**EU assists the reforms of education and training in Central Asia**

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The education sector in Central Asia countries is facing several challenges and, in particular, vocational education and training is struggling to meet labor market needs and prepare workforce equipped with relevant skills.  
  
The European Union has supported the regional dialogue on education between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan through the project “Central Asia Education Platform” (CAEP1 for 2012-2015 and CAEP2 for 2015-2019). The main purpose of the project is to bring the educational systems of these countries in line with the needs of globalized world.  
  
The project milestones are relevant for both higher and vocational education and include the enhancement of the Europe-Central Asia education sector dialogue, the sharing of best practices and the improvement of the information exchange. In terms of the policy making level, CAEP, with support of ETF, has initiated to introduce the evidence-based policy approach in the region, raising awareness of the importance of policy strategies based on scientific evidence and the use of quantitative and qualitative data to shape relevant decisions. The work has been organized around the evidence-based policy making for better employability. The work took place in national teams in all Central Asian countries with the representatives of Ministries of Education, Ministries of Labor and research institutes.  
  
In Kazakhstan, the team members developed a number of surveys for training providers. These tools will facilitate the analysis pf the training needs of teachers and will simplify the follow-up on how the upskilling of teachers have contributed to the better impact. The key training providers have already started to use these surveys.  
  
In Tajikistan, the members of the national team made several suggestions on how to improve the structure of the administrative data provided by the schools to the Ministry of Education. As the result, the data received by the policy-makers is more detailed and offer better evidence for further decision on the reform of education.  
  
In Kyrgyz Republic, the recommendations of the group have influenced positively on the new educational database that improved the collection of administrative data provided by the schools.  
  
The CAEP2 project will be finalized by the end of March 2019, and in order to explore the results achieved, the representatives of Central Asia Ministries of Education, European Commission and European Training Foundation have met in Brussels on 13th February 2019. They've discussed further opportunities for the future cooperation in education between the EU and Central Asian countries at regional level.  
  
“The EU would like to continue with a regional programme like CAEP as there are still many issues that need to be tackled in the future, such as financing of vocational education and training but also the prevention of radicalization through more attention to social inclusion and employability”, said Daniel Weiss, Head of Sector for Central Asia, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission.