

Task Force Education And Youth

Enhanced Graz Process
Working Table 1, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe



Sixth Working Meeting of Senior Officials from South Eastern Europe Podgorica, 27 May, 2005

Overview

The Sixth Working Meeting of Senior Officials from SEE in Podgorica (SOM 6) was hosted and organised by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Montenegro with the support of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe and the Task Force Education and Youth. Among the participants were the nominated members of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, ministry representatives and experts, as well as representatives of the Stability Pact.

SOM 6 concentrated on the following topics:

- Update on current processes in the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe.
- Update on EU developments in the field of Education and Training
- Report on the activities in the framework of ERI SEE
- Main aspects, achievements and challenges of the education reform in Montenegro
- Update on the OECD Project on “Education Development for Disabled and at risk Students
- Update on the ETF project on “Dissemination of the Copenhagen Process to South Eastern Europe”
- Discussion of Future Perspectives and Actions to be taken as outcome of the Graz Conference “Governance and Education for Sustainable Development and European Integration”.

The presentations on the above topics are all available online (<http://www.erisee.org>).

Summary of Inputs:

SOM 6 was opened by Minister Slobodan BACKOVIC, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Montenegro, followed by welcome addresses by Mr. Jean Daniel BIELER, Director of Working Table 1 and Mr. Anton Dobart, Chair of the Task Force Education and Youth.

Mr. Jean Daniel BIELER gave an overview on the results of the **Regional Table of the Stability Pact**, which took place from 16 – 18 May 2005 in Sofia. He pointed out that in future issues of education and training, but also of science and research might become even

more important on the Stability Pact's agenda and should be dealt with in an integrated approach. On behalf of the Stability Pact he expressed his satisfaction with the substantial work of the Executive Director of ERI SEE, Ms. Luminita MATEI, since the last Senior Official meeting in Zagreb in November 2004. He emphasised that a quick solution of still remaining questions of the establishment of the secretariat in Zagreb should be strongly envisaged.

In his **update on EU developments in the field of education and training**, Mr. Anton DOBART referred to issues of preparation of the 2nd Joint Interim Report (Education and Training 2010): e.g. the envisaged finalisation of national progress reports, the tendency to abolish existing working groups and the establishment of clusters of peer learning. With respect to the upcoming Austrian EU Presidency, Mr. Dobart emphasised that it will concentrate on the European Qualification Framework (IQF) in Higher Education and VET, the 2nd Joint Interim Report and possibly on the issue of the Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013). He also made reference to the European Education Ministers Conference to be held on 16 – 17 March 2006 in Vienna (including Ministers from the Western Balkan Countries). The following discussion emphasized the special role of ETF and CEDEFOP in supporting the finalisation of the 2nd Interim Report and the ongoing peer learning process (Arjen VOS, ETF), the role of the accession countries being “active observers” in preparation for full participating in institutions (Madlen Serban, Romania), the specific role of existing instruments in Higher Education like EURIDISE and NARIC (Rossitza VELINOVA, Bulgaria) and specific items of the Austrian Presidency (Edin JAHIC, Bosnia Herzegovina).

The Executive Director of ERI SEE, Ms. Luminita MATEI gave a **report on activities in the framework of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe**: a report on the successful first seminar on the Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme (Bucharest, 6 – 8 May 2005), the development of the ERI SEE website, the issue of the first ERI SEE newsletter (200 recipients) and further plans with respect to a follow up seminar on the ILLP (Sofia, September 2005), an envisaged seminar on Higher Education (Bergen Follow-up, 30 June to 1 July 2005) on invitation of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science and the preparation of a second newsletter. Currently the Work Programme for 2006 is under preparation and a first general framework of activities has been decided in the framework of the Second ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body Meeting which took place on 28 May 2005 in Podgorica.

Ms. Ivana PETRICEVIC presented an overview of the **main aspects, achievements and challenges of Education Reform in Montenegro**. Starting from a presentation of the long term visions (“Book of Changes”) she gave an insight view on concrete reform measures. Efforts not only span the establishment of educational councils and educational institutions, but also curriculum reform, textbook provision and teacher training. Special attention is also given to VET reform, special needs education, the strengthening of the educational network, a review the certification/examination system and the introduction of ICT in schools. Ms. Petricevic also emphasized the importance of continuous cooperation with the donor community to further enhance high quality education for all in Montenegro.

Ms. Christine STROMBERGER from the OECD gave an insight on the current status of the OECD project on “**Education Development for Disabled and at risk Students in Southeast Europe**.” The project is supported by the World Bank, Norway, Belgium (Flemish Community) and Austria. Based on a draft synthesis paper as presented in Sveti Stefan (Montenegro) in October 2004 national reports will be prepared by identified representatives of education ministries in Southeast Europe to be published in second half of 2005. Ms. STROMBERGER also referred to future activities in this field, given continuing donor support: the dissemination of project results to a wider education community, the continuation of the teacher training component and activities in the field of statistics and data collection.

In his presentation, Mr. Arjen VOS from the European Training Foundation emphasized the importance of regional ownership with respect to the project on the “**Dissemination of the Copenhagen Process in Southeast Europe**”, which has been organised with financial support of Italy in 2004/2005. After identification of national co-ordinators in the respective educational systems, a regional start up Conference (Zagreb, February 2005) discussed national action plans and activities to be implemented in 2005/2006. These activities range from a more general dissemination of relevant EU discussions to a focussed discussion on the relevance of issues on EU level (e.g. National Qualification Framework/NQF) for the priorities of education reform of South Eastern Europe. It is envisaged, that results of these activities will be presented on the occasion of a meeting of national co-ordinators in September 2005.

Whereas Mr. Gerhard KOWAR informed about the background of the **international Conference on “Governance and Education for Sustainable Development and European Integration”** which took place from 27 – 28 January 2005, the general rapporteur of the conference, Ms. Madlen SERBAN gave an overview on the recommendations, which covered not only the areas of Education but also of research. Participants stated, that especially the conference’s approach to involve key stakeholders other than involved directly in education, e.g. Parliamentarians, Ministries of European Integration, Finance, Labour and Social Affairs and others, brought added value to the results of this conference. Recommendations of the conference will also be considered in the ERI SEE work programme 2006.