

## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TESTING/ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION WITH TURKEY

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### ÖZET

*Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de varolan ölçme/değerlendirme ve belgelendirme sistemi ve verilmekte olan belgeler ile Avrupa Birliği'ndeki (AB'deki) mesleksel belgelendirme sistemleri ve yeterlilik düzeyleri arasında genel bir karşılaştırmalı çalışma yapılmıştır. AB ülkelerinde mesleksel yeterliliklerin belgelendirilmesi açısından genel olarak yerleşik iki uygulama vardır. Birinci grupta, AB ülkelerinin çoğunluğunda görülen belgelendirmenin geleneksel olarak eğitim bakanlıklarının altında merkezi bir yapıda olduğu ülkeler yer almakta, ikinci grupta ise belgelendirme kuruluşlarının yer aldığı bir sistem uygulanmaktadır. Mesleksel belgelendirme sistemi, kapsamı, ölçme-değerlendirme ve belgelendirme uygulamalarının içeriği, işleyişi, toplumsal tarafların katılımı ve yetkili kuruluşlar çerçevesinde bütüncül bir biçimde incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Türkiye örneği, Avrupa Mesleksel Eğitim Merkezi (CEDEFOP)'un geliştirdiği yaklaşıma dayalı olarak incelenmiş ve Avrupa'daki 2. düzeydeki (vasıflı işgören), 3. düzeydeki (Tekniker) ve 4. düzeydeki (Yüksek Tekniker) gözününe alınmıştır. Türkiye'de bu tip bir gruplama ile karşılaştırma yapılabilecek mesleksel yeterlilik düzeyleri kalfalık, ustalık ve teknikertik düzeyleridir. Türkiye'de yerleşik olan mesleksel belgelendirme sisteminin hukuksal, yönetsel ve uygulama alanları açısından AB üyeleriyle uyumlu olduğu sonucuna varılmış ve sonuç olarak bu doğrultuda öncelikli olabileceği düşünülen proje ve programlara yer verilmiştir.*

### I. Introduction

The present comparative analysis is not only on different kinds of concepts, creation, implementation of the systems, but even more on access to

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qualifications: conditions, procedures, routes and modes of acquisition based on the scheme of CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) generated for the various systems of testing/assessment and certification. CEDEFOP was established in accordance with the request of the social partners based on a directive in 1975. When the emphasis is on the social consequences of the changes affecting the labour markets, vocational training is seen as a longer-term guarantee for the individual. CEDEFOP's role thus consists in creating the conditions necessary for the expression and discussion of the social partners' needs in order to clarify their requests and put them consistently into perspective.

A comparison of testing/assessment and certification practices aims to increase the transparency of the various systems, helping the actors in each of the systems to understand and appreciate more thoroughly how qualifications are attained in the other countries. There is also a need to develop an approach to quality assurance adapted to each national system reflecting the role of the different partners in the vocational education and training process after a careful analysis of each system. Apparently, in trying to compare the national systems, there is still a need for a basic frame of reference.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Concepts, Creation and Implementation

### A) Legal Responsibility

Most vocational and educational training qualifications in the 15 member states of the EU are obtained before or on leaving the educational system (during the period which can be considered as the "initial education and training") and require a certain prior level to be able to follow the appropriate course to be assessed. In the EU countries for vocational education and training, different bodies have final legal responsibility for the *full-time school based, apprenticeship, part-time study or alternance* routes towards vocational diplomas and certificates. In most countries within the initial education and training provision, it is the Ministry of Education which decides on the diplomas and the certificates to be offered and the organizational structure which will determine the offer, define the content, the type of evaluation, its content, as well as the level of specialization except the case in Belgium, Germany and the UK. In Belgium, decisions are made by the individual Ministries of Education for each linguistic Community. In Germany, exclusive autonomy is given to each Länder with coordination at Federal Level. In the UK, the department of education holds only

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<sup>1</sup> Tomris Çavdar, "A Comparative Analysis of the Testing/Assessment and Certification Systems in France and Germany with Turkey" *European Journal for Vocational Training*, No. 22, January-April 2001/1, p. 47.

an advisory role in certification and plays no direct role in the development of qualifications.

In France, full time school based training is the most dominant route towards vocational diplomas and certificates whereas the apprenticeship training under the dual system forms the backbone of the German vocational training system.

In general, the main actor is usually the Ministry of Education in both countries including the major role and involvement of the social partners especially in the case of Germany. Full-time, school based vocational diplomas and certificates are under the authority of the Ministry of Education in France since responsibility for certification has traditionally been centralized under this Ministry. In Germany, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training, BIBB is used to bring together social partners and educationalists to establish and develop awards for Vocational Education and Training. For work-based part of the dual system of vocational training, the role of social partners in the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and Crafts continues on organizing and conferring awards. They fulfil this role based on a public mandate from government.<sup>2</sup>

In Turkey, the system has the features of both French and German systems including a third organization, Higher Education Council for the Technician level. For the occupations under the scope of the Ministry of National Education (MEB), the qualifications leading to vocational diplomas and certificates are under the direct control of the MEB similar to the case of France. For the rest of the occupations, the qualifications are available by the The Confederation of Turkish Craftsmen and Tradesmen (TESK) similar to the case of Germany. The above-mentioned occupations cover the journeyman and mastercraftsman certificates. The remaining occupations for which qualifications lead to technician level are under the direct control of the Higher Education Council. However, recently developments are undertaken to involve the social partners and the Ministry of Employment especially for the vocational certificates outside the scope of the MEB.<sup>3</sup>

## **B) Establishing the Offer**

The main partner is usually the Ministry of Education, with the Ministry of Employment taking a secondary role, the exception being the UK. Most full-time, school based awards are under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Work based awards and special schemes may come either under the authority

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp.47-48.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp.47-48.

Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Employment. Involvement of the social partners in terms of legal responsibility differs from one country to another.

In Turkey, as is the case in France, it is mainly the Ministry of Education which decides the scope of occupations for which certificates and diplomas are to be offered. This means that for the scope of the occupations under the Ministry of Education, qualifications are obtained through full-time schooling or apprenticeship training while the trainee has a work contract with a company. For the occupations under the scope of TESK, qualifications are obtained through work-based apprenticeship training, and as for the technician occupations, qualifications are obtained through full-time schooling.<sup>4</sup>

### C) Decision Making on the Objectives, Content and Assessment

The general situation in most of the EU countries is that the Ministry, or the body responsible for the award establishes a committee competent to decide on the objectives, content and type of assessment. The following EU countries have been selected to elaborate the differences between the decision making schemes<sup>5</sup>.

• In France, the objectives of training courses are defined by the competent ministries, the knowledge and competences to be attained are established by the Occupational Consulting Commissions composed of representatives of the competent ministries, the social partners and the Inspectorate. Their role also includes updating of the curriculum and determining the form of assessment for each diploma. The Commission structure is consultative and is organized and coordinated under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The general situation in France is that the Occupational Consulting Commissions advise the Ministry of Education on the objectives and curriculum content of national awards. They also define the type and content of examinations. However, the final decision remains that of the Ministry of Education.

• In Germany, for example, the school based part of the curriculum and its assessment is determined by the Ministry of Education for the particular *Länder* following the outlines centrally planned by the BIBB (German Federal Institute for Vocational Training). There are also Vocational Training Commissions in each of the German *Länder* advising on training programmes. The school based part of the curriculum and its assessment is determined by the Ministry of Education for the particular *Länder* following the outlines centrally planned by the BIBB.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Tomris Çavdar, "Yetkilendirme ve Onaylama (Akreditasyon) Uygulamaları, Ara İnsan Gücünde Mesleki Belgelendirme ve Endüstri Mühendisliği Açısından Bir Değerlendirme", II. Ulusal Endüstri-İşletme Mühendisliği Kurultayı, 1999, Ankara, s. 2-7.

For work-based part of the dual system of training, the role of social partners in the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts continues on organizing and conferring awards. They fulfil this role based on a public mandate from government.

- In Belgium, objectives, type and content of assessment are determined by permanent advisory bodies to the Ministry, which are assisted by informal working groups which take into consideration the minimum conditions. The role of Permanent Advisory bodies (Conseils Supérieur) is to advise the Ministry of Education in each of the communities at specific levels to advise government. In Belgium, the system allows progression through the accredited awards but most of these awards are academic and Vocational Education and Training Awards are not accredited.

- In Netherlands, the aims and objectives of courses for all secondary awards are determined by the Ministry of Education.

- In Denmark, the Vocational Training Council and the National Trade Committees are consulted on the aims, objectives and the content of awards. In Denmark, automatic recognition of qualifications by the different ministries involved allows passage from one award to another.

- In Italy, The Ministry of Education develops the awards, nominates the National Examination Commission. Their assessment is set locally but under the responsibility of an Examination Commission which includes representatives of the Ministry of Labor and the social partners. The Institute for Development of Vocational Training, a public organization responsible for technical assistance to the ministries and regions on Vocational Education and Training in planning, program development, research and development work and experimentation in the field.

- In Spain, the Ministry of Education and Science holds overall responsibility for establishing the objectives, content and assessment for all the vocational awards. However, reforms have been made to include the social partners into the decision making process.

- In Ireland, at present each awarding body defines the objectives, content and assessment for the awards it offers. The Employment and Training Body FAS, under the Department for Enterprise and Employment defines the objectives, content and assessment for youth training. Other sector specific bodies do the same for their own areas. The whole system is under review with a view to making it more coherent.

- In the UK, the system is very decentralized with Vocational Education and Training taking place under a number of private bodies. Lead bodies including employer representatives are asked to define objectives in terms of standards for different levels. These standards are translated into content and assessment units by the awarding bodies, which then apply for accreditation by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. The awarding bodies in the UK have usually tripartite structures together with sector experts and educationalists for the different occupations and levels of training covered. These awarding bodies are specific to the UK and Ireland. They can be either private or state-financed bodies which offer certificates and diplomas for vocational education and training in a range of occupations at varying levels.

- In Portugal, the Ministries of Education and Employment define the aims and objectives of courses for their particular areas of competence. The Ministry of Education develops the course content itself. However, the Ministry of Employment delegates the responsibility to the tripartite Commissions for each occupational sector. They are in turn coordinated by a permanent tri-partite body.

Although the system in Turkey has the features of both the German and French systems, the situation in the country is similar to the general situation in France that the Ministry of Education has an authorized unit similar to the competent committees in France, which decide on the objectives, content and type of assessment. Their role also includes updating the curriculum and determining the form of assessment for each diploma for full-time training. For the work based apprenticeship training similar to the activities of BIBB in Germany, MEB jointly with TESK decides on the objectives, content and type of assessment. Recent developments are underway to establish a tri-partite (involving MEB and the social partners) and an autonomous organization to improve the vocational training system through the introduction of the occupational standards.<sup>6</sup>

#### **D) Organizational Principles<sup>7</sup>**

An initial distinction needs to be made to determine whether or not the majority of qualifications available are organized into a system of “national qualifications” or official diplomas under the direct control of the Ministry of Education of the country.

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<sup>6</sup>Çavdar (2001), p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48.

*There are four main systems in organizing the assessment of the 15 member countries of the EU:*

- 1. Central elaboration and delivery*
- 2. Decentralized elaboration and delivery*
- 3. Mixed approach*
- 4. Central guidelines and quality control with local delivery*

In the case of *central elaboration and delivery*, initial procedures establishing the Vocational education and training diplomas and certificates and concerning the assessment are centralized under ministerial control. France, Italy, Greece and Luxembourg adopt predominantly centralized approach. Diplomas and certificates as such are designed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

In *decentralized elaboration and delivery*, decentralized decision making usually goes right down to the assessment, as is the case in Germany. However, there are different characteristics in the decentralized systems of Portugal, Ireland, and UK.

As to the *mixed approach*, the awards are obtained through either central and/or college examinations, depending on the diploma. In the Netherlands, for example, the examinations are centrally held under the responsibility of the Ministry but the national vocational boards are consulted.

In the case of *central guidelines and quality control with local delivery*, the elaboration of guidelines and objectives are organized at the national level along with the implementation at regional or local level. In Belgium, Spain and Denmark, this system prevails with unique characteristics specific to each country.

In Turkey, assessment is organized similar to the central elaboration and delivery system in France with some tendency towards decentralization after the enactment of Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Law No. 3308. In vocational high schools and apprenticeship training centers, predominantly a centralized approach is adopted. The examinations for such Vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are designed under the responsibility of the MEB to conduct assessment (for around 89 occupations). However, for the occupations, which are not under the scope of the MEB, the competent bodies (e.g.: TESK Chambers) are mandated to organize and deliver the examinations for assessment.

## E) Examinations and Examiners

Establishing the Content and Assessment The content of the examinations is largely determined by the aims and curriculum of the qualifications and, therefore, by the body which makes the decisions about them. Initial procedures concerning assessment in establishing vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are under the control of the related authorities.<sup>8</sup>

As a fine example suitable to the Turkish context, in France, examinations are written centrally and taken by all candidates on the same day, as is the case in French national diplomas. However, in Germany, each Lander is mandated by the Federal Government to organize examinations within their schools, but it is the schools which set-up the examination panels and carry out assessment. For the craft side of vocational training, the competent bodies (i.e. the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts) are mandated to organize and deliver the examinations.

The appropriate authority responsible for offering the vocational education and training diplomas organizes the assessment and certificates and therefore, a variety of assessment systems coexist in Turkey. For full-time school based training, the examinations take place in each school where such training is provided. Frequently, examinations take the traditional form of written, knowledge based papers accompanied, mainly at craft level, by practical skill tests. For the occupations, which are not under the scope of the MEB, the training solely occurs in the workplace and the Chamber does the assessment. In apprenticeship training, significant part of the training occurs in the workplace, although the test will take place in the school under the responsibility of the examination commission. The concern behind this organization is usually to maintain standards, equity and the fairness in anonymity.<sup>9</sup>

Testing Tools and Instruments<sup>10</sup> In some countries candidates' passing a formal written test as well as an assessment of practical performance in a set piece of work by external assessors is common as in the case of Germany. In some others like France, they insist on the two components of assessment – the written knowledge test and the practical performance test- but allow partial certification of the practical element on the grounds that an individual may be adequately skilled in their own occupational area without being able to complete the written test. In Turkey, similar to France and Germany, multiple-choice tests are widely used for the theoretical part of the examinations. On the other hand, the assessment of

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid p 49

<sup>9</sup> Ibid p 49

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p 49



skills are obviously based on a demonstration of the skills concerned, thus requiring the use of practical tests. Recent developments are underway to improve the quality of written and practical tests and test items to be used in the examinations for assessment.

### **F) Main Bodies and Other Ministries<sup>11</sup>**

In most of the EU countries, responsibility for certification has traditionally been centralized under the Authority of the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, new awards have begun to be accredited by the social partners and Occupational Consulting Commissions advising the Ministry of Education on the objectives and curriculum content of national awards. They also define the type and content of examinations therefore, the final decision remains that of the Ministry of Education. Usually the awards for specifically labor market oriented training courses requires the involvement of Ministry of Employment and such courses are financed, organized and examined under the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment but the certificates are accredited by the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Accreditation which comes under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office. However, in France, the Ministry of Employment usually takes a secondary role as compared to the status of the Ministry of Education. Other ministries take very limited role which is specific to the occupational sector covered. In France, the certificates obtained have to go through a process of accreditation.

In Turkey, the MEB obviously hold a privileged position in the certification process, as is the case in France. It sets up the organizational structure to determine the offer, define the content along with the type of assessment, and its content. Other Ministries in Turkey take a very limited role, which is specific to the occupational sector such as Tourism. However, at present, the certificates obtained as such do not go through a process of accreditation. As it has already been mentioned above, it is expected to establish a tri-partite and autonomous organization (involving social partners) to accredit such vocational training certificates offered by the other Ministries or Chambers especially for the occupations outside the scope of MEB where due emphasis is given to "on-the-job training."

### **G) Chambers of Industry, Commerce and Crafts<sup>12</sup>**

The competent bodies in some of the EU countries such as the Chambers of Industry, Commerce and Crafts, hold legal responsibility for the work-based part

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

of the qualifications obtained especially in the case of Germany. The role of the Chambers of Industry, Commerce and Crafts continues on organizing and granting vocational education and training diplomas and certificates in this country. They fulfill this role based on a public mandate from the government. The Chambers in Germany also play a decision-making role as well as they decide on the occupations, which must be certificated, and make proposals on the organization and content of training to the Ministry of Education and they also countersign certificates.

In Turkey similar to Germany, TESK has a specific role in the certification of skills and competences for the craft and trade types of occupations (around 250), which are not under the scope of the MEB. It is also involved in work-based apprenticeship training to have access to the craft and trade certificates. For such training, TESK in close collaboration with the MEB decides on the objectives, content and type of assessment. Initial procedures in concerning assessment establishing vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are under the control of TESK Chambers. The content of the testing/assessment is largely determined by the objectives of the qualification to be attained. The assessment is organized by the appropriate Chamber responsible for offering the vocational training certificates. The Chamber and MEB representatives countersign the certificates offered. However, as it has already been mentioned above, the certificates granted by TESK do not go through a process of accreditation at present.<sup>13</sup>

## H) Social Partners

Involvement of social partners in testing/assessment and certification system and in the configuration of vocational education and training is essential in order to adapt them to ever changing occupational requirements and the needs of the economy. Vocational education and training accordingly opens up an area accessible to negotiation, collaboration and agreement between the social partners, even if they encounter certain difficulties in putting them into effect.<sup>14</sup>

CEDEFOP's role thus consists in creating the conditions necessary for the expression and discussion of the social partners' needs in order to clarify their requests and put them consistently into perspective. Social dialogue is evolving across industry boundaries and within individual sectors. Vocational training therefore opens up an area accessible to negotiation and to agreements between

<sup>13</sup> TESK (Türkiye Esnaf ve Sanatkarlar Konfederasyonu), 100 Soruda TESK ve Bağlı Kuruluşları Tarafından Yapılan Mesleki Eğitim Faaliyetleri, (100 Questions Explaining the Vocational Training Activities Conducted by TESK and its Affiliates and Other Related Institutions) Ankara, 1998, pp 99-108

<sup>14</sup> Çavdar (2001), p 50

the social partners, even if they encounter genuine difficulties in putting them into effect and following up certain work. It is in the link between the work of the social partners within their national boundaries and the pursuit of the European Social Dialogue.<sup>15</sup>

All the European social partners wish to establish systems for monitoring the changes taking place at the workplace and in job content. This opens up enormous scope for exchanges leading to specific action, particularly the exchange of experience in areas not well covered at European level, such as certification. The employers are worried about the increased competition between firms and that the trade unionists wish to see decisions and programmes centring on individual. The employers would like to see a distinction made between technical aspects of training and the accumulation of knowledge, between apprenticeship and general education, while the trade unionists would like to introduce general education into the specific apprenticeship process. This diversity is expressed in their requests made on;

- knowledge of training systems (by all employers and trade unionists) with the accent on analysis of systems in their historical and cultural context, international comparison and analysis of systems and needs, the differences in investment in training and its consequences for productivity and growth,

- qualification and certification (by all employers and trade unionists) with the emphasis on a consistent system at European level, comparability, recruitment in firms, key qualifications, crafts and technological changes.

- Reform of school and university education (employers)

Social partners have the right to intervene through different means, such as consultation, collaboration, negotiation, co-management and management. They will be required to play an increasingly important role in adapted and adaptable testing/assessment and certification system, whether through consultation procedures, participation in examination, accreditation of occupational sector-based vocational training certificates or in their essential role as providers of sufficient number of training places for young and adult trainees.<sup>16</sup>

In France, social partners have the right to intervene through consultation, collaboration and negotiation.

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<sup>15</sup> Anne-Françoise Theunissen, **CEDEFOP and the Social Partners, Information and Discussion Document**, Thessaloniki, 1996, p.9, 15-16, 18, 21- 23, 28-31.

<sup>16</sup> Çavdar (2001), p. 50.

In Germany, social partners co-manage and manage the system and have a decision-making role.

In Denmark, through the National Trade Committees, the social partners carry a lot of weight.

In the Netherlands, the National Commissions for Vocational Education, on which the employers' association and the trade unions are represented, play a comparative role.

In the UK, the employers' role has increased while that of the trade unions has tended to decrease.

In Greece, current reforms are taking on board because of the need to associate the social partners in the devising of vocational education and training awards.

In Turkey (Türkiye), a number of projects have been developed to involve the social partners in vocational education and training in order to enhance the bridge between employment and vocational education and training systems starting from the negotiation stage similar to the French system with the ultimate aim towards co-management or management similar to the German system. Requests of social partners are embedded in the social culture and constructs. The role of social partners is seen essential for the system to function correctly. Therefore, social dialogue has started to be undertaken in the economic activity sectors in a concrete fashion that can contribute to general progress in vocational education and training. Recent developments are taking on board the need to associate the social partners in devising of vocational education and training diplomas and certificates, developing occupational standards along with the systems of testing/assessment, certification and accreditation.<sup>17</sup>

### **III. Access to Qualifications: Conditions, Procedures, Routes and Modes of Acquisition.<sup>18</sup>**

There are basically two types of routes, full time provision as in the case of France and apprenticeship training within the dual system in Germany as the major modes of acquisition of qualifications.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid p 50

<sup>18</sup> Ibid pp 51-52

In Turkey, both French and German modes of acquisition exist side by side. There are, on the one hand, vocational and technical high schools, which offer full-time provision leading to vocational and technical high school diplomas as well as mastercraftsman certificates after one year of work experience. On the other hand, there are apprenticeship-training centers leading to journeyman and mastercraftsman certificates. If the training in such centers is complemented, the graduates of such centers can also be granted vocational high school diplomas.

Higher vocational education institutions also offer full time provision for technician diplomas in Turkey. As it was mentioned above, the apprenticeship route is still a valid one for mastercraftsman and journeyman certificates as well as the vocational and technical high schools for the occupations under the scope of the MEB. For the other occupations, which have been under the scope of TESK, work based training is the route to have access to such qualifications.

### **A) Occupational Competency Levels**

In general according to the European level system based on the scheme of CEDEFOP, the vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are offered based on the levels which are Level 2 (Skilled worker), Level 3 (Technician) and Level 4 (Higher Technician).<sup>19</sup>

Level 2 (Skilled worker) vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are the first full vocational qualifications obtained after the end of compulsory education. Traditionally they lead directly into the labor market. Courses take place either in secondary schools or in specific post-compulsory institutions.

Level 3 (Technician) diplomas are equivalent to the level of the diplomas conferred at the end of secondary general education. These have been included and form an integral part of the second cycle of secondary education and have both a general and a technical content leading to either higher education or labor market entry. The courses take place both in schools and in specific post-compulsory Vocational education and training establishments.

Level 4 (Higher Technician) are the diplomas obtained through full-time education and training and are studied in secondary schools, post compulsory institutions or higher education institutions.

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<sup>19</sup> CEDEFOP-PANORAMA, *Systems and procedures of certification of qualifications in the European Community*, CEDEFOP, Berlin, 1994, pp. 74-75.

In Turkey, the system of testing/assessment and certification and vocational education and training diplomas and certificates offered have been analyzed to set up a general comparison level with the European level system. The European levels taken into account are level 2 (*Skilled Worker*), level 3 (*Technician*) and level 4 (*Higher Technician*). The present levels comparable to such a classification are *journeyman*, *mastercraftsman* and *technician* levels leading to such diplomas and certificates. These diplomas and certificates have been compared to the ones offered in the EU based on the European level system. (Please refer to the Tables 1, 2 and 3 below for the comparison scheme)

### **B) Selection Criteria<sup>20</sup>**

Most vocational education and training qualifications in the EU, in general, require a certain prior level, 8-11 years of full time compulsory education to be able to follow the appropriate course to be assessed. For entry to the European level 2 (*skilled worker level*) in general, the candidate is either required to have attained a certain level at the end of compulsory education through full-time school based or apprenticeship training which also exists at European levels 3 (*technician level*) and 4 (*higher technician level*). The situation is similar at each level of award. Access to a vocational qualification at levels 3 and 4 may be conditional on the candidate holding the appropriate award.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. pp.74-75.

**The Diplomas and Certificates in Turkey (Türkiye) Corresponding To The Level 2-  
European Skilled Worker (a preliminary scheme)**

Country	Name of the Diploma and Certificate	Mode of Acquisition	Type of Diploma or Certificate	Level of Responsibility	Organization of Assessment	Usual Age for Obtaining the Diploma and Certificate
Turkey (Türkiye)	MEB Journeyman Certificate	Apprenticeship	Nationally recognized certificate	MEB	The Ministry of Education has overall responsibility.	16-19
	MEB Mastercraftsman Certificate	Apprenticeship or full time+ 1 year work experience	Nationally recognized certificate	MEB	Examination commissions are set up at schools.	18+
	TESK Journeyman Certificate	Work based training	Nationally recognized certificate	TESK Chambers of Crafts and Trades	TESK Chambers of Crafts and Trades conduct the examination.	16-19
	TESK Mastercraftsman Certificate	Work based training	Nationally recognized certificate	TESK Chambers of Crafts and Trades	TESK Chambers conduct the examination.	18+

TABLE 1

The Diplomas and Certificates in Turkey (Turkiye) Corresponding To The Level 3- European Technician (a preliminary scheme)

Country	Name of the Diploma and Certificate	Mode of Acquisition	Type of Diploma or Certificate	Level of Responsibility	Organization Assessment	Usual Age for Obtaining the Diploma and Certificate
Turkey (Turkiye)	Vocational Higher Education Institution Diploma MEB Mastercraftsman Certificate	Full time  Apprenticeship or full time+ 1 year work experience	Nationally recognized diploma  Nationally recognized certificate	Higher Education Council  MEB	Higher Education Council overall responsibility  The Ministry of Education has overall responsibility The examination commissions are set up at schools	20+  18+
	TESK Mastercraftsman Certificate	Work based training	Nationally recognized certificate	TESK Chambers of Crafts and Trades	TESK Chambers of Crafts and Trades conduct the examination	18+

TABLE 2

The Diplomas and Certificates in Turkey (Turkiye) Corresponding To The Level 4- European Higher Technician (a preliminary scheme)

Country	Name of the Diploma and Certificate	Mode of Acquisition	Type of Diploma or Certificate	Level of Responsibility	Organization Assessment	Usual Age for Obtaining the Diploma and Certificate
Turkey (Turkiye)	Vocational Higher Education Institution Diploma	Full time	Nationally recognized diploma	Higher Education Council	Higher Education Council overall responsibility	20+

TABLE 3



In Turkey, the candidate is required to go through 8 years of compulsory education for entry to the journeyman and mastercraftsman level similar to the European levels 2 and 3. Access to mastercraftsman level and technician level may be conditional on the candidate's holding the appropriate certificate and training:<sup>21</sup>

*For the journeyman certificate (similar to the European level 2 (skilled worker) in some occupations);*

a) The candidate is required to complete 3-4 years of apprenticeship training (for the occupations under the scope of MEB) or,

b) The candidate is required to work for 2 years in the occupation concerned (for the occupations outside the scope of MEB).

*For the Mastercraftsman certificate (similar to the European level 2 (skilled worker) and level 3 (technician) in some occupations);*

a) The candidate is required to take apprenticeship training with 3-4 years of work experience (for the occupations under the scope of MEB) or,

b) The candidate is required to work for 5 years in the occupation concerned (for the occupations outside the scope of MEB) or,

c) The candidate is required to take vocational and technical high school training with one-year work experience afterwards.

*For the Vocational and Technical High School Diploma (similar to the European level 2 (skilled worker) and level 3 (technician) in some occupations)*

a) The candidate is required to be a graduate of a vocational high school or,

b) The candidate is required to take the complementary courses in apprenticeship training.

*For the Technician Diploma (similar to the European level 4 (higher technician) in some occupations)*

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<sup>21</sup> Sarper Süzek, 3308 sayılı Çıraklık ve Mesleki Eğitim Yasası, (Law No:3308, Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Law) Temel İş Yasası, (Fundamentals of Labor Law), Ankara, 2000, pp. 115-123.

a) The candidate is required to complete two years of Vocational Higher Education (ideally after the vocational and technical high school)

#### IV. Conclusion

The changes taking place in labor markets influence the work organization and the definition of qualification. Consequently, the systems of testing/assessment and certification along with the systems of vocational education and training are not static but involve a dynamic series of relationships, which change and evolve according to the rapid technological developments and the changing needs of the societies. Equity in reducing barriers of age, sex and educational background and taking on board the evolving changes and needs are the major means of access to a more flexible and adaptable system.<sup>22</sup>

The systems of testing/assessment and certification hold a different significance according to each country. Transparency and comparability of different systems require not only their harmonization, but also better understanding of their differences and originality helping the actors in each of the systems to understand and appreciate comprehensively the ways and means the qualifications are attained. In this framework, the French and German systems in the EU set fine examples for better understanding the comparative analysis of the system of testing/assessment and certification in Turkey.<sup>23</sup>

As for the forthcoming possible joint projects to be carried out with the EU, the main objective in harmonizing and comparing the qualifications between Turkey and the EU countries should be that of raising the level and development of qualifications in Turkey and in member countries of the EU, with the dual aims of improving their economic well-being on the one hand and promoting social cohesiveness and possibilities for workers' development on the other thereby bolstering the the full membership of Turkey to the the European Union. In this regard, some of the important areas of cooperation can be as follows:

1) Development of all proposals and policies in line with the principles set forth by the modern, contemporary and laique (secular) Turkish Republic along with the Social Constitutional Unitary State for the improvement of the general and vocational education and training system with the ultimate aim of achieving the level of EU and OECD countries,

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<sup>22</sup> Çavdar (2001), p. 54.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 54.

2) Adaptation of the vocational education and training system with respect to requirements of 8 years of compulsory integrated initial education and towards 11 years of initial education thereafter,

3) Involvement of social partners into the vocational education and training system through social dialogue in terms of negotiation, consultation with the ultimate aim towards co-management and management of the overall system,

4) Improvement of the role of Social Constitutional State along with the social partners on the overall vocational education and training system,

5) Development of vocational education and training programs for the deprived population groups such as the people migrated from the rural areas to the metropolitan cities and provinces as well as the population in the informal sector towards their transfer to the formal sector,

6) Development of vocational education and training programs for the betterment of the role and status of women in the world of work,

7) Improvement of the general and vocational education and training provided to the handicapped people towards their social integration,

8) Improvement of the vocational training provided to the prisoners towards their social integration,

9) Development of programs for the youngsters (both for the youth and children) and elimination of child labor,

10) Development of programs for life-long learning,

11) Improvement of the social security system in line with the emerging needs of vocational education and training system,

12) Improvement of the activities of the Labor Organization in line with the principles of the Social Constitutional State and integration of social partners to this process,

13) Improvement of apprenticeship training system and promotion of this system to higher levels of education,

14) Increase the overall support to the activities concerning the vocational training system for the SMEs in particular under TESK and Foundation for the Promotion of Vocational Training and Small Industry (MEKSA),

15) Integration of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce to the vocational education and training system similar to the TESK,

16) Increase overall support to the institutionalization of the National Occupational Standards Institution including an overall Accreditation Institution suitable to the Turkish context in compliance with its European counterparts,

17) Integration of occupational standards and educational programs,

18) Improvement of vocational guidance programs during and after compulsory integrated 8 years of initial education,

19) Recognition and improvement of the activities concerning the alignment of the national certificates and diplomas to European Level towards free movement of labor.