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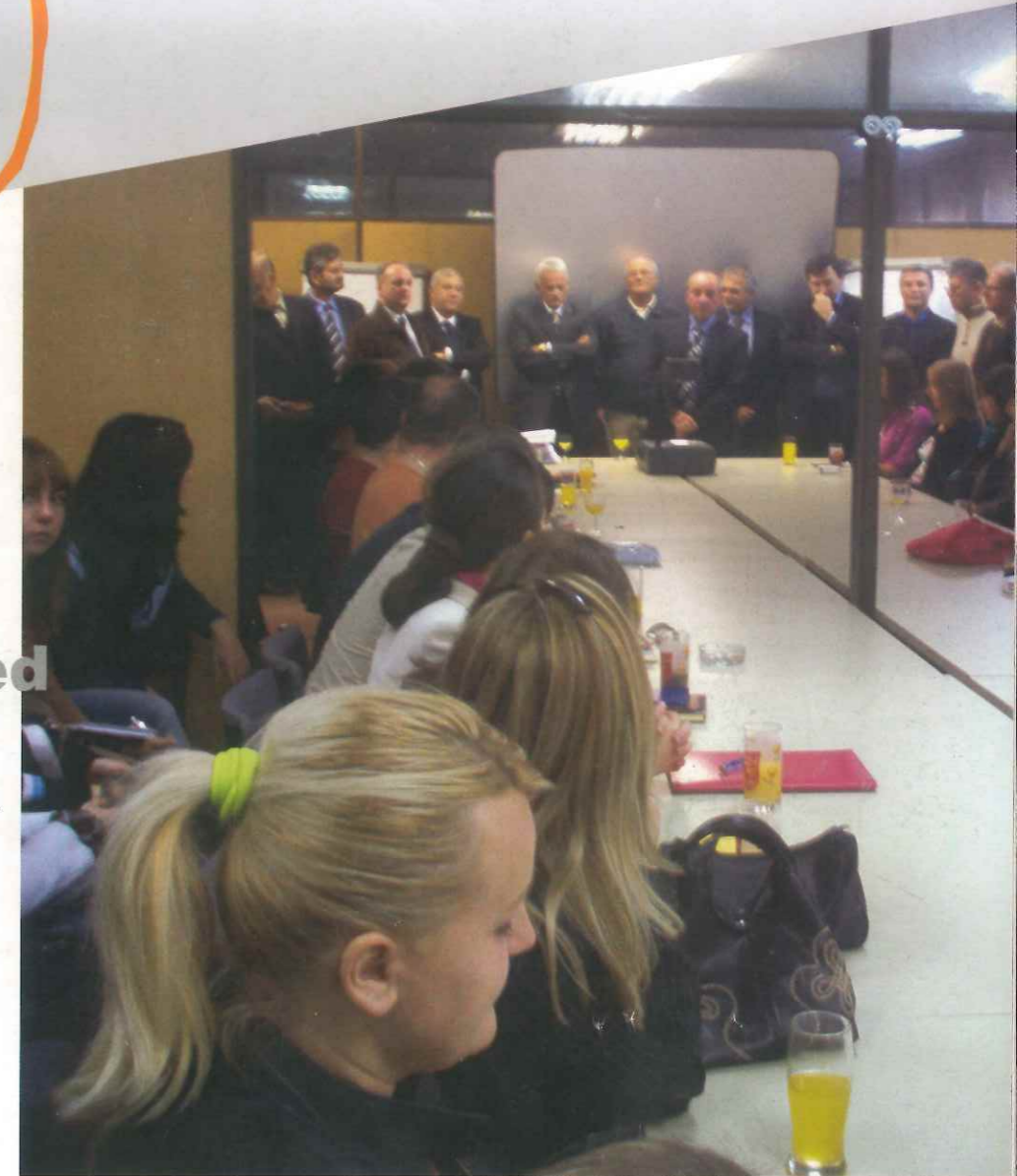
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Refik Šećibović, Ph. D.

Education, in all historical epochs and societies, has involved a transmission of intellectual achievements, that is, a transmission of knowledge in the function of self-development and development of the community in general.

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Politicians - the Fate of Education

Education and development (Obrazovanje i Razvoj, O&R), it is a title that will not score highly from a marketing point of view. However, education and development are the two drives of the mechanism of the transmission of knowledge. The knowledge, which brings together the employees of the educational elite, under the cloak of reform changes, and the idea, as old as the civilization, that the knowledge is both a self-development and the development of community in general, which is what the educational streams set as the imperative for an overall progress.

Founding of this magazine was preceded by one year preparations in Banja Luka, Travnik and Belgrade. All issues will be published in English and mutually comprehensible languages of the region. There is no magazine in the area of South-East Europe that addresses the problems of education, and the scope and contentions of reform. The ambition of O&R is to connect, explain and support the processes of development, and to primarily, provide information and prepare an atmosphere that would enable an exchange of professional ideas, results, opinions and experiences of the participants of education reforms.

South-East Europe is, undoubtedly, a well of intelligent, educated and competent young people. It is abroad, outside their own countries, that they show their knowledge and competence. That is undisputable too. At the same time, we can deem correct the claim that they are not needed in their countries. The most competent ones, which represent the smallest percentage of the total population, have been for decades a marginal and accidental occurrence. The self-absorbed and self-contained politicians, the creators of our lives, talk about them and call upon their achievements. Youth and intelligence are only symbolically rewarded, and get to be mentioned only in order to raise or assert the fragile national pride.

They remain a "decoration of the world" that leaders have no intention to use in any other way but in the spirit of their short-term campaigns and daily banter. That is why they prefer to mention them only, and give, as a gift, to others. Such is the situation regarding the highly educated population in this part of Europe at the beginning of 21st century. There is no knowledge for progress and development here. The education is tackled by the 'elite'. Elite authors and artists dream of a return of the system where in serious schools teaching is done as in the old times. At the same time, they spend time abroad, send their children to the most prestigious universities, and come back to their homeland extremely adherent to national heritage which are most often only allegedly, close to their heart - sljivovica (plum brandy), ajvar (a vegetable mixture), raspberries .. which have been our only export for decades.

The Europe orientated intellectuals, though not a hindrance, are far from a unanimous group that could seriously influence intellectual and social life, which would have an equal standing in Europe.

Education in these areas is still expenditure, and not an investment in the future; it is an exception rather than a rule! That is why the intellectuals get upset only when it comes to the reform of grammar schools, which their children go to. And only then! Unfortunately, parents whose children go to vocational

secondary schools or training schools, can't be heard. The future is built, through the process of education, by all young people, no matter which form of schooling they chose! The future of these countries lies in training schools, too, and in schools for children with special needs, and in vocational schools, not only grammar schools and elite universities! But who thinks of the future in these instable areas?!

Education, as a development priority, provides an economic development. As such, it is included, written and proclaimed in all political parties' programs. But, actually, it is of little concern for any party, and of even less concern for politicians, unless used for self-promotion.

Our fate - the politicians, address or talk about education only at the time of budget adoption, they remind of the national pride - preservation of the language, culture, tradition ... Of losses and financial analyses, there are almost no plausible data. It is not popular to talk about the brains that we put on sale and relinquish to those societies and cultures that are proclaimed enemies on the domestic scene. Do children from diasporas know the language for which they so vehemently fight, do they believe in the same god as their ancestors in the fatherland, do they know the history?

It is true that at first it was only the footballers and unqualified workers that were leaving the country, then technicians and engineers, and now we have an exodus of young experts. And what do we do? We continue making brandy, and ajvar and welcome them on holidays, we take photos of them for local papers to make ourselves look important, getting poorer in our situation with no way out, we wait for a political unraveling that would, on its own, show us the way and direction of progress.

Unfortunately, however crass it may sound, it is high time we made a final account of education in South-East Europe. What should be done to make education work for the development of those countries? And which segments of education must be given priority? These countries have to get an answer if, after the establishment of new borders, they have a chance to implement European patterns of development. That is why, in fact, this magazine wants to initiate these questions that bother the population of the region.

How to be a modern society of educated people?

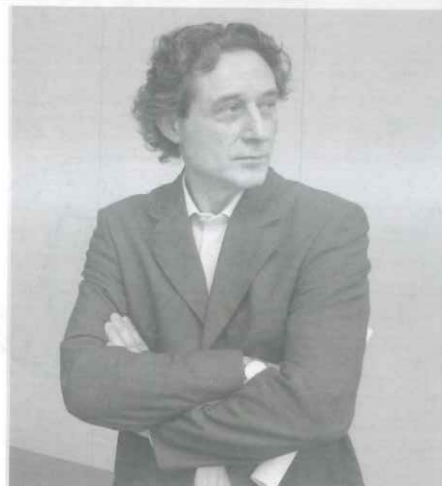
Attempts to realize reforms, legal solutions, coming closer to European standards - those are still anathemas in the Balkans. In my desire to avoid the anger a propos consistency and continuity (which has been lacking for decades), I will give an example of a wise ancient legislator. Solomon gave wise laws to Athenians on their request but made them promise they would not change them for at least ten years, until they see how good they were. Sapienti sat!

Magazine O&R is an attempt to come to the society of knowledge in South-East Europe without waiting for political solutions.

I firmly believe that is possible and that an exchange of information and experiences can affect the change of attitude towards education, complete the reform processes and bring us closer to European standards.

Education has to become a part of development, and that is the motto of this magazine. It is the faith in possible and an attempt to avoid becoming a region that the children from diaspora would visit either as a "twilight zone" or just to see their ageing parents, meet cousins and remind themselves of customs and organic food.

Šećibović



Branimir Štrukelj,
President of the Education Union
of Slovenia

Tempo Dictated by the Budget

Compared to the other countries from the region, Slovenia spends most on education – more than a billion Euros, which is only five times less than the total Serbian budget. This makes it obvious why it is important that a country is doing well in business and economy. Many believe that the Slovenian education model is the best in the region. Croatia is right behind Slovenia and, according to some, with regard to material conditions in schools, somewhere between Serbia and Slovenia.

It need not be mentioned how important education is for every country and their citizens, especially in the 21st century. Everybody knows that education is a proven development formula, without which an economic boom is impossible, that it is a key strategy in a combat against poverty, and that without big investments into education little can be done in the era of science, technology, computers and globalization. Although the support, albeit only nominally, never lacked, many politicians in the developing countries were often incapable of meeting all the conditions necessary to move from words to acts.

How is education treated in South-East Europe and the region, and what is the message that can be inferred from those examples? What is the budget spending for education, what are the differences and similarities, and is Europe succeeding at all

in imposing its standards? Are there going to be lay-offs and closing of some schools?

Judging by a short comparative survey of educational systems in the countries in the region, right in the beginning we can come to a conclusion in the form of the following formula: poor country = poor education = low salaries = poor results = poor country. And, so goes the circle. It can go the other way round if instead of 'poor' we put 'rich'.

The most positive example in this part of the Old Continent is Slovenia, in almost all aspects, although the envoys over there are rather reserved when they explain the status of education employees and the status of the branch. Nevertheless, many believe that the Slovenian educational model is the best in the region and that the attitude towards this branch is not merely nominal. On that imaginary comparison list, Croatia is right behind Slovenia, and according to some, somewhere between Serbia and Slovenia, based on the criterion on how far the reform has come, and on legal and material conditions in schools. On the other hand, there are plenty of those who think that

Croatia will encounter many problems in the completion of the reform.

Among five countries in the region, Slovenia spends most on education, more than a billion euros, which is only five times less than the total Serbian budget. This makes it obvious why it is important that a country is doing well in business and economy.

Sandi Modrijan, General Secretary of the Education Trade Union, says that the attitude of the state, i.e. the politicians, towards education is fairly good.

- It can always be better, but, luckily, the state realized that only with more money for the educational system and teachers' salaries, something can be achieved, explains Modrijan. Currently, in Slovenia 6.1 per cent of GDP goes to education which is above the EU average.

In primary and secondary schools in Montenegro, in December 2004, the employees demanded an increase of 10 per cent of the salary coefficient, they threatened with strikes, but the authorities soberly and coldly replied that a raise is only possible if the number of schools or the number of employees is cut down by at least 1,000. Slobodan Backovic, the Minister of Education in Serbia and Montenegro, told the discontented teachers that a pay raise of 25 Euros per teacher equaled the building of two schools and that such a claim was impossible to fulfill given the state of the modest state budget. At the same time, the Montenegro university lecturers also complained of poor standards and the salary of only 340 Euros, but they did not mention the strike.

In all countries in the region the biggest item in the education budget is employees' salaries, on which more than 80 per cent of the total budget is spent. The only exceptions are some Cantons in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, rare are the countries like Slovenia where the remaining 20 per cent of the budget is sufficient to maintain and invest into the system of schools and universities.

Due to a lower number of pupils in Slovenia, BiH, SiCG, Bulgaria, Hungary, etc, many teachers will lose their jobs fairly soon as a result of inevitable demands of the international rules. One of the key criteria that will have to be obeyed is that a class can have no less than 20 pupils. If it can't be met, the recommendation is to merge classes, which automatically renders one teacher 'redundant'.

There are no strikes in schools in Slovenia

Branimir Štrukelj, of (the biggest) Education Union of Slovenia, and one of the two European members in the Executive

Board of the Education International, says that over the past few years the strikes of teachers and other educational employees ceased in Slovenia because the trade unions, and there are three of them, managed to significantly increase the teachers' and other educational employees' salaries compared to other those of other industries. Thus, there is a social dialogue taking place over the past few years and pay raises are negotiated through collective contracts. However, when asked if the salaries are sufficient for a normal life, Štrukelj concedes that salaries are never big enough.

- If we would ask any employee in education, they would say that their salary is not big enough. But, if we take objective criteria, and say that an average salary of a secondary school teacher in Slovenia is something over 1,000 Euros and that that is about 30 per cent higher than the average salary in Slovenia, that we can claim that salaries are close to decent, comments Štrukelj.

The standard in Slovenian schools, compared to other countries, is on an enviable level. Classrooms are well equipped, there are media labs besides libraries, each school has at least one classroom with about 15 computers, and all schools have free access to the internet. BiH can only dream of such a standard, or even Serbia, where the only well equipped schools are in big towns. For example, in Serbia, after a recent significant EU donation that in the end of the last half-year granted 15,000 computers to vocational secondary schools, one computer will not be shared by 70 but 'only' 29 pupils.

According to some data several years' old, 448 primary schools in Slovenia were attended by 180,874 pupils, and 149 secondary schools were attended by 100,858 pupils. According to data of the academic year of 2002/2003, there were 87,056 students at three state universities. Additionally, there are 10 private faculties in Slovenia.

Salaries in elementary and secondary schools are similar and they total 1,460 Euros gross, monthly, after 10 years of service. The figures are approximate and depend on the number of the years of service, promotion, bonuses, but, still, the sum is at least five times higher from what their colleagues in the region get.

So far, there have not been any significant lay-offs of teachers, but there is a lot of talk of rationalization, which is a euphemism for lay-offs. Lay-offs are actually a consequence of demographic problems which result in fewer numbers of children that sign in to schools.

A totally opposite process is going on in Serbia, where vocational secondary schools

are more popular as students want to obtain a diploma as soon as possible and start earning. This indicator is a consequence of a crisis, that is becoming more tangible, and because of the feeling of insecurity in this transitional country, before which other international obligations are piling up.

"Fictional" teachers – lay-offs inevitable

Of 396.1 billion Dinars (slightly less than 5 billion Euros), which is the total of the budget of Serbia, 15 per cent is planned for the educational system, or at least, that is what the holder of the key of the state treasury Mladjan Dinkic intended. Of those 58.5 billion Dinars, 87 per cent will be spent for teachers' salaries, which, by the end of 2005, should be increased for up to 31 per cent in four stages.

There are 1618 primary schools in Serbia and 700 secondary schools, with more than 100,000 employees, and 1,250,000 pupils (900,000 primary school pupils). There are 150,000 students at six state universities, with the faculty of more than 5,000. The reform interventions and the struggle to improve the school and university standards are expected for all educational levels.

Finnish recipe for success

That investing in education pays off can be seen from the example of Finland whose students show superior knowledge at international contests, and the economy is still so strong to provide the status of a rich and developed country. The recipe is only seemingly easy: the state gives 5 per cent of its GDP for pre-school education, primary and secondary schools, which totals 1.8 billion Euros. But that is not all. In addition to that money, a further 1.1 billion euros flows into these institutions from municipal budgets, which makes it, for countries in transition, the unbelievable 2.9 billion Euros. Well, the budget of Serbia is less than 5 billion Euros! An average teacher's salary in this Scandinavian country amounts to 2,000 euros, which is for about 300 euros higher than an average salary in that country.

There are four private universities in Serbia and several dozens of private colleges. Although it seemed that an expansion of private colleges was gathering momentum, new education authorities, led by Slobodan Vuksanovic, seem to have decided to re-think it. A few weeks ago, the members of the Republic Council for Development of University Education declined the green light for a go ahead for some 20 projects that were already positively reviewed by a Commission that gives recommendations for the Council as to who can be given the license to work.

Given that Dinkic, the Minister of Finances, advocates severe savings for this year, it is interesting to look at his reply as to where the additional money could be found for the educational system. He thinks that, for a start, it is necessary to find "dead souls" at schools and that in the first stage that will be enough to cover for the planned decrease of 7 per cent of the salary fund. He estimates that there is exactly that many of fictional teachers in schools in Serbia. What was happening is that the savvy school employees come up with a plan to outwit the state, so they would not report the colleagues who retired or even died and used the fictional numbers to boost the income. It is very much likely that such a practice will be put to an end and that a regulation of last February will come to an effect. That regulation entails a provision that schools receive means based on the number of pupils and not based on the number of classes, which has been the case so far.

It is public knowledge that Dinkic, immediately after he stepped into office, wanted to lay off 5,000 employees who were redundant according to all rational criteria, but he gave in to trade union requests. The World Bank experts, immediately after the fall of Milosevic regime, in a comprehensive analysis, found that almost every third employee of the education system should be laid off. That idea is still afloat, but, most likely, will be executed gradually, as in other transitional countries.

There are always reasons for strike

While the other budget clients in Serbia complain that they were of poor luck with the Budget for 2005, the Serbian education authorities are satisfied as their part of the Budget pie should be for 12 billion Dinars more than that of 2004. Slavko Karavandic, the assistant Minister of Finances, finds that this year's budget is far better than the last one.

- We are satisfied that not only the educational employees' salaries will be increased but that we received 4.5 times more means for investment and maintenance expenses. Now we will have enough to meet our liabilities from 2003 and 2004, and perhaps there will be some money left over and would be used to finish some facilities, hopes Karavandic.

In the last distribution, the employees of primary schools had the best luck, followed by those in secondary schools. Decent means for current expenses and maintenance were allocated to universities too, finds the branch Ministry.

Karavidić does not know if this year's budget will calm the employees who keep threatening with strikes (although, the threats were more common to the period before 2000).

Karavidić thinks that employees in education, as anybody else, have always a reason to protest "since the salary is as it is". But, objectively, the staff in schools and at universities in Serbia will, for the first time, receive a significant pay raise and will not, anymore, be on the bottom of income ladder.

Zdravko Kovac, the president of a very influential Education Employees Trade Union "Nezavisnost" from Serbia confirms that education will receive a somewhat better treatment this year compared to other industries, but he thinks that it should not be forgotten that in 2004 this branch suffered disadvantage as the salaries with all increases were insufficient to cover the living costs. That education was of better luck this year can be seen from the fact that the salaries in 2005 will be about 20 per cent higher than the salary average in Serbia. An average monthly salary in Serbia is 15 000 Dinars (about 190 Euros).

However, the union leader, Kovac, believes that lay-offs in schools in Serbia will be inevitable in this year.

- As soon as we sign the collective contract, we will establish some regulations to protect the employees, but after that, some will be redundant, there is no doubt about that. It is certain that the primary school teachers will suffer the hardest blow, than secondary school teachers and non-teaching staff. It won't be possible anymore for each school to have a boiler room keeper, a handyman, and 7-8 cleaning ladies, all of them not working more than 15 per cent of total working hours, states Kovac.

In his opinion, the attitude of the state towards education is increasingly less nominal compared to the age of Tito and Sloba.

- I think something is changing because

for the first time we got more than the other budget clients. It is an illusion to expect a percentage as elsewhere, in developed countries. Our GDP has risen from 3 to 3.5 per cent and that is a big step forward. For the time being, we cannot ask for more as anything over this would be unrealistic, estimates the union leader from Serbia.

Of all the countries in transition, Slovenians made the best educational model,

Warning statistics

According to OECD data, an average allocation for education in the EU countries is 5.5 per cent of GDP, with Korea giving the highest 8.3 per cent. Slovenians assign 6.1, Finland 5.8, Hungary 5.3 per cent of GDP... Statistics show that Serbia is towards the end of the scale, based on how much is spent annually per pupil. BiH is at the bottom of the scale, with only 500 to 800 Euros spent yearly for a pupil, which is even 6 times less than European average for primary education. It is pointless for us to talk about the EU amounts for secondary schools, as that figures reaches the inconceivable 6,400 Euros per pupil per annum.

with one part remaining centralized and the other decentralized. Other countries in the region are only just now considering that idea.

Unionists concerned about the state of education in BiH

The most unusual educational model is the one of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it is a result of the state structure which consists of three entities, 10 cantons and the District of Brcko. In this federation, there are no less than 13 ministries of education! Besides the basic law on education on the state level, there are 10 more laws in 10 cantons and one for the Republic of Srpska and Brcko District, each. A poor country cannot allocate a lot for the salaries and equipment for schools, which, by and large, function with the most basic teaching resources.

Ibrahim Halvadzija, president of the BiH Trade Union for Elementary Education, says that BiH started a reform of primary schools, and a framework law on the level of the state has been passed and it acknowledges and takes into account the existing situation in BiH, but:

- The situation in elementary education in BiH, in any case, must get much better. We are even concerned, as the reform started in a way that was the least wanted and expected. For example, the state law is not being adhered to and the reform is being conducted on several tracks in BiH; it is a product of several policies existing in BiH. For example, the nine-year elementary education has already started in some cantons, while in other cantons, where we have two curricula and syllabi, we have a case that in one of those the reform is ongoing, and, in the other, where the teaching is in Croatian language, there is no reform at all, explains Halvadzija.

According to Halvadzija, the reform was undertaken without basic conditions and schools unequipped in all aspects.

- For example, in the area of the Federation we have almost 1,096 schools which make up a network of 387 matrix schools. Unfortunately, we have schools where the basic teaching means are only a board and chalk, speaks bitterly the President of the BiH Trade Union for Elementary Education.

According to official data of the Federation Institute for Statistics, in the last school year, 2003/2004, there were 267,000 pupils and 13,200 teachers in primary schools in BiH. Unlike the other data, which is available, it seems to be difficult to obtain an answer to what is the Budget of BiH and how much is allocated to education.

- When we speak of the GDP, it is difficult to define it. BiH is wrecked after the war and given everything that was happening. We have some figures and it is very difficult to say what the sum is. It is being said that a lot has been allocated,

even about 6.5 per cent of GDP, but GDP itself is very low. BiH is one of the poorest countries in Europe, even in the Balkans, so that percentage of 6.5 of GDP means nothing, as the ratio to which we compare that figure is very low. And how much is that in convertible marks (KM), it is difficult to say, as even the state institutions evade saying what the amount of the GDP is, says Halvadzija.

At one place in the analyses that gives the picture of the situation in BiH, it is stated that, by far, the least is being allocated for the primary education even though it comprises the biggest population both in terms of pupils and employees.

- We are not happy about that and we demand a re-distribution within existing means which are not big... We have even in a conversation with the World Bank brought out some worrying facts. Let's say that one class in primary school costs 0.65 KM and that one pupil in one canton for one school year costs the state about 500 Euros. The most goes for pupils in the Sarajevo Canton, 800 KM, as they reached a standard far above the others. Only the Brcko District can compete with it. The international community experts, at first, couldn't believe how little is being allocated. Salaries, investing in school equipment and other costs for elementary education are on the same levels. Even the world experts recommended a more just redistribution of means within the education system, warns Halvadzija.

There have been some indications that there will be lay-offs in BiH too - new standards are being introduced, in accordance to the available means, so, in this country, too, classes will be merged to classes of no more than 20 pupils.

When asked about the attitude of the state towards education, Halvadzija says that it is only nominal "since the approach to reform was so disorganized, irresponsible, and since the standards and principles established in the state law were diminished at cantonal levels".

Even harsher in his critique of the reform is Nedžad Jahić, President of the Central Bosnian Canton Union. Not tongue-tied at all, he claims that the attitude of the state towards education is not even nominal, but that the education is treated as a burden, expenditure, not as a productive process in a democratic society.

- Authorities here are the purpose to themselves only, and the rest is unimportant. One should run away from education! But, where to, when there is nothing real and realistic? And, it is not known when there will be anything... comments Jahić, and this remark of his gives away opinion not only about the education but about the politicians in power in Central Bosnian Canton.

Absolute dissatisfaction in Central Bosnian Canton (CBC)

Jahić claims that employees in education in CBC are absolutely dissatisfied, and adds that there have been strikes and there will be strikes in the future. He also says that they are preparing claims to send to schools and the CBC Government for unpaid salaries. There are liabilities dating from 2002, 2003 and 2004.

- The pay is minimal and nothing works as it should. There is also segregation, there is everything, it is total chaos... The reform should be completed by 2010, and the reform disadvantages the employees in education and that is why we feel it as an imposed reform. Nothing functions; there are a lot of strikes from dissatisfied employees because of the salaries, which are below average. Our employees are absolutely dissatisfied because they have the worst status of all cantons in the Federation of BiH. The only exception is the Sarajevo Canton, which is in a better position when it comes to both salaries and bonuses. Not much is being invested into schools, they are unequipped, as, actually, is the characteristic of the whole region, except in Slovenia, and, to some extent, in Croatia,

where, since lately, they have been trying to do something, comments Jahić.

In his opinion the standing of Slovenia is at least three to four times better than of BiH. There, says he, they have no problems, they entered Europe, there are no strikes but there is law that is obeyed:

- We are far below them and we could not reach them even in 20 years, even under the condition that we worked on that every day.

The total budget of the CBC is 108,941,500 KM, and out of that, education gets 45 to 47 per cent (49,555,384 KM). The

Specific situation in Slovenia

There is another specific situation identified in Slovenia - an increasing number of children enroll at Grammar Secondary Schools (more than 50 per cent). That results in lower numbers of pupils in vocational secondary schools, where they already encounter a problem of redundant teachers.

largest part of that budget pie, two thirds, goes onto primary schools. Further 27.32 to 32 per cent goes onto salaries. Primary school teachers' salaries amount to 490 KM, not including the bonus for the years of service (for each year there is an increase of 0.6 per cent), and 600 KM for secondary schools, also, not including the years of service. There are no faculties in CBC founded by CBC, there is only a branch of Tuzla University in Travnik, the Pedagogic Faculty, and a branch of Mostar University in Vitez.

What is important and unusual, notices Nedžad Jahić, is that of the total budget for education in CBC (49,555,384 KM), a disproportional percentage of money is spent for school equipment and maintenance of 51 primary schools than for 23 secondary schools. According to Jahić, the question is why is it that so much more is spent on primary schools when there is double as less of them than secondary schools.

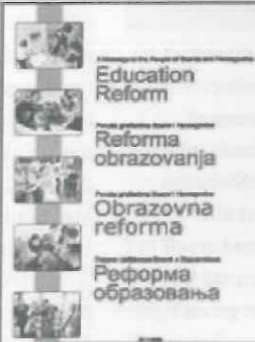
- We believe that artificial figures are in the question, notices this union leader.

Studying in BiH

What is the cause of poor efficiency of the higher education system in BiH?

□ Tens of thousands of students enroll at universities in BiH every year, but only a few thousands, i.e. a little over 10 per cent graduates. The relevant authorities believe that the reason for that lies in the poor state of the current educational system.

Although the majority of students who quit studies explain it in relation to the lack of



money and consider studying a privilege of those who are better off financially, the Federal Minister of Education, Zijad Pasić, thinks that the higher education in BiH is extremely cheap. "We here still take into account the social status of these young people. This is going to remain for more years to come and almost everyone can study

now. But, in the future, it is going to change and it can be expected that public universities will also introduce the practice of European

countries, or the private colleges here, of charging high fees", says Pasić.

(source: Vecernji list)



Studying in Slovenia

Were you aware of the opportunity to study in the neighboring Slovenia?

□ There are 14 students from neighboring Croatian municipalities of Istra studying at

University of Primorska in Koper, and there could be at least 200 of them", HINA reports the statement of the rector, Lucija Čok, given on the occasion of the recent presentation in some Istrian municipalities of study programs of that Slovenian university. Besides Istra, there is an interest in the region of Rijeka, and even wider, to study in Slovenia.

A few months ago Novi list wrote about it in the article "Easier entrance to Slovenian than Croatian universities". According to the Slovenian Regulations on studying for foreign citizens and Slovenians without citizenship, it is regularly easier for Croatian

citizens to enroll at Slovenian universities than for Slovenians. For such students, at each department, there is a quota of up to 5 per cent of all placements for full time students, and up to 50 per cent of placements for part-time students without any classification. If, however, there are more applicants than envisaged by the enrollment quota, the selection is based on the success achieved in secondary school, but there are no entrance exams. The number of prospective Croatian first year students is always lower than the quota envisages, so there is no need for the selection. According to the information available at the Slovenian

Ministry for Education, Science and Sport, there are three universities in Slovenia.

(Source: InfoS)

Bosnian Language - an optional course

Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Serbia, at the suggestion of the Council for ethnic minorities of the Republic of Serbia, brought a decision to amend the Regulations for the Curriculum and Syllabus, by introducing Bosnian Language with the elements of ethnic culture for the first and second year of primary school.

Public primary schools are attended by 30,000 pupils, and 10,000 pupils attend secondary schools (plus pupils who go to medrese, Islamic secondary schools, and Catholic School Centre). There are 2,055 employees in primary schools and 968 in secondary schools. The rationalization was allegedly conducted, but according to the union's estimates, only in writing. According to some documents, there is a redundancy of 77 employees in primary schools and the process is undergoing. At the same time, in secondary schools only a few redundancies have been registered and those employees already left schools with some pay off and with no complaints.

Education in the Republic of Srpska (RS) is the last and least of worries

According to Ranka Mistic, the president of the RS Education Trade Union, the process of reform of elementary and secondary schools has started in the RS, and, soon, the reform of higher education will start too. The reform demands additional efforts from teachers because they are the bearers of reforms, and that brought new demands on them: working longer hours at school, education, supplying additional literature. Salaries are extremely low, notices Mistic, from 250 to 280 KM in elementary and secondary schools, while the average salary in the RS is 240 Euros.

- We are unsatisfied both with the salary and the status, and we believe that education and the status of the employees in that branch is the last and the least of the state's worries. If it weren't so, our status would not be on the margins, because in all other sectors the salaries are much better. If we compare ourselves with Slovenia and Croatia, we are far below them. In Croatia, for example, salaries are around 800 Euros, and in Slovenia, they must be satisfied when they draw parallels with the surrounding, but I don't think that is the case if compared to other professions, comments Mrs Mistic.

The year before last, 12 per cent of the budget was allocated to education. For 2005, the allotment is 18 per cent, but it is actually less, since the budget too is smaller - doesn't even reach one billion KM. Speaking of percentages, in developed European countries, education receives about 3 to 3.5 per cent of the budget, and when it is said that the RS gives 18 per cent for education, it sounds good, but actually that percentage does not even reach the amount of 1 per cent of developed European countries.

In the RS, 140 million KM goes to education, and there are 18,000 employees in

education and culture, there are 98 secondary schools (with almost 50,000 pupils) and 190 primary schools (with 126,000 pupils) and two universities, in East Sarajevo and Banja Luka. At university in Banja Luka, there are 13,530 students and 1,738 of full time employees and employees by contract. In Serbian Sarajevo, there are about 4,000 students and 524 lecturers and guest lecturers.

- Around the time of elections, all those who are in the political game, take education as an example, but it all dies out as soon as the elections are over. For everything that has been happening, the RS is still not in a position to make quality cuts. The situation in any case deserves no applauding, we are far from that, claims Mrs Mistic.

What is, in fact the fate of an education employee, as it is nowhere really an attractive profession, except in Finland, Switzerland and Norway? Balint Magyar, the official Minister of Education in the Government of the Republic of Hungary, at a recently held international meeting, warned that the education employees' salaries in that country are still below the European average, although in 2002 they had a pay raise of 50 per cent, and the raising trend has continued in 2003 and 2004. Now they receive about 150,000 Forint, something more than 600 Euros, gross. However, their pupils score well at world contests.

The South-East countries that have not adopted the standards dictated by the EU, will not be able for much longer to resist the requests for adjustment to new, market conditions, where there is no place for sentimentality and old habits.

New trends

Rationalization, savings on all sides and sharing financial obligations are trendy. All countries getting closer to the EU, or those that are members already, commit themselves to render the educational system more rational. Also, many countries turn to a multileveled financing model, in accordance to which a part of sources comes from the state treasury, a part from local budgets, the third part from own income, with donations as an additional option. Those who think that they can survive resisting new demands and inevitable changes in education, are seriously wrong. The time to come will refute their claims and reveal their illusion. And, in the end, all will have to harmonise their educational systems to European standards, only with an unreasonable, pointless and unnecessary stalling. Unless they want, at any cost, to remain an isolated island that everybody will avoid from a far distance, as the plague.

Olga Nikolic



Dr Pavel Zgaga on the reform of education in the Republic of Slovenia

A Harmony Between the Profession and Politics

The Slovenian Ministry for Education and Sport published the White book on education, which announced a reform of the education system. The Book, after the strict expertise, offered a concept of a possible education system. The achieved reform in Slovenia gets positive evaluations. Dr Pavel Zgaga, Professor at the Pedagogic Faculty in Ljubljana, director of the Centre for Educational Policy Studies (CEPS) and a former Minister of Education, speaks for the O&R magazine.

■ *The Slovenian society managed to reach a consensus on the reform of education. What was a key to form and carry out a common view?*

In the second half of the 1980s, the professional and wider public was more or less unanimous in the criticism of the specialized secondary school system. Some general questions, such as, modernization and lengthening the elementary education to 9 years, return of grammar schools and introduction of leaving exams, autonomy of university, and de-politicization and relinquishing of ideology (with a negative attitude to religious as a studies as a course for primary and secondary schools), bigger investment in education, which would open the opportunities for private schools... were relatively quickly adopted as a universal consensus. Of course, in the process of strategy detailing, there were lots of differences in opinions, which, in turn, lead to public polemics, without which democratic changes are inconceivable. The crucial reason that the reform advanced in every year was, before all, a 'pyramidal'

establishment of specific concepts among the professional public and the public in general. In the process of the curriculum changes in the second half of the 1990s, there were individual concepts that were put together by the National Curriculum Council. That Council is structurally organized into several branch committees (pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, adult education...), subject committees (for all subjects), and committees in schools. They all gave their remarks, critics and support. The reform of curriculum was the object of seeking a consensus among the experts, as well as in the political sphere and the general public.

■ *How many ministers of Education were involved in the reform? Was there any "mechanism for protection" to provide a continuity in the implementation of the reform, or were all the ministers, since the beginning of the reform till today, of the same opinion?*

Since spring 1990 to the present day, Slovenia had one female minister and six male ministers. To a large extent, continuity has been accomplished for the duration of their mandates. The first minister was in office from the period of secession till the spring of 1992 when it was not possible to start a core reform.

The latest minister was appointed recently, in December 2004. All other ministers, with the exception of one who stayed in office for only several months (from spring to autumn 2000), participated in the governments formed by the designated prime minister from the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS). At that time, ministers and state secretaries, proposed by the LDS, often were not the members of the LDS. The team members who lead some independent areas of the Ministry of Education were, before all, recognized professional authorities and they came either from universities or schools. It was certainly relevant that education had high priority in the programs of the party and governmental coalitions.

The organization of various centers, or institutes, for a professional support of development in specific areas, was one of the mentioned steps in the gradual implementation of the reform. Those centers were not incorporated into the Ministry but they operate independently. So, in the 1990s, the former Institute for Education of the Republic of Slovenia was transformed. Separately established were the Andragoski centre of Slovenia (ACS) (1991), the State Exam Centre (1993), School for Principles (1995), Centre for mobility and European education programs (CMEPIUS) (1990). Without those centers where the professional, individual and specific aspects of education are considered, neither the reform nor its implementation would be possible.

■ *What has the education reform changed in comparison to the old system? Which changes were implemented first and how were they accepted in the beginning?*

The educational system in Slovenia in the late 1980s was organized based on specialized education as in the other republics of the former Yugoslavia. Political criticisms of that system, which came from the opposition of that time, were complemented with the professional criticism, which was already offering some specific alternatives.

The first chance to change the republic Law on specialized education came in 1988. It was, under the pressure of the democratic public, adopted by the then Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia. The result of that change was the re-introduction of grammar schools into the secondary schools system. In addition to that, a decision was brought too to prepare a special law on higher education, outside the 'specialized education'. Thus, the first core changes referred primarily to grammar schools and higher education (the new law on higher education was passed in 1993, and the laws on other segments of education in 1996). On the other hand, courses in Self-

management and the basics of Marxism, as well as the Defense and protection were abolished before the independence. The primary schools started a comprehensive process of adoption of innovative methods, starting from new methodological principles and new ways of marking, to the new concepts in creation of text books.

Viewed from the current perspective, the reform radically changed the overall preceding system of the specialized education. The biggest success of the current system, if compared to other systems in the area of former Yugoslavia, is that the education remained public education, mostly financed from the state budget (and partially from municipal budgets). That means that, by law, it is not possible to charge fees in the public institutions for education of children and young people, as well as in the higher education institutions. Private education institutions for their work can also receive, under certain circumstances, public means (so called concessions), and, accordingly, not charge for the fees (which involves those institutions in the so called public service). In that position are the four grammar schools founded by the Catholic Church and a few nonreligious schools, mostly secondary schools and vocational colleges.

■ *Was there any resistance and which part of the population was the hardest to win over?*

Public discussions on the reform of the educational systems were triple: professional, political and public. There were polemics in each of these areas; solutions could have been found only through a wide discussion and compromises. Final solutions were not identical to the starting conceptual proposals. The conceptual proposal, the White Book on education in the Republic of Slovenia, from 1995, was created by a wide circle of experts, who, in their theoretical views, belonged to different orientations.

The harshest portion of polemics within the professional public was probably related to the reform of curriculum. There we had in the forefront professional views as to how much of the curriculum certain subjects should take up. After long discussions, an optimal consensus was reached, and, did not, in fact, disadvantage any of groups, but the critics continued nevertheless. On the other side, the political public was mostly concerned the polemic about the liberal and conservative concept, in the shadow of the questions on the role of the Catholic Church in public education. The adopted solution excludes from the public

education both the political parties and religion (in primary schools there is a non-confessional course on religion), but they are allowed in private schools. That question remained in the sphere of the political discourse, especially after the appointment of the new government in December 2004. The third side, the general public, summarized the polemics into the thesis on the 'overburdening of children' and the 'school oriented to efficacy'. That is why the implemented solutions proposed by the experts, i.e. by the standards, are currently softer than the original proposals. So, it may happen that, in the following years, we may regret because of the results shown by the TIMSS, PISA and other researches.

■ *How were the resources provided for the whole undertaking, innovations and teachers' salaries and how were those means distributed? Was there any resistance of the Slovenian public to donors' participation?*

A central political issue before the implementation of the reform was actually concerning the material requirements for the reform. A decisive political decision, approved by the National Assembly, practically with a consensus of all political parties, was the law on the approval of the means for necessary development programs of the Republic of Slovenia for education (1994). This law provided additional means for the period 1994 – 1999, and raised the share of the GDP in education from 4.8 per cent to almost 6 per cent for all subsequent years. According to the latest data, the share of total public expenditure for education in 2001 totaled 6.13 per cent, 6.02 per cent in 2002, and 6.09 per cent of the GDP in 2003.

■ *During the creation of the strategy for the reform of vocational secondary education, there was a lot of discussion on how to direct the innovations. Are there any indicators of the change, in the practice, and how is it reflected in the labor market?*

During the process of adoption of solutions and ruing the implementation, there were discussions in all spheres, so the reform of the vocational secondary education is no exception. Though, that sphere is specific to some extent. The new system of secondary education has three verticals, roughly speaking: the four year secondary schools (grammar schools: general, classic, technical, artistic), the four year technical and vocational schools, then the three and two year training schools. The interest of the young people is increasingly for the four year schools, especially grammar

schools. That causes additional needs and demands for restructuring of the network of technical, vocational and training schools. The second problem lies in the restructuring of the labor market: some traditional professions are dying out, and, of course, the labor market demands a more flexible training. There is no point to educate a young person for only one profession that they would be doing their whole life. On the contrary, there is an increased necessity to bring together the elements of vocational education with the life long learning. Finally, for the implementation of the proposed solutions for the vocational secondary education, a partnership of the state, schools and employers is very important. Discussions in that field often point to big differences between the interests of specific fields and hence the crucial polemics and dilemmas.

■ *Can you say something about the Centre for vocational education, its organization, jurisdiction... What are the experiences of that new institution?*

The Centre for vocational education (CPI) was founded in 1995, at the same time with the White Book, that is, within the frame of the concept entailed by this document as the concept of the new system of vocational education. CPI was founded and financed through a partnership of the Slovenian Government, the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Craft Trade (the employers' associations). That decision reflects the idea for a participation of various fields in creation of solutions and their implementation. Today, CPI is a central Slovenian expert institution for development in the field of vocational education (development of curriculum, analyses of labor market, education of teachers, international co-operations). It functions as a professional support to the Council of Experts for Vocational and Training Education, which, by law, is authorized for the preparation of educational programs. The CPI is a necessary institution today, both for the ministry and employers and for schools. The activities of this institution in the field of European and international participation are increasing, which is especially relevant for the Copenhagen process.

■ *Slovenia, as full member of the EU, can use European funds (European social fund, for example). What does it mean practically for the education employees?*

In 2004, Slovenia, for the first time, was in a position to use the European social fund. The advantages are obvious and the whole series of projects was started (regional development, innovations

in education, education of teachers, cooperation with the EU schools and universities). It is still early for a detailed evaluation of these processes. It is obvious that these funds provide an excellent foundation for further development. Since 1999, Slovenia is taking part in three central programs in this field: Socrates and Erasmus (universities). Leonardo de Vinci and the Youth. They are, primarily, intended for the mobility of pupils, students and professors, and the adoption of positive experiences from other EU countries. The mobility opportunities have been rising every year (last year about 550 students had a chance to stay at other EU universities, in the average duration of 3 to 6 months). Many students and professors already have direct, personal experiences of the education and practice of other countries. The administration and bureaucratic procedures, to some extent, also deserve some critics.

■ *According to your evaluation, viewed from the point of a 'common system of education' for the former state, what are the specificities of the countries of the former Yugoslavia?*

A common negative characteristic, in my opinion, is, before all, a big instability of the system of education – frequent changes of ministers, and, subsequent changes of concepts, strategies, as well as the low standing of education in general. It is necessary to render the reform of education a public interest and to provide a continuity of the establishment of education regardless of political changes. That should be a basis of a national consensus. The improvement and the level of the standing of education for the general public depend, to a large extent, on that consensus.

On the other side we have a total positive importance of those systems – in the past they guaranteed a solid general education (especially internationally). Things begin from zero today. The fact is that those traditions could act encouragingly even today when it is necessary to solve the basic problems of the educational system. Of special importance is the challenge in the field of the vocational education: instability and the labor market problems, together with high unemployment – that is an exceptionally concerning context for experts who develop new conceptual solutions. Occasionally, all state institutions, not only ministries of education, should find the most optimal solutions to meet the requests imposed by strategic national issues. And that is even more necessary if the state institutions are determined, with their strategies, to get included in the European and general trends.

Bojana Cebic-Cvetkovic

Results of PISA and TIMSS researches of pupils' achievements show which country is where in Europe and world by knowledge and skills

Ranking Lists for Celebration and Consideration

Of European countries that took part in PISA research, the Finnish students showed, by far, best results in all categories. In the TIMSS project in natural sciences academic achievements the pupils from Singapore scored best results. Hungarians took the excellent seventh place, Slovenians 12th, pupils from Bulgaria were 24th, Romania 27th, Serbia 28th and Macedonia 32nd.

At the end of the last year, shortly one after the other, the results of two big international researches of students' achievements were published. They are, not only about the knowledge, but also about the skills in application of the knowledge, from which it can be nicely seen how the system works in a country. To put it simply, is the system based on cramming or understanding. Although the PISA project (Program for International Student Assessment) is organized every third year, and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) every fourth year, due to a number of circumstances, the timing of results publishing overlapped, which came handy to carry out another important comparison of the educational systems in Europe and 'the rest of the world'.

Of the countries in the region, only the students from Serbia took part in PISA project, and, the closest to this part of Europe, students from Hungary, Greece, and Italy. Hungarians scored by far the best results in all four tested disciplines, while the other students did not stand out and their knowledge and skills were sufficient only for the bottom of the scale. However, the Italian students were better at all disciplines than the Greeks and Serbians, and, on that mini ranking list, the Serbian students were at the bottom.

In the next cycle of researches in 2006, Slovenian, Croatian and Montenegrin

students will also participate and it will be interesting to see that mini competition of the students from former Yugoslavian republics within the whole project, as the results will show whose educational

system is the most efficient and gives most positive effects.

The TIMSS research was somewhat different to that of PISA because, among other countries, three former Yugoslavian countries took part, Slovenia, Serbia and Macedonia. According to demonstrated knowledge, Slovenian students were three times better than the rest, with the Macedonians on the bottom this time.

Of European countries that took part in the PISA research, the best score, by far, was achieved by students from Finland in all categories (they won two first places, one second and one third place), with the students from Hong Kong, Korea and Japan also among the top scorers in all disciplines.

What is actually PISA?

PISA is a program of an international evaluation of academic achievements of students near the end of compulsory education. The main goal of the research is to assess various aspects and levels of knowledge and skills necessary for continuation of education and participation in every day life.

The research is conducted every three years under the sponsorship of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). The first cycle of the research was conducted in 2000 in 32 countries, mostly members of the OECD.

Serbia officially got involved in this program in September 2001 as a part of the second cycle, in which 40 countries participated.

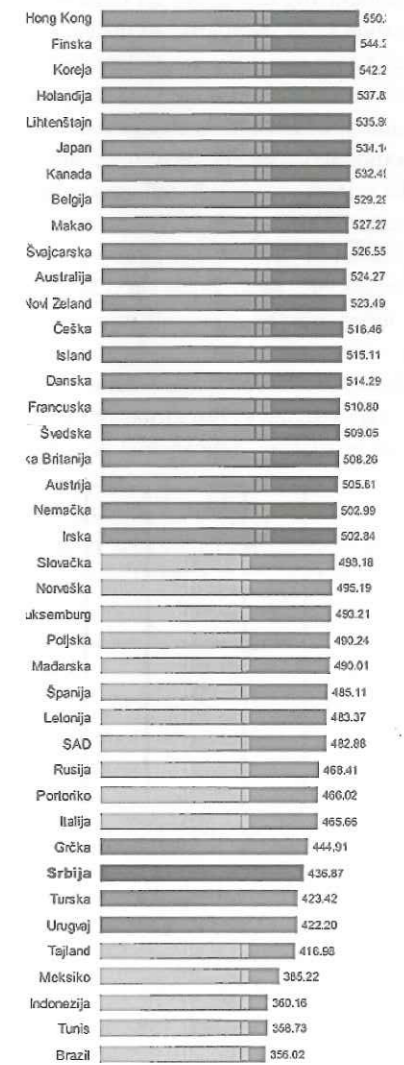
Due to differences in the organization of educational system in various countries, the tested population of students was based on the year of birth not the class or grade. So, the fifteen year olds were tested, no matter which grade, level of education or type of school they attended at the time of the research. The thing is that in different education system the period of compulsory education nears the end approximately at this age, after

which students enter the period of finer specialization. Thus, the main study from 2003 included students born in 1987. The PISA project assesses achievements in four categories: mathematics, sciences, reading comprehension, and problem solving.

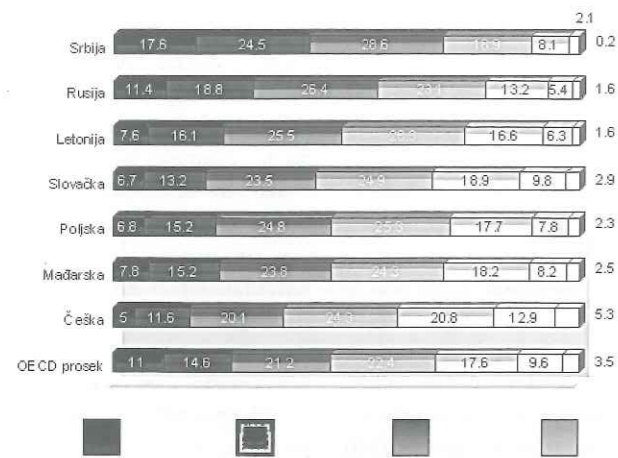
The expected knowledge and skills are defined through literacy, that is, the ability of students to apply concepts they learn at school in everyday life. To put it differently, the emphasis is on functional, applicable knowledge, and not on academic, encyclopedic knowledge. So, for example, in mathematics, it is not tested how successfully a student can perform mathematical operations but how successfully they can recognize and formulate a mathematical problem, solve it using the concepts learnt at school and then communicating and validating the solution that they reached.

The main focus of achievements was on mathematics, and included four areas of mathematics.

The achievements in mathematics and reading comprehension were divided into levels of achievements. Each of the levels was described with regard to the



competency, that is, which competencies and skills we can expect from a student whose results are at a certain level of achievement. The following graph shows the number of students (in percentage) who are at a different level of achievement in the countries of East Europe. This group of countries was separated because



they had a similar tradition in education (which nurtured encyclopedic, conceptual knowledge; high level of centralization in education management; universal curriculum and text books for the whole of education area). Similarly, all the countries from this group, albeit not at the same time, entered the period of post-socialist transition, which entails changes in education too. The effects of the changes of the system are already reflected in the students' achievements in this research.

As can be seen on the lower graph, the education system in Serbia is largely orientated to so as to provide minimal academic achievements – most of the students are at the first and second levels, they are expected to recognize, reproduce and apply basic mathematical procedures

East European countries. Thus, in Serbia we have a relatively high (the highest of all tested countries) percentage of students who could not fulfill even the minimal requirements – every sixth student who attends secondary school cannot manage the elementary test requirements. Similarly, no other country has such a

low percentage of students in the highest categories of achievement. It is interesting to note that Poland is the only country whose students managed, in all aspects, to achieve statistically better results than in the previous cycle of 2000. The main reason for this improvement is that Poland transferred to the nine year compulsory education and put effort to better integrate the contents of various courses, both horizontally (integration of the content of subjects from different disciplines) and vertically (constant integration of what has already been done within a subject at different levels of education).

It is interesting that the reaction on the published PISA research results differed from country to country. For example, there was a repeated loud reaction of the

Below 1 st level - Less than 358 points	First level - 358-420 points	Second level - 421-482 points	Third level - 483-544 points
Fourth level - 545-606 points	Fifth level - 607-668 points	Sixth level - More than 668 points	

MATHEMATICS – student average achievements (OECD average is 500 points)

in simple and obvious situations. At both ends of distribution, both in the zone of extremely low and extremely high achievements, the achievements of students from Serbia significantly differ from the achievements of students of other

public opinion in Germany since nobody was satisfied with the fact that German students were mainly in the middle of the scale in all four disciplines, although they achieved slightly better results than in previous tests. The public opinion in Serbia

was divided into the traditionalists and the radical reformists. The former tried to convince us that not much attention should be paid to such researches because the tests were not suitable for the children who live and study in Serbia. The latter said that the results were worrying and that something should be done urgently to replace the 'cramming' concept with modern teaching which makes students to think rather than learn by heart.

All about TIMSS researches

TIMSS 2003 is a comparative study conducted in 46 countries at all continents, whose goal was to establish the knowledge and skills of students in mathematics and sciences near the end of compulsory education. The research also tests cultural environment, teaching practices, institutional organization and conditions that are believed to mostly contribute to performance in those categories. The importance of this research, coordinated by IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement) from Amsterdam is not that it only enables a comparison of educational systems of various countries but it also measures the changes in the efficacy of education in a country every four years. The next research is planned for 2007.

Since these researches have been conducted for the last ten years, many countries (such as the USA, Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the Czech Republic and Romania) used the results of these studies for reforms of their educational systems.

The research involves testing in several areas of natural sciences – chemistry, physics, the Earth science and the living beings science.

The students of Singapore achieved the best scores in natural science, followed by the Chinese and Koreans, then followed by students from Hong Kong, Estonia, Japan. The Hungarians took the excellent seventh place, Slovenians 12th, pupils from Bulgaria were 24th, Romania 27th, Serbia 28th and Macedonia 32nd. The Romanians, who were in 27th position, did not meet the average of 474 points. Right behind them were the students from Serbia, 28th place, and Macedonia, in 32nd place.

As to the achievements in mathematics, there are no bigger surprises there either. The students from Singapore were the top performers again, followed by Koreans, and students from Hong Kong in the third

place, and Chinese in the fourth place. The Hungarians scored high again and took 9th position. Slovenians were 21st, Serbians 24th, immediately followed by Bulgarians and Romanians. All these countries won more points than the average. Macedonians took 30th place, scoring far less than the average which was 467 points.

If we compare the best and worst results achieved by students from Hungary, Slovenia and Serbia, it can be seen how much better the Hungarians are. The high

Positive reviews

Slobodan Vuksanovic, the Serbian Minister of Education and Sports, was more than happy with the results of the TIMSS research compared to the results the students in Serbia showed in the PISA project. He said the TIMSS results were good and added that such an evaluation can be given having in mind the circumstances in which the students in Serbia live and study, and which are completely different to the standards of living and education of other countries whose students also took part in the research.

The peers of Serbian compulsory education students did not live through wars, bombardments, hyperinflation, sudden reforms in education, went on Vuksanovic, listing all the potential obstacles in studying in our country. He is the third Minister of Education in Serbia over the last year, and when he came to office in October last year, in the first few weeks he had to cope with the senseless decisions of his predecessor, Ljiljana Colic, renowned for kicking out Darwin from the text books of the eighth grade of primary schools. The magazine O&R will, on some other occasion, write about the plans for the reform of the educational system in Serbia.

14 per cent of Hungarian students found themselves in the category of the best students. Only 6 per cent of Slovenians achieved the best results and only 2 per cent of students from Serbia. The point of the scale marked as high level of knowledge was reached by 46 per cent of Hungarians, 33 per cent of Slovenians and only 16 per cent of students from Serbia. The point marked as average knowledge was reached by 89 per cent of Hungarians, 75 per cent of Slovenians and 48 per cent of Serbian students. Only three per cent of Hungarian students did not achieve the basic knowledge border, four per cent of Slovenians and a high percentage of 21 per cent of students from Serbia.

Some experts in Serbia appeal to the employees in education to take into account the results of both studies when they change the teaching and learning strategy. Many other wealthier countries did that, concerned about their students not achieving somewhat better results. For these experts, the PISA results are equal to a tragedy, and because of that, the method of work in schools should be changed inevitably and radically. Some find that students did not perform particularly well at the TIMSS study either, but different opinions can be heard too.

The education authorities say that they will take into account the PISA results regarding the success, or the lack of, of the students from Serbia but that they will not take them as a priority in the creation of the new reformed educational model. They explain that the tasks given in the research were not suitable to the Serbian school system. They warn that many wealthier and more developed countries, which did not go through such a stormy and tragic decade as Serbia, took part in the study and performed only slightly better than the students from this part of the Balkans.

That is the case, for example, with the students from the United States of America, who achieved only average results, which, they say, does not correspond the country's position of the world leader number one.

That can be some consolation, or justification, but nothing more than that. Poor results will not get better if there is an alibi that can be taken or not in the evaluation of poor achievements.

In other countries, there were no public statements hinting the diminishing of the importance of the research conducted under the backing of the OECD, except for Macedonia that will not participate in the next cycle of the PISA project. After the first cycle where they did not perform particularly well, the Macedonians withdrew from the project with an explanation that such a project is too expensive for a poor country in transition.

Perhaps the best is to wait for the publication of the list of the best and the worst performers for the next cycle of PISA and TIMSS researches? Perhaps some things will then be (even) clearer? And it will be clear where the students cram the knowledge and where they study to understand, that is, which educational systems are efficient, and which are not good enough for the 21st century.

O. Nikolić
D. Pavlović-Babić

The Roma Decade

At the initiative of the World Bank and other international developmental institutions, the period between 2005 and 2015 is proclaimed the Roma Decade. The aim of this initiative is to improve the social and economic status of the Roma population and to reduce the poverty of the Roma.



The Roma Decade will be promoted by the governments of eight European countries: Serbia and Montenegro, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania and Slovakia. The governments of these countries committed themselves in a special declaration to give special attention to improve the social and economic status of the Roma population and to allocate budget resources to implement that.

In the fund for the completion of the Roma Decade project, set up last year by the World Bank and George Soros's Open Society Institute, the starting investment amounts about 40 million dollars. The money will mostly be used for the reform of the Roma education policy.

Reform of higher education in BiH



Students' Council of the Mostar University publicly opposed the proposition of the Law on higher education in BiH, adopted recently by the BiH Council of Ministries that put it into a parliamentary procedure. According to the draft of the law, higher education in BiH would be regulated at the level of entities not the state. The Croat ministers in the Council of Ministers also opposed the draft law, but it was, nevertheless, adopted with the majority of Serb and Bosniak ministers' votes. The Students' Council of the Mostar University demands the higher education in BiH to be regulated at the state level which would guarantee equal rights for all universities in BiH. Kirsten Kobelt, the senior advisor for politics and planning of the OSCE mission in BiH, finds that the current political situation in BiH does not allow for the Law on higher education to be brought on the state level.

(source: Index.hr/HINA)



Prof Dr Gašo Knežević
On reform processes in Serbia

A Glove Turned Inside Out

The reform of the education system in Serbia started with comprehensive public opinion polls. In the process titled Talks about the reform, the general impression was the one of dissatisfaction with the system.

Still, a national consensus has not been reached, and, consequently, it was not possible for education to be elevated, in any way, above the daily, personal and political interests.

After the change of power in 2003, accompanied by the changes of the newly passed law on compulsory and secondary education, all the reform processes were slowed down, and, later, almost completely halted. For O&R, on the genesis of the Serb education reform speaks Prof Dr Gaso Knezevic, full Professor at the Faculty of Law at Belgrade University and a former Minister of Education in Serbian Government.

■ *Why is it that a national consensus has never been reached?*

We could come to the views that the majority would agree with, I suppose we could. In our case it was the dissatisfaction with the educational system of all its direct users and wider than them. The consensus itself, that is, the goals formed and adopted in that way, would be of a very low quality for a simple reason that the starting point was of the low quality, which inevitably indicates that the quality of the overall educational system was poor. That is a fact and we must accept it. Besides, the idea on forming a national consensus is an aggressive act of the highly educated and it raises the level of the goals in the stage of the adoption of consensus already. In our case, that was the scissors of which one blade was the general dissatisfaction with the education in the country, and the second blade was the inherited system, with all its characteristics. There was no systematic analytical approach to education – measuring, comparisons with other systems... The general experience of the people was based on the family manufacture, on the experience from one's own home. In that aspect, given that children here leave school emotionally after the second or

third grade (I mean here that they stop having a positive attitude to school), everybody deeply understood that something was not right. That is one aspect of the problem. The second blade of the scissors was the traditional environment in the country – the church, strong monopolistic centers, such as publishing centers, which maintained the belief that our traditional school was the best. In that conflict, maintained and nurtured for years, the state allowed for the system to develop uncontrollably. Actually, in the early 1980s, that system was ruined. The money was pumped out, redirected to the priorities of the then government; mechanisms of analytical support, or development and professionalism, were not created. By nurturing the monopoly, we got what a monopoly entails by definition – a closed circle that leads to regression, nadir... Salaries of the education employees were dropping constantly and, by and large, only the people who could not find any other place stayed in education. In 2000 a teacher's salary was 30 dollars a month. Of course, those who find employment in education have lost or sapped the positive attitude to a value system that schools should nurse and develop in the process of the transmission of knowledge.

At the same time, as a consequence of the centralization of the political system, centralization of the education system also grew. Thus, after the constitutional changes

from 1970s when the Republics gained a bigger independency in decision making, we moved into an extreme – in Serbia, the leader of the centralization, that process was, unambiguously, gaining on strength, primarily because of Kosovo and Vojvodina, which had repercussions in all segments of society – all jurisdictions of all bodies and institutions were vanishing except those of the ministry. The centers, such as the Institute for scientific-educational cooperation, and similar, were simply let to “die”. The centralization of power led to all but the “head” of the system – the ministries – to become the obedient executors. With the long time negative selection and incompetent staff, the educational system of Serbia became a glove turned inside out.

■ *How do the other republics of the former Yugoslavia behave in that period and do you think that the Slovenian national consensus is the reason for the continuity that has been accomplished?*

They, more or less, understand that nadir is close. I think that Slovenia was the first to realize that it could not follow that course any more. It is likely that there was a common commitment on some other level, not only in

the area of the educational system. There was a clear and unambiguous commitment for, I will provisionally call it, - ‘europization’. The Slovenians wanted to go to the direction opposite to the direction ‘pulled to’ by the republic with the biggest population, Serbia. They, according to my knowledge, before 1990, before gaining the independence, managed to create and carry out, to some extent, a parallel story in the educational system. There were attempts for institutional changes in Slovenia as early as 1987-1988. Thanks to that general commitment, which they had adopted far earlier than the others, Slovenia had her own vision of the educational system earlier, too.

On the other side, the picture that I got about Croatia is as it follows. There are two schools of thought: one regressive, one modern, oriented towards European goals, dating from 2000, and fairly strong, based on as much as I followed the Croatian reform. I can hardly speak of other republics, but, for Serbia, I know that a serious consensus has never been reached. During my mandate, we brought the idea on the adopted general view of the reform at the level of the Government not through the Parliament. Thus, a national strategy was not defined – from a fear of misunderstanding that could prevail in an environment that did not know much about education. Actually, we chose the Government decisions as a method and our strategy passed

the ‘filter’ at that level. It may be wrong, later it proved to have been wrong because already in the next make-up of the ministry of education it all reversed back to the original state. However, all documents of our strategy went through a comprehensive public debate, nothing was hidden from the public.

■ *Have you, by evading harsh and radical cuts, created a space for a resurrection of the traditionalist school in the country?*

Why were we not considerate? No-one took us seriously. No-one believed that we really wanted to implement the tenets of that strategy, to modernize and improve our educational system.

The ‘traditionalist’ school in Serbia was not well organized, and, in those sporadic conflicts between the ministry and church, mathematicians’ association, Serbian language and literature scholars, university, etc, we managed to solve the problems.

■ *The foreign money dictates priorities - that is a remark of your successors in the office of the Minister of Education. What were your experiences with the donors?*

The problem of the attitude of donors towards the countries that use those means is the following: they form universal teams who know the principles very well but often don't know much about the local conditions. They are often ready to sacrifice the situation ‘in the field’ for the sake of a principle. Those were our ‘conflicts’. For example, the World Bank, at one time, thought that the reduction of the teaching staff was a necessary solution. Their calculation was simple, they look at the number of pupils, schools and teaching and non-teaching staff, and, viewed in that way, we had a staff redundancy. But they didn't know what a broken network was - small schools in rural areas with a small number of pupils, the infrastructure that doesn't allow it for children to be driven safely to bigger centers...

■ *How much of the resources from foreign donations and credits have been used so far?*

So far, we have used about 25 per cent of the World Bank credit. After the change in the Ministry of Education, instead of people opened for cooperation and orientated to the integration with Europe, we got a team that is scared of all that is foreign. The desire to return to the atmosphere of self-sufficiency prevailed, to get enclosed within the own frames with a clumsy and inaccurate definition of traditional values that, allegedly, justify that. The active role of the Ministry of Education stopped, and when the foreign partners, such as the Israeli company Marmanek, instigated an initiative to continue the cooperation, the response of the then leaders of the Ministry was silence. That is how, not only the planned spending of the credit stopped, but what had been agreed till then was not used. All

development programs were extinguished. There is no development in Serbia without education. Since the beginning of 2004, there has been no action concerning development. Of the budget means, 87 per cent was spent on the salaries, and very little remained for development. So, the donations were a way to improve the investment in the school system.

■ *If you were to participate in the Government again, would you advocate the new change of the law?*

Immediately after the change of government, I thought that would not be a serious approach. Today I think that was the only thing we could have done. Start afresh.

■ *Regarding ‘your’ Law on compulsory and secondary school education, there were lots of polemics and resistance in relation to licenses, the introduction of the nine year compulsory education... How do you interpret the changes of the law that did not encounter any greater polemics?*

The Union is appeased – there are no licenses for teachers, and with that, a fear that we are not worthy is removed. The union has again settled in a cocoon from the time of communism and is only interested in the employees’ salaries. The results of two surveys conducted on international level indicate that in that comparison we score poorly and we are on the bottom of the scale. I refer to PISA and TIMSS researches. Within those researches, compared to other European countries, we are at the bottom of the scale, and compared to other developing countries, former countries of the non-aligned movement, we are not leaders either. That is the tragedy of this country. If someone acknowledges and identifies the problem, they can solve it. Sweeping it under the carpet won't bring any solutions. Currently, we do not admit that there is a problem, and we justify our views with the alleged traditionalism. Practically, we first get pupils and later experts who cannot compete with the others, incessantly leaning on, for excuse purposes, that one per cent of the extraordinary children who are not a product of the system anyway and who would be the same in any system! Our educational system takes in 70,000 pupils in each generation. Of that number we get one per cent of competent people who can cope with the world. And that one per cent, unfortunately, most often goes abroad and never returns. They are forever missing to create our own elite and reach a different, better educational level, and, if you will, a better national consensus that we mentioned in the beginning.

■ *Can private education, as a more flexible one, improve the general situation?*

The picture that I, as the former Minister of Education and the professor of the public university, have is bad. Serbia does not have enough professors of good quality even for the

public universities. If the private higher education competes with that, the standard has to drop. For five university centers and one art university, we have no qualified human resources. The level of teaching in our education is low, and those human resources are the best we have. It is enough to visit any university centre in Europe and see the difference. We have no equipment, libraries or computers. We have not been developing for years. Besides, the mercantile spirit has better chances to grow within a private educational system. There are some signs of moving forward. After all, those universities are smaller and even that helps them to adopt and implement European standards more quickly. They are organizationally and institutionally suitable, if there is a desire and intention to raise the standard to really be a serious competition to state higher education institutions.

I emphasize, the source of the money is not crucial for the quality of studies. What is crucial is the provision of quality and a mechanism to ensure that process. Therefore, licensing is necessary for all universities, both private and public, and a ruthless licensing process at that, one which would deny a license for work if the elementary conditions are not met. The quality must become both a demand and a goal.

■ *Are the concept of the reform of the educational system and the documents thereof, a list of nice wishes?*

The whole three year long work was wasted. Not one of the experts that created the reform has kept their position in a body or an institution. The Council of education that we set up was dismissed and no member has been recommended for the new make-up. So the creators exist neither as an evaluating mechanism nor as a continuity. A list of the potential members of the new Council is a whole new story – people of all provenances are there. There is only Mira Markovic missing. There are no people involved in education, there are no people, or there are only a few, who have wider perspectives on the development of the country in general. With the formation of such a Council, the education will be imprisoned for the further three years. There will be no development, as, judging by the personnel solutions, we cannot expect it. The names of the members of the Council were dictated by some circumstances. For example, ethnic minorities did not manage to agree on their representative, and the solution was found in Ivan Ivic, a Serb, which is absurd. Although, I believe, that he as a person will guarantee a speck of common sense in that calculation. But, that solution in itself is absurd and tells of the lack of serious approach in forming of one important and serious institution.

Bojana Cebic-Cvetkovic

Education for Employability and Entrepreneurship

Notes for presentation in workshop

Introduction: Human resource development for economic growth-employability and entrepreneurship

Anastasia Fetsi

As clearly expressed by the Lisbon European Council, the European Union has set the objective to become the most competitive, dynamic, knowledge based economy by 2010. It has also been clearly recognised by the same European Council that human resources (the human capital) of Europe is one of the main assets for the achievement of this objective and its permanent development through LLL policies is essential. Also entrepreneurship is emphasised as a basic skill to be provided through Life Long Learning.

Today within the EU, human resource development (education and training) is seen not only as the core issue of education/training policies (see LLL approach, Copenhagen process) but also as a key element of social and employment policies (see European Employment Strategy and Human capital approach) as well as of the economic development actions (see work of DG Enterprise on education for entrepreneurship and pillars 1 and 4 of the European Charter for Small Enterprises)

So the importance of this workshop lies exactly on the emphasis given to human resources in promoting economic growth, employment and social cohesion. (Normally when talking about economic growth emphasis is given more on investment, access to credits, macroeconomic stability, good public administration, anticorruption etc, while the quality and potential of human resources is rather left behind rather than being seen as an integral part of a package for growth).

In this workshop we will deal with two aspects or qualities of the human resources in the SEE namely the entrepreneurial

capacity and employability (another aspect being active citizenship).

1. The situation in the SEE - relevance and scope for enhancing entrepreneurship and employability

All SEE countries in different starting points in time and with different speed have entered a transition process meaning that they have embarked their transformation into market oriented economies and democratic societies. In the last 10 years (small scale) privatisation has progressed and the private sector accounts already for 62% of GDP. The contribution of SMEs to the private sector development and GDP is considered important: contributing to more than 50% to GDP in some countries of the region. Also SMEs can be considered as the first employment generator/net job creator in the region (in particular in the WBAs). Also we should mention the importance of micro-enterprises accounting for 51% to 98% of all SME's in Romania and Albania respectively. Still the privatisation process has led to little restructuring or fresh investment and little technological change and innovation -while there is still scope for development of the private sector to the levels of the Central European transition economies (accounting for 77% of GDP) and the increase of SMEs.

At the same time the transition process has led to increased joblessness as expressed by the low activity rates and high levels of (long term) unemployment ranging between (14% in Albania and Croatia to 29% in Serbia 35.8% in FYROM, 40% in BiH and 57% in Kosovo). Young people (especially those having dropped out the education system and those having finished secondary vocational education) are

relatively over-represented among this pool of unemployed. Moreover, in general there is a bias of (long term) unemployment towards those least qualified, those with outdated skills, ethnic minorities-Roma, etc. Despite the high unemployment some countries in the region report a lack of skilled, well-qualified labour force thus demonstrating existence of skill mismatches.

Taking into account the above, two useful for our purposes remarks can be made:

1. Entrepreneurial spirit in the region does exist as demonstrated by the increasing numbers of SMEs but it can/should be further nurtured in order to bring SMEs levels to those of the central European transition economies (and possibly make them more productive, innovative, dynamic)

2. The problem of (long term) unemployment creates serious waste of human resources and create a barrier to the socio-economic development of the countries so more systematic and intensive efforts have to be made in order to increase the employability of those unemployed/redundants/non active

2. How can we further nurture entrepreneurship through education/training

Definition of Entrepreneurship in Education and Training

Two elements:

■ A broader concept of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, which involves developing personal qualities and is not directly focused at the creation of new business

■ A more specific concept of training on how to create business and also to develop a business (make it bigger, more competitive)

Source: "Helping to create an entrepreneurial culture"-EC - Publications Enterprise policy

Entrepreneurship is an attitude itself that can be applied in all working activities in life. Qualities of entrepreneurship include: creativity, spirit of initiative, responsibility risk taking, independence, etc. These are qualities that are gradually developed in an individual and are also linked to her/his culture and environment but they can be also promoted through education and training. The earlier we start to inculcate in an individual these qualities the better it is, of course. The question is to which extent the education systems in the SEE are able to inculcate these qualities. And the answer is that education systems in SEE are not yet ready to support fully entrepreneurship.

Education systems in the SEE have been geared towards stable full-time wage

employment (mainly in big enterprises). Accordingly, the whole learning process as well as the skills and attitudes the education system has been promoting are to a large extent still revolving around this obsolete reality.

It has to be recognised that SEE Ministries of Education have already started the process of modernisation of their education systems and the EU through its Phare and CARDS programmes has been providing important support to that effort but we cannot yet speak about large scales achievements (although the candidate countries are more advanced) in terms of promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit.

Overall, introducing the entrepreneurial spirit within the education/school system requires a number of changes including:

■ Changes in the school management and school organisation

■ Introduction of innovative learning processes

■ Teachers that have an understanding of enterprise and business environment and are able to foster entrepreneurship in the classroom work

■ Revision of curricula to include entrepreneurship as a subject, module or cross-curricular theme

■ Support students' entrepreneurial activities

■ Develop co-operation between schools and the world of business

Developments in all these areas are gradual and need to be further and systematically promoted. As demonstrated by a recent report of the European Commission, for the moment the most straightforward, visible, targeted action for promoting entrepreneurship within the education system in the Western Balkans concerns the introduction of optional and extracurricular courses on entrepreneurship at primary but mainly secondary education level. This action is primarily donor supported (we have to mention the Junior Achievement/Young Enterprise programme implemented in many countries of the region) although some national actions of this form can also be found. A legitimate question arises on how donor supported actions of this kind can be mainstreamed into the curricula.

Some efforts to introduce entrepreneurship education at post secondary level are also noticed through provision of specific courses or cycle of studies by public or private universities or other educational establishments.

Concerning the enhancement of entrepreneurship of the adult population outside the formal education system, actions

seem to focus on "how to create a new business". These concern training courses organised mostly by networks of local/regional business centres but also by employment services. These training courses are often donor supported although some national funds through e.g. the implementation of active labour market measures are also invested. Other actions (television programmes, campaigns, exhibitions and fairs, round tables, etc.) aim at changing attitudes of people towards entrepreneurship, informing about business opportunities and un-tapping latent entrepreneurship potential. Finally, a lot of donor supported activities promote training for managers of existing businesses and consultancy services to existing businesses.

The above demonstrate that the donor community has been particularly active in supporting training and other measures that enhance the entrepreneurial spirit and skills of the adult population. A lot of transfer of know how has been taking place for example with the design of relevant training courses or the enhancement of local training capacity to deliver these courses or establishment of structures such as the networks of regional/local business centres. The question arises now, how the countries of the region will incorporate this know how within a strategy for permanent support to the enhancement of entrepreneurship of adult population. Obviously what has happened up to now can be considered as a demonstration of what can be done in order to increase the entrepreneurship potential and skills of the adult population and how. It has also offered the countries a rich experience in order to identify where the gaps of the education and training provision are and how they can be filled. This experience may have offered countries an easier planning of their next steps for further increasing the entrepreneurship potential of their populations.

3. How can we enhance employability through education and training

Definition of Employability: It is the key outcome of education and training of good quality, as well as a range of other policies. It encompasses the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if she/he so wishes or has been laid off, and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods in the life cycle (ILO Decent Work 2002).

Already this definition tells us that education and training can enhance employability of the individuals only if it

transfers to individuals skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes that are required by the economy and the labour market. This implies that the education and training system has to know what these are. In SEE the education systems have difficulties in answering this question for two reasons:

1. Because the education system does not have (good) communication with the economy.

2. Because there is still uncertainty in the economies in which way they are moving and consequently a lack of clarity in the messages on skill requirements they provide.

In order to address the first reason the Ministries of Education in most SEE countries are making efforts to bring the two worlds (education-economy) closer through the establishment of national councils for vocational education and training at national and/or sub-national level ensuring participation of social partners, Ministries of Labour, Economy and occasionally other sectoral Ministries. But generally these councils are at an early stage of development and their functioning (when they function) is quite weak at the moment. Exceptions are the two candidate countries. The reasons are several but the lack of willingness for co-operation of the other stakeholders is often reported by the Ministries of Education as the main impediment. At the same time a lot of efforts are being made mainly through donors' projects (but not only) for the opening of the schools to the local community through for example undertaking of skill needs analyses in the enterprises, developing partnerships with local enterprises, ensuring better links with the local employment services. At the same time EU funded projects (but also other donors projects) aiming at improving/modernising the education provision involve social partners in the identification of new occupational profiles and updating of the existing ones. However, we are far from admitting that there is a permanent/established dialogue between the two worlds.

The second reason is more difficult to address as economies in the countries of the region are in permanent change and often enterprises or other economic actors find difficulty in expressing their skill needs. However, the skill needs analyses that have been undertaken by a number of CARDS projects in the region demonstrate that some clear messages on skill requirements are already there. One of them is the importance of social skills such as team work, and readiness for co-operation, motivation and positive attitude to work, commitment and loyalty, communication skills. Knowledge

of foreign language and ICT skills are also highly demanded. Identification of technical skills is more difficult unless enterprises have introduced new technologies and modern equipment.

Overall, the challenge of bringing the world of education closer to the one of the economy in order to provide relevant skills to the individuals and enhance their employability is still there. Donors projects can only give examples of good practice and demonstrate that this is feasible but in the end it is up to the national/local actors to keep the debate/dialogue going on in a coherent institutional frame.

In the field of increasing employability of adults (unemployed/redundants/inactive) again we can find a big number of donors' actions in supporting the development and implementation of training courses, the establishment of training centres, the capacity building of local training providers to deliver relevant training, etc. We can also see that training, motivation seminars, and guidance to the unemployed in order to find a job make part of Active Labour Market measures and services that the Employment Offices offer in almost all countries in the region although the funds available are definitely not sufficient and the quality of the provision is often not adequate.

Overall, there is general recognition that training is important for raising employability of the individuals and there is a training provision developing. What is lacking is a system for providing incentives and permanent quality training opportunities to individuals for enhancing their employability in order to support the economic restructuring process and ensure social cohesion. ADD ABOUT PES

4. Concluding remarks

- Enhancement of entrepreneurship and employability of individuals is a prerequisite for economic restructuring & development and social cohesion in the SEE countries (as in any other country)

- Education and training can be used as main instruments for their enhancement

- The main need in the SEE countries is to take stock, evaluate and ensure mainstreaming of successful donor projects (which are the main supporter of promotion of entrepreneurship and employability today)

- In the medium term they will need to set up a permanent system of updating of skills of their populations based on the principles of Life Long Learning and supporting the economic restructuring process

- Partnership of relevant actors and in particular of Ministries of Education and Labour and social partners is a prerequisite for the development of such a system. (Assist your Ministries of education or even take the initiative to mobilise them.)

New law on higher education soon in Serbia

European Standards at Serbian Universities, too

The preliminary draft law brings a series of novelties, beginning from the European system of credits and evaluation to shorter studying and accreditation.

The draft law on higher education in Serbia, which in December 2004 went through meticulous academic debates, should be passed by the Parliament in April at the latest, due to the forthcoming meeting in Bergen. In Bergen, the education and state authorities from Serbia will account for how much has been done of what Europe has 'designated', and how much has been accepted in this area.

It is expected that the new law on higher education will introduce European standards in the Serbian education system, as envisaged by the Bologna Declaration, which the Serbian education authorities endorsed in autumn 2003 in Berlin. The intent of the authors of this document is to strengthen the role of universities within the state and render studying more flexible.

The proposed text of the law introduces a series of novelties, which should, primarily, allow easier studying and a faster process to obtain a degree. But, the students are expected to increase their engagement as the success will not depend only on the exam but on a series of pre-exam obligations, such as colloquia and papers, which represent a crucial novelty resulting from the European credit transfer system (ECTS). ECTS entails evaluation of activities throughout the academic year, and provides the standard of evaluation of knowledge across Europe, and, with that, it allows higher mobility of students and easy transfer to similar departments in the country and abroad.

New solutions bring the control of the work of professors regardless whether they

teach at private or state higher education institutions. It also does not allow them to work both at private and state faculties. Although this way of evaluation of professors has been widespread in Europe, many believe that evaluation of professors here will only be seemingly accepted and that certain resistance can be expected there.

New paragraphs also envisage a two-tier studying, in accordance with which basic studies will last three or four years, with the exception of medical schools. The 'master's' status can be achieved after two additional years of studying, and a PhD after another year.

Long and difficult debates, in the world of academics, were led in reference to some proposals in the preliminary draft law, specifically with regard to keep the status of the legal entity of faculties, accreditation, make-up of the National Council, credit transfer, introduction of two-tiered and applied studies, status of private faculties and universities in the future system of higher education in Serbia.

A big commotion occurred regarding the three year long studying at faculties. The biggest protests happened at the oldest and the biggest state university, the Belgrade University, where some professors wondered who needed four year long studies if a degree could be obtained after only three years! There were some remarks about the equalisation of the length of studying at faculties and colleges, which, many believe, would lead to devaluation of degrees.

Serious claims came from the University of Pristina saying that the draft law is unacceptable as it does not propose a universal system of education in the whole territory of Serbia, whilst the University of Kragujevac found that the legal status of

faculties and universities was not clearly defined.

The members of the Community of private faculties and universities of Serbia draw attention to a discrimination in the draft law that gives advantage to state faculties and universities, which, they claim, is especially visible in the paragraphs that regulate the make-up of the National Council, Accreditation Commission and the University Conference, bodies that take care of the development and quality of education, control of work and license issuance, and which do not include members from the private higher education institutions.

Harsh and numerous resistance and comments caused the stipulation that a higher education institution which is not founded by the Republic, has to provide a bank guarantee for the termination of studies according to the number of students for which the institution is accredited, which should ensure for students the continuation and completion of studies in case that private institution stops to work. That, practically, increases the starting capital that private initiatives will need to enter this sphere and it will cut down the number of students in private schools. Increased investments will, among other things, result in higher costs of studying at private schools, which means higher fees that should cover the higher costs. That is a negative side of the proposed law, warn the critics from private universities, albeit admitting that there is a positive side to it, and that is that it provides a certainty for students.

Professor Ljubomir Madzar, a one-time rector of "Braća Karić" University, the oldest and the biggest private university in the country, considers that there is a huge risk that the "blow" of some proposals can be survived by only one private higher education institution, and that all others would be moved to a lower status, in which they could remain for a long time. That blow refers to the stipulation that a higher education institution can have the status of a university only if they conduct accredited academic study programmes "at all levels of studies, in the framework of at least two scientific fields, and three scientific areas".

- So far, that condition is not fulfilled by any of the private universities and it is highly likely that the majority will not be able to fulfil it at all in the foreseeable future. For many, it will be questionable whether they will manage to achieve even the much more modest status of an applied studies academy, forecasts Madzar.

Criteria, according to his explanation, will be high and restrictive, which, he believes is right, as a university, in order to justify that title, has to be a school that covers all scientific fields.

- It is in the public interest that an order is introduced into this, in many facets, murky area, even if many private schools have to pay for it with a knockdown of their status, says Madzar.

- Majority of private higher school institutions find 'lethal' the condition under which a school can obtain the license to work only if in the implementation the accredited program they employ no less than 75% of full time teachers. It is true that many private schools managed pretty well by engaging teachers on the supplemental basis or simply by engaging teachers fully employed at other institutions. In that, private schools showed a high degree of entrepreneurial resourcefulness, and, with relatively small human resources, and decreased costs, managed to conduct broad and ambitiously set programs.

They believe that the regulations on banning the competition will for the most part hit the private sector in education. That would decrease the efficacy of the use of the teaching capacities of Serbia, which, they claim, is meagre anyway, so, private as well as a number of state schools, will have to turn to resources of lower quality. Thus, and needlessly so, the level and quality of teaching processes will drop, estimate the founders and employees of the private higher education institutions. They also believe that the law should envisage the possibility for private schools, same as the state schools, receive some budget funding, but this idea has not been adopted so far and is not included in the draft law.

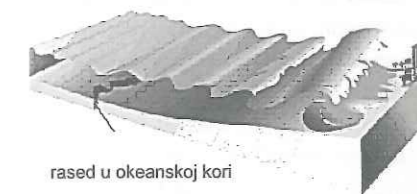
It has been more than four years since the change of regime in Serbia, and during that time, intensive works in the world of academia have been done for the new law on university which should be in line with the Bologna process and the laws of the modern age. In the meantime, all countries from the region, except for Serbia and BiH, have passed new laws. The education officials in Serbia say that they too will soon finish with this issue, but they add that a more difficult task is still ahead. It involves the implementation of the new stipulations and the beginning of more than necessary reforms that have to be comprehensive and radical. And, not all academic employees in Serbia like that.

Olga Nikolić

Practical knowledge

Big Wave

Tsunami ("a big wave" in Japanese) is a result of an earthquake whose hypocentre is under the sea or the ocean, and the epicentre is on the surface of sea or ocean. Seismic waves spread from the hypocentre through the water surface, creating waves of small amplitude (height) but of very long wavelength. However, as they get closer to the shore, the waves get bigger, up to 10



rased u okeanskoj kori

meters high and devastating. Given that in the areas of East and Southeast Asia, the Pacific Ocean plate meets the Asian and Australian land plates, which results in frequent earthquakes and volcanoes, it is exactly in these areas that tsunamis occur most frequently.

Students, first learn about this phenomenon in the fifth grade of primary schools, in the geography course (within the topic on geomorphology), and then in the seventh grade (within the topic on East and South East Asia). However, all the knowledge on tsunamis that students acquire is meagre and does not exceed the informational level. That should be changed, the topic should be approached differently, for example, it could be connected with what is happening in the world. It should also be noted that, in accordance with the present curriculum for the geography course, physical-geographical processes and phenomena are learned at a serious and detailed level. That is completely inadequate for the age of students at that level, and it poses a huge problem in acquisition of operative and applicable knowledge at later levels of education.

Emilija Đoković

Tasks:

- To adopt the organisation of work and a rational use of time and energy.
- To learn about safety at work, protection of health and of healthy environment.
- To learn about the basic characteristics of provision and application of the most important technical materials.
- To know and understand how to read and apply a technical drawing in the construction of parts, mechanisms or products.
- To gain skills for construction of some parts as designated by the technical documentation.
- To be able to produce simple technical drawings on the computer.
- To be able to recognise types of pressure and how they affect machinery elements.
- To familiarise with the main parts of measuring tools, principles and rules of work.
- To be able to apply measuring in practice.
- To learn the most important processes of manual and machine processing through metal machining removal.
- To learn the following concepts: geometry of tools, metal machining removal, heat at cutting and cooling, work regimes, durability of tools.
- To familiarize with the tools, principles of work and machine cutting.
- To be able to choose and apply tools and processes of manual and machine cutting.
- To learn the concepts of thermal and chemical-thermal processing.
- To familiarize with the cooling means.
- To learn the basic characteristics of corrosion.
- To learn about the reaction of materials to corrosion.
- To be able to choose and apply the most important procedures of surface protection.

- To familiarise with the elements of movement power transmission.
- To learn the basic characteristics of electric power and the usage of electronics on the tool machines.
- To be able to choose and put up the parts in mechanic systems.
- To familiarize with the elements of pneumatic and hydraulic systems.
- To be able to program the production of the simplest parts on numerically managed tool machines.
- To familiarize with assembling and dismantling of some machines and tools.
- To know and be able to put machines into use, and to detect and remove errors and obstructions for the machine operation.
- To know and be able to produce parts, mechanisms and systems related to the occupation.
- To know and be able to use the relevant literature.
- To be prepared for life long education.

Education for this occupation lasts three years, and the conditions for enrolment are a completed primary school and adequate health state.

This occupation envisages horizontal and vertical permeability. Upon the completion of the second grade and the completed block of classes, students can leave the school and acquire a corresponding degree (certificate) for – an ASSISTANT MACHINING OPERATOR.

After the second grade, and before the 60 hour block of classes, students can chose the occupation for which they continue education in the third grade. After that, and after they successfully complete the third grade, students get a degree for:

- Machining operator
- TURNER;
- Machining operator:
- MILLING CUTTER;
- Machining operator:
- POLISHER.

After they complete education, students can find employment in small, medium and big companies. After two years of work, they can take the craftsman exam and gain the craftsman title for the relevant occupation. Under some circumstances, students can continue their education in technical schools or technical colleges.

Without visas into EU

The decision of the EU Council of Ministers, which allows the students and experts from the countries of the Western Balkans to obtain more easily visas to enter the EU territory for the purpose of additional education, came into effect in early January.

That decision is a clear sign that the EU wants the experts from this area in the family of European countries.

Thanks to the alleviated visa regime, the young people from the West Balkans will not need feel such distance from European values, culture, and before all, the education system.

**Equipped to study!**

In the UK, 70 per cent of students starting university own a personal lap-top. The results of the study conducted by the "Marks&Spencer" chain show that those starting university in the UK will take with them the equipment to the amount of 3,300 to 6,400 Pounds (approximately 36-70,000 Kunas). Three of four students (about 70 %) will take with them their own lap-top computers and TV sets, and 60% will have a DVD player, 95% a mobile phone, and 30 % a hand held computer...

The money for all that comes from loans and parents. The study shows that, despite the student loans problem in the UK (in that country, students leave university with a debt of about £12,000!), there is an obvious and surprising increase in students' purchasing power.

(Source: BBC News)

Debate on education started on the Internet

The Ministry of science, education and sport started a public debate on their web site with regard to drafting of the new Law on textbooks and the Regulations on evaluation of students in primary and secondary schools.

On their web site, the Ministry points out that they are planning to produce new Regulations on evaluation, due to frequent and justified complains to a part of provisions from Regulations. The Ministry believes that the existing Law on textbooks allows the existence of parallel textbooks that expire within a year. Such textbooks are expensive and they upset children and parents, and rightly so, says the Ministry. (Source:Hina)

A Lesson Not Learned

"Tolerance, alertness, physical and moral courage to speak up against injustice, were not learned. Had human kind not failed to heed the experiences and lessons of the Holocaust, many mass killings would have been avoided", reads the message from the United Nations, from New York, at the beginning of the commemoration of 60 years since the liberation of Auschwitz.

Recently, the world leaders gathered to mark the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, on the, so far, biggest commemoration of the atrocious episode of the 20th century history – of brutal, organized killing of millions of people, mainly Jewish, committed by Nazi Germany.

The Holocaust was the state policy of genocide toward the European Jews and other "enemies of the German state", executed from 1933 to 1945. Over that period, almost 6 million Jews perished in 39 concentration camps in Europe. Auschwitz was the biggest among them. In Poland, 85 percent of the Jewish population was killed; about 2.8 million people and at least 1.5 million children. It is estimated that only 22 per cent of Jewish children who were alive in 1933 survived the Holocaust. The number of those who perished in the Nazi crimes, unwanted and persecuted as the enemies of the German state, is estimated to be 5.5 million; of which about a half million were Roma, between 10-15 thousands homosexuals and three million of Poles, many being political prisoners and Soviet war prisoners. Even priests, the disabled, the socially unsuitable, such as beggars, homeless, and alcoholics were deported to concentration camps.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Initially, in 18th and 19th century, the term 'anti-Semitism' denoted hatred towards the Jewish people and towards international political trends, liberal cosmopolitan trends, most frequently associated with the Jewish. Those were the ideas of equal human rights,

democracy, free trade, socialism, financial capitalism and pacifism. Hatred to the Jews has been existing for centuries. Pogroms were often, instigated with the story that the Jewish used the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes.

Publications, such as the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" gave support to and fortified the theory of the international Jewish conspiracy. An important part of anti-Semitism was nationalism.

The latest annual report of the State Department on global anti-Semitism gives four major reasons and sources of hostility towards the Jews in the world:

- a traditional anti-Jewish prejudice, which, for centuries, pervaded not only Europe, and which included the views of ultranationalists and others who assert that the Jewish community controls governments, the media, international business and the financial world;
- a strong anti-Israeli sentiment that crosses the line between criticism of Israeli politics and anti-Semitism;
- anti-Jewish sentiment expressed by Muslim population in Europe, based on antipathy toward Israel, as well as Muslim opposition to developments in Israel and the occupied territories in Iraq;
- criticism of the politics of the United States and globalization that spills over to Israel, and to Jews in general who are identified with both.

EUROPE

The American State Department in their latest report on anti-Semitism states that over the last several years Europe marks an increase of hostile manifestations against the Jews. The problem of anti-Semitism is especially strong in Russia and Belarus, as well as in the other countries of the former USSR.

The report states that in Western Europe there were a number of physical attacks against the members of Jewish communities, for which skinheads and members of extreme right political groups were responsible. Additionally, there is an increase of anti-Semitism on the internet and of hate speech in low-circulation

books. Publishing of anti-Semitic books and reports is often followed by readers' hate mail containing hatred, anti-globalization and anti-Western sentiments, as well as ethnic nationalism.

A part of the report concerning the former Yugoslavian countries points that there are some occurrences of anti-Semitism but that abuse of the members of Jewish communities were isolated incidents. There is a case from September

BiH Rectors Conference established

Yesterday, in the Sarajevo office of the Council of Europe, the rectors of eight BiH universities signed the Decision on establishment of the Rectors Conference in BiH. Hasan Muratovic, the rector of the University of Sarajevo, the oldest, the biggest and the most respectable higher education institution in BiH, has the honor to be the first chairman of the BiH Rectors Conference (RC).

The process of setting up the BiH RC started



a year ago and was conducted as a part of the joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe with the aim to reform the leadership and management of BiH universities, and it should enable further reforms of higher education in the country. Hugh Chetwynd, special envoy of the general secretary of the Council of Europe, emphasized that signing of the Decision was a specific step toward the reform of the higher education in BiH. Investing in higher education is at the same time investing into the future of BiH and that is why the Council of Europe, together with the World Bank and other partners, will continue to invest the efforts and resources in order to successfully bring to an end the reform of the higher education in BiH. Signing of this Decision is an important event, not only for the universities but for the country at whole. Now, BiH has her representative in the European association of universities. The goal is for BiH to become a part of European academic space by 2010, preceded by the full commitment to Bologna Process and the reform of the higher education in which a lot more effort and resources are to be invested.

rektorat@unsa.ba

2004 when unidentified perpetrators vandalized several tombstones at a Jewish cemetery. The leaders of the Jewish community in Bosnia and Herzegovina state that there is a tendency to mix anti-Israeli sentiment with acts of anti-Semitism, and media often fail to distinguish between criticism of Israeli policy and anti-Semitism.

According to the report, the Jewish religious community in Croatia has 2,000 members and maintains good relations with the authorities in that country. The report gives the example of a member of municipal council in Dubrovnik and his statement that choosing between Serbs and Jews, Jews were still a greater evil but no disciplinary action was taken against him. Additionally, Croatia participates in an informal international Working Group for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (ITF), with 20 member countries. The ITF advocates that the knowledge of the young people about the Holocaust is a way to combat anti-Semitism.

In Serbia and Montenegro, for the period from July 2003 to December 2004, there were a number of cases of anti-Semitism. The incidents mainly included the acts of vandalism on Jewish property and cemeteries, and the most of it involved spray-painting graffiti on Jewish objects.

Jewish community representatives in Slovenia reported widespread prejudice, ignorance, and stereotypes being spread within the society, and that the citizens

Virtual school – Dialogue, Democracy and Peaceful Conflict Resolution



All communication for this virtual school is made through e-mails and the web.

In spring 2005, The Mostar Nansen Dialogue Centre, together with ND centers from Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, starts a regional virtual school for the second generation of students with a topic "Dialogue, Democracy and Peaceful Conflict Resolution".

The texts for each course are delivered to students through e-mail, in Acrobat Reader or MS Word format. The students can read the material on

computer screens or print them out. All questions concerning any of the courses are sent to lecturers through e-mails, or put up on the previously defined mailing list.

The lecturers will include some of the most renowned names from universities from the region and wider. Some courses will be taught by experienced facilitators from the Nansen centers network. All communication with teachers and lecturers will also be made through electronic mail.

All communication and literature will be prepared in the English language. Students, teachers and lecturers are expected to use English.

do not consider Jews to be a native population despite their presence in the country for many centuries.

However, according to the report, a positive view prevails about the countries of the former Yugoslavia and their attitude to anti-Semitism. The reports point that the governments of all countries of former Yugoslavia harshly condemn the anti-Semitic incidents and that anti-Semitism has no stronghold in any of these countries.

B. Ć. C

How to Obtain a Master's Degree in Human Rights?

European Inter-University Center (EIUC) for Human Rights and Democratization was founded in Venice on 15 September 2002, with a goal to provide institutional founding and autonomous managing of the Program for European Master Degree (E.M.A) in the field of human rights and democratization, as well as to enable the member universities to jointly develop additional educational programs on human rights.

Since December 2004, EIUC is comprised of 32 of 37 European universities already participating in the Program for European Master Degree in Human Rights and Democratization, which was started in July 1997.

This Program, through a one year intensive academic program for education of professionals in the field of human rights and democratization, gives a practical work experience to its students. It is a multidisciplinary program that casts light on invisible relations between human rights, democracy, peace and development. This program offers an active and politically oriented approach to studying international relations, law, philosophy, history, anthropology, political science and sociology. Students have the opportunity to meet and be taught by leading academics, experts and representatives of international organizations (including the EU representatives) while studying in a multi-cultural environment.

The Program offers one semester in Venice, and the second semester at one of the participating universities.

E mail: secretariat@emahumanrights.org source: Medija centar – Beograd

The EU to provide 2.2 million Euros for the reform of the vocational education in BiH

In the next two years, the European Union will provide 2.2 million Euros for modernization of the sector of vocational education in BiH, including the rationalization of the number of occupations and the improvement of the life-long learning systems. This was announced at the meeting of the representatives of European Union and representatives of ministries of education, schools and labour market sector of entity and cantonal levels. In this way, the second stage of the EU support for reform of vocational education in BiH started. Through this project, the EU aims to improve the improvement of legislation in order to create a unique educational space.

The aim is to educate children in accordance with the needs of the labor market through an establishment of a social dialogue. The project gives a greater access to education and transparency of diplomas, as well as opens up the European labor market. It is expected that the modernized programs and curriculum will be brought closer to children. This project will prevent the brain drain from the country and encourage the return of those young people who are abroad.

The first stage of the EU support for the reform of vocational education lasted from 1998 to 2004, and resulted in a creation of new study programs and curricula, and modernization and rationalization of the number of occupations.

(source: Nezavisne novine)

The Copenhagen Declaration

Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training

Over the years co-operation at European level within education and training has come to play a decisive role in creating the future European society. Economic and social developments in Europe over the last decade have increasingly underlined the need for a European dimension to education and training. Furthermore, the transition towards a knowledge based economy capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion brings new challenges to the development of human resources.

The enlargement of the European Union adds a new dimension and a number of challenges, opportunities and requirements to the work in the field of education and training. It is particularly important that acceding member states should be integrated as partners in future cooperation on education and training initiatives at European level from the very beginning.

The successive development of the European education and training programmes has been a key factor for improving cooperation at European level. The Bologna declaration on higher education in June 1999 marked the introduction of a new enhanced European cooperation in this area. The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 recognised the important role of education as an integral part of economic and social policies, as an instrument for strengthening Europe's competitive power worldwide, and as a guarantee for ensuring the cohesion of our societies and the full development of its citizens. The European Council set the strategic objective for the European Union to become the

world's most dynamic knowledgebased economy. The development of high quality vocational education and training is a crucial and integral part of this strategy, notably in terms of promoting social inclusion, cohesion, mobility, employability and competitiveness.

The report on the 'Concrete Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems', endorsed by the Stockholm European Council in March 2001, identified new areas for joint actions at European level in order to achieve the goals set at the Lisbon European Council. These areas are based on the three strategic objectives of the report; i.e. improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the European Union, facilitating access for all to education and training systems, and opening up education and training systems to the wider world.

In Barcelona, in March 2002 the European Council endorsed the Work Programme on the follow-up of the Objectives Report calling for European education and training to become a world quality reference by 2010.

Furthermore, it called for further action to introduce instruments to ensure the transparency of diplomas and qualifications, including promoting action similar to the Bologna-process, but adapted to the field of vocational education and training. In response to the Barcelona mandate, the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) adopted on 12 November 2002 a Resolution on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training. This resolution invites the Member States, and the Commission, within the framework of their responsibilities, to involve the

candidate countries and the EFTA-EEA countries, as well as the social partners, in promoting an increased cooperation in vocational education and training.

Strategies for lifelong learning and mobility are essential to promote employability, active citizenship, social inclusion and personal development. Developing a knowledge based Europe and ensuring that the European labour market is open to all is a major challenge to the vocational educational and training systems in Europe and to all actors involved. The same is true of the need for these systems to continuously adapt to new developments and changing demands of society. An enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training will be an important contribution towards ensuring a successful enlargement of the European Union and fulfilling the objectives identified by the European Council in Lisbon. Cedefop and the European Training Foundation are important bodies for supporting this cooperation.

The vital role of the social partners in the socio-economic development is reflected both in the context of the European social dialogue and the European Social Partners framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications, agreed in March 2002. The social partners play an indispensable role in the development, validation and recognition of vocational competences and qualifications at all levels and are partners in the promotion of an enhanced cooperation in this area.

The following main priorities will be pursued through enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training: 2

On the basis of these priorities we aim to increase voluntary cooperation in vocational education and training, in order to promote mutual trust, transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications, and thereby establishing a basis for increasing mobility and facilitating access to lifelong learning.

European dimension

- Strengthening the European dimension in vocational education and training with the aim of improving closer cooperation in order to facilitate and promote mobility and the development of inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other transnational initiatives, all in order to raise the profile of the European education and training area in an international context so that Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for learners.

Transparency, information and guidance

- Increasing transparency in vocational education and training through the implementation and rationalization of information tools and networks, including the integration of existing instruments such as the European CV, certificate and diploma supplements, the Common European framework of reference for languages and the EUROPASS into one single framework.

- Strengthening policies, systems and practices that support information, guidance and counselling in the Member States, at all levels of education, training and employment, particularly on issues concerning access to learning, vocational education and training, and the transferability and recognition of competences and qualifications, in order to support occupational and geographical mobility of citizens in Europe.

Recognition of competences and qualifications

- Investigating how transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels, could be promoted by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, and common measures, including a credit transfer system for vocational education and training

- Increasing support to the development of competences and qualifications at sectoral level, by reinforcing cooperation and co-ordination especially involving the social partners. Several initiatives on a Community, bilateral and multilateral basis, including

those already identified in various sectors aiming at mutually recognised qualifications, illustrate this approach.

- Priorities identified in the Resolution on lifelong learning adopted by the Council of the European Union (Education and Youth) on 27 June 2002
- Priorities identified in the Resolution on the promotion of enhanced European co-operation on vocational education and training approved by the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) on 12 November 2002
- Developing a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning with the aim of ensuring greater compatibility between approaches in different countries and at different levels.

Quality assurance

- Promoting cooperation in quality assurance with particular focus on exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training.

- Giving attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers within all forms of vocational education and training.

The following principles will underpin enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training:

- Cooperation should be based on the target of 2010, set by the European Council in accordance with the detailed work programme and the follow-up of the Objectives report in order to ensure coherence with the objectives set by the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture).

- Measures should be voluntary and principally developed through bottom-up cooperation.

- Initiatives must be focused on the needs of citizens and user organisations.

- Cooperation should be inclusive and involve Member States, the Commission, candidate countries, EFTA-EEA countries and the social partners.

The follow-up of this declaration should be pursued as follows to ensure an effective and successful implementation of an enhanced European cooperation in vocational

education and training:

1. Implementation of the enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training shall be a gradually integrated part of the follow-up of the objectives report. The Commission will reflect this integrated approach in its reporting to the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) within the timetable already decided for the work of the objectives report. The ambition is to fully integrate the follow-up work of the enhanced co-operation in vocational education and training in the follow-up of the objectives report.

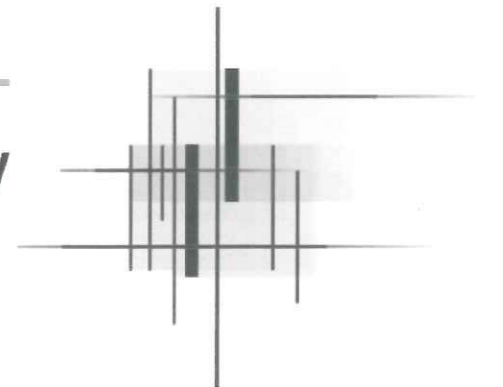
2. The existing Commission working group, which will be given a similar status to that of the working groups within the follow-up of the objectives report, in future including Member States, EFTA-EEA countries, candidate countries and the European social partners, will continue to work in order to ensure effective implementation and coordination of the enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training. The informal meetings of the Directors General for Vocational Training, which contributed to launching this initiative in Bruges 2001, will play an important role in focusing and animating the followup work.

3. Within this framework the initial focus between now and 2004 will be on concrete areas where work is already in progress, i.e. development of a single transparency framework, credit transfer in vocational education and training and development of quality tools. Other areas, which will be immediately included as a fully integrated part of the work of the follow-up of the objectives report organised in eight working groups and an indicator group, will be lifelong guidance, non-formal learning and training of teachers and trainers in vocational education and training. The Commission will include progress on these actions in its report mentioned in paragraph 1.

The ministers responsible for vocational education and training and the European Commission have confirmed the necessity to undertake the objectives and priorities for actions set out in this declaration and to participate in the framework for an enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training, including the social partners. A meeting in two years time will be held to review progress and give advice on priorities and strategies.

Alternative Academic Educational Network

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Alternative Academic Educational Network (AAEN) is an interdisciplinary research centre for higher education policy. It participates in national and international activities in this field, particularly in research, development and consultancy projects.

The primary goals of AAEN activities are to preserve and promote the quality of higher education, to foster courses of the Bologna Process in establishing European Higher Education Area.

After several years of activities in the field of higher education reforms in our country, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has honoured AAEN to establish the UNESCO Chair in Governance and Management of Higher Education.

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Quality assurance

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• Giving attention to the learning

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The following principles

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• Measures should be voluntary and

principally developed through bottom-

up cooperation.

• Initiatives must be focused

on the needs of citizens and user

organisations.

• Cooperation should be inclusive

and involve Member States, the

Commission, candidate countries,

EFTA-EA countries and the social

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The follow-up of this declaration

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ensure an effective and successful

implementation of an enhanced

European cooperation in vocational

European dimension

• Strengthening the European

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the development of inter-institutional

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• Increasing support to the

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Several initiatives on a Community,

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confirmed the necessity to undertake the

Commission, candidate countries, the

EFTA-EA countries and the social

partners.

The follow-up of this declaration

should be pursued as follows to

ensure an effective and successful

implementation of an enhanced

European cooperation in vocational

education and training.

The ministers responsible for

vocational education and training

and the European Commission have

confirmed the necessity to undertake the

Commission, candidate countries, the

EFTA-EA countries and the social

partners.