE system: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/Tajikistan.pdf

The expected results of the project are:

- A modern, viable and competence based teachers' CPD system, better responding to teachers' and school managers' needs
- A National Learning Assessment System properly developed and implemented, targeting selected educational stages
- A strengthened planning, budgeting and monitoring (PBM) process that results in a more equitable and efficient distribution of resources

Research will complement and bring together the main components of the project.

The NSED also gives special attention to the development of initial and secondary vocational education, and a well-functioning TVET system is widely seen by the Tajik government as an important element for economic development, cohesion and social inclusion.

A considerable number of students graduate each year from the sector lacking the knowledge, skills and qualifications required to successfully enter the labour market, and collaboration between the business community and the TVET education is currently relatively poor.

A second EU funded **"Quality Education Support Programme I"** project will give support to the Ministry of

Labour Migration and Employment (MoLME) in the development of a modern and viable TVET teachers of practical subjects' Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system. The project, implemented by a consortium led by GOPA, will:

- Assist the government to strengthen and develop legislation outlining the roles and responsibilities for initial TVET
- Support the development of a Competency Framework (TCF) and Staff Appraisal System (SAS) for initial TVET teaching and managerial staff
- Support the building of capacity of TVET in-service training providers
- Support the development of Business – TVET partnerships
- Strengthening the institutional and HR capacities of representative TVET authorities for effective policy development and functional restructuring of the system.

Asian Development Bank TVET Programme

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also recently launched a new programme for the initial TVET sector, **"Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project"**.

The project aims to lay down the foundations of a demand-driven,

quality-assured and flexible TVET delivery system responsive to labour market needs through:

- Developing competency-based standards (CBT) and assessment tools aligned to an adapted European qualification framework
- Minor rehabilitation of building facilities and provision of modern equipment and teachers training to support the delivery of new CBT curriculum
- Improving access to quality programmes
- Strengthening governance and management.

More details can be found at:

<http://www.adb.org/publications/taj-strengthening-tvet-project-brief>

World Bank Group Holds Youth Entrepreneurship Forum in Tajikistan



THE WORLD BANK
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The 2nd "Youth Entrepreneurship Forum" was held on 17 January in Dushanbe, bringing together over 200 participants – young people, private sector companies, civil society, government representatives, HE institutions and development partners.



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The event celebrated youth entrepreneurship successes to date and raised awareness of the relevance of youth empowerment and capacity development for job creation and economic growth in Tajikistan.

"Private sector development, as an important creator of jobs, is the foundation of the World Bank Group's overall program in Tajikistan. Young people, as the largest segment of the population and Tajikistan's main asset, play a key role," said Patricia Veevers-Carter, World Bank Country Manager for Tajikistan. *"The World Bank stands ready to support the Government of Tajikistan's efforts to put youth at the center of its development priorities, so that young people have the necessary skills and opportunities to productively contribute to the development of their country."*

The event was part of the World Bank Group-financed **Central Asia Youth Empowerment and Jobs Project**, which last year trained around 4,000 young people from various regions of Tajikistan on entrepreneurship. The project aims to provide youth with technical business skills, empower them to harness their creativity and energy, and help them transform their ideas into concrete activities.

Read more at:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/01/17/empowering-young-people-in-tajikistan>

EHEF and CAEP events on HE and VET to take place in Dushanbe

European Higher Education Fairs in Central Asia and Asia (EHEF) is a European Union funded project that brings together universities from Central Asia and the EU to

discuss cooperation through conferences and roadshows as well as organizing Education Fairs where students can find out more about studying in Europe.



Having already organized events in China, Malaysia, India, Vietnam, Lao, Cambodia, Nepal, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic during 2014-16, they are now planning a conference in Tajikistan that will provide a platform for discussion among higher education leaders and university staff from both Tajikistan and EU member states.

The 2-day event will provide an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of cooperation between the EU and Tajik HE sectors to date as well as look at future opportunities. Working groups will focus on practical implementation and sharing of best practice on topics such as the Bologna Process, successful partnership building and internationalisation strategies.

The event is planned for May 2017 to coincide with the **CAEP Regional Conference on Quality Assurance and Accreditation**, when HE and VET representatives, QA and Accreditation experts and Ministries of Education and Labour specialists from Central Asia and the EU will be invited to share approaches, best practice and latest trends in the sector. Details will be published on the CAEP website shortly.

For more info on EHEF:
<http://www.ehef.asia>

"Save the date": Next CAEP events

7 March, 2017

3rd Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM)
Brussels, Belgium

24-25 April, 2017

Peer Learning NQF 2nd Meeting
Istanbul, Turkey

26-28 April, 2017

Data Collection Working Group 2nd Meeting
Istanbul, Turkey

May 2017 (date to be confirmed)

Regional Conference on QA and Accreditation in HE and VET
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

In the next CAEP Newsletter issue #6 (April 2017):

1. Report on Peer Learning and Data Collection Kick-off meetings
2. Country Focus Turkmenistan
3. Erasmus+ activities in Central Asia

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