

European Union Education Goals & the Compatability of Turkish Tourism Education

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Abstract

Tourism is a distinctive labor intensive sector with human as its basic production component since it aims to sell and offer service. As human is the core focus of this sector and service is provided through human beings, training of the people who will be working in the tourism industry becomes vital. Especially the value addition to economy and provision of cultural tolerance enhances the importance of tourism sector not only for developing countries such as Turkey but also for European Union and for the rest of the world. As the European Union countries absorb 68 per cent of the tourism movements (75 per cent of tourism revenues) in Europe and 41 per cent of the total world; the significance of the tourism sector cannot be underestimated. Therefore this rapidly growing but previously ignored industry has started to take its attention to the education as education quality will enhance the service and in parallel enable to better cope with the increasing competition. Among the educational systems, vocational tourism education is continuously changing in Europe. For this reason vocational tourism education configuration in European Union is studied in this research. The study consists of three parts. In the first part EU theoretical information about EU's educational and vocational education programs are studied. In the second part, vocational tourism education in EU is analyzed and in the last section of the study the Turkish vocational tourism education is analyzed within the EU perspective.

Keywords: Tourism Education, Vocational Education, Tourism Education in European Union, Vocational Education in European Union

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1. Introduction

The growth of both education and tourism as industries in recent decades has led to growing recognition of these industries from both an economic and social perspective. Roppolo (1996: 191) noted, as countries become more interdependent, their success, growth and economic prosperity would largely depend on the ability of two industries; education and tourism, to create the avenues crucial to support international exchange and learning. The changes in the tourism industry over the last two decades coupled with the changes in education have seen the convergence of these two industries with education facilitating mobility and learning turning into an important part of the tourist experience (Ritchie, 2003: 1).

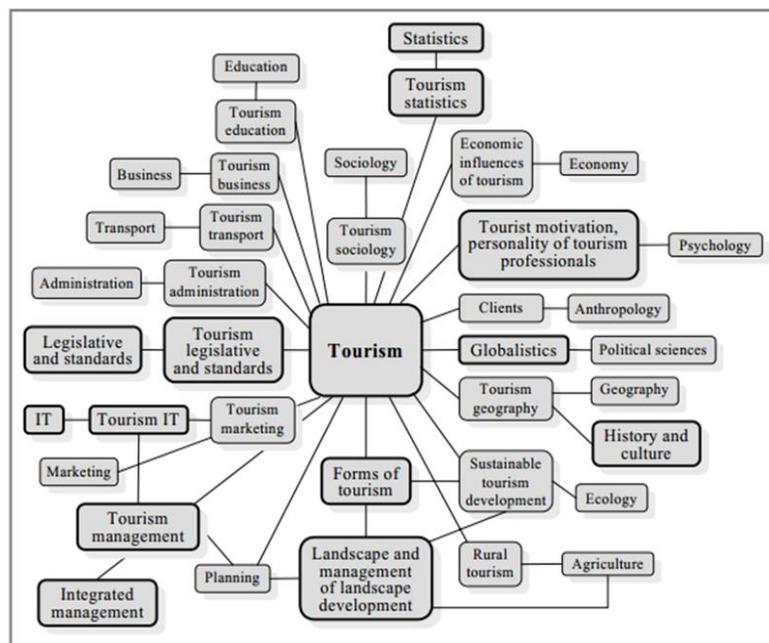
The increasing size and sophistication of the tourism industry has conveyed increasing pressure for a considerable upgrading of the professionalism and on-the-job competence of all its employees. This pressure is apparent at all levels, from the basic front-line staff positions to the most senior leaders. The current growth in tourism education and training is an effort to respond to these pressures, and to do so in a way that makes this career a competitive choice in the employment market. The development of vocational education throughout the western world was prompted by changes in the world of work and the development of the service economy together with the need to sustain competitive advantage as, governments have encouraged vocational education.

This started with the emergence of business schools but has extended to include sectors as diverse as journalism, town and country planning, media studies, leisure management and tourism (Fidgeon, 2010: 700).

For much of the 1980s there was general agreement as to what should inform the curriculum. This was determined, in part, by the content of early textbooks. However as tourism programmes grew and developed (a product of a wider range of academics entering the field) programmes tended to take on the character of the particular expertise of their respective faculties (Cooper, Scales, & Westlake, 1992).

Rather than merely considering the technical stands and qualifications, Jafari's scheme of tourism education displays a model where, economy, history, geography, sociology, psychology, anthropology, law and all other related sciences are integrated as a whole for the educational goals of the tourism industry (Figure 1). Though, certainly, technical institutions, both vocational and technical, have formed the traditional backbone of training for the industry. They are typically two to three years in duration, and lead to a diploma in various specialized areas. Examples of these include bartending, food and beverage preparation, hotel sales and marketing, and motel operations (Jafari, 2000: 167).

Figure 1. Model of tourism education: Jafari's scheme



Source: (WTO, 1997)

Tourism education has been studied mostly with regard to curriculum planning and knowledge (Busby, 2001; Busby & Huang, 2012; Caton, 2014; Fidgeon, 2010; Leiper, 1981; McIntosh, 1983; Stanciulescu & Bulin, 2012; Tribe 2000).

Tourism education, like any form of vocational education, carries the burden of having to balance three imperatives; the need to promote individual development, the need to advance knowledge and the need to be practical and relevant to industry (Riley, 2002: 171).

Definite areas of knowledge can be better attained by work experience than by education or that experience is only beneficial if preceded by education. The continental European vocational approaches that combine apprenticeships and education demonstrate the benefits of a clearer definition of what each can do. The effects of apprenticeships run through the whole structure of vocational education. Those very same skills that can be acquired by an apprenticeship are, to an extent, incorporated into vocational management education producing managers in the continental European model. This is management built on top of craft knowledge (Riley, 2002: 173).

Regarding the content of tourism courses, there has been an ongoing debate about what should be taught and which disciplines should highlight the content of tourism courses.

The content of tourism courses is reliant on a number of factors, for example, level of qualification, whether the focus is on education or training, or has a business or academic focus. The idea of establishing a core body of knowledge for tourism has been debated for almost as long as tourism has been studied (Airey & Johnson, 1999).

Although there are recognised qualifications in tourism the industry does not depend on them in the way those other industries such as the medical industry does.¹ This absence of credentialism has two important implications. Initially, it means that signals from the market are not easy to see and secondly, it affects the actual process of matching people to jobs (Riley, 2002: 174).

When we consider the European Union (EU), we can name the Union as a comparatively newcomer as an actor in the field of education and vocational training. Hence much has not been studied in terms of EU Tourism Educational policies. Studies covered so far were mainly about Europe and the importance of tourism for this region, trends outlining a general framework, most of the time comparing the countries (ATLAS, 1994; ATLAS, 1995; Cooper & Messenger, 1991; Formica, 1996; Lawson, 1974). Vocational training underlined in the Treaty of Rome of 1957, where it was directly confined to the basic aims of creating a common market for goods, services and capital. By time, the Union's delay has strayed well beyond these relatively narrow economic boundaries to cover a broad range of social, cultural and security policies (Hantrais, 2000).

EU has recognised that tourism makes a substantial contribution to national GDP in all the Member States, vary widely between them, in respect both of national finances and of local and regional development. Furthermore, European Union member nations have the responsibility to follow the EU vocational education policies and do the necessary arrangements. Work power mobility, globalization in production and developments in information and communication technologies have necessitated the member nations to harmonize national and international education policies, especially vocational education policies (Yazçayır, Yağcı, 2009: 141)

2. Vocational Education & Educational in EU

The European Council apparently carried out the instruction stated in Article 128 (EEC Treaty) in 1963 when it agreed on ten general principles for setting up a common policy for vocational education and training based on the Decision of EU 63/ 226 of 2 April 1963². Most importantly, the principles contained the commitment to give all people the opportunity to receive adequate training in order to be able to exercise free choice of occupation and place of work, and to reach new and higher levels of employment (Ertl, 2003: 17). With 87/569/EEC: Council Decision of 1 December 1987 concerning an action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life, these principles have been modified and clear goals of vocational training have been set.³

¹ Commission Directive (2014), 2014/82/EU of 24 June 2014 amending Directive 2007/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards general professional knowledge and medical and licence requirements text with EEA relevance

² OJ No 63, 20.4.1963, p. 1338/63.

³ OJ No 346, 10.12.1987 p. 0031 - 0033

1. (a) strengthen, in cooperation with the social partners, links and cooperation at all levels between the vocational education, training and guidance systems and all sectors of the economy, both public and private, including, as appropriate, public, private and voluntary bodies and youth organizations;
(b) ensure that such activities contribute to:
 - mobilizing available resources to encourage the personal and vocational development of young people,
 - avoiding ad hoc and temporary structures, and
 - the acquisition of recognized vocational qualifications;
2. encourage better use of opportunities flowing from a more diversified process of vocational guidance and support for those undergoing training, and from the coordination of such activities with a view to maintaining continuity;
3. provide improved knowledge of developments in the labour market, including the changing requirements for skills and qualifications in the different sectors, and of working conditions, particularly health and safety;
4. promote equal opportunities, in particular through measures taken to enable young women to participate on an equal basis in all vocational training programmes, and to facilitate their transition from training to employment;
5. devote particular attention to young people most at risk, including disabled and disadvantaged young people, as well as those who leave full-time compulsory education with few or no qualifications, with a view to making it possible for them to obtain a recognized training qualification and thus facilitate their transition to employment;
6. encourage the development of the creativity, initiative and enterprise of young people. This involves in particular promoting skills and confidence, which are necessary for access to training leading to a recognized qualification and

Although they were laid down by the Council as a 'Decision', the principles were not regarded as legally binding by most of the Member States. As a consequence, the subsequent actions in this field took place at an intergovernmental, rather than at a supranational level (Barnard, 1995: 14).

For the new schemes the establishment of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Education (CEDEFOP) in West Berlin in 1975⁴ and which had been transferred to Thessaloniki, Greece, in 1995. The Centre is operating in the analysis of systems of vocational education, in the development and recognition of qualifications and in the co-ordination of information and communication between Member States (Official Journal of the European Communities, 1995: 30).

Ertl (2003: 20) underlines the progress of vocational education as: in the field of higher education, the basis for Erasmus (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) was established in 1987. A number of programmes in the context of vocational education were developed, providing a wide range of opportunities for institutions and individuals.

In 1992 the Treaty on European Union (TEU, also called 'Maastricht Treaty') dealt with vocational education and training (Art. 127, which replaced Art. 128 of the Treaty of Rome) and, in a precise way for the first time, with general education (Art. 126). Both Articles are included in the new chapter 3 of the Treaty, entitled 'Education, Vocational Training and Youth', under Title VIII 'Social, Education, Vocational Training and Youth Policies'. The Treaty extends the objectives of education and vocational training. And vocational training is seen as a means of helping businesses to adapt to change (Milner, 1998: 163).

The Union's main incentive for the processes made possible by the new Treaty are the programmes SOCRATES⁵ and LEONARDO DA VINCI⁶, both launched in 1995 on the basis of Articles 126 and 127 respectively. Given the experience acquired in 1995, it was necessary to better identify the specific nature of activities to be supported within Leonardo da Vinci while taking into account the Common Framework of Objectives as defined in the Council Decision, as well as the new priorities and improvements in procedures (OJ C 60, 29.02.1996, p. 16). It represented a new framework for extended EU activities, formerly supported by the programmes Petra⁷, Force⁸, Eurotecnet⁹, and parts of Lingua¹⁰, Iris and Comett¹¹.

facilitate access to the labour market. In this context, special account shall be taken of the initiative and adaptability required of workers in small and medium-sized enterprises

⁴ Official Journal L 039 , 13/02/1975 p. 0001 – 0004 Article 1

A European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, hereinafter called "the centre", is hereby set up. In each of the Member States, the centre shall enjoy the most extensive legal capacity accorded to legal persons. The centre shall be non-profit making. It shall have its seat in Berlin (West).

⁵ The year 1995 is the first year of the implementation of this action. Socrates Programme Draft call for proposals relating to the implementation of Chapter III, Action 3, (Questions of common interest on the education policy) of the Community Action Programme 'Socrates' (95/C 192/08), OJ C 192, 26.07.1995, p. 11–13.

⁶ Leonardo da Vinci Programme Action Programme for the implementation of a European Community vocational training policy (Council Decision 94/819/EC of 6. 12. 1994 — OJ No L 340/94).

⁷ Report On The Implementation Of The Petra Programme - Action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life, * COM/93/704FINAL */

PETRA was launched in 1988 on the basis of the Council Decision of 1 December 1987 concerning an action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life, and was initially intended to run for five years, up to 31 December 1992. However, during the initial phase of the Programme, it became evident that the issue of initial vocational training was attracting increasing attention in the policy agenda of the Community - reinforced in the context of discussion and debate on the implementation of the Internal Market and, later, on the preparation of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

⁸ Force was implemented between (1991-1994) for developing continuing training, Report From The Commission (2000), Final Report on the Implementation of the First Phase of the Community Action Programme Leonardo da Vinci (1995-1999) COM (2000) 863 final, p.6

⁹ Eurotecnet was put into action for the period (1990-1994) in terms of promoting innovation in training, Report From The Commission (2000), Final Report on the Implementation of the First Phase of the Community Action Programme Leonardo da Vinci (1995-1999) COM (2000) 863 final, p.6.

¹⁰ Lingua was also applied for (1990-1994) targeting and promoting language competence.

Report from the Commission (2000), Final Report on the Implementation of the First Phase of the Community Action Programme Leonardo da Vinci (1995-1999) COM (2000) 863 final, p.6.

As a follow-up of EU initiatives to generate a regulatory framework for mutual recognition of qualifications, reforms of national regulations tend to be orientated towards the European classification of qualifications.

2.1. Tourism Education in EU

Tourism represents the third largest socioeconomic activity in the EU in terms of contribution to GDP and employment, after the trade and distribution and construction sectors. It is one of the few economic sectors which register continuous growth, in spite of economic and financial difficulties, presenting thereby a great potential to contribute to "Europe 2020", the EU's growth strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive EU economy.¹²

With some 1,8 million businesses, primarily SMEs, this sector employs approximately 3.3 % of EU workforce (about 8 million jobs) and generates about 2.9% of EU GDP. Taking into account the sectors linked to it is estimated to provide around 8,5% of all jobs (approximately 18.8 million people employed) and generates about 7.9% of the European Union's GDP. Despite increasing competition from other regions of the world, the EU is the world's No 1 tourist destination, with 563, 4 international arrivals in 2014 (UNWTO, 2014: 4). EU started to give the importance tourism deserves.

To improve this sector, training, improving skills and advance vocational educational had become inevitable. Furthermore in the European Economy, small tourism firms (SME) contribute about 10 per cent of the annual GDP and represent one in seven of all jobs (European Commission, 2004). However, in today's economy small and micro tourism enterprises face enormous difficulty competing with their larger counterparts, both in terms of their operational capacity to run their business as well as their technological capability to operate in a global market place (Braun & Hallick, 2006: 694). Thus the advancement of vocational education becomes vital for the European Union countries.

There have been attempts by several organizations, including the UNWTO, the European Union's CEDEFDP (the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Education) to improve awareness and bring standards to tourism education (Elliott, 2011: p.235).

Jonckers (2005: 8-9) discussed trends or general societal changes as a great influence for the further development of this sector that need to be integrated into educational programs of EU.

a) **tourism and sustainability:**

- a seismic shift in people's awareness of the environmental impact of mass tourism;
- a new social awareness-interest in authentic, small and local holiday experiences;
- the new tourist (would eat in a local restaurant, would use local guides, would look for the true story behind the destination);
- more do-it-yourself travellers (more demanding and at the same time taking responsibility)

b) tourism and accessibility: almost 40 million people in Europe are handicapped and they are tourists too; from a commercial point of view alone these consumers are not to be neglected;

c) tourism and rural and cultural heritage: there is a clear and growing market for non-traditional tourist destinations;

d) tourism and peace: tourism is associated with tolerance, cultural exchange, learning to know each other, creation of welfare and friendship;

e) tourism and sports: this goes far beyond the Olympic Games, as it is a rapidly growing segment for individual and group tourism;

f) **tourism and health:**

- a healthy lifestyle and promoting a healthy diet among customers will become a priority for travel companies;
- holiday companies will work more closely with the medical professionals;
- travellers will be better educated about holiday health risks in general;

¹¹ The COMETT Programme aimed at promoting training in, in particular, advanced technologies in a European context. Report from the Commission (1996), COMETT II The Final Evaluation Report, 16.09.1996 COM (96) 410 final, p.18.

¹² Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on European Tourism Quality Principles /* COM/2014/085 final - 2014/0043 (NLE) */ p.2.

g) tourism and technology:

- broadband will revolutionise communication culture and boost e-commerce; it will directly affect how we take holidays;
- mobile phones will be our personal holiday organisers;
- artificial intelligent agents in our computers will act as personal holiday tour operators;
- virtual holidays will become a reality

Demirkol and Çetin (2014: 143) underlined the fact that EU had given grand prominence to tourism education due to improve the qualities of tourism supply provided within the Union. Furthermore, so that the employees will be trained in the necessary fields of the industry, vocational profiles and job specifications are being prepared.

As Hall cited (2006: 52) since the ATLAS conference on ‘Tourism Education in Central and Eastern Europe’ was held in Poland in 1995, much has changed in the landscape of tourism education, both in the new European Union (EU) member states and the long established members.

In terms of the ATLAS Project, the stages in the model can be interpreted as follows: (Richards, 1998: 1)

“*socialization*: creation of the thematic network and agreement on the body of knowledge; *externalization*: identification of sources of research knowledge suitable for application; *combination*: establishing a database to create new knowledge; *internalization*: use of the new knowledge in teaching and learning through European Modules.”

By using such a positive knowledge creation spiral, the network can identify research information available in individual EU member states (externalization), which can be integrated through the database (combination) to create new knowledge about tourism and leisure at the European scale, which in turn can be used in teaching and learning (internalization).

There has been a significant expansion of tourism education in most of the countries in the New Europe. For example, in Romania there have been 15 universities (12 public and three private) offering tourism courses, compared with 1 before 1990 (Cristureanu, 1996 quoted from Hall, 2006: 53). Up until 1994, Slovenia only had tourism education at vocational, post-secondary school level, in spite of tourism being one of the most important sectors of the economy. By year 2005, there were three higher education institutions offering courses in tourism and hospitality. The major driver for change in the former Communist states has of course been the transition to a market economy and increasing diversification and specialization of tourism products that this has stimulated (Hall, 2006: 53) Thus becoming a member state, clearly brought out positive improvements after the accession in terms of tourism education

Specialization has also been stimulated by rising tourism demand and the growth in repeat visits to the region. However, more recently, as in the rest of the EU, curricula have had to be changed in line with EU guidelines, and the process of fitting courses into the Bologna Framework¹³ is now well under way in most of the new member states. Many of the former Communist states already started replacing their old higher education systems with the two-cycle Bachelor Master system in the early 1990s.

The rationale for the Bologna Framework is to provide a mechanism to relate national frameworks to each other so as to enable (NFQ, 2005: 2):

(a) **International transparency** – this is at the heart of the Bologna process and while devices, such as the Diploma Supplement, have a role to play in this objective, it is difficult to ensure that qualifications can be easily read and compared across borders without a simplifying architecture for mutual understanding.

(b) **International recognition of qualifications** – this will be assisted through a framework which provides a common understanding of the outcomes represented by qualifications for the purposes of employment and access to continuing education.

¹³ The Bologna Process was initiated in 1999. It now involves 45 countries. In 2003, Ministers with responsibility for higher education gathered in Berlin to review progress in the Bologna Process, and called on each participating country to develop a national framework of qualifications, as well as for the elaboration of an overarching Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

(c) *International mobility of learners and graduates* – this depends on the recognition of their prior learning and qualifications gained. The outcomes of study abroad will contribute to a qualification sought in their home country.

Most countries have adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)¹⁴ and have been introducing the diploma supplement as agreed under the Bologna Declaration of the EU (EURYDICE, 2005).

The extent of tourism education provision, just as in the rest of Europe, varies considerably from one country to another. Historic factors and the relative importance of tourism in the national economy still have a considerable influence.

The Commission's efforts to attain mobility, improve labour market transparency and ensure greater recognition of educational qualifications in the tourism sector (COM 205) led to a number of measures which could be taken at European level to promote mobility, including: (Richards, 2001: 62)

- a) *more extensive use of the EURES (European Job Mobility Portal) network;*
- b) *full implementation of the directives for mutual recognition of professional qualifications and the adoption of Europass¹⁵ - training;*
- c) *more effective use in tourism-related activities of the European social fund and the Leonardo programme;*
- d) *more consideration of skills development in tourism under the structural funds*

For upgrading skills in vocational training programmes like LEONARDO DA VINCI, SOCRATES, YOUTH assisted in funding projects and promoting a European policy for employability in the tourism sector. The Leonardo da Vinci Programme contributes to the implementation of a vocational training policy at Community level (see Article 127 of the Treaty on the European Union). Its objective is to promote new approaches in initial and continuing vocational training policies and practices. By LEONARDO DA VINCI the issues covered by the projects were: ecological tourism; virtual training; transnational cooperation in training in the travel sector; forestry and recreational activities; distance learning for tourism technicians and rural tourism development.

There is also a need to mention that since the 1980s the tourist marketplace has become increasingly specialized and segmented resulting in the growth of niche markets such as rural tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism and cultural heritage tourism (Ritchie, 2003:3). Furthermore, travel and tourism experiences distinctively for study or learning also appear to be increasing (Roppolo, 1996), illustrating the prospective for educational forms of tourism in EU.

The SOCRATES programme, which has supported European education policy, co-financed at national level many projects carried out by educational establishments in the field of tourism. These were mainly aimed at improving linguistic competencies of students or catering studies. The Socrates programme of the EU, for cooperation in the field of education, was adopted in March 1995 (European Commission DGXXII– Education Training & Youth, 1995). Its overall objectives focus, among others, on: 'The development of the European dimension in education at all levels so as to strengthen the spirit of European citizenship, drawing on the cultural heritage of each Member State,' 'stimulation' (European Commission DG XXII–Education Training & Youth 1995, p. 6).

Furthermore, YOUTH, the European programme at the service of cooperation in the field of youth, co-financed 45 different projects affecting tourism. The Commission also funded two projects targeting tourism, after a call for proposals published in September 2000 in preparation for the European Year of Languages 2001.

¹⁴ OJ C 197, 27.07.1988, p. 11–11,

ERASMUS — European Community Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS) — Call for expressions of interest from universities

One of the main obstacles to student mobility in the Community is the difficulty in giving credit for study periods carried out in other Member States or in providing academic recognition for diplomas delivered by other Member States. The European Community Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS), is designed to fill this gap.

¹⁵ Europass consists of two documents (Europass curriculum vitae (CV) and Europass Language Passport) & three other documents (Europass Certificate Supplement, Europass Diploma Supplement and Europass Mobility) filled in and issued by competent organisations. Europass is supported by a network of National Europass Centres. Europass has been established by the Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single transparency framework for qualifications and competences.

The aim of the projects was to encourage tourists to learn Spanish and Greek for the holiday resorts. While the participation rate of qualified institutions participating in SOCRATES in the EU15 was 38% in 1999/ 2000, in the new participant countries this figure was 54%. The largest number of outbound students from the new member states going to Western Europe is generated by Poland (5400 in 2003) and the Czech Republic (3000), but even relatively small countries such as Lithuania (1000) generated substantial outbound mobility (Hall, 2006: 56).

One specific college in Netherlands has been pointed out as a model case for the EU countries¹⁶ (Commission Staff Working Document, 2012: 0375). Alfa College in the Netherlands has set up regional strategic alliances with industry and regional policy makers. Further than student and teacher placements, collaboration with industry focuses on product and process innovation, and on how to translate these into capabilities that students can gain. The college works thoroughly with industry on the curriculum to regulate what kind of competences will be needed in the region in the coming years. The college has correspondingly established collaboration with other vocational education providers (across disciplines), in the framework of clusters that include SMEs, employers. Consequently we can highlight that EU supports the collaboration of educational institutions with the employers of the sector.

Demirkol and Çetin (2014: 143) underlined the importance of provision of vocational profiles and work roles for the tourism industry in EU. Furthermore there has been reinforcement for graduate studies in the field of tourism especially by scholarships and grants provided by the Union.

3. Tourism Education in Turkey & Its Compatibility

Tourism education in Turkey has been studied so far by various researchers (Avcıkurt et al., 2009; Boylu, 2002; Hacıoğlu, 2008; Kızılırmak, 2000; Kızılırmak, 2004; Korzay, 1987; Kozak, 2009; Kusluvan, S. & Kusluvan, Z., 2000; Okumuş & Yağcı, 2005; Pınar, 2014).

Mostly the issues with the education The Higher Education Law of October 1981 govern the activities of the entire higher education system in Turkey, including the short cycle of higher vocational schools. In 1981 university reform, which was defined as the model of Anglo-Saxon system was firstly applied in the USA (Pınar, 2014: 5071). Since 1981, the Turkish higher education system has consisted of a structure based on three main cycles Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate.

In Turkey, almost all the vocational schools are offering tourism programs (80%) meaning that as a vocation it is accepted with a proper education (İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi, Türkiye Araştırmaları Merkezi & TURAD, 2012; quoted from Pınar, 2014: 5071)

According to the European Commission's Progress Report (2007) good progress has been made in the area of education, training and youth. Turkey has continued its successful participation in the Community's LEONARDO DA VINCI, SOCRATES, and YOUTH programmes and ensured smooth transition with the successor programmes Lifelong Learning and YOUTH in Action. However it was detected that the children with disabilities faced difficulties in accessing affordable and inclusive education services, from pre-primary level upwards. Inclusive vocational and lifelong learning opportunities have been also found limited. The monitoring, evaluation and inspection of private special education and rehabilitation services were prescribed as requiring particular attention.

Sevgin Akış Roney and Perin Öztin made a useful contribution to the literature by their article Career Perceptions of Undergraduate Tourism Students: A Case Study in Turkey. The authors described the situation in Turkey where tourism vocational education has been encouraged by government initiatives.

The result of this has been that there were 31 universities that offer four-year programmes in tourism and hotel management, and approximately 90 two-year programmes at vocational schools (Quoted from: Tribe, 2007: 1).

Regarding the Bologna process, Turkey is at an advanced stage of implementing the Bologna process recommendations, but significant quality differences persist among Turkey's 170 universities according the European Commission's Progress Report of 2013.

¹⁶ Quoted from: Commission Staff Working Document (2012), Vocational education and training for better skills, growth and jobs Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes, SWD/2012/0375 final

An independent and fully functional Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency remains to be established in conformity with the European Standards and Guidelines. Preparations for the agreed quality assurance agency for higher education have not yet started (Progress Report, 2013: 69).

In the area of education, training and youth, applications in the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes continued to grow considerably. Turkey continued to improve its performance in all the Europe 2020 and ET 2020 targets, and to reduce the gap with the EU average in all but tertiary education attainment (Progress Report, 2013: 69).

Within “Strengthening the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) and the National Qualifications System (NQS) in Turkey” regarding National Qualifications System, it has been decided as this system would be established by the institutions/organisations and/or consortiums representing the tourism sector, such as employers’ and employees’ institutions, vocational training institutions, universities, NGOs, non-profit organizations and organised industrial zones (Strengthening the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) and the National Qualifications System (NQS)

(http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/ipa/tr_07_02_13_vocational_qualifications_authority_national_qualifications_system_en.pdf; p.1). It is an assenting remark to underline that national qualification system would be improved by a cooperation of the sector representatives, universities and NGOS with a mutual effort and a common mind.

Turkey has established a working group on the Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and initiated the establishment of a national qualifications system, which can be considered as an important development in the area of Lifelong Learning. It is expected that the efforts made in this regard will improve participation by adults in lifelong learning in the coming years.

The positive remarks about the compatibility have also been noted by Eurydice (2005: 195) as follows:

ECTS was first introduced in higher education institutions in 2001 and has been officially implemented in the universities within the context of EU student mobility programmes. The Diploma Supplement (DS) was first introduced in higher education institutions in 2001. It is not mandatory yet but will be compulsory from the 2005/06 academic year onwards. The national DS template has been formed in line with UNESCO-CEPES, European Commission and Council of Europe standards.

In the meantime, universities have been required to prepare sample copies of the DS for all degree programmes, including doctorates. Some universities have already completed all the preliminary work required to issue the DS in June 2005. The DS is to be issued to students free of charge on request, in English and in one other widely used European language (German or French).

Demirkol and Çetin (2014: 143) focused the urgent need of qualified tourism personnel. When compared with the Union training activities, TUREMs were found to be in a lower standard. However it has also been emphasized that the educational advances carried out recently by the Ministry of Tourism as highly promising.

Ministry of Tourism & Culture (2007: 29) had planned strategies for 2023. According to these plan institutions offering vocational education on tourism would receive capacity reinforcements with improvements in quality and content of their curricula.

The skill levels required for standardization and analyses, assessments on vocational education as well as productivity analysis true to internationally applied standards, improvement of quality and employment would be determined by certification. A system for certification of professional qualifications would be adopted and implemented for increasing the quality services.

Last but not the least as a constructive improvement for the above mentioned certification need, a project financed by EU named TUYUP (Increasing the Adaptability of Employers and Employees in Tourism Sector Project) started in Turkey in January 2014 aiming to escalate the training quality and environmental awareness in tourism sector, will straightly reach more than 4.000 tourism establishments, sector employees, pertinent professional chambers, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and universities.

30 month-project planned to be finished in July 2016, aiming to raise the vocational, technical and foreign language skills of employees in front desk, service, housekeeping and kitchen of licensed establishments within the agenda of EU standards and needs. The Project, supported by European Union and the Republic of Turkey and whose beneficiary is Ministry of Culture and Tourism, has a budget of 7, 5 million euros. Project activities are being led with the coordination of Ministry of Labor and Social Security (Smart Tourism: Investing in Human, Nature and Future, <http://tuyup.turizm.gov.tr>)

4. Conclusion

It is for certain that education and vocational training is crucial for the development of quality and employability in the tourism sector and would be future keys in terms of competencies. Turkish tourism education has started to evolve with an affirmative change. Tourism faculties have started to give education. Tourism education faculties have opened up. Likewise for the Commission it is a universal feature that the developments in the quantity and quality of the demand for tourist services are leading to measures designed to increase the provision of initial and continuing training in the tourist sector and to improve its quality. Therefore they support tourism education with their ongoing programs and grants even for graduate tourism studies.

In general Turkey's establishment of systematic learning assessments and its participation in international assessments are considered as positive outcomes, giving the country tools to plan future system improvements (Kavalsky, 2006: 45).

Vocational tourism education in general outline shows compatibility with the EU applications in terms of general higher education applications defined by the European Commission. As an auxiliary improvement, certification in tourism can be advanced, but this necessity has been already stated as one of the targets of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture which have been mentioned in the previous section within the Tourism Strategies of 2023 and a EU-funded project has already started as it has been mentioned in the previous section.

What can be further improved in vocational tourism education considering the recent trends in the industry would be initially about courses covering the new types of tourist demand, departing from the traditional forms ("ecological tourism", for example), which would definitely create a need for specialization in existing vocational roles and tasks or for new skills to be created through an adequate provision of initial or continuing training. Hence students can be educated about ecotourism under the subject environmental tourism, ecotourism. Secondly an awareness of the vital role in the development of this sector played by small businesses in all the national contexts means that the number of training ventures designed to maintain and add to employees' vocational skills is increasing, therefore a special attention needs to be devoted to training, especially continuing training, for those running small and medium-sized tourist-hotel concerns. Consequently a particular attention needs to be presented to educate prospect employees for SMEs.

While there is a clear appreciation that education and training is a lifelong learning process, a major challenge presently facing tourism is to attract and train the many young people essential for entry level positions which will both cure the unemployment problem of the youngsters and enhance the work quality of the tourism SMEs.

In parallel to what we have discussed before about offering different specialization areas; the various tourism courses that Jonckers (2005: 8-9) have suggested according to EU trends might also be offered more frequently in the Turkish university curriculums, such as "tourism and sustainability", "tourism and sports", "rural and cultural heritage" and "tourism and health". This kind of courses would render diversity of knowledge and ease Erasmus course adaptation both for Turkish and Erasmus students coming from abroad.

As a final point and a last proposal, the number tourism graduate studies could be increased all along the universities of Turkey. There are approximately 30 Graduate programs in Turkey related with tourism under various program names varying from Tourism Management, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Tourism Management and Hospitality and Sustainable Tourism Management, etc. and about 13 tourism Doctorate study programs overall in Turkey. As the EU shows clearly support with the scholarships they submit to graduate programs, it would certainly assist the graduate students to apply for EU programs like Erasmus. This would not only provide compatibility but also enable the students in Turkey who are willing for further academic goals and for further broader perspective.

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