



24 April 2003

EDC-QA (13)

**PROJECT**  
**EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP :**  
**FROM POLICY TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**(EDC-QA PROJECT)**

*Researchers' meeting*  
*Ljubljana, 28-29 March 2003*

*Meeting report*

## INTRODUCTION

The researchers, invited to carry out the stocktaking study on quality assurance in education and in EDC in Southeast Europe, met in Ljubljana on 28-29 March 2003. The meeting was moderated by Michela Cecchini. The agenda and list of participants appear respectively in appendix 1 and 2. The researchers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro could not participate in the meeting.

The objectives of the meeting were to discuss in detail and come to a shared understanding of

- concepts and processes of quality assurance in education and for EDC
- methods and requirements to carry out the stocktaking study.

The main result of the meeting was to provide substantial new content elements on quality assurance in education and the situation in Southeast Europe which allowed Cameron Harrison to revise his first draft research instrument (see below). The final version of the research instrument appears in document EDC-QA(8) final.

### **1. Presentation of the project “EDC : from policy to effective practice through quality assurance”**

Michela Cecchini presented

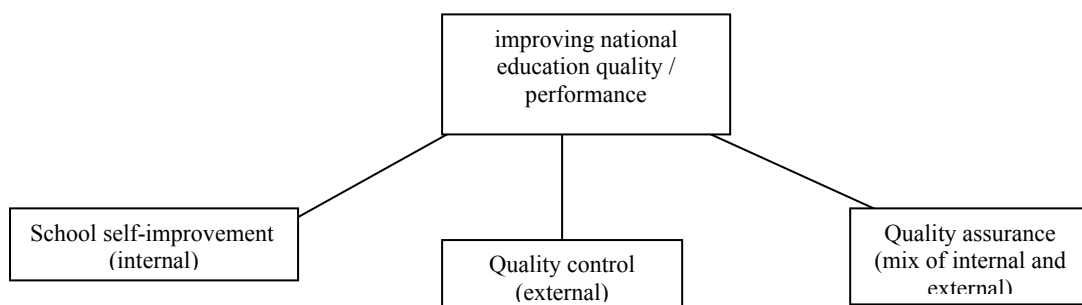
- the origin and launching of the project
  - follow-up of the “Stocktaking research on policies for education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity” : evidence of the gap between policies and practice; lack of policy implementation plans; lack of quality assurance systems
  - new project introduced within the Stability Pact process in January 2002; funding from Norway confirmed in October 2002; first meeting held in February 2003
  - UNESCO’s endorsement of the project
- the objectives of the project
  - to develop quality assurance mechanisms for education for democratic citizenship in ten countries of Southeast Europe
  - to do so in three phases : 1) to take stock of existing policies and practices in Southeast Europe and internationally; to develop a draft QA instrument for EDC; 2) to test and pilot the instrument including training of relevant practitioners; 3) to revise and finalise the QA instrument in line with the results of the second phase
- the strategy of the project
  - to embed the project and the development of quality assurance for EDC in the national educational reform processes
  - to this end, to ensure the ownership of the project by ministries of education through UNESCO and through the setting up of an accompanying regional consortium
- the calendar of the first phase of the project, see page 13.

## 2. Quality and quality assurance in education and for EDC

Cameron Harrison presented his paper setting out the development and the key elements of quality assurance systems (see document EDC-QA(12)).

Resulting from the presentation and the ensuing discussion, as well as from the detailed content discussion of the draft research instrument (document EDC-QA (8)) the following points were underlined :

- no particular quality assurance model exists, particularly in the field of education, which the EDC-QA project is tied to. Quality assurance takes different shapes;
- quality assurance is related to governance and intends to help bridge the policy-practice gap identified by the “Stocktaking research on policies for EDC and management of diversity”;
- quality assurance is related to development, to improving educational quality and performance. However, past experiences have shown that neither top-down development, in the form of quality control, nor bottom-up development, in the form of self-evaluation of school have worked for the whole educational system;
- quality control and quality assurance which are often taken one for the other need to be differentiated. The educational process and effective teaching are complex as they include for example teachers’ beliefs in what education is, or their and society’s expectations from learners. They are therefore not susceptible to control;
- the responsibility for quality and quality assurance lies with “the people who do the work”, especially in schools;
- quality assurance means connecting policy to practice by devolving responsibility and power, demanding accountability and offering support;
- the various approaches of educational improvement can be schematised in the following way, using Euridice’s categories on school evaluation<sup>1</sup>



- in Southeast Europe, it would appear that the control system is predominant rather than a system of ownership and quality assurance. It is nevertheless assumed that elements of quality assurance exist. There are also differences from country to country.

<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.eurydice.org/documents/evaluation/en/frameset\\_eval.html](http://www.eurydice.org/documents/evaluation/en/frameset_eval.html)

In Southeast Europe, the quality assurance approach raises issues of governance, of the decision-making, administrative, improvement and teaching cultures such as school autonomy, the autonomy of the teaching process and of headmasters, the cooperate working climate (team work culture), the focus on teaching results rather than on teaching process.

### **3. The stocktaking study on quality assurance in Southeast Europe**

Related to the conceptual issues set out above, the purpose of the stocktaking study was defined in the following way :

**The relevance for Southeast Europe of the quality assurance approach will emerge from the whole stocktaking process. The quality assurance concept, which developed in western contexts, cannot be simply imported to Southeast Europe. Quality assurance needs to respond to existing problems in the educational systems.**

**The stocktaking study will therefore be formative rather than summative. In other words, the stocktaking study should identify**

- **how the educational system is working in terms of educational improvement,**
- **what QA elements exist or do not exist**
- **what are major obstacles and what needs to be done.**

**The stocktaking study will provide the basis for a “matching exercise” between the QA approach and the functioning of the existing educational system.**

In terms of working methods, the study should

- combine different methods : documentary analysis and illuminative methods such as interviews and focus groups
- involve *inter alia* ministry officials, school heads, teachers and trade unions, local authorities, teacher training institutions, inspectorates
- include cross-questioning (triangulation process) between official statements and practitioners’ viewpoints
- closely involve the ministry; the final report should be shared with officials
- be a maximum of 20 pages long
- be finalised for 30 June 2003

The following short term calendar was agreed to :

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| - revised draft instrument by Cameron Harrison | 4 April  |
| - feedback from researchers                    | 8 April  |
| - send out of final instrument to researchers  | 11 April |
| - budgeted research plans                      | 18 April |
| - feedback on research plans                   | 25 April |

While it was too early to discuss the regional analysis of the national reports, Cameron Harrison’s initial thought would be to draw possible conclusions for each QA element set out in document EDC-QA(12) focusing particularly on professional development, training contents, organisational development.

#### **4. The international review of QA models**

The international review of QA models will be carried out by Janez Krek with the support of Cameron Harrison. It is complementary to the stocktaking study on QA in Southeast Europe. It will describe and analyse, in terms of strengths and weaknesses, major models of quality assurance for education and for EDC. It will also present examples of good practices and of instruments.

One limitation to the review will most likely be that models and instruments will not necessarily be translated into English.

All researchers are invited to send possible relevant materials for the international review to Janez Krek.

#### **5. Strategy for ownership development of ministries of education**

- UNESCO will send a letter to the Ministers of education informing them about the project and calling for their close cooperation in general and for the stocktaking study in particular.
- the participants were informed about the following meetings, held mainly in the framework of the Council of Europe and related directly or indirectly to the EDC-QA project :
  - Third Prague Forum on strategies for educational reforms : “raising quality, visions and realities”, Prague, Czech Republic, 10-12 April 2003;
  - 4th meeting of EDC coordinators, Vantaa, Finland, 8-10 May 2003 : includes the item on regional networking activities in Southeast Europe;
  - multilateral seminar on EDC policies, Strasbourg, France, 16-17 June 2003;
  - 3rd Informal Conference of European Ministers of Education from South-East Europe, Istanbul, Turkey, 15-17 September 2003;
  - 21st session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education Athens, Greece, 10 - 12 November 2003 : will focus on quality in education.

These events provide opportunities to raise awareness about and discuss issues of quality assurance and to inform about the QA-EDC project. The two ministerial meetings were particularly highlighted as providing opportunities for political statements on quality assurance as political backing for the EDC-QA project.

Researchers were invited to make contact in particular with the EDC coordinators in their country (the list appears in appendix 3) and inform them about the project.

- Information was also provided about two initiatives concerning specifically quality assurance in Southeast Europe :

- seminar on reconstructing middle-level education organisations; inspection and evaluation of schools, Belgrade, Serbia, 17-19 March 2003;
- preparation of a web based resource pack on assessment reform (based on country matrixes) by the Open Society Institute Education Support Programme.

Researchers were encouraged to contact the respective participants of the Belgrade seminar for their country<sup>2</sup> and their country nodes of the SEE-education cooperation network writing the assessment reform matrixes (see appendix 4).

## **6. Project and meeting evaluation**

As part of the on-going evaluation of the EDC-QA project, participants were invited to fill in the meeting evaluation questionnaire, prepared by the evaluator, Bernd Baumgartl.

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<sup>2</sup> information about the Belgrade seminar can be found on [http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id\\_reconstructing\\_ml\\_org.htm](http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id_reconstructing_ml_org.htm)

**Appendix 1**  
**Agenda**  
(document EDC-QA(9))

**1. Opening of the meeting and presentation of participants**

**2. Presentation of the EDC- QA project**

documents : project presentation, EDC-QA(6) and first meeting report, EDC-QA(4)

**3. Quality and quality assurance in education and in EDC**

document : first meeting report, chapters I and II, EDC-QA(4) and introductory discussion document, EDC-QA(10)

**4. The stocktaking study on quality assurance in Southeast Europe**

document: first meeting report, chapter IV.1, EDC-QA(4)

- the research framework : presentation by Cameron Harrison and discussion document to come
- cooperation with education ministries and consultation of EDC stakeholders
- calendar and deadlines

**5. The international review of QA models**

document : first meeting report, chapter IV.2, EDC-QA(4)

**6. Strategy for ownership development of ministries of education**

- role of UNESCO
- Council of Europe multilateral seminar on EDC policies, Strasbourg, 16-17 June 2003

**7. Project and meeting evaluation**

document : first meeting report, chapter IX, EDC-QA(4), and evaluation plan to come

**8. Conclusions**

## Appendix 2 List of participants

Michela CECCHINI, **co-coordinator**

6 Parkway Close, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, Herts, AL8 6HJ, UK

Tel : + 44 1707 377 148

Email : [cecchini@btopenworld.com](mailto:cecchini@btopenworld.com)

Ms. Milika DHAMO, Professor, Department of Education and Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania

Phone + 355 4234 224/ 233 178      Cell phone + 355 682 029 919

E-mail: [mdhamo@albmail.com](mailto:mdhamo@albmail.com)

Mr. Ciprian FARTUSNIC, Researcher, Institute of Educational Sciences, 37 Stirbei Voda, Sect.1 Bucharest, Romania

Phone/ Fax +4021 315 87 05

E-mail: [cipf@ise.ro](mailto:cipf@ise.ro)

Mr Cameron HARRISON, Director, Harrison Leimon Associates, Woodfield House, Priormuir, GB-ST ANDREWS KY16 8LP

Tel: +44 (133) 447 80 67      Mobile: +44 777 342 7195

E-mail: [cameron@harrisonleimon.co.uk](mailto:cameron@harrisonleimon.co.uk)

Mr Janez KREK, **coordinating institution**

Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, Bicevje 7,

1111 LJUBLJANA, Slovenia

Tel: +386 41 45 99 43 & +386 1 566 14 92

Fax: +386 1 566 14 93

E-mail: [janez.krek@guest.arnes.si](mailto:janez.krek@guest.arnes.si)

Mr. Tzako PANTALEEV, Ph. D., Professor, Executive director, Center for Educational Strategies, 19 Serdica st. 12002 Sofia, Bulgaria

Phone + 359 2 983 335 Cell phone + 359 88 802 410

E-mail: [pantaleevt@abv.bg](mailto:pantaleevt@abv.bg); [tzakop@yahoo.com](mailto:tzakop@yahoo.com)

Ms. Mateja PERSAK, **technical assistant**

CEPS, Faculty of Education

Kardeljeva ploščad 16

1000 LJUBLJANA, Slovenia

E-mail : [Mateja.Persak@Uni-Lj.si](mailto:Mateja.Persak@Uni-Lj.si)

Ms. Danijela PETROVIĆ, MA, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Cika-Ljubina 18-20, 11000 Beograd, Serbia

Tel: +381 11 3282 77      Fax: +381 11 639 356      Cell phone: + 381 63 77 98 372.

E-mail: [dspetrov@eunet.yu](mailto:dspetrov@eunet.yu); [Dspetrov@f.bg.ac.yu](mailto:Dspetrov@f.bg.ac.yu)

Ms Vedrana SPAJIC-VRKAŠ, Ph. D. (Professor, Educational Anthropology and Intercultural Education), University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Education, Ivana Luciceva 3, 10000 ZAGREB, Croatia

Tel: + 385 1 61 20 167/46 49 656

Fax: +385 1 61 56 880

E-mail: [vedrana.spajic-vrkas@zg.tel.hr](mailto:vedrana.spajic-vrkas@zg.tel.hr)

Prof. Ilo TRAJKOVSKI, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, Bul. Krste Misirkov, bb, MK-91000 SKOPJE

Tel: +389 91 464 229

Fax: +389 91 11 81 43

E-mail: [tilos@bistra.rek.ukim.edu.mk](mailto:tilos@bistra.rek.ukim.edu.mk)

**Appendix 3**  
**Council of Europe EDC coordinators in Southeast Europe**  
**(updated November 2002)**  
 (document EDC-QA(11))

**ALBANIA**

Mr Astrit DAUTAJ, Educational Researcher, Institute of Pedagogical Research  
 Rr. "Naim Frashëri" 17, Nr. 37 TIRANA  
 Tel: +355 4 256441 Fax: +355 42 23860 and (home) 355 424 35 58  
 E-mail: astritdautaj@yahoo.com; dautaj@albmail.com

**FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Ms Ljubinka DRAGOJEVIC  
 Professor of Democracy and Human Rights  
 Technical School  
 78000 BANJA LUKA  
 Bosnia and Herzegovina  
 Tel: 00387 65 530 016 Fax: 00387 51 212 328

**BULGARIA**

Ms Daniela KOLAROVA, Sofia University, Partners Bulgaria Foundation  
 Ljuben Karavelov str. 66 - 1000 SOFIA  
 Tel: 359 2963 2677 ; 963 26 88 Fax: 359 2 963 47 99  
 E-mail: daniela@bitex.com

**CROATIA**

Ms Nada JAKIR  
 Head of Department for bilateral and multilateral co-operation  
 Ministry of Education & Sports  
 Trg hrvatskih velikana 6 - Hr- 10000 ZAGREB  
 Tel: +385 1 4569 035 /4569 005 Fax: +385 1 4610 478  
 E-mail: nada.jakir@mips.hr

**KOSOVO**

Mr Christof H. CONRAD  
 International Advisor ,Department of Education  
 Provisional Institutions of Self-Government - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology  
 Eximkos Bldg, Nena Teresa Street  
 PRISTINA/KOSOVO  
 Tel: 381 38 504 604 3964 Mobile: 377 44 248 556 Fax: 381 38 504 604 4668  
 E-mail: conrad@un.org

**MACEDONIA**

Ms Olga DUKOVSKA-ATOV - Head of Presentation Unit - Ministry of Education & Science Dimitrie  
 Cupovski 9 - 100 SKOPJE  
 Tel: 389 2 11 61 01 Fax: 389 2 12 11 10  
 E-mail: olga@mofk.gov.mk

**ROMANIA**

Mr César BIRZEA, Directeur - Institut de Sciences de l'Education  
 37 Stirbei Voda, Sector 1- 70732 BUCAREST  
 Tel: + 40 21 313 64 91 Mobile: 40 21 92 64 8042 Fax: 40 21 312 1447  
 E-mail: cesar.birzea@ise.ro

**SERBIA**

Ms Radmila GOSOVIC  
Co-head of the Department for Education Development  
Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia  
Nemanjina st. 22-24  
11000 BELGRADE, Serbia  
Tel: 381 11 3616 293 Fax: + 381 11 3616 270  
Email : radmila.gosovic@uzzpro.sr.gov.yu

**SLOVENIA**

Mr Mitja SARDOC - Educational Research Institute - Gerbiceva 62  
1000 LJUBLJANA  
Tel: 386 1 4201 240 Fax: 386 1 4201 266  
E-mail: mitja.sardoc@guest.arnes.si

## Appendix 4 SEE ECN<sup>3</sup> Country Nodes

### **ALBANIA**

Center for Democratic Education  
Rruga e Elbasanit, Pallatet Fratari, Kulla 3/29, Tirana, Albania  
Phone: +355 4 340 378 Fax: +355 4 340 379  
E-Mail: [bmusai@cde-ct.org](mailto:bmusai@cde-ct.org)  
WebSite: <http://cde-ct.org>  
Head: Bardhyl Musai, Executive Director  
Contact Person: Bardhyl Musai, Dr Contact Person's e-mail: [bmusai@cde-ct.org](mailto:bmusai@cde-ct.org)

### **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

*Students resource center SRCE*  
Univerzitetski kampus Sarajevo (KMT)  
Zmaja od Bosne b.b.,  
71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Phone: + 387 33 206 048 Fax: + 387 33 206 048  
E-mail: [srce@soros.org.ba](mailto:srce@soros.org.ba)  
WebSite: <http://soros.org.ba/~srce>  
head: Muhamed Serdarević  
Contact Person: Armin Ibrahimpašić Contact Person's e-mail: [armin@soros.org.ba](mailto:armin@soros.org.ba)

### **BULGARIA**

National Institute of Education  
125 Tzarigradsco shosse Bul., bl. 5  
Sofia 1113, Bulgaria  
Phone: + 359 2 7172 24 Fax: + 359 2 70 20 62  
WebSite: <http://www.nie.bg>  
head: Stanio Stanev  
Contact Person: Deyan Pilev Contact Person's e-mail: [deyan.p@nie.bg](mailto:deyan.p@nie.bg)

### **CROATIA**

Institute for Social Research – Zagreb (ISR)/  
Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD)  
Amruseva 11/II  
10 000 Zagreb, Croatia  
telephone: + 385 1 49 222 99 or + 385 1 49 223 02 fax: + 385 1 48 10 263  
e-mail: [baranov@idi.hr](mailto:baranov@idi.hr)  
Head: Dr. Branislava Baranović  
Contact Person: Dr. Branislava Baranović Contact Person's email: [baranov@idi.hr](mailto:baranov@idi.hr) or [baranovi@rudjer.irb.hr](mailto:baranovi@rudjer.irb.hr)

### **KOSOVO**

Kosova Education Center  
5 Mother Teresa av., Prihstina,  
Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia  
telephone: +381 38 226 897 fax: +381 38 226 897  
e-mail: [office@kec-ks.org](mailto:office@kec-ks.org)  
WebSite: <http://www.kec-ks.org>  
Head and contact person : Dukagjin Pupovci Contact Person's email: [dpupovci@kec-ks.org](mailto:dpupovci@kec-ks.org)

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<sup>3</sup> Southeast European Education Cooperation Network, [www.see-educoop.net](http://www.see-educoop.net)

**MACEDONIA**

University St. "Kiril and Metodij"

"Pero Nakov" bb, 1000

Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

Head: Trajan Gocevski – PhD

Phone: + 389 2 116 520 Fax: + 389 2 118 143

E-mail: [coizv@unet.com.mk](mailto:coizv@unet.com.mk)

WebSite: [www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk](http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk)

Contact: Jasmina Delceva – Dizdarević, – PhD Contact Person's e-mail: [delcevaj@freemail.org.mk](mailto:delcevaj@freemail.org.mk)

**MONTENEGRO**

Ministry of Education and Science Montenegro

School Inspectorate in Podgorica

Novaka Miloševa 10/3

Podgorica, Montenegro

Phone: + 381 81 243 704 Fax: + 381 81 245 780

e-mail: [inspekcija@mn.yu](mailto:inspekcija@mn.yu)

head: Ljubomir Kovačević

contact: Goran Terzić contact person's e-mail: [inspekcija@mn.yu](mailto:inspekcija@mn.yu)

**ROMANIA**

Institute of Educational Sciences

37, Stirbei Voda street, Bucharest 70732

Romania

Phone: + 40 1 313 6491 Fax: +40 1 312 14 47

E-Mail: [info@ise.ro](mailto:info@ise.ro)

WebSite: <http://www.ise.ro>

Head: Cezar Birzea, Ph.D.

Contact Person: Simona Velea (Junior Researcher) Contact Person's e-mail: [simona@ise.ro](mailto:simona@ise.ro)

**SERBIA**

Educational Forum

Vojvode Brane 1/II (za Obrazovni forum)

Serbia , Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

telephone: + 381 11 3065 800 or + 381 11 639 724

fax: + 381 11 639 724

e-mail: [oforum@bos.org.yu](mailto:oforum@bos.org.yu)

Head: prof. dr Ivan Ivic

Contact Persons:

dr Ana Pesikan - [apesikan@f.bg.ac.yu](mailto:apesikan@f.bg.ac.yu) /or/ [zavram@eunet.yu](mailto:zavram@eunet.yu)

Aleksandar Bogojević - [alex@phy.bg.ac.yu](mailto:alex@phy.bg.ac.yu)

	Feb 03 15	March 03 15	Apr 03 15	May 03 15	June 03 15	July 03 15
core group and /or researchers' meetings	1st meeting: planning the project	researchers' meeting				
national teams						
regional consortium						
stocktaking in SEE				deadline natl reports : 30 June		
international review				regional analysis; deadline end July		
preparation of QA instrument						
Evaluation						
	Aug 03 15	Sep 03 15	Oct 03 15	Nov 03 15	Dec 03 15	Jan 04 15
core group and/or researchers meetings		enlarged meeting: planning the QA instrument			3rd meeting?	
national teams						
regional consortium						first meeting?
stocktaking	deadline international review : beg. August					
preparation of QA instrument						draft for seminar
Evaluation						international seminar

