Turkey performs strongly on list of top Asian universities

Turkey has the universities in the top 300 universities in Asia according to a ranking released last week by the Times Higher Education magazine, which is an expert's said at an "outstanding result" for the country.

The Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2013 was released last week. The rankings are compiled in collaboration with Thomson Reuters and evaluate the performance of universities based on a variety of criteria such as teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.

Turkey's Middle East Technical University (CETU) (22nd place), Bilgi University (26th place), Koc University (54th place), Bogazici University (58th) and Istanbul Technical University (864) are all on the list of the 100 best Asian universities, where Japan's University of Tokyo holds the top spot.

But as Turkey has more than 130 universities, isn't it a lot of an endorsement to have only five make the list? "Editor of Times Higher Education Rankings, Phil Baty, said that Turkey is in a real interest that this hardly so. They said: "When taken into the context of the broader Asian demographics, the universities in the top 100 is an excellent result for Turkey. Considering the size of the population, the number of universities and investment that nations like Japan, Korea, Taiwan and China are making in their higher education systems, Turkey is doing well in terms of its efforts to improve further."

"I think that Turkey should continue to be very proud of their excellent performance in the Times Higher Education Rankings." He also said that country's higher education system seemed to be consistent in terms of strengths and weaknesses. "A detailed analysis of the 13 indicators used in the rankings does not show any particular area of strength or weakness. In fact, the performance is fairly consistent across the board," Baty said.

"Japan, whose University of Tokyo leads the Asia University Rankings list, has more top 300 institutions than any other nation. Taiwan is the second most represented country in the rankings with 7 institutions, followed by Malaysia and China with 15. This is consistent with these nations' willingness to invest generously in building world-class universities and to ensure that they are at the forefront of the knowledge and innovation economy," Baty said. These countries are also doing very well in the Middle Eastern nations. In that region, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are the exceptions with a medium or strong performance across all indicators.

"But also commented that investment in higher education is investment well made, "as it brings abundant financial return to the nation through an improved economy," he added. "But a world-class university needs more than just money – freedom is also essential academic freedom for scholars to pursue curiosity driven research and to push toward the boundaries of our collective knowledge and intellectual freedom to manage their own affairs free from too much government interference and to be dynamic and flexible in the face of a rapidly changing world."

He also shared his opinion on what makes a university a good one. "But the single most influential performance indicator is one of research output. We look at how influential each university's research output has been in pushing the boundaries of knowledge in world class research journals. Each of our top three universities in the tables does well in this. In addition, the top three universities in the table also have a strong international reputation for their research, and enjoy a strong research income and productive research output."

Education opportunities in Asia

The rankings show that Asia has some very good universities. Baty, again, saying, "In terms of higher education, Asia is currently the most exciting and dynamic continent on earth." He said that university is in need of more information on institutions that are close to making the world top 100, but have not quite made it, which in turn will enable students to make fully informed choices when choosing a place to study.

The Times Higher Education magazine published its inaugural Asia University Rankings, a top 100 list based on the trusted performance indicators used to create the prestigious Times Higher Education World University Rankings that are published each autumn. The rankings for Asia and global rankings are available on the institution's website at http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings.