

Attila Szabo - Study and Expert Visit 2012-2013
"How to catch EU standards in education"
An inventory of summary findings and learning experiences
Ordu, Turkey, 24-28 June 2013

Who we are?

We are eight participants for this study visit and we are from Bulgaria, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, and Spain. We (the participants) are mainly teachers in all levels of education, trainers, headmasters and inspectors. The range of our expertise enables us to have a general view of the educational systems and challenges encountered within the schools of the modern world.



Our motivation for the study visit:

Regarding our motivations and expectations concerning the study visit: We were interested in learning about the difficulties that students encounter, how to help them with learning difficulties, how to help and support teachers to help students, ...and the quality of the education, including standards of education (i.e. are there minimum standards? ...can standards block creativity, or cultural distinctiveness?).



Where did we go?

Ordu is in one of the disadvantaged regions of Turkey according to standards of the Turkish Ministry of National Education. The Provincial Directorate of National Education in Persembe (a town of 10,000 inhabitants near Ordu) is working under the Ministry of National Education and it is fully responsible for the management of all education and training activities in the region. There are many European LLP projects (Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtvig, Youth in action) in this area. There are also many teachers willing to get involved in this kind of cooperation. However, for the Turkish schools there is fierce competition in getting involved in EU projects in which they want to participate.



Problems that we have encountered:

Our group had a dilemma about "The quality of standards on education at EU level". Because there are standards in different areas at the EU level, such as mining, agriculture, trade etc., but in Education there are competencies, rather than standards. We may need standards in education and quality management too. Apparently, there are similar approaches in every country. We considered - based on the information received from the hosts - that there is sufficient inspection for standards assurance in primary and secondary education in Turkey. However, while standards are essential, autonomy is necessary to adapt to the local and regional social needs. This autonomy is a function of the local political and cultural values.





Key competencies:

Enhancing the quality of education and vocational training is important. Evaluation of learning performance and detection of the progress made is based on standards defined in a national context rather than at the EU level. The acquisition of key competences is an important issue. Key competences in shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. EU indicatives exist for key competencies. They provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction, and motivation. The acquisition of key competences fits in with the principles of "equality and access for all". This reference framework also applies in particular to disadvantaged groups whose educational potential often requires added support. Examples of such groups may include people with low basic skills and aptitudes, early school leavers, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, or migrants, etc.



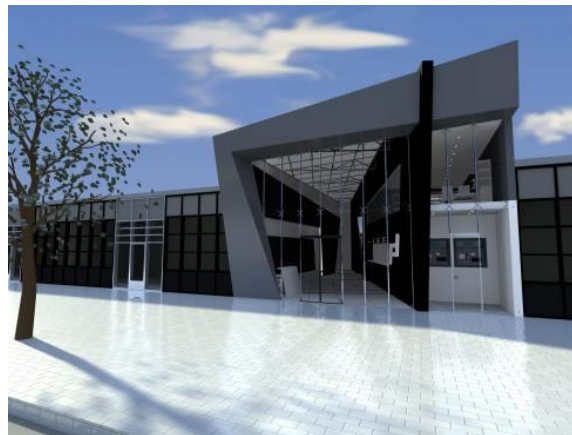
Innovation seen in primary and secondary education:

In Ordu we have visited the Science and Art School for gifted students. Here we have experienced an open and friendly student-teacher interaction, excellent facilities, and keen caring for gifted children. Tutoring takes place after or before their regular school hours to enhance their existing talent in various fields of arts and science. All the staff is highly qualified, approachable, and highly motivated.



Innovation seen in tertiary education:

At KARADENİZ TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ (Trabzon University) we have learned about the Mevlana project for international students outside the EU to come and study at Turkish universities. We have also learned about the FARABI project that supports national student exchange. The Erasmus student exchange programme is also in place with many EU institutions. During our visit to Karadeniz Teknik University we were extremely impressed with its facilities and resource.



Take home message:

Our experience was that the Turkish education system is well-resourced and we were told that nearly 30% of the government budget is being invested in the education system, which is higher than in most if not all European nations. It was a pleasantly surprising experience, especially the [FATİH project](#) - (... to simply sum up our study visit!).

This study was supported and made possible by:



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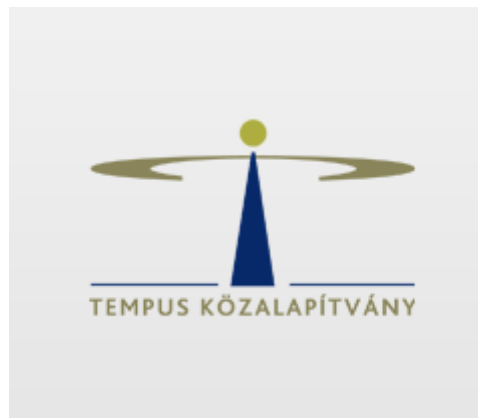
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