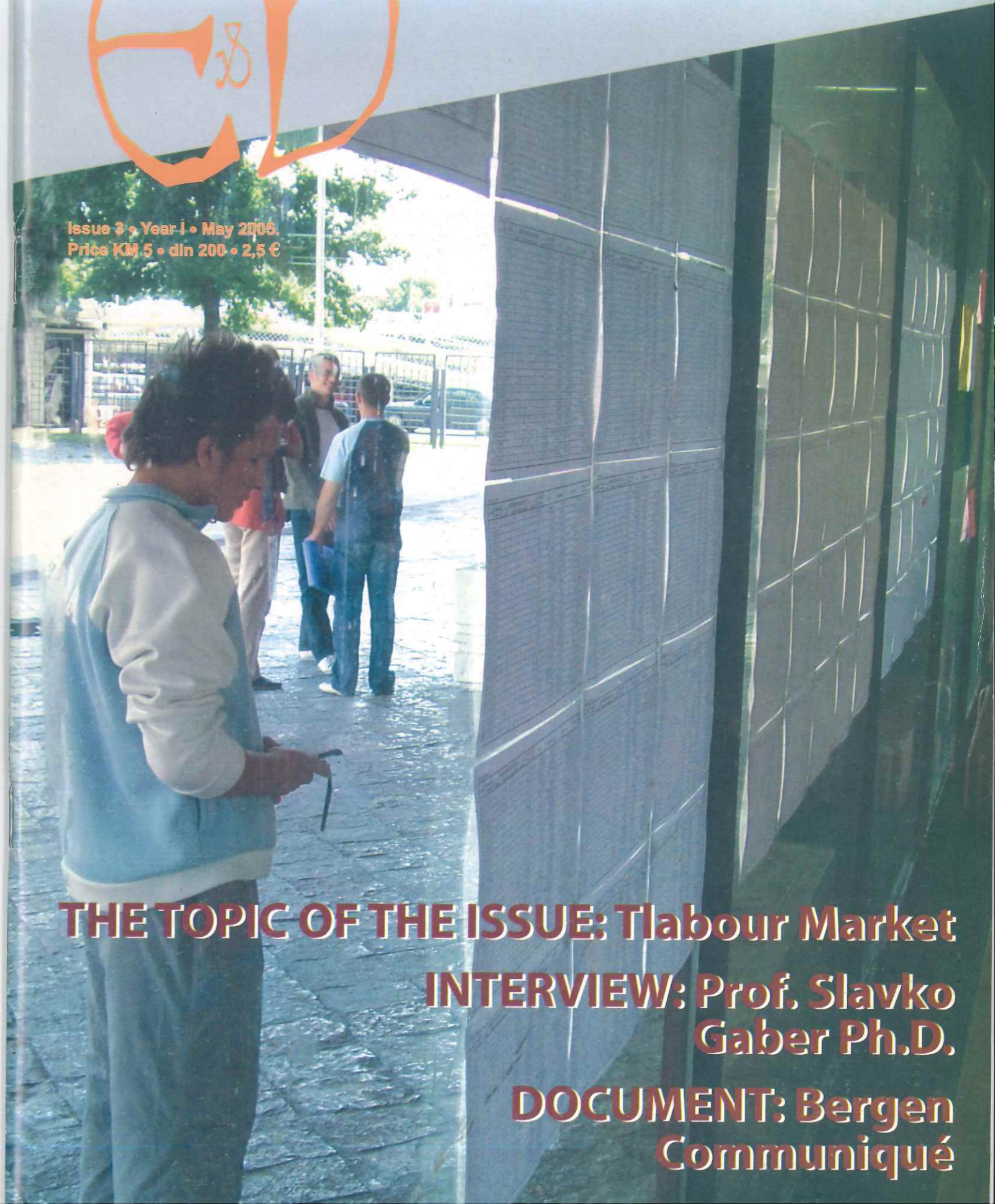




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THE TOPIC OF THE ISSUE: Tlabour Market

**INTERVIEW: Prof. Slavko
Gaber Ph.D.**

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Communiqué**

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The Education Support Program (ESP) and its network partners support education reform in countries in transition, combining best practice and policy to strengthen open society values. ESP works to facilitate change in education and national policy development. Support is focused in South Eastern Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia, Turkey and Pakistan. ESP's mission is to further open society values in education. These include accountability in governance and management, equal access for minorities and youth considered to be at risk, sustainable approaches for improving quality in education and the involvement of civil society. ESP emphasizes program implementation and policy development in these target areas. Standard education reform priorities that focus primarily on systems for improving quality are balanced, in ESP's approach, with learning outcomes that are a high priority for open society. Central among these are critical thinking, civil and social responsibility, multiculturalism and positive attitudes to diversity, and an awareness of "self and the other."

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Prof. Refik Secibovic, Ph.D.

Balkan Unrest

Competences, competences, competences... are a unanimous demand from the market and employers. At the same time, it is a demand on educational systems to stop increasing the army of unemployed experts, and a demand to abandon "good contacts with the right person" when recruiting staff, and to value only the skills and abilities that bring progress, gain, profit etc. to a company.

At the same time, the comfort of a permanent, full-time job – the lethargy one can give in to after finding a permanent job, social security that nothing can disturb disappears for good.

The twenty-first century, with the term competency for each occupation, causes unrest among the employed. Competences are a connection between the education and the labour market, they unite academic and professional profiles but they also determine the learning goals. In that way, the new market directly affects the changes of educational systems. Inevitably, looking for people with a wide range of competences, market demands direct the educational system towards the production of workforce with acquired skills, which enable direct participation in the work process. Education for the sake of it, i.e. learning in order to spend many years on the labour market is becoming a thing of the past.

Dynamics of the development of new technologies, media...the environment as it is today, shows that "incompetence" and the lack of a competent workforce is a big drawback. Formal and informal institutions dealing with education are therefore competing to train as many people in everything that employers require – knowledge of foreign languages, computer skills...

This is why the question: "Do you have a CV?" is so frequent among young people. They have realized, before the "permanently employed staff" organized in unions with the aim to keep their "comfort of idleness" under the slogan of rights guaranteed by laws and social programmes, that in order to find a good and well-paid job, one must have a good business biography translated into several international languages. In this way, young people with a new "eligibility" – which includes certain level of education, interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills, analytical skills, innovativeness, initiative, persistence...and especially willingness to learn – recommend themselves to their future employers for working in multicultural and international environment – in every respect skilled for the job, so to speak, even at the beginning, they are capable of achieving maximum results.

New laws prescribe abolishment of fear and unconfirmed authorities in all fields. In the process of learning, a good teacher is a means of accomplishing good education. Pupils and students can make mistakes, but they are called to maximum engagement. Establishing trust in the interaction between teachers and pupils is directly connected to the interest in learning and quality work.

Next to competences, there is demand for quality control. It refers to pupils and students, but also to teachers and professors, their financiers and politicians.

Are only young people those who have realized that they need competences in order to do a job?

Idealized picture of a future society through the prism of labour market and a connection with education according to recommendations of developed European countries is, unfortunately, rarely the case in practice in our region. In southeast Europe, it is still believed that education does not assume measuring, responsibility or facing the consequences. Generally accepted is a demagogical concern which calls to national and political awareness, crying out that changes are expensive, unfeasible and that nothing is missing in the current systems.

A reliable indicator of the effectiveness of schooling systems are the records of unemployed in the employment bureaus and institutes for the labour market. Analyses show that insensitive network and inappropriate education at schools and at universities are the main cause for the high unemployment. In the conditions of ruined economic systems, the situation in the last couple of years has drastically deteriorated so the records show several generations of the same educational profiles. Inevitably, in the conditions of fast economic and technological changes education must respond to the demands – a fast, disciplined and consistent production of the very same workforce must commence, lead by various knowledge.

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Iskra Maksimovic, M.A.
Centre for Quality Education

According to contemporary beliefs, a broader definition of vocational education and training encompasses more or less organized and structured activities, regardless of whether they provide recognized qualifications. The aim of vocational education and training is to provide pupils and adults with an opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and abilities (work competencies), required and sufficient to do a job or several similar jobs. Also, the process of education and training should provide professional preparation, through which an individual will acquire skills that will help him to adapt more quickly and easily to the changing demands of the labour market.

Accordingly, the content of vocational education can be oriented towards the demands of the labour market, and then directed right at a job or an occupation or the combination of the two, but it must include general education and vocational theoretical education. In what proportion and how these elements are combined, depends on the specific nature and characteristics of each national system of education and training.

At the end of 1990s, the development of European education got a new swing and a direction, which especially focused on the field of vocational education and training.

The cornerstone of these changes was laid by a new document the White Paper on education, whose main aim was to harmonize educational systems, training and employment and their further advancement within the framework of the future development of Europe.

The White Paper has set the key principle of modern Europe – compatibility of social integration, employment and personal achievement of every citizen. Education should take part in providing such compatibility and lead to building a knowledgeable society of Europe. The principle of lifelong learning plays the key role on that path. As European systems of education and training are specific and different in many ways, which in some cases

of employment. Therefore, the tasks facing the education and training are focused on: improvement of quality, easier access to all forms of education and training and opening of the sphere of education.

1. Improve the quality of education in accordance with the new demands from the society based on knowledge and modernize the teaching and the learning process;

2. provide easier access to the systems of education and training for all, in accordance with the principles of lifelong learning, faster employment, career development and active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion;

3. open education and training towards the wide world in the light of faster connection between the work and the society and the response to the challenges faced in the process of globalization.

Common denominator of educational reforms in the countries of European Union is the effort to establish a flexible

Vocational Education and Training in Europe – 2010

appears as inflexibility and parceling out without connecting or making it possible, the White Paper was supposed to establish these “common blocks” for building a knowledgeable society of Europe as quickly as possible. The Lisbon Declaration was

In 2010, Europeans will live in the conditions of very competitive and dynamic economy based on knowledge, in the world which will have a larger selection and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

established on these grounds, defining the main strategic goal that should be accomplished in Europe in 2010.

In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary not only to transform the economy but also to modernize the whole system of education and training and the system of social welfare. In this context, good education and training should lead to accomplishing the desired goal – learning for employment, which connects the sphere of education and training with the sphere

system for initial and continual vocational education in order to respond to the changed demands on the labour market. At the same time however, vocational education and training have the task to give pupils and adult learners general knowledge and values

necessary for their further personal growth, professional advancement and career development. Therefore, the processes of modernization and reform of vocational education and training are complex and lengthy.

As the determiner “learning for employment” is a desired parameter of future outcomes, vocational education and training become especially important and are given priority. In accordance with that, member countries of the European

Task 1: Improve the quality of education and training in accordance with the new demands from the society based on knowledge and modernize the teaching and learning process;

- upgrade education and advanced training for teachers and trainers,
- develop the skills needed for a society based on knowledge (new basic skills),
- provide access to information technologies for all,
- increase the number of students enrolled in scientific and technical studies,
- use the resources to the maximum.

Union agreed in Barcelona in 2002 that the process of modernization and adaptation of vocational education should follow and meet the demands of the society based on knowledge and provide higher level and better quality of employment. In accordance with this, the Framework of Development of European Vocational Education and

Training was developed (“Copenhagen Process”), its key priorities being:

- develop lifelong learning (including training),
- define concrete future tasks of vocational education and training,
- promote mobility,
- develop e-learning,
- strengthen cooperation.

Development of lifelong learning is viewed in the context of connection between vocational education and training and the European Strategy of Employment, i.e. how it helps increase employment. Mobility is seen as a means of learning, and e-learning is focused on improving the system of vocational education and training. In the field of cooperation, Copenhagen Process defined “the open method of cooperation” as a future model of work. Starting from these key segments of Copenhagen process,

Task 3: Open education and training towards the wide world in the light of faster connection between the work and the society and the response to the challenges faced in the process of globalization;

- strengthen the links with the world of work, research and the society as a whole,
- develop the spirit of entrepreneurship,
- intensify the learning of foreign languages,
- increase mobility and exchanges,
- strengthen European cooperation.

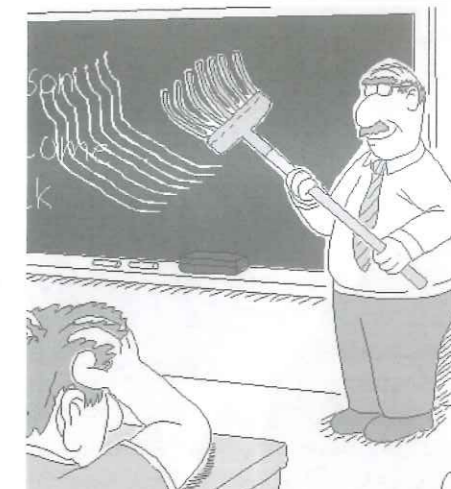
five main priorities have been identified on which further development of vocational education and training in the member states will especially focus:

1. Find a solution for a large number of insufficiently qualified workers. Although a large number of European countries have made progress in developing skills of their working population and although a larger percentage acquires higher secondary education, there is still a large number of those having low qualifications, which presents an obstacle to further development of economy, competitiveness and social cohesion. In order to change and overcome the current situation, vocational education must be more flexible, open and attractive – which means easier access to higher education but also to the labour market. The demand is to focus the vocational education and training as much as possible on a pupil/student in order to reduce early leaving school and “drop outs” among young generation. One possible mechanism to achieve better results is career counseling which would help young people and adults to find professional paths which suit them best.

Task 2: Provide easy access to educational systems and training for all, in accordance with the principles of lifelong learning, faster employment, career development and active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion;

- create open environment for learning,
- make learning more attractive,
- support active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion.

2. Promote continuous capacity building. According to the findings of the analysis “Vocational Education and Training – A Key to the Future / Lisbon-Copenhagen-Maastricht: Mobilization for 2010”, this form of vocational training is the weakest link in lifelong learning. Still, only 10% of companies provide training for adults within lifelong learning. This imposed a demand on all stakeholders, including social partners to take actions which support employers, especially in the sector of small and medium-sized companies in developing and providing more training for their workers (especially older workers, women who are returning to the labour market, etc.). Also, there is a demand to recognize informal learning, establish collective contracts between social partners at all levels, create an adequate environment in vocational schools and companies, develop a more flexible educational process, introduce



distance learning, e-learning.

3. Increase mobility in order to promote development of European labour market. The lack of mutual recognition of qualifications and competencies is the main barrier to the mobility within the European Union. Establishing the European framework of qualifications represents one of the essential mechanisms for achieving this goal. Promotion of a strong connection between education, training and labour market demands should be manifested in direct connection between the institutions for vocational education and training and the world of labour.

4. Invest in the quality of the system of vocational education and training. It is necessary to increase the volume of investment in vocational education and training in order to raise the levels of skills of European population. All actors must take on responsibility for a larger investment in vocational education and training. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to upgrade and develop the quality assurance system and evaluation of vocational education and training, a system that would be broadly applied in the state as well as in the private sector.

5. Provide high-quality professionals in vocational education and training. The quality of vocational education and training depends in the first place on the quality of teachers and trainers. Their role is to establish the process which will move from classical teaching to the model of guiding through learning with constant innovations. As the position of a teacher in vocational education is little valued, it is necessary to improve that position and increase the attractiveness of such occupations. There is a special demand for constant upgrading of teachers and trainers, especially in the spheres of information technology, innovations in the field of learning.

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Prof. Slavko Gaber, Ph.D., professor of sociology of education at the University in Ljubljana and former Slovenian Minister of Education

If there is not a stable political authority, and if there is not a high level of concord of all the factors of changes, then the reforms are doomed to disaster.

Nowadays, flexibility is a great quality. Being skilled in an area, above all in those areas which allow further learning in life. New knowledge, communications, the Internet, computers, knowledge of languages and a capacity to work in a team are today's demands. All big corporations know it is not enough to have leading experts in a certain area. If they are not able to cooperate with each other, if they are full of prejudices about the "Jews", Albanians, black people, Serbians, then they are experts on an argument and they are not very useful.

■ *In the whole region, there is a wish to harmonize the educational systems with the systems in the European Union, but there is also dissatisfaction because it has not been done yet. At the same time, a resistance to changes seems to be getting stronger with every practical action and task. What are your views concerning the reform of the educational system – when should the changes start and to what extent does the social reality determine the readiness and the degree of success in implementation?*

- This is not the case only in the region. This is common for all reforms in Europe and broader. Agreeing with the ideas that underlie the changes and the general feeling that something is wrong and that it should be changed are one thing. The differences in opinion occur when there is a concrete request. How to implement the changes, should they be a product of social changes or should they be imposed – the conflict of interests around it creates a resistance and internal blockades. The level of agreement between the protagonists of the reform processes depends on the maturity and general social atmosphere. If there is not a stable political authority, if there is not a high level of concord of all factors of changes, then the reforms are doomed to disaster. One of the distinct features of countries in our region is a very fast acceptance of ideas, the wish to improve the system of education...but when it comes to realizing the promises or agreements there are huge problems. This is where we, Southern Slavs, are rather inconsistent. There lies a big difference between our systems, which are so often inefficient and, for example, Scandinavian – where negotiations can last longer but when an agreement is reached, then it assumes a certain responsibility to implement it. It is not the case here. In brief, the success of the reform is the question of a consensus and a political decision and the strength to implement what has been agreed.

■ *What is your experience from the cooperation with the countries in the region, bearing in mind the specific historical and cultural events in the recent decades? What are the advantages and what are disadvantages, bearing in mind that the points of departure for the reform of education were similar?*

- The similarity reflects in the fact that we all knew, more or less, what we did not want, i.e. that we did not want socialism and Marxist dogma any more. The differences began from the moment when some countries, as early as the second half of 1980s, sensed what they would like to change – in the societies of the newly created countries the level of consensus largely determined the maturity of the educational systems. In Slovenia, that concept matured and became a sort of hegemony in Gramsci's sense of the word. And so, when we came to realizing the idea, when we had to institutionalize and apply that as solutions in concrete cases, it went more easily. But we must not fool ourselves – it did not go without tensions and difficulties. Of course, everyone agrees that we should build a system which will be efficient and for the benefit of the children and the

Step by Step

nation in general. They all want social justice and at the same time market economy which would be efficient enough – the difference between us is only in the way we implement those declaratively adopted principles. How? What mechanisms to apply in the implementation? How much money will be invested? How much are you willing to work at home to actually learn something? We in the whole Balkans tend to whine about the hard time we are having, that too much is required from us...at the same time, we would like to be good, better than the others, on the top.

New countries that were formed after the collapse of SFRY got internal problems along with their constitution. Where there were more such problems (until the civil war), it was more difficult to impose the education reform as a priority and the ground of agreement. Slovenia was lucky in that sense. In the early nineties, we sort of chose a different path, we knew we wanted to join Europe and were prepared for the difficulties to come. We knew no one was going to pamper us and that we had to invest in education if we wanted to achieve the goal.

When we had big problems with unemployment, Drnovsek's government decided to invest in education and in that way partly solve the problem of unemployment. Although there were a lot of discussions and arguments about various aspects of educational reform, we all agreed on one thing – the educational system should be reformed. Luckily, it turned out that the education reform had priority over the role of Partisans and Domobrani (members of Quisling forces in Croatia and Slovenia WW II) etc. In other countries those things were priority for many years. We were lucky to have education on the top of the nation's priority list.

In terms of the allocation of budget funds it looks like this – from around 4.7% GDP, allocated to education, we came to current 6.13%. In Slovenia, this difference is more than 90 billion tolar (450 million dollars), i.e. two times more than the budget for culture. The picture is more complete if I mention that the army is given around 1.8% and that the increased part allocated to education is 1.4%. The recommendation from OECD is to allocate 80 % of the total budget to salaries and to invest around 9% in development. For the immediate development we allocate 9-10%, which means that Slovenia carried out the recommendation from OECD.

What in your opinion is the situation in the educational systems in the region compared to the tendencies of European countries towards the joint labour market and a harmonized educational space?

- There are attempts to keep the systems within the competence of the member states of the Union

– still we are moving in the direction of better comparability and compatibility, i.e. better mutual adjustment of educational systems. And toward accomplishing the idea of efficient market economy which is socially oriented. It is a so-called advantage that Europe has over America. Main changes and the strongpoint of this idea are in the field of vocational education, as well as in the whole tertiary education. Our region is entering the process of harmonization with European systems at uneven pace. Two potential problems are identified here – one is the opinion that everything should be copied, and the other is persistence in the belief that we are, in spite of everything, very good, if not the best. Neither of these two narrow views is good because for each segment of education one must first see what is good

that is not only the question of the evaluation of the implementation of the Bologna Process. Studies TIMS and PISA also show the position of education in the countries of the region. In my opinion, none of us are doing great, not even well. Slovenia is in the best position, but I personally believe that we are not positioned as well as I believe we should be. Why? One part of our public believe that we work too hard, that we ask too much from ourselves...but the international study TIMS showed us that we thought too highly of ourselves and that "Slovenians do not work enough". As for the Finish, who are among the first on those lists, the situation in the society is different. They think they know less than the results show. They do what we in this region cannot – when they say they are learning, they are actually learning,

Competencies

Vocational education is a problem in the whole region because there is not an economy which would be truly engaged in that field. As regards Slovenia, I can openly say that all reform actions would have failed if there had not been for the state who had supported that idea for more than ten years, bringing that segment of education into a new situation where companies now look for engineers, particular craftsmen... where companies are ready to invest a certain amount in educating required workforce. One of the larger conceptual mistakes in the stage of establishing relations between the economy and education is whining about the bad luck – in that way, one can only put children off enrolling in vocational schools of that profile. In Slovenia, we have not achieved everything we would like to in that field, but today it is easier to talk about what programme we need for a particular profile. People in the economy are now interested in what expert they are going to hire, if they will have any knowledge, if they will adjust quickly enough to new situations...The industry now necessitates the knowledge in the field of information technology, foreign languages, etc.

and what is not worth much. There is not a country where all segments are equally developed and of good quality. The report from the conference in Bergen clearly shows which country in the region of southeast Europe is taking which position. General qualification, in my opinion, is that we are all behind in that process – some more, some less – but all of us together far behind. In Europe at the moment, different classes of universities and studies are being established. Some universities with particular programmes will be in the first class, while the others will be classified in the remaining classes, and some, unfortunately, will not be ranked anywhere.

■ *What position can the systems of South Slavic countries take in relation to the European systems? What potentials do they have?*

- There are huge differences – Serbia, for example, has several times larger potential than Slovenia, due to the size of population itself. The University in Belgrade must be stronger than any other university in the region due to the potential it receives, but not in regard with the organization and the output effect. So the advantage of a bigger number is obvious. However, there is also a quality. It is achieved step by step and it is easy to lose. But

when they say they are going to change something – they change it or change it in 90 percent of the cases. We do that in 60 percent of the cases at best. This so-called protestant ethics practiced in Scandinavian countries obviously has a great advantage over our self-satisfaction that we fill with whining. All international studies show that, according to the time we spend at school, we are below average. As for the results, we are around average, and I do not know who we should thank for that. We should be lower and we want to be in the top third. That is impossible – if you invest average energy at school and at home, where can you classify yourself? Well, below average. It is a very simple formula. The world does not really tolerate our self-perceptions and prejudices.

■ *What does the market specific of the Balkan countries look like considering that the industry is in ruin? Is the service sector, which in the European countries dominates over production, seen as a solution and how can the educational system respond, considering that it would require new and complex occupations, skills?*

- Majority still believe that it is desirable to launch a finished profile of an expert on the labour market in order to satisfy the tradesmen. But they

do not know where they are going by believing so. This thesis has failed in all serious systems in the last ten years. One should follow in the direction of programmes which are broad enough, general and of a good quality, which, within a broader field, give opportunity to those who have obtained qualifications to get advanced training and be as flexible and possible. This process should be established in every company for each machine. We cannot educate a profile to work on a particular machine because nowadays machines are replaced every three to five years. Some even sooner. Schooling must give such competencies and in a practical way so that those who have been trained can join the new production process, in a new situation at any moment. Nowadays, flexibility is a great quality. Being skilled in an area, above all in those areas which allow further learning in life. New knowledge, communications, the Internet, computers, knowledge of languages and capacity to work in a team are today's demands. All big corporations know it is not enough to have leading experts in a certain area. If they are not able to cooperate with each other, if they are full of prejudice about the "Jews", Albanians, black people, Serbians, then they are experts on an argument and they are not very useful.

■ *There is apparently a need in this region to exchange the old ideology for a new religious or a political option. What mechanisms of protection do you see as a possible way to make idolatry a matter of choice?*

- There are differences in that sense. It seems that the longer a regime lasted, the more concepts you can hear that do not have much in common with the European Constitution. The school should be secular, which does not mean it is antichurch, but that it stays away from ideologies i.e. prevailing of one political idea. The school should be conceptualized in such a way as to take over a part of the values which are common to all of us: liberals, conservatives, Catholics, Orthodox...

What is common to different religions, ethnic groups, political groups – should be built into the basis of the education system, and apart from that it should be neutral and leave the families and individuals with the freedom of choice regarding ideologies. The concept of secular school comes from the Greek word – laos, which means people, nation. Another name is demos – the rule of all. Laos means that we are all in an equal position before the law. So according to this idea, nothing must prevail and what is common is our mirror. If a nation is intensively dealing with events from fifty, a hundred or more years ago, that in a way absorbs and encourages internal intolerance, which is not lacking in territories with a lot of intolerance.

■ *There is an apparent tendency to include entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, tradesmen in some kind of a direct social cooperation. How do you evaluate the teaming up of those factors in the economic situation as it is at the moment in the Balkans?*

- When you have little vital economy, then you have little partnership. It simply cannot be otherwise. Relationships, of the kind advocated in Europe, are only starting here and they should be carefully fostered and all necessary conditions should be provided. It is an illusion that the partnership can be established quickly and perfectly, the social partnership must be established step by step.

Slovenia has made some good results in that area, but it is still far away from the desired goal.

Still, it is far better than in 1993 when people would reach for the guns on the mention of the social partnership. Nowadays, they talk about that, negotiate about what each can offer in that relationship and what can be expected in return.

■ *Credits, which the World Bank issues to countries in the western Balkans, represent a significant part of the funds for education reforms. How do you find the misunderstandings between the World Bank experts and experts in education, who very often have different stands on the priorities of these countries and the possibilities, mostly conditioned by poor financial situation?*

- The World Bank finances reforms to various extents. In Slovenia they did not take part in financing. They found it quite strange that we did not take the money that was being offered. That was how we eliminated influences from outside. We did hire consultants who were needed. We invited a lot of them, Swedes, Finish, Norwegians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Danes... So we looked at everything more or less and chose what we thought was clever and applicable to our conditions - but without someone else's money. I believe that was not a bad decision, but I also know that is not possible in every country. Besides the World Bank, there are many other institutions who support education in the region. Soros helped a lot and he should be erected a monument in that part of Europe.

In the relationship with the World Bank there is not a uniform formula, but there are two typical mistakes that are made when foreign experts come

- we do not listen to them because we believe we know better and they do not listen to us because they believe they know more. Both options are equally wrong. It is possible to make progress only through cooperation.

Foreign experts do not have accurate information about the country they work in. When I advised one of the countries about the concept of reforms of the educational system, I tried to learn as much as possible about how that nation and people perceived themselves, what their subjects of conversation were, what their public disputes were... I went to see a hit play in the theater. I was a stranger, but I spoke the language well enough to understand the play and the fine points of the dialogues on the stage. That is what I told my colleagues from the western and northern countries several times. If we are entering this relationship, we are influencing, interfering - then we must be radical, fair and as detailed as possible. Our action must not narrow down to offering schemes applied in our countries - they can be inapplicable in some other systems.

We from ex-SFRY countries are quite self-confident. We are the best in everything and everyone else is stupid. One of the great leaders said that foreigners would not speak about what was wrong here. Not only did "the great leader" say that, it got into the minds of common people.

That is where one should look for the answers, the solutions for the changes. The World Bank can be a useful partner, provided you listen to them and they rush to your aid when you do not have the strength to carry on. The trends are different and they can direct activities and funds in the fields which are a European choice, but nowhere in the region is the system of financing born by the World Bank. The system that we are creating must be established in such a way that the country itself can support it. The educational system must be self-sustainable. Therefore, one can expect from any organization to pay for the reform, the development of the concepts, the training for a couple of thousands of trainers, teachers... but it is not possible to expect this organization to finance the salaries.

It is necessary to combine local brains, build one's own capacities on one hand, and on the other hand listen and look carefully what is going on around us, be open. Europe is opening, the world is strong - that is my experience from staying with a group of 105 experts who worked on the European Constitution. There are so many people with a lot of potential, but no one can fool themselves that they are in charge, the leading ones... we, South Slavs should not stand aside and whine, nor should we stand on the battlefields and boast about our success. We are smart enough to learn. We Slovenians are normal participants in that game. And as regards the Union and the other ex-Yugoslav countries, we would like to be surrounded with EU countries as soon as possible. We have sentimental and - as always - completely selfish reasons for that.

Bojana Cebic-Cvetkovic

Vocational Education and Training in Serbia - Reform Directions

In regard with the strategic directions of the development of vocational education and training in Europe, there is the issue of reforms and modernization of vocational education in Serbia.

The main goal of the further development of vocational education in Serbia is its positioning among the factors of technical-technological, social-economic and individual development. The first step in that process is to conceptualize the development of vocational education and meet the social and individual needs and abilities. In order to provide the best possible education, transform the system of managing and financing education and include stakeholders and social partners, provide efficient transfer of knowledge, but also enable all participants in the education process to acquire skills and provide full respect for ethnical, cultural and linguistic differences, in 2001 the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia started preparations for the reform of the system of vocational education. In that sense, the analysis of the current system of secondary vocational education was done and it served as a basis for the preparation of the Strategic Framework for the Reform of Secondary Vocational Education, which was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2002. The main points of departure in the proposed reform were defined in the request to:

- provide complete and constant access to secondary vocational education for all members of the society;
- learn under the conditions and in the way that, to the largest extent, suits the real needs and abilities of those who are learning and which is in accordance with the potential and the needs of the society;
- increase opportunities for learning through institutional, programme and organizational pluralism in the realization of education and the connection between formal and informal education;
- provide quality and professionalism in realizing vocational education which includes social verification of norms and standards for institutions and educational programmes.

Reform processes that started in 2001 and 2002 continued in 2003 by defining priorities and

key areas of action. Those included:

- legal changes in vocation and general education;
- establishing new institutions in the field of vocational education, which meant start the process of decentralization;
- introduction of new system of enrolment in the first grade of secondary vocational schools;
- modernization of curricula and introduction of 27 new educational profiles as a pilot project in nine fields of work;
- introduction of modular principle in structuring curricula;
- advanced training for teachers for the realization of new profiles and curricula.

One of the objectives of the processes of modernization and reforms of vocational education and training in Serbia that started is to meet the needs of the market economy, of the society and an individual. Since this process is lengthy and gradual, it can not be implemented only by the Ministry of Education and Sports, nor can it be done only by vocational schools (teachers, directors, school associations), but all actors and factors who "deliver" their needs to the system of vocational education must be actively involved - employers, companies, unions, employment services, the Chamber of Commerce, Employer's Association, parents, pupils. The path of this modernization and further development of vocational education is founded in a separate document - Development of Policy and Strategy of Vocational Education and Training in Serbia.

The change of economic policy means a different structure and organization of vocational education and training. Directions of further structuring include:

- systemic regulation of cooperation with all relevant actors (employers, unions, Chamber of Commerce, professional societies, state institutions and government bodies);
- defining the role and responsibility of social partners (state, employers, unions and the chamber) for implementation, programming and realization of vocational education and training;
- provision of systemic connection between the labour market and the development of



vocational education and training in certain occupations, fields of work and profiles;

- involvement of social partners in defining and structuring educational profiles, in evaluating the outcomes of educational profiles (external panels at final examinations and vocational final examination, craftsman's and specialist's examinations, certifications);
- systemic regulation of the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy (especially in the spheres of adult education, employment, certification and accrediting, lifelong learning, continuous education, introduction of new profiles);
- further institutional development of vocational education and training at national level (establishing National Council for Vocational Education).

Main strategic directions of the joint action of all participants will ensure that vocational education and training:

- are compatible with European standards;
- give everyone an opportunity to acquire professional qualifications;
- ensure establishing a new relationship between the theoretical and vocational education and the creation of a new relationship between

schools and companies;

- ensure the application of the principle of lifelong learning.

Starting from here, the process of further reform of vocational education will include:

- further upgrading and innovation of curricula based on the outcomes of learning; upgrading of modular model of curricula; introduction of new programmes, courses;
- programme and organizational redefinition of practical work and professional practice based on an established and defined agreement between the key social partners and the Ministry of Education and Sports;
- further updating of - contents, organization and methods of the teaching process, teachers' work and schools in general;
- development of an adequate system of grading and evaluation of pupils' achievements;
- development of a satisfactory balance between the general and vocational education, theoretical and practical education (proportion between general and vocational education was proposed in the Concept of Development of Secondary Vocational Education);
- further redefining of educational profiles in order to meet the needs of a new economic reality;
- provision of conditions for the system of certificates, diplomas and qualifications in accordance with European standards;
- rationalization and harmonization of the network of secondary vocational schools with the needs of economy, labour market, employment policy, wishes and abilities of pupils;
- development of the system of educational standards;
- quality assurance of vocational education, its constant monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of pupils, teachers and schools, i.e. institutions for education in general;
- provision of a better vertical and horizontal mobility of pupils within vocational education and their further access;
- creating conditions for continuous capacity building for teachers and total professional development of teachers (new role of a teacher, their constant development and advancement), introduction of new methods in teaching (group work, interactive learning, project work, problem solving, etc.);
- innovation of equipment and teaching materials;
- becoming independent and further development of vocational schools in new conditions, connection with the local surrounding, needs of the local economy, finding new ways of financing;
- advanced training for directors and building their capacity for the new working conditions.

Iskra Maksimovic, M.A.

If one should say in brief what employers are looking for when hiring workers, then the answer would be that they are asking too much, at least when you bear in mind what workforce our secondary vocational schools are educating. There is almost no advertisement in which a local or a foreign company does not expect to have young applicants, under thirty years of age, with many years of working experience, who speak English fluently, are good at several computer programmes and have a driving license. It is no wonder that for the position of a secretary or a commercialist many ask for advanced vocational school, and if someone does meet the above-mentioned requirements, very often it does not automatically guarantee you a job. Because employers want ambitious, hard-working, communicative associates, with excellent organizational skills and to be interested in team work. Among other requirements which need to be fulfilled, there are often things like "ability to work under pressure", "intellectual

Employers look for "complete" persons

curiosity", "orientation to outcomes" or "analytical skills above average".

On the other hand, a logical question is what employers offer in return. Optimistic anticipations like "opportunity to earn well", "outstanding environment with proven professionals" or "training for challenging projects" usually boil down to a modest salary, which is, as many young people claim, not worth working for. The gap between the expectations of secondary-school pupils on leaving school and employers' wishes can be explained by a well-known example: employers always say "work hard and I will pay you well", and employees say the opposite "pay me well and I will work hard". The conclusion could be that our secondary vocational education, with the exception of several educational profiles, educate workforce who have difficulty finding a job and who after obtaining a diploma find themselves on the labour market. This is also evident from the information recently published by the National Employment Service that 48% of young people under 27 are unemployed. Even 90% of young people under that age wait for a job for over five years, and 55% for over two years, while only 6% are formally employed. In order to start work, they must first go through various types of vocational training, retraining

or advanced training. All former Yugoslav republics have faced this phenomenon.

- The main problem is that no one since the early nineties has dealt with the issue whether schools meet the needs of the world of work or not, but those schools have been used to preserve the social peace and to keep the children in the educational system. It was relatively easy for them to enroll in advanced schools or university and no one paid attention to whether the pupils had appropriate knowledge and skills and whether they could find jobs. In the meantime, the economic structure changed, there are not any big systems any more, and our vocational schools were created upon the model from the socialistic period, so in 2001 we had a system that matched the economy from the eighties. Machine vocational schools are the largest in number in Serbia, and we know how big the needs are for that kind of workforce - says Gabrijele Bratic, the national director of the Unit for the Implementation of the Programme of Reform of

Vocational Education in Serbia.

Outdated curricula, outmoded educational profiles, teachers without initiative and a difficult financial situation in the society negatively affected the overall functioning of school and the pupils as well. Employers complain that young staff are uninterested, that they do not have enough practical knowledge and that they need a year or two of training in order to engage in their field of work. As Snezana Markovic, the head of the Department for Additional Education and Training within the National Service for Employment says, pupils who finish secondary school, but also those who finish university leave with very good theoretical knowledge of which their peers from many countries would envy them. However, they lack concrete practical knowledge so they must have six, nine or twelve months of on-the-job training, depending on the level of their qualifications.

- It is typical that our secondary vocational schools do not educate workforce either for employment or for the continuation of education. It turns out that these pupils have a hard time at university because they have less theoretical knowledge than those who finish grammar school, but that they do not have perseverance in work and that they are not



"You've presented yourself nicely, but honestly, we need someone with more experience."

used to constant learning. They are on-and-off learners and they have been made so by the old curricula, they are rather passive and not used to taking their destiny in their own hands - claims Danka Vlahovic, the Principle of Economic-trade school in Sopot.

At the same time, employers ask from the workers not to neglect work, to have work habits, to be responsible at work; to have a wide

range of skills and be aware of all the potentials they can develop at work. Borko Ziravac from the Employers' Association says it is necessary to create a system that would enable workers to get advanced training in other fields, so that, say, after two years spent at one job, they earn the right to get advanced training or retraining at the expense of the local self-governance and the state. It turned out that acquiring knowledge in several similar or different fields improves the work at a particular job.

- Private employers expect a "complete" person who can do anything as soon as they are hired, and we are trying to convince them that it is impossible and that it takes time to adjust and learn. Employers say the candidates must speak a foreign language at the highest level of conversation, they must know how to use several computer programmes and be good at communication. We have a problem between the supply and demand, because more and more people are losing jobs and employers are interested in younger persons, who have no commitments and who can dedicate their time to work even after the official working hours. Since the persons recorded by the National Employment Service mostly lack the above-mentioned qualities, we organize various types of training where they can acquire additional

knowledge and skills, which will help them find a job easier - says Snezana Markovic, pointing out that the situation will change once we do not stick only to official diplomas, as there are people who do not have formal qualifications and can do certain jobs.

The effect of schooling on the development of positive personal qualities is best seen in the examples from domestic educational practice. The reform of the secondary vocational education, carried out in cooperation with the European Union, i.e. through the European Agency for Reconstruction, started in 2003 in five fields of work: agriculture and food production, medicine, machine engineering, construction and electric engineering. One of the starting points of the programme was that all segments of the society had to be involved in the reform of the secondary vocational education - from pupils, who would attend

Students with a diploma from a secondary vocational school mostly find themselves at the employment bureau

reformed schools, teachers, who would undergo special training in order to introduce the reform in the right way into the educational system and respond to the needs of the society - all the way to the municipalities and the economy, which would again have a clear and important influence on the development of the region and on the formation of the labour market.

European Union runs the programme of the reform of secondary vocational education in the

Subjects and modules

The need for the new curricula has been imposed by the labour market, where new occupations are wanted or new knowledge and skills within the existing occupations. Contemporary economy imposed the need to have social partners, teachers and experts in the field of education work together to design curricula. The new programme has subjects and modules in its structure. Subjects retain the disciplinary approach, and modules (sets of functionally related knowledge, skills and abilities required for a particular job) enable linking theory and practice. Another novelty is the orientation to outcomes, which define what a student should know or be able to do after finishing school. A novelty in curricula is a different proportion between theoretical lectures and practical classes - in three-year pilot schools that means 70% of practice and 30% of theory, and in four-year schools that proportion is 60% to 40%.

neighboring countries as well - in Macedonia, BiH, Croatia and Albania. In Serbia the programme is in the first phase, in Bosnia in the second, as it is in Croatia (because the reform was stopped for some time due to the changes in the Government's stands), while Macedonia has gone the farthest ahead. This is one of the rare fields that is being continuously implemented in Serbia and that has not been affected by the shift of the political set in the Ministry of Education. As Gabrijele Bratic mentions, work is an international issue and it represents a national interest of any country.

How much the learning according to new curricula affects the pupils can be seen in

Economic-trade school in Sopot, where the reform in the field of work economy, law and administration is underway in cooperation with GTZ.

Two new educational profiles have been introduced business and financial administrator, and as of the autumn the third one will start - a bank clerk.

- Pupils who attend these educational profiles are encouraged to have entrepreneurial spirit, they must learn to create their lives and their careers and that there is not a single country or government that will do that instead of them. Pupils will not need additional training when they finish school, because the curriculum they follow is flexible and pupils are getting used to lifelong learning in practice - to follow the development of technologies, to be able to use all electronic gadgets, to speak foreign languages fluently, to develop communicativeness, ability to solve conflicts, ability to work in a team. Pupils at the bureau for training simulate the work in a company and that is a revolutionary novelty, but it is the guaranty that having obtained a diploma they will know how to do the job they have been educated for. This simulation starts from the registration of a company, contains the overall organization of office work - financial operations, trade and the like. During their education, pupils simulate the work in various types of companies. They learn how the budget institutions function, do all kinds of secretarial jobs, learn to follow the changes in regulations and apply those regulations - and all that is the guarantee that when pupils finish school they will know how to work - says Vlahovic.

According to her words, the role of professors is very important, because they are practically the company's managers, they encourage them to work, to handle different situations, to solve problems, take initiative... Compared to this way of work, one can say that the old educational profiles are producing the unemployed. The only exception in this school are three-year profiles: a cook, a waiter and a pastry chef, who are oriented to practice and where pupils quickly find jobs when they finish school, while occupations like a tourist, a culinary and a catering technician, according to experts, have outdated curricula.

Radmila Pejic

Keeping Young Experts

The President of the Executive Council of Vojvodina (IVV) Bojan Pajtic stated, addressing the students from ex-Yugoslav republics that the Provincial Government are doing everything to keep the young experts in the country, because this generation of students is a pledge to Europe. Pajtic received representatives of students' organizations of universities and faculties from Slovenia, BiH, RS, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, participants in the project "Students' Path to Europe". "Education is extremely expensive and it is difficult when a country ends up without experts. In order to prevent brain-drain, IVV has a programme which supports the education of 330 young researchers, and those who show the best results will get a job. Also, IVV is working on bringing back 70 of our young experts, who are at the moment living and working in Canada, France or Germany". He said that the University in Novi Sad is one of the most prestigious in Serbia and Montenegro, mentioning that, according to European standards, it is graded with a "four", and that the universities which are ahead of it like Oxford are graded with a "five". Mladi info

A Third of Young People Without a Job

One in every three persons at the age of 30 is unemployed, and around 100,000 young people do not have a day of working experience. "Unemployment among young people is the first on the list of problems in Croatia, because that generation is expected to bear the economic growth and pay back 30 billion of foreign debt", the president of SSSH Vesna Dejanovic pointed out on Friday during the Days of Open Door, with which this office celebrated 15 years since the foundation. The Door of Tvornica in Subiceva street was open for young people and all those looking for a job. At the "stands" of unions, HZZ, portal My job, Network Association and Association for Helping Victims of Mobbing, young people were able to find out what occupations are wanted, what rights they have concerning work, how to write a biography and many useful tips. They were able to try a live job interview with an employer and ask for legal advice from a union. Contemporary knowledge, skills, access to global technologies make young people the most comparative advantage in the development of Croatia, said the economic advisor of SSSH Mario Svigir. By following the model of growth and development in EU countries, and with an ambitious development strategy, Svigir points out, 200,000 to 250,000 more permanent jobs could be created in Croatia within 10 years. If the Croatian economy restructures and develops according to employment models in EU, more employment can be expected in the sphere of technologically advanced industries, catering services and tourism. Huge potential for employment of around 170,000 highly educated under 30 years of age Svigir sees in the development of the sector of business services. In trade, but elsewhere too, he warned, a "creative destruction" of jobs is underway. Old occupations are disappearing and new are created, but young people must master this new knowledge and skills in time so that they can compete on the labour market. When entering the world of work young people are most upset by flexibilization, i.e. work for a definite period of time and unpaid overtime work, in many companies affectionately called "loyalty". Vjesnik

Unions in Serbian education, their mutual relations, influences, pressures and the fight for members

Guild Clinch in the Balkan Manner

Several days before the summer break, the leaders of the Association of Unions of Educational Workers of Serbia called the employees in primary and secondary schools to boycott the first classes in the morning and afternoon shift as a sign of protest because a special collective contract has not been signed which would, among other things, protect them from being fired without control. It is no secret that experts from the World Bank have insisted on a more rational network of the schooling system even since the democratic changes and that, due to the drop in birthrate and abolishment of some occupations, there will be at least 10 percent surplus employees (about 12,500 people), so it is very likely they will be made redundant as of the autumn. Even though the Branch Minister, Slobodan Vuksanovic, has made a public oath that it is more likely that he will be fired than any teacher or professor.

For many, the union's call on a warning strike is more likely to have been organized for the purpose of winning union points in the fight for members than a purposeful action that will hit the target. In a concrete case, educational authorities were threatened that the school year would not start on time in September if by then a special collective contract was not initiated – even though the whole work on preparing a draft of that document is still to be finished by guild unions. In other words, they have not done the job, and they are blaming the authorities for the text that they themselves have not prepared yet. That is absurd. And typically in the Balkan manner.

As a matter of fact, special collective contracts can be a pretext for a story about the status of unions in Serbian education, their mutual relations and the power. One could say with a clean conscience that all relations and influences from the state level are mirrored at this one, the union part of a micro system. In Serbia, two special collective agreements are in effect in education at the moment, for primary and secondary schools. They have been in effect since 1 January, 2000. In the meantime, there have been attempts to change that document – the last attempt was in November 2003 when the adopted text was signed by the Minister of Education of that time, Gaso Knezevic, the President of the Association of Unions of Educational Workers of Serbia (USPRS), Miodrag Skrobanja, and the President of the Branch Union of Educational Workers of Serbia "Nezavisnost", Zdravko Kovac. The third union leader, Branislav Pavlovic, from the

Disagreements in the joint work on writing collective contracts signal that the relations between professional organizations are weak in other spheres of cooperation as well

Union of Education of Serbia (SOS) did not have a permission to do that, because there was no mention of coefficients necessary for determining salaries in the text.

In the meantime, in March this year, in the Serbian Parliament the new Law on Labour was adopted, so that provisions from the current collective contracts which are not contradictory to that Law and to the so-called "overarching law" on the basics of the educational system, remain in the effect until 23 September, this year. Therefore, it is necessary to have a new collective contract initiated by then. Besides these documents, there is a Protocol in which the state promises not to start the rationalization (which is a euphemism for dismissals) by the end of the school year.

Leaders and experts of the unions of educational workers have taken part in writing the draft of the proposed collective contract by different stages. In

Money Power

- In order for a union to function, it must have funds and people. If this union had more money, I would hire the best experts to participate in the negotiations. Most unions in foreign countries have a large number of employees and the power of a union is reflected in how many experts they can hire or engage in talks which require expert knowledge – says the president of SOS.

the end, the president of "Nezavisnost" – Zdravko Kovac joined this work. The other two union leaders complain that he insisted on additional requests, which they believe slowed the process of writing the document.

Kovac does not think that he is holding back the agreement by refusing to accept the version of the contract from 2003, because he believes that it is an archaic and useless document. He would rather organize work meetings where solicitors from all unions would design a new text. His proposal has been accepted without much enthusiasm and shortly before publishing the magazine "Education and Development" contours of the new collective contract in education should be established and then forwarded to the branch ministry and ministries of work and finances.

- A set of school laws and laws regulating the field of public services and state bodies is being

prepared and I do not see any reason for panic when we are "covered" by Protocol by the end of August. It is better to use that energy to make a collective contract which will last and not make a list of wishes which will not be in accordance with the laws – comments Kovac.

The president of USPRS, Miodrag Skrobanja, says that his union with this warning strike wanted to push the writing of the document which will prevent the principles from arbitrary hiring their own people while there are obvious redundancies in other schools.

- We have taken to the Minister Slobodan Vuksanovic a lot of decisions that principles make already giving their employees 20, 30 and even 50 percent less classes for the next year because there are not enough pupils in a class. He was a little surprised asked us to give that information to him, but he still claimed that not a single educational worker will be fired during his term. As he did not show us a magic formula with which he is going to accomplish that, it seems as if we are more aware than he is that there are huge redundancies in education – says Skrobanja.

Despite the disagreements that exist between the unions, he still believes that the whole business concerning the contracts will finish on time – otherwise, if the unions do not manage to protect their educational workers from dismissals, in his opinion, they should not exist.

By the friction concerning the drafting of the collective contracts one can assume that interpersonal relationships between the representatives of the unions are far from ideal. Union leaders cannot even agree on which professional organization is the largest. Kovac estimates that they all have relatively equal power, with about 20,000 members, Skrobanja explains that at the time when representation was being established, USPRS brought to the Ministry of Education more application forms than the other two unions together, while Pavlovic denies the statements about equality claiming that SOS is the largest with 40,000 members, and that GSPRS "Nezavisnost" is three times weaker. Unions disagree even on the number of employees, according to one of them there are about 101,000 teachers and professors, while according to the other one this number is bigger by

Similarities in Small Differences

- Regarding the union power, when compared to the Balkan region or countries of southeast Europe I believe we have similar problems that countries in transition have, like Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia. I can say this because I cooperate with them often. Slovenians are a bit ahead of us in that sense, first of all they have more money, bigger national income, so the unions are richer too – comments the president of SOS Branislav Pavlovic.

around nine thousand. There are estimates according to which there are as many as 120,000 people working in education, and statistics show that there are between 900,000 and 1,000,000 pupils in Serbia.

Union representatives differently interpret the reasons why they fight like cats and dogs and not act as partners to whom the interest of employees is the most important. Pavlovic thinks it is normal because they are actually competitors who are fighting to steal away members from each other or attract those who have not made their choice yet. Kovac criticizes Pavlovic because of the union marketing and for stirring up dissonant tones which occur between "Nezavisnost" and SOS, and Skrobanja condemns the other two unions for making concessions to the state when ever there is an all-or-nothing situation and he believes their relationships are actually weak.

The president of SOS estimates that it would be the best for everyone if there was only one union in education, and to support his theses he brings out the information that this principle works well around us. For example, in Macedonia there is only one union, as it is the case in Montenegro.

- It is the easiest way to negotiate, but you must convince people that there are not any special reasons to have more than one union. Even in the rest of the world they are working more and more towards integration. We are members of the International of Education, which had 27,000,000 members, and there was the Confederation of Teachers, which was much smaller, and last year at the congress in Porto Alegre we made a decision to accept them. Here we should be uniting as well, but in this country we can not achieve that easily – comments Pavlovic.

How tense mutual relations sometimes are shows the example that in "Nezavisnost" they are seriously considering to file a complaint with the International of Education and request to dismiss Pavlovic because they believe that the President of SOS represents only his union in that organization, instead of protecting the interests of all unions in Serbia and Montenegro. What can we say about this, except that those are Balkan affairs where gossiping and tattling very often takes a big part of every conversation, including business conversation and strategy!

How will the union story on integration end we will see in several years. The epilogue itself is not in question because Serbia must follow the world union trends and other trends, the unknown is who will be the mainstream into which the others will flow.

Two out of three representative unions of educational workers ("Nezavisnost" and SOS) are parts of big unions, but according to their presidents that does not influence the autonomy and independent union activities. Still, the fact is that when these two big unions organize a general strike, their members respond, but when it is the other way around, educational workers only get verbal support from their headquarters.

- United branch unions are a confederation of branch unions. Education is, in terms of the number of members, one of the smaller members in the confederation, but we are significant because we have a good reputation in the society and good income, in contrast to big unions, for example, metal, textile,



leather industry workers... Those sectors have been completely destroyed, which makes their income quite problematic. In terms of income, we take the fourth or the fifth place, which means we have a lot of influence, in the sense that our voice is heard in the executive board of the united branch unions, the presidency and the like. Therefore, one could say that the branch union has established itself in the sense of significance and influence on the policy of the united branch unions – claims Kovac.

Influence

As regards how much local unions can influence the rationalization of the network of schools, management, financing, principles' behavior... there are different opinions, which range from complete denial to the opinion that unions actually exist for the sake of "lobbying".

- We are doing everything we can, and at the end of June we showed to the Minister a lot of information about the rationalization of the network. Even he himself did not know some of the information about the school schedules, structure of occupations... That means we have some influence, but you know that the final result is with the local governance, i.e. they develop policies, and I have to admit that we do not have much influence there. Therefore, we have agreed with the branch ministry to propose amendment to the law on primary and secondary schools in order to reduce the influence of politics as much as possible.

The Union of Education of Serbia is part of the Independent Union of Yugoslavia and part of the Association of Independent Unions of Serbia (SSSS). These relations at republican level are not regulated and, as Pavlovic claims, SOS and SSSS do not have large points of contact.

Those who are informed about the union affairs, claim that unions of the kind that Greeks, Frenchmen and Italians have do not exist in Serbia. When laws which apply to education or the reform of university are being passed there, and the union is not in favour of these laws, then a million or even two million people who are directly or indirectly affected by the announced changes come out on the streets.

In USPRS they say that they are the only guild union because they realized in time that mutual interests of metal, leather industry, educational and medicinal workers can never be the same and they even wonder how the other two unions of educational workers can function on those principles.

In contrast to countries where union movements are very strong and whose representatives influence the decision making process in various expert bodies, which function at the national, ministry or vocational level, in Serbia it is a bit different. For example, in the National Educational Council (NPS) out of 41 members only one represents the interests of all representative unions in education, and all union leaders are equally enraged by that, although even they have different opinions about the significance of this body, which by the law determines the education development strategy in Serbia. The fact that there is only one union representative in NPS shows the relation of the state towards professional organizations and the power of their influence from their point of view, as it is not very likely that those who changed the law last year believe that one union voice could influence the final decision of the National Educational Council on anything.

On the other hand, in neither union do they say that they will not follow the decisions made somewhere else (in the commission of some expert body, for example where a member is a representative of their union), but they point out that who else but the union leadership will decide whether to accept the decisions. As a principle, the statement of all union leaders boils down to the stand that those decisions are accepted, provided they are supported with arguments.

When politics finds itself in the union focus, everything is the same, so to speak – guild leaders gossip about each other and accuse each other, their own deeds are praised and someone else's are minimized and they always blame the other one for the slowdowns in the union life. If it is any consolation, union leaders here claim that the way they function is similar to models existing in countries in transition, in the Balkan region and even broader.

Olga Nikolic



Prof. Radmila Marinkovic-Neducin, Ph.D.
Rector of the University in Novi Sad

The Law on Higher Education is Necessary

■ *At a recently held conference in Bergen, dedicated to the Bologna Process, Serbia took third place in reverse order according to the progress it made in fulfilling the commitments it had taken on. What is your opinion about the position that the Serbian higher education has taken on the list of European countries and do the scores reflect the real relation between the educational systems of the participating countries?*

At the conference of Ministers in Bergen a summary of the situation regarding the reform of the higher education was presented, for the first time with simplified quantitative indicators deriving from the reports prepared by the countries participating in the Bologna process. For this reason, the objectivity of this review can be doubted to some extent, because it does not come from an essential analysis of the changes in the institutions of higher education but primarily from the review of systemic changes. To make it simple, maybe we played better "in the middle of the field" than the review shows, but we did not make it in the ending, so we cannot be satisfied with the result.

■ *What was the main reason for such a bad score and how can the educational system in Serbia achieve a better score within the current legal framework?*

The fact that the Law on Higher Education in accordance with European trends has not been passed, that the national system of accreditation and quality assurance of higher education institutions has not been institutionalized, that the already anachronous educational system has not been changed – not only did this influence the review of the reforms in our country at the European scene but they make the further development of our universities much more difficult. Therefore, without going deeper in the discussion whether the review

could have been more positive if there had been a better presentation and an assessment of what had been done, I consider it a good warning that in a relatively short time we must design a new system in accordance with the choices of the European Higher

a standard, continual assessment, with new programme contents and new educational profiles at all faculties of our University. First pilot-programmes of two cycle studies have started, programmes of doctoral studies. The credit transfer system (ECTS) has

on overall design of the credit system in all its elements, we have only started introducing the system of internal accreditation and self-evaluation, ahead of us is the forming of information system according to the unique standards. Majority's determination for changes at our University is a good precondition for further progress.

■ *What is your opinion regarding the stand of the educational officials who stated that advocates for the uniting of the European higher education are "Bologna profiteers" and what do you see as a gain from choosing to reform the higher education?*

It seems to me that the polemic "for" or "against" the Bologna has been put behind if we want to be part of modern Europe, and I do not see any alternative to that. It is more the question of how we understand the Bologna process, how we translate it into our own choices and how fast we are ready to adjust to the demands of the contemporary society. I do not see any danger that we will lose quality and tradition of our universities in this way. There are not any prescribed solutions and models, on the contrary – there is a lot of room for initiative and individual choices within the general framework.

Therefore, each institution of higher education must define its mission in order to identify the demands from its surrounding, define its own needs and resources, and in order to grow stronger and change in accordance with European trends. We are aware of the fact that universities nowadays enter some kind of a competition, in the most positive sense of the word, where quality and efficiency will be extremely important for students when choosing where to study. Therefore, we see the reforms not as an imposed commitment but as our own interest. At the same time, this means the interest for changing the whole system of higher education, which

The Law is only the first necessary step, and the strategy of further development of the overall system of higher education is certainly the next priority in establishing long-term goals (capacities appropriate to the needs for the workforce of a certain level of education and profile, the institutional network, relation between the state and the university, financing mechanisms, development of the non-governmental sector...) of any country that wants to be part of Europe, as defined by the Bologna Process.

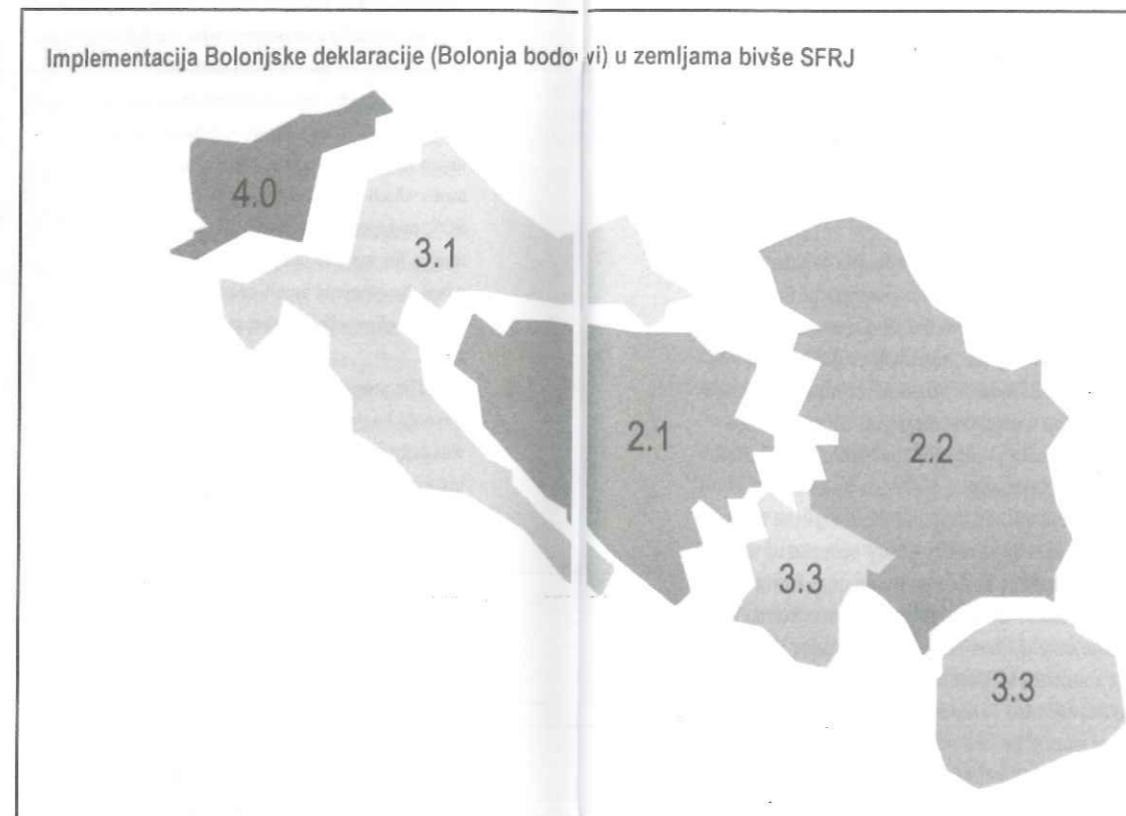
should provide the preconditions for the recognition of our universities in the European Area.

■ *How much does the lack of an appropriate legal solution hold back or obstruct the reform of Serbian universities?*

The current Law to a certain extent enables the transformation of universities, but in many elements it represents an obstacle. A completely anachronous system of study, the absence of quality assurance system, the absence of criteria concerning the financing of planned study cycles, disintegration of university and limitations in organizing interdisciplinary basic studies, unclear profile of institutions of higher education are only some of those elements. Therefore, it is necessary and urgent to pass the new Law, in whose preparation almost three years of work have been invested, which is the unanimous stand of the Community of Universities of Serbia. If it had been done, nowadays we would be in a much better position, essentially better and not only in regard with the review in Bergen. Further delay of its adoption will cause a lot of damage to the institutions of higher education, to students and the society in general.

The Law is only the first necessary step, and the strategy of further development of the overall system of higher education is certainly the next priority in establishing long-term goals (capacities appropriate to the needs for workforce of a certain level of education and profile, the institutional network, relation between the state and university, financing mechanisms, development of non-governmental sector...) of any country that wants to be part of Europe, as defined by the Bologna Process.

Bojana Sebic-Cvetkovic



Education Area, if we want to take part in it on equal terms.

■ *The University in Novi Sad viewed separately got a lot higher score compared to the general score. What separates the University of Novi Sad from the Serbian average and brings it closer to European standards?*

In a three-year period the University in Novi Sad commenced the reforms of the educational process within the framework of the current Law on University. More than a half of the current programmes have been reformed within three years by introducing one-semester and elective subjects as

been introduced in one third of the programmes, as far as the current system of study allows. Diploma Supplement (in Serbian and English language) was introduced in 2004 as an official document at the Faculty of Technical Sciences, the largest faculty at our University, and during this year it will become a standard for the whole University.

These elements probably contributed to a positive review of the reforms at the University of Novi Sad. This, however, does not mean that we have finished the job. There is a serious work ahead of us on introducing new teaching methods,

Serbia officially joined the "Bologna process" in 2003. Based on the report of that time, at the meeting of Ministers of Education in Berlin, it was concluded that the delay was negligible, i.e. that significant progress had been made concerning the reformation of higher education institutions. The commitments taken at the time and in a two-year period included introduction of two-cycle studies, adoption of national standards for quality assurance and establishing a procedure for the recognition of qualifications in accordance with the Lisbon Convention.

Unfulfilled Commitments

According to the implemented reforms the first place is shared between Denmark and Norway with a score of 4.9 and among the first ten are the Flemish Community in Belgium, Czech Republic, Iceland, the Netherlands, Scotland, Finland and Germany. Right above Serbia are Albania, Luxemburg and Spain.

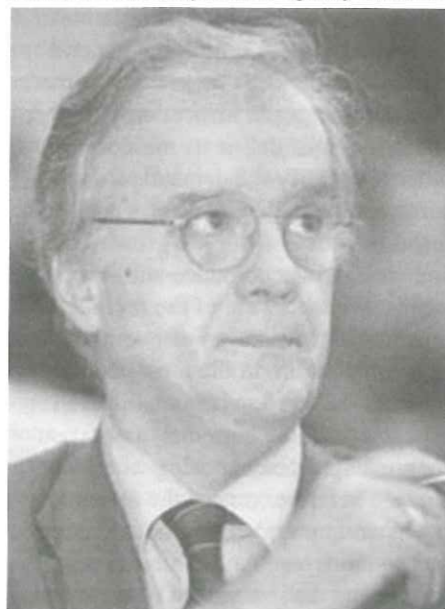
From September 2003 until May 2005, the development of the three areas that the Ministers' Summit in Berlin defined as a priority was especially reviewed. The first priority area is the development of the quality assurance system, within which they evaluated whether the national standards and procedures had been adopted, whether agencies for quality assurance and accreditation had been established, then the participation of students in the process of quality assurance at all levels, participation of foreign experts in the process of quality assurance within the national agency, in the process of external evaluation, as well as the membership in international networks for quality assurance in higher education. The second area is establishing two-cycle system of studying, i.e. establishing study programmes based on two cycles, the evaluation of which includes the number of enrolled students and the access to the second cycle of studies. The third key element – recognition of diplomas and qualifications – measured from the perspective of issuing Diploma Supplements, ratification of the Lisbon Convention and the implementation of the European system of credit transfer.

During the preparations for the Ministerial Meeting in Bergen the review of the progress made in the implementation of the Bologna Declaration in those three areas was made for all countries participating in the process, based on the National Reports of those countries (submitted by the Ministries Responsible for Higher Education in accordance with the standard format), as well as the analysis by several international organizations. It is interesting that three countries submitted two reports because of the parallel educational systems existing in those countries – Serbia and Montenegro, Scotland and England and Flemish and French part of Belgium.

Depending on the level of implementation for

each of ten separate items, all countries received a score of 1 to 5, and the scores are appropriately colour-coded: one is marked with red colour which represents a minor level of implementation,

two is orange, marking a small level of implementation, there is yellow representing a good level of implementation, four is light green as a very good, and the highest grade is five – for excellent level of implementation, marked with dark-green colour. All countries knew in advance what the review would look like, because for each item it was precisely stated what needed to be done in order to get a particular colour. For example, in order to deserve dark-green colour for the development of the quality assurance system as a whole, it was necessary to have that system developed on the national level, that standards and procedures have been adopted on the national level, that agencies for quality assurance



Prof. Dejan Popovic, Ph.D.

and accreditation are functioning and that all institutions are accredited.

Bearing in mind how much our faculties have achieved in the field of the reform of

On the list of 43 countries participating in the Bologna process, Serbia is taking 41st place, i.e. the third place in reverse order, with a score of 2.2. Behind Serbia there are only Bosnia and Herzegovina with a score of 2.1 and Andorra with a score of 2, while all the countries from the region, including Montenegro – are before us, was the conclusions of the review at the conference of the Ministers of Education, held in Bergen on 19 and 20 May. Of the ex-Yugoslav countries, the best placed is Slovenia, which received a score of 4, thus taking 24th position, Macedonia and Montenegro with a score of 3.3 taking 30th and 33rd position, while Croatia is taking 37th position with a score of 3.1.

higher education in the last couple of years, it seems that the disastrous position of Serbia was not a surprise, but the fuss was made in public following the statement of the Minister of Education, Slobodan Vuksanovic, that he is more than happy with the standing in Bremen. Once again the main point of the problem was shifted to mutual accusations of former and current educational authorities, and there was the least mention of who is really guilty because of the bad result. Where is Serbia on the map of Europe?

For the level of quality assurance Serbia got orange colour, thus taking place among the eight last countries in Europe, for the level of two-cycle studies we also earned a score of two and took place among the six countries before the last, while for the level of recognition of qualifications, despite the score of four, we are among the nine last countries. The worst score Serbia got for the participation of students in quality assurance and for the item that represents the percentage of academics enrolled in the study programmes based on two cycles, while we earned a light-green colour, i.e. a score of four thanks to the ratification of the Lisbon Convention. A professor at the Electro-Technical Faculty and the former assistant to the Minister of Education for Higher Education, Srbijanka Turajlic, points out that there are students enrolled in the two-cycle studies at Belgrade University and that access to the second cycle of studies is not limited, pointing out that those two scores are the result of "someone's negligence and disinterest".

- The only green colour, for the ratification of the Lisbon Convention, was earned at the

time when the minister of education was Gaso Knezevic. We signed this Convention, ratified it, formed ENIC centre (European Network of National Information Centers) and received the highest score for that. In the meantime, for some reason this centre was abolished so we went one step back – says Turajlic.

She reminds that she criticized the Report for the Bergen Conference immediately after it had been made, but the Ministry did not change that Report although they could have better presented some implemented reforms. Instead of that, adds Turajlic, the Ministry acted "as if they did not care at all whether we would be the first in Europe or the forty-first." And the second appeal that the Alternative Academic Educational Network sent immediately after the conference in Bergen to all official institutions, managements of universities and faculties, the public in general and the academic community did not produce any reactions. AAOM asked for the immediate development of overall national strategy of development of higher education and for the above-mentioned institutions to be actively involved in its implementation, so that at the Summit in London in 2007, Serbia can show that it truly wants to become part of the European Area of Higher Education.

And while Turajlic believes that Serbia achieved a minor progress in fulfilling commitments taken in Berlin, the current Minister of Education claims that we were "extremely well received" in Bergen especially due to the fact that our delegation included two representatives of students' organizations.

- I am thrilled by the congratulations we received from the most responsible people from the international community, that in three and a half months we managed to design the Law on Higher Education and that the academic community had a leading role in that work. I am thrilled with the knowledge of the situation in the Serbian political life and the relaxing attitude towards the date of the law adoption. For three and a half years people who were the most responsible for higher education fooled the professors and students with the stories about reforms and they neither passed the law nor did anything concrete. I am surprised that we even received any points, considering that in the previous years nothing had been done in the field of the reform of higher education. The only column where we have the largest number of points is the merit of the University in Novi Sad – said Vuksanovic.

Denying the accusations from Minister Vuksanovic, Srbijanka Turajlic reminds that the Bill on Higher Education was made in the autumn 2003 and that it was published on all websites relevant for the higher education. According to her "only a person who does not know what is happening in higher education or

who does not care about that at all can be satisfied with the achieved results".

Representatives of the Students' Association of Belgrade (SSB) and Students' Association of Serbia (SUS) notice that we have not done the homework from Berlin and that there are a lot of commitments to come, that need to be fulfilled by the next conference in London 2007. Mihajlo Babin, a member of the delegation from SUS says that Serbia needs the Bologna process in order to function better in education and to avoid remaining "a black hole in Europe". A member of ESIB (National Students' Associations of Europe), Predrag Lazetic, claims that participation of Serbian Minister of Education in the activities of the Committee for Monitoring the Bologna Process in between the two Ministerial conferences is minor and that the educational authorities were not interested in the political commitments accepted in Berlin. As one of the reasons for the negative review of our country, Srecko Sekeljic from SSB mentions the disagreements in the academic public concerning the joining to the Bologna process, which, as he claims, resulted in postponing the passing of the Law for two years now and in faculties not reforming their curricula within the current Law.



Prof. Srbijanka Turajlic, Ph.D.

-Larger part of the reform could have been implemented within the current legal framework and that is the mistake of the faculties. The current law allows for the reform but it neither encourages it nor obliges to it so the reformed programmes are sporadic attempts of individual faculties or even departments at faculties – believes Sekeljic.

Members of the academic community with carefully selected words and in a temperate tone expressed their dissatisfaction with the negative review of Serbia and with the fact that we are behind other countries in the reforms, with the explanation that we joined the Bologna process



Prof. Gaso Knezevic, Ph.D.

later. The fact that no one criticized us in Bergen was a sufficient reason for optimistic predictions from all sides that we will most certainly improve the review and fulfill the accepted commitments.

Prior to the Ministerial meeting, the Rector of the University in Belgrade, Dejan Popovic, stated that he was glad he would not be there when Serbia submitted the report on achieved results".

- People who are now on relevant positions are not guilty for such a negative review, because we are years behind. Now we have to do our best to adopt the Law in accordance with the European regulations and to implement the norms which require statutory regulation during the next year and a half. Only then can we speak about the framework within which these new processes should function, but if the Law is not adopted and this step is not made, we will never move on – believes Popovic.

Goran Damjanovic, the vice-president of the Students' Association of Montenegro, says that Montenegro faculties have commenced the reforms right along and that the first generation of students in accordance with the Bologna system has already been enrolled. Furthermore, students' bodies have been reformed, and Montenegro was the first in the region to introduce the students' parliament.

- Our Minister is very satisfied with the review of the reform in Montenegro, but the students are not because we believe that it takes a lot of time for students and professors to get used to the new system. We have outdated books, quite nervous professors who find it hard to accept reforms and we do not have financial preconditions to be able to meet the criteria set by the Bologna Declaration. Still, the most important thing is that we have moved from a standstill – says Damjanovic and expresses hope that the adoption of the new Law on the Students' Standard and the amendments to the Statute of



Dr Slobodan Vuksanovic

the University will bring progress.

- Looking at the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Bologna Process, one must admit that BiH is moving slowly but safely. Unfortunately, it would be better for students, as well as for the whole academic community if reforms went faster, believes Sinisa Skocibusic, the President of the Students' Association of the University in Mostar.

- Although the overall review of what has been achieved in BiH is not very positive, I believe we can be satisfied in regard with the quality assurance and partly in regard with the recognition of diplomas. Other segments are much worse, but I believe that in the next period there will be significant improvement. I think that all members of the academic community share the idea and dissatisfaction with the slow process of the reform. It is in students' interest that the set goals are achieved as soon as possible. So far there have often been disagreements in regard with the implementation of the provisions of the Bologna Declaration between the students, as well as between the teachers, but above all between the authorities and the university - says Skocibusic.

Our collocutor believes that the scores that BiH got are objective and that it will be a greater challenge to make up the lost. As he claims, priorities will be the provision of the legal framework for the reform and the money, and if the state provides enough money, a huge part of the problem will be solved in regard with the quality assurance and the social dimension.

For the next Summit in London in 2007, Ministers of Education have defined several priority areas: implementation of standards and procedures for quality assurance proposed in the report of the European network for quality assurance, establishment of the national system of qualifications, issuing and recognition of unique diplomas for all three study cycles and creation of opportunity for more flexible studying, including the recognition of previous learning.

Vesna Smiljanic

Echoes of the Bergen Conference

At the end of last week in the Norwegian city of Bergen, the Conference of Ministers of Higher Education of the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration was held under the name Towards the European Higher Education Area. The Croatian Delegation was led by the Minister of Science, Education and Sports and assistant professor Dragan Primorac, Ph.D.

Minister Primorac informed those present about the implementation of the Bologna Process in Croatia. He commented on the Croatian legislative framework for the implementation of the Process, and the bodies responsible for the implementation of the first phase of the reform. The first phase - evaluation of the study programmes - is being implemented this year by the National Council for Higher Education and the Agency for Higher Education, with additional operative support from the Ministry. Minister Primorac presented the steps to follow, in particular the introduction of the new lump sum model of financing universities in Croatia as of 2006, and the upcoming work on developing criteria for financing. In order to plan further development of higher education, Minister Primorac believes it is necessary to monitor what is happening in other parts of the world, and especially in the United States. He emphasized the significance of the cooperation on establishing joint projects and doctoral studies, and in this area he arranged cooperation with the Austrian Minister and the French Minister of Higher Education.

The Ministers agree that there has been great progress in the implementation of the three priority goals. Those goals are the introduction of higher education system based on two major cycles, assurance of the quality of higher education and recognition of foreign diplomas. Directions for further development of these reform areas have been determined. A common framework of qualifications in the European Higher Education Area has been adopted, which includes three higher education

New "Bologna Countries"

The Conference was concluded by the ceremonial signing of the joint announcement of the Ministers. The Ministers welcomed five new countries that joined the process. Those are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In the announcement the main partners in the Bologna Process are said to be universities, their workers and students. Their role in the implementation of the Bologna Declaration has become even more important now that the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration have implemented the required legal modifications to a great extent.

cycles - undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate and general learning outcomes for certain levels of study. Standards for quality assurance are accepted according to the suggestions from the European Network for Quality Assurance, and the forming of the European Register of Agencies for Quality Assurance is welcomed. Furthermore, the preparation of national plans for the improvement of the quality of the process of recognition of foreign qualifications was announced, which will be part of national reports for the next Ministerial Conference.

The announcement states further challenges and priorities of the process. The importance of improving the synergy among the sectors of higher education and other research sectors has been emphasized, as well as the connecting of the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area. The "Bologna countries" are faced with the task of developing doctoral studies which should promote interdisciplinary context and develop the knowledge and skills applicable to the broader labour market. The Ministers emphasize the need for securing equal approach to higher education for all branches, as well as the need for securing the best possible conditions for studying. They have announced further efforts to remove the obstacles to mobility of students and teachers and invite them to take part in the programmes of mobility in greater



Dragan Primorac, Ph.D.

number. Special emphasis is on the importance of cooperation between the "Bologna countries" and other countries in the world and on the strengthening of intercultural understanding and dialogue. Approaching 2010, when the Bologna Process must be completed, the Ministers committed themselves to securing the independence of higher education institutions as to enable them to implement the agreed reforms and they acknowledge the need for sustainable funding of those institutions.

Since the Bologna Process leads to creating the European Higher Education Area, it is necessary to consider further preparations required for supporting continuous development of higher education even after 2010, so the Group for Monitoring the Bologna Process is asked to do research regarding those issues. It is agreed that the next Ministers' Conference be held in 2007 in London.

Elvira Marinkovic-Skomrlj

BiH - Integration into the European Higher Education Area

In Sarajevo, on 9 June, 2005 a three-day seminar was finished under the name BiH - Integration into the European Higher Education Area 2005. The seminar was organized with the purpose of raising awareness among university staff, students and ministry staff about their role in the Bologna Process and its main objectives: recognition of diplomas, quality assurance, mobility of students, accreditation, lifelong learning and two-cycle system.

According to Prof. Srebrena Dizdara, PhD, the President of the Management Board of the World University Service (SUS) BiH, the seminar raises a number of important issues concerning the future of the higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, among which the priority is to see in what stage is the process of changes in European education, where is Bosnia and Herzegovina and to try to give the answers to some processes which are not clear enough.

From the words of the Minister of Civil Affairs, Prof. Safet Halilovic, PhD, the participants immediately found out that Bosnia and Herzegovina is on a very low position in those changes. Minister Halilovic reminded around 150 participants in the seminar that Bosnia and Herzegovina used to have universities within the jurisdiction of the state Bosnia and Herzegovina, financed by the state, it had strong funds, and today it has: "Division, local competence for financing and normative regulation, badly organized and irrational universities, viewing certain universities as national institutions and national bastions...".

reports Oslobodjenje. While Prof. Dizdar points out that "it is necessary to pass an overarching law on higher education, which represents a visa and the first requirement for the Bologna Process" (SRNA), the Minister Halilovic stated that the Ministry of Civil Affairs had prepared the Bill on Higher Education. The Bill has been supported by the international community, whose experts actively participated in its drafting and in the cooperation with the representatives of academic communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "The Law is in the parliamentary procedure and the academic community, professors and students must get involved in these problems. Maybe then it will be clear how big an influence politics has on the opinion of the academic community", stated minister Halilovic.

The three-day seminar was part of the TEMPUS project on Raising Awareness of the Bologna Process in BiH, and it was implemented by WUS (World University Service) Austria and SUS BiH in cooperation with "Georg-August" University from Göttingen and the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the end of the seminar, the Regional Manager of WUS, Dino Mujkic, announced that a similar seminar would be held in September as well, while the Chief Executive of WUS, Almir Kovacevic, pointed out that, thanks to the Bologna Process, countries of southeast Europe are for the first time not so much behind, but they have an opportunity to implement the process shoulder to shoulder with the rest of Europe.

Merisa Kozica

Different Stands Concerning the Law

These days, in magazines in Bosnia and Herzegovina great attention was drawn to the Law on Higher Education. Higher education in BiH is in a need of reform. These days the Bill on Higher Education of SDS MPs - Mr Momcilo Novakovic and Mr Bosko Siljegovic. A large number of magazines published the stands that this Law did not represent the reform of higher education in

BiH. The reason for the above-mentioned conclusion is found in the understanding that the Bill will not regulate higher education but will require passing the Law on Higher Education at entity and cantonal level, as well as in District Brcko. Proposers of the Law anticipated it would be necessary to form the Agency for Higher Education for the whole territory of BiH. This Agency would represent an inter-entity

body established on an inter-entity agreement. Within the Agency they anticipate to establish a Coordinating Board for Higher Education, as well as a National Centre for Information, which BiH is obliged to establish according to the Lisbon Convention for the purpose of recognizing foreign diplomas. Some believe that this Bill is bad because it does not tackle the issue of language which is very important

for achieving vital national interest. On the other hand, the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs prepared a draft version of the Law on Higher Education in BiH. It was pointed out that the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs worked on this Bill in cooperation with the representatives of the academic communities of Sarajevo, Mostar and Banjaluka Universities. There are seven universities in BiH at the

moment. The Law on Higher Education at national level would regulate their areas in accordance with the European standards and enable the implementation of the Bologna Declaration. It is extremely important that the opposed stands are reconciled and that they find a compromise for passing this very important Law.

M. K.

■ *Quality is the term which "appears" in all stories about the reform. Is it possible in the context of opening new universities which do not have enough teachers, but are established on „travelling teachers“?*

- Everywhere in the developed world the practice is to establish new universities because they have a different orientation and a programme. Here those are bad copies of the not-so-outstanding Zagreb University. With few exceptions, there were some attempts in Rijeka, for example the Department of Philosophy, few in Split, and I do not even know about the others, which are actually "gigs" of elderly gentlemen professors from Zagreb for the purpose of enabling someone in the town to add that they are a university, i.e. "sveuciliste" town. Instead of a group of young people separating from Zagreb University and building a different university or a faculty. At the same time, the funds are being reduced, for example the Department of Philosophy has not received a kuna for years, because they invested in Croatian studies founded for ideological, pogrom reasons in order to eliminate ideologically and ethnically unacceptable teachers at departments of the Zagreb Faculty of Philosophy. Stories around "veleuciliste" (the Croatian word for advanced school) got stuck in "unclear financial circumstances", and when it comes to quality, it is interesting to stress two examples from medicine – the Institute of the Academic Miroslav Radman, for which no one knew what was going to happen with them for a year and a half, and the project „Genera“ of Prof. Slobodan Vukicevic, Ph.D. So, two projects which beat everything else, bibliography of their leaders "beats" the bibliography of around 50 professors at Zagreb Medical Faculty. There is no democracy here. Finally, in Zagreb we have a problem visible even to the blind, that Zagreb University should be divided according to disciplines, which would be the most logical. Faculty of

Philosophy is probably the largest in the world, it is actually social-humanities university. We passed the new Statute, which is still in favour of its sustaining, although there is not modus operandi. It does not exist and does not function as a community. Very often wrong things happen, but most often nothing happens, which is maybe the worst. Mastodon, backwards university which cannot change because of its structure, but it is not spoken about because everyone is satisfied with the normative ikebana instead of things being solved.

■ *Do you think that mobility will sustain, namely, students are most probably interested in that?*

- The shortest stay in Norway or Switzerland is at least four times more expensive than here. Therefore, students' mobility must be supported by scholarship funds, which I have not heard about. We will have students who will get invitation scholarships, but that has always been the case. Furthermore, English language must be the second language of the university communication, no one can go to a European university without speaking English fluently. There will be a formal opportunity, but the whole idea is for it to be filled with content, and I do not see that. I am afraid that in the autumn we will start with the new system, the social context will remain untouched ("the parking place"), university context untouched, the question is when will the university be divided and finally criteria will also remain untouched. For example, here we consider it scandalous when someone dissociates themselves from the majority opinion of the agency, there is no responsibility. We can not guaranty a quality because we do not have a clear possibility of checking bibliographic categories, so on the Internet we have Croatian bibliographic base where we make entries of our works ourselves, which is absurd.

Elvira Marinkovic-Skomrlj

Outlooks of Sociology and Humanities in BiH

The opening of a scientific gathering Outlooks of Sociology and Social Sciences in BiH at the Faculty of Political Science in Sarajevo marked the 40th anniversary of the Department of Sociology. A number of professors and students of the Faculty of Political Science gathered at the event. Divided into three panels, the scientific gathering will raise important issues concerning social sciences in general and sociology in the contemporary society in BiH.

Sefko Medjedovic, Esad Ljubovic, Cedomir Cupic, Jusuf Ziga, Slavo Kukic, Ugo Vlaisavljevic, Nerzuk Surak, Gajo Sekulic, are only some of the participants who will present their views during this gathering. The Dean of the Faculty of Political Science Ismet Grbo said that sociology, as a future critical science on one hand, and science ethics and the era of science on the other hand, are obliged to return to the world a more serious judgment of neglected values.

Speaking of sociological science and the contemporary era, the head of the Department of Sociology Asim Mujkic mentioned that this department is celebrating and reviewing the 40 years of existence in the era of the ethnic-nationalistic rule, where these sciences are limited to spiritual. On the other hand, nowadays we are facing the process of parcelling out knowledge into academic disciplines which resemble particles. Both tendencies take away the meaning of science in general, and the humanities are faced with the question whether they should enter the competition with the humanities. The other tendency is close to de-ideologising social knowledge. As a solution, Mujkic establishes a possibility for social sciences to focus on fostering critical thinking, which developed between the two above-mentioned polarities.

Openly on Corruption in Higher Education Information Society in B&H

The team of the Students' Association of Serbia fir fighting corruption in higher education after presenting the results of their survey to the public (the survey was carried out at universities in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac and Nis), organized presentations of the survey and talks with the students and professors of the two largest national universities in Serbia, Belgrade and University. At the gathering at the Law Faculty of the University in Novi Sad there were very few students, whose absence could perhaps be justified by the fact that they are preparing for the examinations, which are in progress, but it is disappointing that professors are not interested in this subject. The readiness to speak openly on corruption was shown by the representatives of Rector's Office, the Faculty of Technical Sciences, the Law Faculty and the Faculty of Philosophy, as well as of the Provincial Ministry of Education and Culture.

The SUS survey shows that 98 percent of 1,300 surveyed students have heard that there is some kind of corruption at their faculty (taking or giving bribe for an exam or another service, forgery of documents, lack of transparency and ethics, conditioning students to by the textbooks, various forms of cheating at exams...), 31 percent of academics are ready to offer bribe if they cannot otherwise pass the exam, 47 percent believe that cheating at exams is acceptable... A corruptive students' "traffic light" has been made: in the red zone there are 19 percent of the students who admitted they were corrupted, they do not feel bad about that and they even have parents' support; the yellow zone is very crowded, but there is also a potential danger from the further growth of corruption because even 74 percent of the students said they had a tendency to corruption in order to obtain a diploma easier, the green zone is not very "inhabited" and there are only 7 percent of uncorrupted students, who, as it was said at the round table in Novi Sad, "suffer a great deal of consequences". Very soon professors will go into "the traffic light" and such a survey will be organized by Transparency Serbia, announced the Rector of Belgrade University, Prof. Dejan Popovic, PhD, said Dragan Mihajlovic, one of the coordinators of SUS project on corruption.

„Please prevent the cheaters from getting

rewards“, read the letter sent by a group of students to the Dean of FTN Ilija Sosić. It turned out they were right, and it was not about the old-fashioned "techniques" and „cheat sheets“, but "sophisticated" technologies, and the "knowledge" was transferred through a bug in an ear. And so it went from one examination to another, all the way to the reward! When the cheating was discovered and proved, the sanctions followed, and they are, as opposed to many other faculties, at FTN they are contained in two rule books! So when the cheating is discovered and proved, the Dean brings an action and it is published on the notice board. The result is: considerably less cheating at examinations.

"What does 19 percent of corrupted students mean? In order for them to cheat at examinations there must be professors who are not interested in preventing them from doing so, as there must be professors who are ready to take bribe...Therefore, we must see how many professors are corrupted – noticed student associate dean of the Faculty of Technical Sciences, Zeljko Tekic, and insisted on carrying out a survey which would deal with this issue.

Emphasizing that academic structures are part of the society and that universities share the destiny of their environment, the Rector of the University in Novi Sad, Prof. Radmila Marinkovic – Neducin, PhD, noticed that the university community has still preserved its dignity to a certain extent because there is less corruption at universities than in other parts of the society.

"The future of our higher education, established on the Bologna principles, is the introduction of a transparent examination procedure, credit system, internal and external evaluation of higher education institutions, university ombudsman, ethical board, all of which will contribute to establishing a new system of value, pointed the Rector Marinkovic-Neducin and encouraged students to inform her personally about any case when professors conditioned their students to buy their textbooks, as well as about any other deviations.

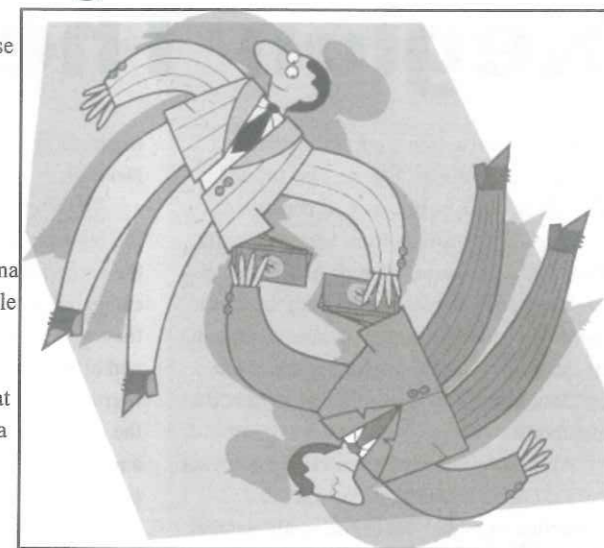
The Dean of the Law Faculty, Prof. Olga Cvejic – Jancic, was asked a direct question by students: How would you react if a student complained about a concrete case of corruption at this faculty.

-That would be a simple case because the procedure is clear when you have the names, but unfortunately you never have the names and that is why it is difficult to track down. We must all join the fight against corruption, that is the phenomena that condition it, like for example "insurmountable subjects", i.e. examinations that students massively and many times fail at particular professors – said Olga Cvejic-Jancic.

The Dean of the Faculty of Technical Sciences Prof. Ilija Cosic, PhD, reminded of all those activities and good results that this faculty has achieved in the last couple of years in fighting "impassable subjects",

In the discussion one could hear a concrete complaint about a female professor from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, who as a guest professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, by selling her textbooks "charges the racket of 900 dinars per student". Although the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy warned her not to do that, this professor continues the old practice. Vesna Kukic asked if the deans had an instrument for sanctioning such other forms of corruption?

"untouchable professors", serious cheating at examinations...Continuous assessment of students during the year has been introduced (you cannot bribe the professor five times!), for already five years students have been evaluating professors and teaching fellows (how they lecture, examine, how objective they...), once a month there are public debates where students, professors and the dean team discuss and solve current problems. As regards tracking down deviations at the faculty, says Cosic, "it is important to have the tools to find that out. That is how we found out for example that one of our professors was selling textbooks at his apartment. Is that professor involved in teaching today?" – Cosic asked the present students who answered in one voice: "No!" . At FTN they found a cure for a headache called "untouchable professors", who



insisted on using only their textbooks or mimeographed notes and whose examinations even good students could not pass for several years. When they were explained that there are professors at Belgrade University who could teach their subjects, the situation changed considerably.

In the discussion one could hear a concrete complaint about a female professor from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, who as a guest professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, by selling her textbooks "charges the racket of 900 dinars per student". Although the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy warned her not to do that, this professor continues the old practice. Vesna Kukic asked if the deans had an instrument for sanctioning such other forms of corruption?

- When concrete cases of corruption are discovered, as was the recent case at the Technical Faculty „Mihajlo Pupin“ in Zrenjanin, the further procedure is in the hands of police and judiciary, but at the moment there are no mechanisms to prevent and control corruption in the faculty and university regulations. Not even the administrative bodies of AP Vojvodina are able to fight corruption are universities within administrative supervision, although the Province has regained the competence in the area of higher education – explained the assistant to the Provincial Minister of Education and Culture Svetlana Vujovic. She also pointed to the possibilities that would be created in that sense by passing new legal and faculty regulations.

I. P.

KORUPCIJA In the Whole Region There is

Anticorruption students' network in the southeast Europe was formed in 2003 in Bulgaria. It consists of students' organizations from Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania and Moldova. The Network was established with the aim to coordinate students' organizations concerning the issue of corruption in higher education and development of joint strategy to fight the corruption.

At the beginning of its work, the Network carried out an identical survey on the corruption in higher education in all member countries.

Within the first part of the project, the Students' Association of Serbia collected the statutes and the rule books of most faculties in Serbia and carried out an analysis of anticorruption actions they should contain.

The second part of the project has been designed in accordance with the results of the survey and the analysis which confirm that there is corruption in higher education in the entire region.

During the second phase, all organization members of the Network will present the results of the survey in their countries and, as the first step in fighting corruption, start talking about this problem at least within the academic community.

The campaign started in May 2005. So far the results have been processed and presented only at universities in Serbia, but it is soon

expected in other countries members of the Network.

The team for fighting corruption of the Students' Association of Serbia within the second phase of the project will start a campaign under the slogan "It is rotten" and they will work on informing the academic and broader public about the existence of corruption and its consequences, by presenting the surveys at round tables, through brochures, and through other forms of informative and promotion material and in direct contact with students during the examination and the enrolment term.

Until now presentations of the survey results have been held in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis and Kragujevac and the participants were students, professors, rectors, provosts, as well as the Minister of Education and Sports and the President of Serbia.

The team for fighting corruption will continue with their activities in the next school year when they will present the standards for the faculty and university regulations which will include institutional mechanisms of control and prevention of corruption.

So far the project has been supported by the People's Office of the President of the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of Education and Sports, as well as by the Rectors of the University in Belgrade, University in Novi Sad, University in Nis and University in Kragujevac.

It is Rotten

Activists of the Students' Association of the University in Novi Sad held an action on the occasion of fighting corruption.

At the Students' Square there was an info-stand where students could get information about the action "It is Rotten", which is happening within the project on fighting corruption in higher education. Promotion material and information were distributed about the recent survey of the Students' Association of Serbia, which showed that there is a very high level of corruption at universities in Serbia.

According to the spokesman of the Students' Association of the University of Novi Sad, Natasa Gajic, the aim of the action was to have the students face the warning information and that it makes them think and wish to change something.

The action will be carried out at faculties within the University of Novi Sad, and at the beginning of July, during the entrance examinations, the Students' Association will organize info-stands where the future freshmen will be informed about corruption in higher education.

Beta



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Students' Internship in BiH Legislative Bodies of BiH

Unemployment rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina has reached 40% which warns of the danger of wasting human resources, due to increased emigration, especially of young and educated workforce. Being unable to find a job in their own country after finishing secondary, advanced or higher education, young people more and more often successfully show their knowledge and talent where the chances for a better life are bigger. And the loss of educated workforce causes serious consequences for the social-economic development of the country, because they represent the mainstay of the society. The drain of young people is primarily the consequence of the lack of opportunities, opportunities to prove themselves as creative and independent persons in the education process and then at work as well.

A part of the problem is that the educational system does not offer any practical work experience, and on the other hand, the labour market demands creative and independent persons with initiative, persons who are ready to take the risk on their own responsibility and who have work experience. The question is to what extent are these qualities formed through education, bearing in mind the fact that the system of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is mainly ideologically coloured and established on outdated methods of work.

Aggravated Harmonization

By signing the Dayton Agreement, education was put under the competence of entities, i.e. the cantons of the country. That is an aggravating circumstance for the harmonization of universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina with universities in highly developed European countries, because BiH has not yet adopted the Law on Higher Education at national level. Too extensive and based exclusively on theory, educational programme does not offer to our students the satisfactory quality of studies that their peers in Europe have. In order to balance the disproportion of theory and practice, the mismatch between the curricula and the labour market demands, an initiative has been launched for students' internship in legislative bodies at entity and national level. The initiative has been undertaken by the National Democratic Institute for International Relations, in partnership

with BiH universities and parliaments. Starting from 2001, advanced university students and final year students at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Law faculty, Faculty of Philosophy, Economy and Electro-Technical faculty, have been given opportunity to gain valuable experience for their future work through practical work.



Parliamentary Practice

Interns, involved in the clubs of political parties, commissions, boards and administrative services, do comparative analysis on bills, draft amendments and laws. Interns translate documents and complete administrative tasks. They do research on parliamentary procedures of other parliaments and draft proposals for improving the operating procedures. For example, the achievements of interns in 2003 in the Federation Parliaments are: 17 draft amendments, 25 comparative analysis, 5 draft operating procedures and 2 draft laws. Besides, this programme enables young interns from the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, BiH Federation Parliament and RS National Assembly to meet during the conference of parliamentary interns, which is held at the end of each round of internship. On this occasion young people exchange concrete information and examples of their work. What is most important is that in this way they transfer skills, knowledge and competencies which the economy and the labour market demand, and the programme itself helps a better understanding of the democratic system and in this way increase employment. Thanks to this programme, many interns got a job in BiH legislative institutions because representatives could use the help of creative, young and yet experienced people.

Rejuvenation of Workforce

As regards employing new staff, according to Vedran Hadzovic, the Secretary of the joint service of BiH Parliament Assembly, the situation is as follows: "We in the administration, at BiH level, need rejuvenation at all levels of government. We need young people who have ideas, who are ambitious, who

are good at new technologies and who speak foreign languages." In any case, everyone's expectations have been fulfilled, and the intention of National Democratic Institute – to leave BiH, but prior to that find interested partners who would continue the practice of young people doing internship in BiH public institutions – has been fulfilled. Namely, the BiH Parliamentary Assembly announced an open competition young people to do voluntary work within its services, only now instead of six or nine months, they volunteer for twelve months after which period they have an opportunity to take governmental examination.

It seems that the institution of Ombudsman BiH it was lead by the same motives. In 2003 it applied the programme of students' internship in this institution. Students were given opportunity to work daily on the cases of violation of human rights. The project "Development of Youth Politics in Banjaluka" was initiated. It is implemented by the Youth Communicative Center. It provided an opportunity for the young people to be on a monitoring mission in the Assembly of the town of Banjaluka, as well as to organize round tables and public discussions about the problems that young people are facing – in order to initiate the solving of the above-mentioned problems at the sessions of the town's Assembly.

Through such and similar projects young people develop awareness about the possibility of active creation of political and social life of the community. If passiveness and lack of opportunity to prove oneself at work are the reason for leaving the country, this is a positive example of how to lower a percentage of unemployed people and their leaving the country, which openly threatens to turn into exodus.

Andjelka Dobrilovic

Young People in BiH are a Vulnerable Category

In the last couple of years in Bosnia and Herzegovina the reform of education has been implemented and young people are the least involved in it. There are indicators which indicate a massive apathy among young people in BiH who are identified as a vulnerable category of the population struck by poverty, according to alarming findings. In regard with this, they have numerous obstacles and problems when choosing education, work and healthy living in general. Dome data indicate that it is necessary to establish youth politics which would considerably improve and enrich the life of the younger population.

Concrete strategy for young people does not exist yet at national level. Competence over education in BiH is with ten governments, but this is not regulated at national level.

In BiH Federation, the Ministry of Education and Science is competent for the field of education, and its role is above all coordination, since education is decentralized and competences have been transferred to cantons. In the District of Brcko there is the Department for Education.

In Republic of Srpska, the sector of education is centralized – in this entity there is only one ministry: the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The basis for the reform of education in BiH is the Programme of the reform of education that the Ministers of Education and Human Rights and Ministers for Refugees from the whole BiH presented to the Council for Peace-Keeping in Brussels, in November 2002. The programme consists of five requirements and recommendations for their fulfillment. All bodies and Ministers competent for the sector of education in BiH, committed to implementing this document. Some of the key areas that need to be reformed are: the legal framework, finances and governance, the change of the system of financing higher education, harmonized curricula and a number of other significant changes related to the field of education. The process of the reform of higher education in BiH is yet to come, and it should definitely involve young people. A radical reform of education would be more effective if it had support from those who needed it the most.

A. D.

New Occupation

Thanks to Miodrag Lovrić, professor of statistics, students at the Belgrade Faculty of Economics can now cope more easily with the rather difficult contents of this subject. Namely, Prof. Lovrić and his associates created the statistics software EduStat, which is unique in the world of software programs. After many years of teaching students in New Zealand and Australia, Prof. Lovrić came up with the idea to create one such program. He said: 'I have been teaching a long time, and I have repeatedly seen how difficult it is to learn, acquire or pass statistics. There are numerous reasons why. It is not only about knowing or not knowing mathematics, whose instruments are indispensable in calculating various parameters or values. The problem lies in the dullness of the subject, which frequently kills the students' enthusiasm to work and learn, despite their strong motivation. On the other hand, this is the 21st century, and it is only normal to involve computers and adequate software

programs when teaching statistics. My New Zealand students, where I taught for a while, had difficulty in using the current statistics software at that time, which produced results without giving any explanations in an utterly dull and boring way, and which were also impractical.



I had to listen to their complaints every day. This made me start to explore statistics software, and that was the beginning of the history of EduStat.'

The program has been designed for a range of users. Along with students and professors working on their master theses and doctoral dissertations, it can be used by students and teachers of secondary schools of economics, as well as those who need statistics for various research, analyses and reports in companies, banks, insurance companies, institutes,

market and public opinion research agencies, etc., simply for all forms of statistical analysis.

This unique educational software is in the Serbian language and is comprehensible to all those who speak Serbian or other related languages. Unlike the previous program MINITAB, which only gave out problem solutions without explaining the process of calculation or comments, this program explains the solution, allowing students to learn about the process itself. The program offers the so-called decision-making tree, a feature which allows the user to choose the best decision-making method. We should not forget the hyperlinked statistics glossary, which significantly facilitates the process of learning and comprehending statistics.

Professor Lovrić adds that EduStat is an extremely comfortable, user-friendly program, with rich and sensitive HELP options, and over 280 photographs. This program is already used at the Belgrade Faculty of Economics, and professor Lovrić shares with us his experience of working with students: 'Students like the new program very much, as it makes it easy to learn this complicated subject, and it is also praised by my colleagues. We will launch a series of presentations of the program at all our faculties where statistics is taught, and our plan is to also present it to statistics teachers worldwide. We have two different prices – the price for students will be 25 euros, while it will cost 100 euros for all other users. The price of such software programs in the world is around 1,000 euros.'

The program EduStat offers a simulation of the statistics examination, which allows students to see how much they have learnt and can be used as a general test before the actual examination. It also offers virtual lectures, which students can hear, and, while listening, they can simultaneously follow a visual demonstration on the screen – which all makes this program special and unique. We are hopeful that such properties will make the program attractive enough for the local stakeholders in the sector of education as well.

Radmila Pejić



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Gender Equality in Curricula

One third of women in Serbia have not finished primary education, and only six percent of the female population have finished university. A considerable part of the information about the drop out from the process of further education refers to female pupils. These data have initiated the launching of the project "School for Equality", whose aim is to introduce the topics of gender equality into the regular curricula for pupils and teachers in Serbia. The implementers of the project are the Centre for Female Studies and Gender Research and the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. With the financial support from the Canadian Agency for International Development, educational programmes have been held for over 300 teachers in several places in Serbia. The aim of these programmes was to make the first step towards introducing the topic of gender equality into the school system in Serbia.

The leader and author of this programme from the Centre for Female Studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Biljana Branković, emphasizes that they have organized training in primary schools about the gender equality for teachers and associates, while in secondary schools they have carried out short courses on sexual abuse of adolescents for teachers and programmes for pupils on violence in partner relationships and on sexual abuse.

Teachers were able to acquire knowledge on how to overcome gender stereotypes, how to reveal hidden inequalities, how to "encourage" girls to do "male jobs"... Doing research on several generations of textbooks, experts from the Institute for Psychology concluded that there is a general cultural matrix which repeats itself and which promotes patriarchal cultural values – peace, freedom, patriotism, respect for cultural identity...and that the bearers of those values are men, also that in our textbooks there is a high level of empathy for women's suffering and their subordinate social status. But despite all that the textbooks imply that it

is the women's duty to sacrifice", stresses Dijana Plut from the Institute for Psychology. The second part of the project refers

RODNA RAVNOPRAVNOST U ŠKOLI:

priručnik za nastavnike/ce
(radna verzija)



za internu upotrebu, namenjeno nastavnici/maticama koje pohađaju seminare u okviru projekta "Škola za ravnopravnost"

Uredile: Biljana Branković i Tanja Ignjatović

Donator projekta: Kanadska agencija za međunarodni razvoj



to creating a manual on Gender Equality in Schools. The manual was primarily aimed at teachers who attended seminars on gender equality. The authors Tanja Ignjatovic i Biljana Brankovic pointed out in the introduction that it was a draft version of the manual and that after its application in school practice and after a detailed evaluation of the applicability of the manual the final version would be made.

The manual consists of three parts:

1. professional texts that the authors recommend to teachers
 2. concrete instructions for working with children in primary schools (e.g. detailed description of work shops and exercises that can be used within regular classes or extracurricular activities, as well as lesson plans for history and literature classes)
 3. authors' research articles for pupils
- Professional texts are based on research

and they talk about various subjects: the picture of gender roles in textbooks, an introduction into social history, the picture of everyday life of a Serbian medieval village, female characters in Roma folk literature, the analysis of the status of women in Serbia from the perspective of the state and nongovernmental organizations... It is important to emphasize that the texts are followed by the reference lists and where ever it was possible a list of internet addresses where teachers will be able to find more information on a particular subject. The texts are accompanied by instructions for working with children, which are given in the form of a lesson plan. All instructions have been designed in accordance with the methods of active learning or as a description of a scenario for exercises or work shops. A special chapter in the book Brainteasers – a corner for the gifted is dedicated to the texts which can be interesting for the most interested and most creative pupils. Those are professional texts written in an interesting style and they talk about provocative subjects so the introductory text Men's Brains and Women's Heart is trying to answer the question why some girls who are excellent pupils at school later do not succeed in making a good career for themselves.

At the end of the manual, the authors prepared five annexes of which we would here like to mention a very concise and very significant and useful Dictionary of Basic Notions.

Besides very interesting authors' texts and concrete suggestions for working with children in some parts of the manual only principle ideas have been proposed. The authors themselves say: our intention was not to compile a "cookbook" with ready recipes, but a collection of various subject matters, which can inspire teachers to develop and implement the proposed ideas.

Ivana Pantelici
e-mail: pantelici@bos.org.yu

them with guidance and counselling services with a view to widening access.

Mobility

We recognise that mobility of students and staff among all participating countries remains one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process. Aware of the many remaining challenges to be overcome, we reconfirm our commitment to facilitate the portability of grants and loans where appropriate through joint action, with a view to making mobility within the EHEA a reality. We shall intensify our efforts to lift obstacles to mobility by facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits and by encouraging participation in mobility programmes. We urge institutions and students to make full use of mobility programmes, advocating full recognition of study periods abroad within such programmes.

The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world

The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. Our contribution to achieving education for all should be based on the principle of sustainable development and be in accordance with the ongoing international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education. We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.

We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our

experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest. We see the need to identify partner regions and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions. We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension.

IV. Taking stock on progress for 2007

We charge the Follow-up Group with continuing and widening the stocktaking process and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. We expect stocktaking to be based on the appropriate methodology and to continue in the fields of the degree system, quality assurance and recognition of degrees and study periods, and by 2007 we will have largely completed the implementation of these three intermediate priorities.

In particular, we shall look for progress in:

- implementation of the standards and guidelines for quality assurance as proposed in the ENQA report;
- implementation of the national frameworks for qualifications;
- the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level;
- creating opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, including procedures for the recognition of prior learning.

We also charge the Follow-up Group with presenting comparable data on the mobility of staff and students as well as on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries as a basis for future stocktaking and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. The future stocktaking will have to take into account the social dimension as defined above.

V. Preparing for 2010

Building on the achievements so far in the Bologna Process, we wish to establish a European Higher Education Area based on the principles of quality and transparency. We must cherish our rich heritage and cultural diversity in contributing to a knowledge-based society. We commit ourselves to upholding the principle of public responsibility for higher education in the context of complex modern societies. As higher education is situated at the crossroads of research, education and innovation, it is also the key to Europe's competitiveness. As we move closer to 2010, we undertake to ensure that higher education institutions enjoy the necessary autonomy to implement the agreed reforms, and we recognise the need for sustainable funding of institutions.

The European Higher Education Area is structured around three cycles, where each level has the function of preparing the student for the labour market, for further competence building and for active citizenship. The overarching framework for qualifications, the agreed set of European standards and guidelines for quality assurance and the recognition of degrees and periods of study are also key characteristics of the structure of the EHEA.

We endorse the follow-up structure set up in Berlin, with the inclusion of the Education International (EI) Pan-European Structure, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) as new consultative members of the Follow-up Group.

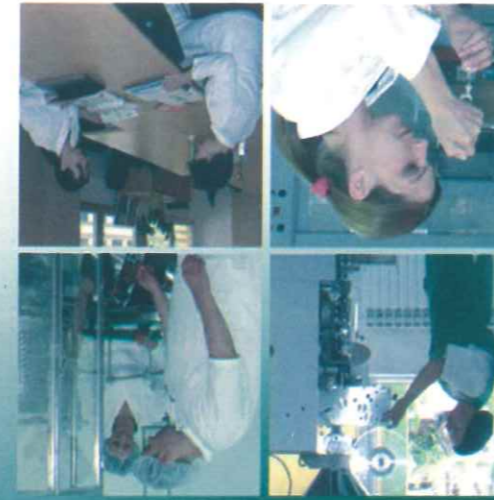
As the Bologna Process leads to the establishment of the EHEA, we have to consider the appropriate arrangements needed to support the continuing development beyond 2010, and we ask the Follow-up Group to explore these issues.

We will hold the next Ministerial Conference in London in 2007.

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