

# ERI SEE

## EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

### REPORT

On the ERI SEE 7<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials meeting  
*Ohrid, Macedonia, 25 November 2005*

#### **Background and Justification**

In accordance with the *Memorandum of Understanding* signed by the SEE ministers of education and higher education among the instruments to be used by the **Secretariat of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE)** in order to fulfil its objectives is organisation, twice a year of the Senior Officials Meeting.

#### **Preparation of the meeting**

#### **Objectives of the seminar**

1. To offer the framework for information and dissemination on the development registered at European Union and countries from the SEE;
2. To discuss the ways for enhancing regional cooperation
3. Make recommendations for policy makers

#### **Agenda**

The agenda of the workshop envisaged a session dedicated to presentation of the European debates on European Qualification Framework, the programme of the Austrian Presidency in the first half of 2006, presentation of the results and recommendations made within the expert workshop on EQF-NQF organised by the Task Force on October 2005 in Vienna and the ERI SEE overview of 2005 and the thematic outlook for 2006.

In the Annex 1- please find the agenda of the seminar.

## Organizers

The workshop has been organised by the ERI SEE Secretariat with the support of the Task Force Education and Youth and the Macedonian Ministry of Education and Science.

## Target group/participants

Invitations have been addressed by the ERI SEE Secretariat to all the nominating representatives of the ministries of education from the SEE (signatory of the Memorandum of Understanding) as senior officials as well as the Governing Board and Consultative Body members.

## Activities performed during the seminar

### Participants

A number of 33 experts, representing ministries of education from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro- Rep of Serbia, Serbia and Montenegro- Rep. of Montenegro and Kosovo have attended the meeting. The experts participating to the thematic seminar on *Investing efficiently in education* were among the participants.

Ministries of Education from Bulgaria and Moldova have not been represented at the seminar. In the Annex 2 - the list of participants

### Language of the workshop

The working language was **English**.

### Topics

- A. European Qualification Framework (EQF)
- B. Recommendations of the expert workshop, October 2005, Vienna
- C. Programme of the Austrian Presidency in 2006 and the challenges for the SEE
- D. The ERI SEE overview of 2005 and thematic outlook for 2006

## **A. European Qualification Framework (EQF)**

Mr. Arjen Vos, on behalf of the European Training Foundation has introduced the concepts and work that has been done at European level-the general context, political commitment of the European leaders for establishing EQF and the Meta framework developed. A debate and consultation process have been organised in 32 European countries, EU member state, acceding countries and candidate countries and based on the results of the consultation process, the ministers of education and training will decided upon the next steps to be undertaken.

## **B. Recommendations of the expert workshop, October 2005, Vienna**

The Task Force Education and Youth of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, in close cooperation with the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe, has initiated a consultation process for SEE on the European Qualifications Framework. An expert workshop "Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning - Relevance, Feasibility and Implications for SEE" (Vienna, October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005) offered a forum for a broad discussion on the topic. Participants were HE and VET experts from the SEE Ministries of Education, experts from EU member states, the European Training Foundation and the OECD, as well as from the European Commission.

The expert meeting identified the following priorities for development:

- **Awareness raising and commitment**  
To be able to move forward in the process, the SEE countries need strong commitment by Ministries, Government and Social Partners involved in the effort of establishing EQF-compatible national qualification frameworks – respective activities such as awareness raising campaigns, etc. need to be considered.
- **Common language and terminology**  
As terminology and concepts vary from language to language, respectively country to country further steps should be taken to clarify key concepts and terminology used in the EQF consultation process.
- **Making use of already existing structures and processes**  
In developing QFs and promoting reform initiatives existing structures and processes should be used (e.g. National BFUGs, Bologna Promoters, etc.).

- **Capacity Building Measures**

Valuable experience in the development and implementation of QFs is already available at European, regional and international level. Peer learning and provision of technical expertise at regional level through networks for regional cooperation like ERI SEE or the European Training Foundation play an important role. Lessons learned from international evaluations, eg, the 2005 Scottish evaluation and the 2005 South African evaluation may provide useful insights into the implementation of QFs.

### **Funding/Financial Assistance**

As EQF/NQF refers to all sectors of education, financial resources will be needed to support successful implementation processes – both from national as well as international sources. It is therefore vital that funding instruments of the European Commission will be available for the implementation of QFs in the life long learning perspective including the relevant interfaces. It will be important to draw attention of national governments as well as the European Commission to the fact that the participation of the SEE countries in the new LLL programme will not eliminate the need for special 'assistance funding' for education reforms in the region.

### **C. Programme of the Austrian Presidency in 2006 and the challenges for the SEE**

Mr. Anton Dobart, the chair of the Task Force Education and Youth has informed the senior officials on the programme that will be implemented during the Austrian Presidency in the first half of 2006. Under the headline "Quality is the objective", the Austrian Presidency will deal with the following dossiers: 2<sup>nd</sup> Joint Progress Report on the implementation of the Education&Training 2010 Work Programme, Lifelong Learning Programme, EQF: Towards a European Qualifications Framework in the field of Lifelong Learning, European Parliament and Council Recommendation: European Quality Charter for Mobility, Council Conclusions on Language Competence Indicator, European Parliament and Council Recommendation: Key Competences for LLL and possible recommendation on Quality for Teacher Training.

### **D. The ERI SEE overview of 2005 and thematic outlook for 2006**

The executive director of the ERI SEE Secretariat has presented the main objectives followed in 2005, in accordance with the working programme adopted in November

2004 by the Governing Board and Consultative Body members of the ERI SEE, the results and challenges faced in implementation process.

It has been also presented the main lines of development for 2006, as it has been agreed on the Governing Board meeting in Podgorica, in May 2005.

During the discussion, the senior officials indicated the need for a better dissemination of information on EU development in the region- with a bigger responsibility to be taken by the senior official's representative and GB members from each country as well as the importance of developing twinning projects for enhancing the institutional capacity in the region.