

April 9, 2010

MUSTAFA KOÇ, THE CHAIRMAN OF KOÇ HOLDING:

“WE CALL ON ALL AUTHORITIES TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN TURKEY”

Nimet Çubukçu, the Minister of National Education, and Mustafa V. Koç, the Chairman of the Board of Koç Holding, shared with the public at recent press conference the achievements to date of the Vocational Education: A Crucial Matter for the Nation project, as well as the project’s goals for 2010. Launched in 2006, the project is being run by Koç in conjunction with the Ministry of National Education. The Vocational Education: A Crucial Matter for the Nation project is a long-running campaign to raise awareness of the importance of vocational education and the relationship between vocational education and employment in the Turkish economy. Speaking at the press conference, Mustafa V. Koç, the Chairman of the Board of Koç Holding, said “Koç Holding has focused on developing a model for cooperation between vocational education and the industry that would establish a new system. By moving away from the political sphere, we are taking an integrated approach to spearhead this model.”

The Vocational Education: A Crucial Matter for the Nation project, run by Koç Holding, will complete its fourth year in June. The project encourages young people to choose vocational high schools by contributing to the creation of a skilled workforce, raising public awareness of how a link between vocational education and employment contributes to the country’s economy, and pioneering the establishment of cooperation between the business world and state institutions. Nimet Çubukçu, the Minister of National Education, and Mustafa V. Koç, the Chairman of the Board of Koç Holding, held a press conference in Istanbul’s Rahmi Koç Museum to share the project’s progress to date and its goals for 2010.

“We have focused on developing a model to pioneer a new system”

Mustafa V. Koç began by saying “I would like to thank to all our partners and above all the Ministry of Education, all of whom have supported our belief that Turkey needs enterprising, hardworking, productive, and skilled young people.” He went on by stating that with the Vocational Education: A Crucial Matter for the Nation project, the focus was on developing a model for cooperation between vocational education and

the industry that would pioneer the establishment of a new system. Mr. Koç continued, “All of our efforts seek first and foremost to raise public awareness of how a link between vocational education and employment contributes to the country’s economy ... And next, to present representative implementations to a wide range of industries and various institutions by generating accurate process models and to spread across the nation...”

“We are working toward an integrated solution by moving away from the political sphere”

Mustafa V. Koç emphasized that they were taking an integrated approach to spearhead the cooperation by moving away from the political sphere and shared the project’s progress to date with the public: “We are providing training scholarships to 8,000 vocational high school students at 264 schools in 81 provinces, and by offering them internship opportunities, we bolster their knowledge, skills, and competencies. Our team consisting of over 300 volunteer employees , who are mostly vocational high school graduates, provides coaching and mentoring to our students to serve a role model and contribute to the students’ career advancement and personal development. What’s more, we aimed to provide employment priorities to as much of our scholarship students as possible. ”

“Our successes and efforts have been registered with two major awards”

Mustafa V. Koç noted that as the project competes its fourth year, it ended 2009 with extremely important and gratifying progresses and registered its success by winning two major awards. Mr. Koç reminded that the Vocational Education: A Crucial Matter for the Nation project was selected as “Best Volunteer Project” in the Corporate Volunteer Association’s Awards from the Heart, and won the “Silver Prize” at the 2009 Magellan Awards organized by the League of American Communications Professionals (LACP). Mr. Koç explained that the project seeks to bolster the creativity and project development and implementation skills of vocational high schools by providing project grants and cooperation. He further noted, “As a part of the Creative Ideas Competition, which we co-organized with the World Bank, Birmot Izmir won the \$20,000 practice award in the specialist Vocational Education category for its “My School at the Authorized Service” project. In addition, three IT projects were carried out in collaboration with the UNDP - Habitat for Youth program and certified computer training was provided in 22 provinces. We also organized an Internet video competition to boost participants’ motivation and creativity.

“We help our scholarship students familiarize themselves with working life”

Above all, the project helps students familiarize themselves with working life in their respective fields. According to Mr. Koç, in 2009, 87% of the students who had applied for internships completed summer internships and 65% of them have been placed to skill internships. Through such internships offered at different companies all over the country, the students got first hand experience in various sectors. Mr. Koç added that “Our students are studying special curricula at 11 newly-launched

computerized Fiat laboratories since 2008, equipped with a range of automotive industry equipment. The labs, located in nine provinces, enable students to prepare themselves for the sector and learn workplace processes in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

“Although the effects of the crisis are lessening, unemployment is rising rapidly, and a well-educated workforce is of critical importance”

“While it seems as though the effects of the crisis are behind us, the effects can still be seen in our country with the rapid growth in unemployment” explained Mustafa V. Koç, the Chairman of the Board of Koç Holding. He emphasized that “We can only boost our national competitiveness and contribute to the development of our country if unskilled labour is reduced and a skilled workforce which meet the needs of the labour market is trained.”

“Developing a national education strategy is a must”

At last year’s meeting, Mr. Koç pointed out Turkey’s poor employment rate – the result of high levels of unemployment, a large underground economy, and the burden of high tax rates and employer contributions. He now explained that “I proposed a national employment strategy jointly developed by all interested parties as a solution. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security is currently working to develop this national employment strategy with the participation of all partners. We are looking forward to seeing the results of these endeavours.”

“Vocational high schools must not be subjected to political or populist discussions”

Vocational high schools play a vital role as educational institutions training skilled workers, who in turn form the backbone of the economy, Mustafa V. Koç explained. He added, “Vocational education was subjected to discouraging populist discussions for decades and unfortunately has only been brought to the agenda within the framework of university exam coefficients.” Mr. Koç continued: “That being said, everyone who recognizes the importance of vocational education for our country’s development and truly cares about the future of our children must focus on the heart of the matter and work towards improvement with a common mind.”

“The reputation of vocational education should be restored”

Mustafa V. Koç stated restoring the status of vocational education is fundamental.. He elaborated on this by saying that the real issue was to improve the quality of vocational and technical education, provide the right internship programs by looking after students, and develop systems to forge school-industry relationships. “Our common goals must be to open the right departments opened in the right regions, have industry and trade institutions located in those areas communicate their workforce needs to educational institutions, and to have all graduates obtain employment in the formal, tax-paying economy” said Mr. Koç. He concluded that “As

a result of these efforts, vocational high school students will reclaim their status as highly sought-after, productive and skilled individuals. Only then vocational schools will be able to carry out their real mission and thus discussions about university exam coefficients will become irrelevant”.

Pride and joy felt by award-winning vocational high school students

Scholarship-winning students from vocational high schools, who made a speech during the event, thanked the Ministry of Education and Koç Holding for the opportunities they were given. The students thanked to Koç Group employees who offered coaching voluntarily and stated: “You should know that what you did for us was not in vain. The time we spent with our vocational school coaches bolstered our self-confidence, alleviated our concerns about the future, and encouraged us to take firm steps. Our families experienced all of this with us and felt the same excitement and emotions.” On behalf of all vocational high school students, the scholarship-winning students expressed their desire that this project serve as an example to other institutions and organizations, and accordingly spread across the country.

Winners of the Internet-based Make Your Vocation Be Heard Video competition (www.konusturmeslegini.com) for all vocational high school students also received their awards at the press conference.

Hande Arslan’s self-made video clip won first place in the competition in which vocational high school students explained their vocations without naming them. Nimet Çubukçu, Minister of National Education, presented the first place award to Hande Arslan while Mustafa V. Koç, the Chairman of the Board of Koç Holding conferred the second place award to Melek Gökhan. Ali Y. Koç, a member of the Board of Directors and the President of Koç Holding’s Corporate Communications and Information Technology Group presented third-place awards to Ali Osman Demirezen, Egemen Kumcu, and Aysel Ağırbaş.