



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



# Communiqué

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEW DYNAMICS OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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Recommended by the Participants of the Regional Conference and by the representatives of the WB6 Ministers in charge of Technical and Vocational Education (TVET)

Since its launch at the first Summit in 2014, the Berlin Process became one of the strongest multilateral support mechanisms for the European perspective of the Western Balkans.

Following the WB6 Summit series, the establishment of the Western Balkan Alliance for Work-based Learning as a cooperation platform between TVET and the private sector initiated at the Vienna conference 2016 and leading up to the Summit in London as part of the Berlin Process, which will be held on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2018, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development invited representatives of public and private sector entities, bilateral and multilateral financial and international institutions in the field of TVET from WB6 economies, as well as Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland along with representatives of International Financial Institutions and other multilateral and bilateral institutions.

In a series of specialized lectures, four thematic workshops and one ministerial plenary discussion, the participants enhanced greater cooperation between relevant stakeholders and used the meetings as a platform to reflect upon recent developments in the area of TVET. Trends such as demographic developments, changing legal frameworks and digitalization all lead to structural changes in the labour market, thus challenging the region's economies to modernize and adjust their TVET systems.

As a joint result of above mentioned interactions the participants developed the following recommendations to the political leaders of the fifth WB6 Summit in London. The recommendations are clustered into four key intervention areas which require reform efforts to strengthen the TVET systems in order to respond to the needs of the labor market.



### “Regional approaches for labour market oriented TVET systems”

- The paradox of high (youth) unemployment in the Western Balkans while there is an urgent need for skilled work force by the private sector, calls for closer cooperation between TVET providers and companies. The regional approach should be enhanced to strengthen cooperation and join forces in working towards EU standards. Regional approaches facilitate learning, regional work force mobility and joint responses to labour market trends. Therefore, new regional mechanisms need to be established to tailor the countries’ TVET systems to private sector needs. Additionally, it is important to strengthen capacity building efforts in institutions of the TVET system.

### “Adjustment of TVET on change requirements of economy”

- New approaches for coordinated actions over the coming years will positively impact TVET systems on macro-, meso- and micro-level. Changing work and business processes have to be addressed by adjustments in various areas – such as occupational profiles and standards, qualification standards and TVET credits, curricula and training programs, teaching and learning media, cooperation between learning sides in schools and companies and as well as improvement of competences of TVET teachers, in-company trainers and management personnel.



## “Shaping supportive Legal Frameworks”

- Strong TVET systems need to incorporate mechanisms for systematic and high-quality cooperation between the educational sector and economy. Legal frameworks should foster linkages between state institutions and the private sector and describe their respective roles and responsibilities with regard to fostering work-based learning.
- Linkages between regional reform initiatives, notably the cooperation between the Educational Reform Initiative for South Eastern Europe and the Chamber Investment Forum, as put forward in Vienna in 2016, shall continue to be strengthened as a vehicle for sharing of lessons-learnt and identifying joint approaches.

## “New alliances for preparing the workforce of tomorrow”

- New and diverse approaches to partnership and cooperation, both with upstream basic education institutions, higher education institutions and, above all, with industry and across borders have to be initiated.
- Digital literacy as basic personal and social skill has to be more firmly anchored across educational careers, from basic education, secondary and vocational training to higher education. Digital transformation ICT sector-specific competences are increasingly being certified on a sectoral basis. Private sector and public TVET institutions need to cooperate more closely to adapt the certification of competences to the sector specific needs.
- The development of digital teaching and learning materials requires the cooperation of IT experts as well as methodological-didactical and subject related specialists. Continuous upgrading of vocational teaching and training personnel requires a cooperation across institutions and the active involvement of the private sector. The innovative potential of NGOs has to be used and upscaled.