

Activity Report on the implementation of the ERI SEE Work Programme 2009 January – December 2009

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Foreword

The year 2009 was marked with the strengthened EU enlargement policy¹, which recognises the progress of SEE towards European intergration and supports the intensified national efforts for moving the process of rapprochement to the EU further² and the increased regional ownership of the SEE cooperation under the leadership of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The region recognises that the current economic downturn calls for stronger regional partnerships, innovative networking and close cooperation in developing human capital³.

The achievements so far, marked with successful networking and regional cooperation in the development and implementation of lifelong learning strategies, national qualification frameworks, quality and equity in education, and in the integration of education, research and innovation in a functioning knowledge triangle, call for further strengthening and lobbying for ERI SEE as a regional platform which alines itself also to the instruments for exchange of experience within the EU (clusters of knowledge, peer-learning etc.) and supports capacity building for increased use of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and the European Neighbour and Partnership Policy Instrument (ENPI) for education and training reforms, as well as for participation of its' members into the EU programmes for external cooperation in education and training, including gradual involvement into the Life-long Learning Programme. This in particular in light of the future successor of the Lisbon Strategy "Europe 2020"⁴ and the new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020"⁵) adopted by the Council in May 2009.

This report presents the activities for implementation of the ERI SEE Work Programme 2009, organised and coordinated by the ERI SEE Agency in the period January-December 2009. The implementation of the activities is a result of the joint efforts and work of and with experts and policy makers of all ERI SEE partners (international organisations/institutions and donor countries) and the ERI SEE members (SEE countries and the Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital of the Regional Cooperation Council).

The "ERI SEE development process", initiated in 2009, is driven by the strong leadership of the Chair of the ERI SEE Governing Board Dr. Radovan Fuchs and the Co-Chairs. It addresses the renewal of the political commitment, the development of ERI SEE into an international organisation, as well as the adjustment of the thematic areas, instruments and the widening ERI SEE funding.

The Regional Cooperation Council closely follows and supports the ERI SEE work and contributes to its activities with expertise and knowledge sharing.

The Report is organised around the five ERI SEE outputs for the period 2008-2010, as agreed by the Governing Board in 2008. Integral part of the Report are the national reports of eight ERI SEE members (Annex 3), based on which the evaluation of the ERI SEE impact at national level was prepared.

¹ "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010", Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, 14 October 2009

² Completion of the accession negotiations with Croatia is expected in 2010; the efforts for overcoming the obstacles for opening of negotiations with the Republic of Macedonia have intensified; the EC is preparing an Opinion on the Montenegrin application for EU membership. Two countries applied for membership in 2009: Albania in April and Serbia in December. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to speed up key reforms. The stability of UNMIK/Kosovo has been maintained. The EU will negotiate a New Agreement with Moldova, which will go beyond the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and will promote deeper cooperation and approximation between Moldova and the EU.

³ Bucharest Conference on Fostering and Building Human Capital for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in South Eastern Europe (March 2009).

⁴ Currently under a public consultation process.

⁵ Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), Official Journal of the European Union (2009/C 119/02).

ERI SEE ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO THE DEFINED OUTPUTS 2008-2010

1. Output 1: ERI SEE members are informed on lifelong learning initiatives in the region and had the opportunity to develop a common strategy

Implemented activities:

1.1. Seminar: “Writing of Project Proposals – Preparation of Terms of Reference and Project Fiche”, Zagreb, Croatia, 27-28 March 2009

The ERI SEE Agency organised the seminar, which was hosted by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of Croatia. The Netherlands expert Ton Farla provided the main contribution in the preparatory phase and in the implementation of the seminar.

Total number of 17 participants took part to the seminar. Staff members of the respective structures of the SEE Ministries/agencies/centres involved in planning and implementation of projects funded with LLL, IPA and ENPI funds from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo⁶, the Republic of Macedonia and Serbia participated to the seminar.

The seminar agenda covered the process of drafting Terms of Reference (ToR) with focus on: background and rationale; objectives and requested services; methodology and output, as well as input and requirements. The preparation of project fiche was elaborated into details. The Kosovo⁷ delegation presented the structured approach towards coordination of donor support to projects in the area of education and training. In order to support the on-going preparations of project proposals for IPA funding, an example of a project aiming to support the establishment of a new national institution was presented.

The SEE representatives provided draft versions of ToRs and project fiches for potential projects in education and training and worked during the group work sessions on these materials in order to improve their quality.

The participants acquired specific knowledge and improved their capacity for proper development and assessment of project ToRs and project fiches.

Conclusions and recommendations for future regional cooperation:

The participants expressed high appreciation for the seminar from different points of view: the relevance of the topics covered with the programme, the structure and the format of the seminar, the possibilities for networking during the working sessions and the free time, the training materials prepared by Mr. Ton Farla, the examples of national ToRs and project fiches which were made available for training purposes, as well as the input and the facilitation of the seminar work provided by the expert. They provided the following conclusions and recommendations:

⁶ Under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

⁷ Under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

- Good knowledge and capacities for implementation of Logical Framework Approach (LFA) in the development of ToR and project fiches (in particular for projects targeting EU funding, funding by the World Bank and other international and multilateral institutions) are of utmost importance.
- Interest for continuation of the networking by further professional communications related to development of national projects in education and training was expressed. Use of the existing possibilities for networking provided on the ERI SEE web site was recommended (e.g. registration and participation in the different e-moderated fora), provision of documents and other information in the priority areas of lifelong learning, qualifications frameworks, quality and equity in education and the knowledge triangle etc.
- ERI SEE to continue enabling exchange of information on: the national systems of education and training in the region, the reforms and the challenges in the course of their implementation, as well as sharing of good practice examples.
- In this context, it was agreed to explore the possibility the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) publication on the projects whose implementation was managed by this Agency to be made available to the ERI SEE members.

1.2. Meeting of the network of national VET agencies and institutions of SEE, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10-11 December 2009

Recognising that the diversity of the VET systems in SEE is an asset which serves as a basis for mutual learning and support to future reforms, the VET institutions agreed on strengthened regional cooperation by establishing a SEE VET network (SEEVET-Net), (Tirana, Albania, September 2008). Supported by ERI SEE and the European Training Foundation (ETF), the networking of the VET agencies and institutions of SEE continued in 2009. The second meeting of the network was jointly organized by the national VET Agency of Albania, the Director of which is Chair of SEEVET-Net, the ERI SEE Agency, the ETF and the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina hosted the meeting.

The meeting gathered together 24 top level officials and experts from the SEE national VET agencies and institutions, ETF experts, as well as experts from the donor countries the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The main objective of the meeting was to contribute to sustained dialogue and communication of the VET institutions in the SEECP region, the members of the SEEVET-Net being part of it. The meeting focused on the aspects relevant for strengthening the work of the SEEVET-Net and provided a platform for updates on the recent European and SEE developments relevant for the role of VET in the context of lifelong learning. The agenda of the meeting covered briefings on the ETF project for sustainable networking in the SEECP region, as well as on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), followed by the report of the Chair of SEEVET-Net. The SEE countries presented the national activities in 2009 in the areas relevant for regional networking: NQF development and contribution of the VET institutions; implementation of lifelong learning strategies; quality assurance, evaluation and accreditation processes. The contemporary challenges for the European VET agencies and the transnational experience of cooperation and networking with sister institutions was illustrated with the Slovenian example of good practice. The ETF presented the work-in-progress on preparation of a project "Cities

and Lifelong Learning” with involvement of Barcelona – Spain, Glasgow – the United Kingdom, Tirana – Albania and Belgrade – Serbia.

The brainstorming session on how to develop sustainable cooperation, mutual exchanges and sharing of good practice between the SEEVET-Net members was supported with presentation of the structure and the role of the platform of European Providers of VET (EUproVET) and the Dutch association that represents all governmentally funded secondary VET and adult education institutions - MBO Raad.

The discussion on the draft SEEVET-Net Cooperation Agreement brought to the conclusion for establishment of a working group with involvement of the Chair of the network and representatives of the Montenegrin and the Serbian centres responsible for VET to prepare an updated draft of the Agreement.

Conclusions and recommendations for the future networking among the SEECP VET agencies and institutions:

Seeking innovation, developing conditions for the creativity to flourish, and strengthening complex partnerships are the mechanisms considered to be the key drivers for overcoming the crisis in SEE. The SEE region is to follow the same short-term and long-term European⁸ ways of meeting the challenges: making VET a more attractive option and raising its status by improving the quality of VET programmes. Greater flexibility and individualisation are needed to reach more people. Increased interaction: cooperation with the world of work through the development of workplace-based training, and increased cooperation and mobility by implementation of the common European tools. Increased action to reach young people and vulnerable groups will continue to play an important role in VET development.

The region faces common challenges with regard to formulation of comprehensive frameworks for reforms which would aim at: avoiding fragmented reforms in different sectors of education, mainstreaming the achievements of pilot projects, consideration to private and non-formal training, the VET-Higher Education correspondence, development of NQFs for lifelong learning and implementation of the lifelong learning strategies. Important challenge for SEE is the development of adult training and continuous vocational training in the situation of lack of public resources for substantial continuous training and adult education, low motivation of employers due to high unemployment rates, insufficient cooperation among the relevant stakeholders, little research about skill needs etc. There are challenges in governance, partnership and management related to: decentralisation, inter-ministerial coordination, school autonomy, equity in education, quality assurance systems, involvement of social partners etc., as well as the need for increased public resources for education and training.

Recommended further actions:

- The Chair of SEEVET-Net Mr. Ilija Paluka to organise a meeting with representatives of the Montenegrin Centre for Vocational Education and the Serbian Centre for Vocational and Adult Education in order to prepare a revised version of the draft SEEVET-Net Cooperation Agreement within the first three months of 2010.
- The final version of the Agreement to be sent to the SEECP countries for national consultancies and decision for signing the document.

⁸ Conference under the Swedish presidency with the European Council “The role of VET in meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow”, November 2009

- The Chair of the SEEVET-Net to organise and coordinate the process of signing the SEEVET-Net cooperation Agreement.
- Based upon the identified areas for cooperation and mutual learning, SEEVET-Net to develop and adopt a work programme for 2010.
- Upon a jointly agreed agenda, MBO Raad to organise a study visit of representatives of the SEE VET agencies and institutions to the Netherlands for enabling peer-learning and getting more information on the functioning of MBO Raad, other Dutch institutions and EUproNET.

1.3. Establishment of expert network in lifelong learning, including participation to the Workshop on advanced training of e-moderators

Lifelong learning is increasingly becoming a high priority area in SEE. The recent IPA and ENPI documents have foreseen substantial interventions in this area. ERI SEE supports the professional communication, exchange of experience and peer-learning among the SEE experts by the newly established internet forum on lifelong learning. The forum moderator is an expert on VET and lifelong learning from Albania.

The moderator took part to the workshop on advanced training on e-moderation, which was organised and implemented by the University of Teacher Education Central Switzerland (PHZ) (Lucerne, Switzerland, 24 - 25 June 2009).

1.4. Updates of the information on lifelong learning on the ERI SEE web site

The library of documents on lifelong learning available on the ERI SEE web page was updated periodically.

2. Output 2: Information on the European Qualification Framework and the development of National Qualifications Frameworks in the SEE region has been improved

Implemented activities:

2.1. Information exchange within the Governing Board and among experts on Qualifications Frameworks

The practice of exchange of information on the European developments in the field of qualifications frameworks and briefings on the progress in the ERI SEE region (established in 2005) was sustained. At the Eleventh meeting of ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body (Zagreb, Croatia, 16-17 November), the participants were informed about the second meeting of the Council of Europe steered network for qualifications frameworks in SEE, on the current state and outlook for the development of the Croatian Qualifications Framework, followed with presentations of the members of the Governing Board on the recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

The discussion addressed the interest for structured mutual learning on the NQFs in SEE, in particular with regard to the importance of ensuring mutual recognition and

mobility of the work force in the region. The on-going NQF development processes, the progress made so far and the identified needs for mutual learning and joint work have paved the way to the development of activities for establishment of a SEE cluster of knowledge on NQF.

2.2. Establishment of an e-moderated forum on qualifications frameworks

NQFs are increasingly becoming a high priority in SEE. The recent IPA and ENPI documents have foreseen substantial interventions in this area. ERI SEE supports the professional communication, exchange of experience and peer-learning among the SEE experts with the newly established internet forum on NQFs. The forum moderator is from Montenegro.

2.3. Provision of relevant information on Qualification Frameworks on ERI SEE web site

The library of documents on qualifications frameworks available on the ERI SEE web page was updated periodically.

2.4. Synergy of the activities with the Council of Europe, the European Training Foundation and the OECD

The Council of Europe, the European Training Foundation, the OECD and ERI SEE continued the cooperation and the coordination of the activities in the region.

The coordination is not limited to qualifications frameworks, but addresses different areas of education and training in which these institutions/organisations are developing and implementing regional activities. The most important areas of cooperation were equity in education (inclusive education for diversity and SEN) and the organisation of the SEEVET-Net meeting.

3. Output 3: The issues of quality and equity in education are promoted and strong networks have been established

Implemented activities:

3.1. Seminar 2: “Teacher training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts”, Zagreb, Croatia, 28-29 May 2009

The SEE countries are characterized with diverse social contexts and are rich of different cultures. Promotion of social cohesion and employment are high on the political agendas of Bulgaria and Romania as EU Member States and are gaining importance among other ERI SEE members. Provision of equitable access to quality education which involves the vulnerable groups (people who live in poverty, people with special needs, minorities and women) will continue to challenge the education and training systems of the ERI SEE members.

The ERI SEE Agency organised the seminar. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of Croatia hosted the event. The seminar was organised in close cooperation with the European Training Foundation, the OECD, the ERI SEE donor countries

Austria, The Netherlands and Switzerland and the ERI SEE members Romania and Croatia.

Total number of 28 participants from SEE (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia and Romania), the ERI SEE donors Austria, The Netherlands, and Switzerland, as well as from the ETF and the OECD took part to the seminar.

The seminar addressed the following topics: Communications from the European Commission on inclusive education and the renewed social agenda of the EU; the OECD project "Teacher Education for Diversity"; the ETF coordinated regional project "Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity"; the national policy of Romania towards teacher training for inclusive education; teacher competences needed to successfully implement diversity education, with a Romanian example of training needs analysis in rural areas; different approaches to inclusive education in a historical perspective and their influence on current practices in education; the index of inclusive schools and presentation of the E-Croatia project "E-Islands".

The seminar contributed to:

- awareness raising and knowledge transfer on the international policies and support (European Union, ETF, OECD), as well as on the national policies on teacher training for inclusive education for socially and culturally diversified societies;
- strengthening the mutual learning and deepening the exchange of information and good practice among the experts from the countries which were represented at the seminar;
- formulation of recommendations for future ERI SEE support to regional cooperation in the priority area of equity in education.

Recommendations for future regional cooperation:

Based upon the input provided, the discussions developed during the seminar and the recommendations of the participants, potential for long-term cooperation, as well as possibilities for immediate dissemination actions were identified.

Recommendations at content level:

- As part of the support to the policy learning process in the region, ERI SEE to continue the practice of dissemination of information on European policy recommendations relevant for the role of education and training for development of equitable, knowledge based societies, including the teaching profession and equity in education;
- Having in view the objectives of the OECD project "Teacher Education for Diversity" and the activities foreseen until 2010, it is recommended the SEE countries to consider their interest for participation in the project as a region. In case of positive feedback, the possible modes of involvement of the ERI SEE region in the project, including the financial contribution, to be elaborated with the OECD and further communicated to the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body for agreeing the future steps.
- Having in view that key policy directions are formulated driven by the findings of the international assessments in education (PISA, TIMS etc.),

the ERI SEE members to ensure continuity in their involvement in the international assessments;

- The National Centre for Staff Training in Pre-University Education of Romania (NCTPE), in collaboration with the relevant national authorities, to consider the possibility of making available for wider use by SEE professionals, the tools and publications produced and published in English language in framework of the project number EuropeAid/121446/D/SV/RO. The modalities of dissemination as well as the availability of the tools and publications would be jointly agreed by NCTPE and the ERI SEE Agency.
- Peer-learning visit to NCTPE of SEE experts, aiming at better acquainting with the Romanian system of professional development of teachers, to be foreseen with the draft ERI SEE Work Programme 2010.
- ERI SEE to support the dissemination of information on the Index of Inclusive Schools as a tool for developing inclusive schools.
- With the objective to achieve synergy of the activities at regional level, ERI SEE to continue the cooperation with the Council of Europe, the European Training Foundation and other international organisations and institutions, as well as with different donors active in the region (in particular with Austria, The Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland as ERI SEE donors).

Recommendations with regard to the methods of ERI SEE work

- Having in view the complexity of the topics covered with different capacity building measures, it is necessary to ensure continuity of the participation and involvement of the SEE experts in the future ERI SEE activities. The members of the ERI SEE Governing Board were invited to pay special attention to this aspect in the process of nomination of participants to the events. Such approach would contribute to increased impact of ERI SEE activities at national level.
- The agendas of the future ERI SEE events to increase the time dedicated to group work sessions, thus enabling intensive collaborative work and exchange of knowledge and experience. The quality of group is strongly linked to the process of nomination of SEE experts for participation to the event and calls for special attention of the members of the ERI SEE Governing Board.
- In order to sustain the continuity of attendance and contribution of the experts during the whole event, signing of separate lists of participants for each day of the future ERI SEE events was agreed.

3.2. Seminar “Assessment and Evaluation in South Eastern Europe Versus Future Challenges”, Zagreb, Croatia, 17-18 December 2009

The seminar enabled continuation of the regional networking of the national institutions in the field of assessment and evaluation in education of the SEE countries. The seminar was jointly organised by the ERI SEE Agency, Cito – the Netherlands and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia. The experts of Cito International provided substantial support in the preparatory phase and in the moderation of the work. Total number of 22 experts on national and international assessment from 7 SEE countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia) and the

ERI SEE donors the Netherlands and Switzerland took part to the seminar. Written and oral contributions were provided by experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Romania and Serbia, as well as from the Netherlands and Switzerland.

As agreed in Sofia-Bulgaria (December 2008), the seminar addressed the novelties in the field of assessment and evaluation in primary and secondary education and the challenges for SEE. It provided the opportunity for briefing on the recent international events in the area of assessment and evaluation (the 10th Conference of the Association for Educational Assessment – Europe and the Regional workshop on evidence based policy making) and addressed into more details: the role of assessment in evaluation; the evaluation practices in SEE and in the ERI SEE donor countries; the future challenges in assessment and evaluation; regional cooperation in international assessment and human resources planning in evaluation.

Being in different stages of reforming the education systems, the SEE countries have systems of assessment and evaluation which address both, the national challenges, as well as the challenges for harmonisation with the European developments. Equally important for the region is its involvement in the international assessments, learning from these experiences and using the comparative data for policy development and implementation for national improvements.

Assessments can be vital tools in addressing the dual challenge of the contemporary education systems: to educate all students & to prepare them for the twenty-first century global economy, and to improve the systems' performance. The assessments both clarify expectations and measure progress toward meeting them. Assessment results have consequences for students in the form of grades, promotion, graduation, and admission to higher levels of education. They also play a role in improving the delivery of education. Classroom assessments help inform educators' classroom instruction on a daily basis. The results of summative assessments play an important role in holding the system responsible for student outcomes, particularly when they are shared publicly and transparently as part of accountability and improvement systems. And assessment data from a variety of assessment sources can help inform systemic improvement efforts at the school, local, regional and national level, guiding decisions about professional development, resource allocation, and program effectiveness.

National policies can do a lot to support the development and use of assessments to establish readiness for higher-level education and readiness for the labour market as the goal for all students, and to improve the education system's capacity to meet that goal. This in particular with regard to: development of standards, support to timely and transparent communication and use of assessment results, improvement of educators' capacity to use data to improve teaching and learning, as well as to support investment in research and development to improve the collective knowledge and use of assessments in ways that improve teaching, learning, and student outcomes.

The presentations addressed the challenges for: different levels of assessment: national, school and student level; different types of education: primary, general secondary and secondary VET; different types of assessment: assessment for learning and assessment of learning.

Outcomes of the seminar: intensive mutual learning and SEE experts empowered to use the knowledge acquired in the future national activities.

Recommendations for future ERI SEE regional cooperation:

Numerous challenges for assessment and evaluation in education call for increased regional cooperation and intensive joint work in the region. There is potential for developing regional projects to address: the reading and understanding of PISA results; identification of the reasons that cause the trend of low performance in Mathematics and Science in SEE; the development of the capacities of teachers to cope with assessment, evaluation and quality assurance processes etc.

It was agreed the ERI SEE forum on assessment and evaluation to be used as a platform for continuation of the communication and joint work. Tasks for the moderator of the forum Ms. Zaneta Dzumhur:

- in collaboration with Ms. Svetla Petrova from Bulgaria, to elaborate a questionnaire for collecting initiatives for regional cooperation. The questionnaire will be communicated via the ERI SEE forum. Building on the input provided, potentially a regional meeting with involvement of experts from Cito – the Netherlands and from Switzerland would be organised to elaborate the ways how to approach different initiatives for regional cooperation;
- in cooperation with Ms. Roxana Mihail from Romania and Mr. Goran Sirovatka from Croatia, to develop a questionnaire similar to the one of TIMMS, aiming to collect an encyclopaedia of topics of interest for the region for secondary analyses of the information produced with the international surveys.

Having in view that equity in education is priority at policy level for all ERI SEE members, there is a challenge for ensuring equity in the processes of assessment and evaluation to pupils belonging to different categories of vulnerable groups in SEE, a complex region, rich of ethnic, religious and cultural differences.

There is a challenge for the assessments community to be actively involved in the on-going intensive processes of the development of NQFs, thus enabling adaptation of the assessment and evaluation processes to the learning outcomes oriented curricula and qualifications frameworks. The NQFs development is to cover the lifelong learning span (IVET and general secondary education, CVET, higher education, adult learning, non-formal and informal education), thus posing additional challenges for assessment and evaluation. A reference was made that there is good NQF practise in Croatia, which has involved different stakeholders since the early phases of the development process.

3.3. Continuation of the internet forum on assessment and evaluation in primary and secondary education, including participation to the Workshop on advanced training on e-moderation

The internet forum established in 2008 continued to function as a regional platform which provides support to networking of experts in assessment and evaluation in primary and secondary education. The forum moderator is from BiH.

The moderator took part to the workshop on advanced training on e-moderation organised by the Teacher Education Central Switzerland (PHZ) (Lucerne, Switzerland 24 and 25 June 2009)

3.4. Continuation of the internet forum on quality assurance in education, including participation to the Workshop on advanced training on e-moderation

The internet forum established in 2008 continued to function as a regional platform which provides support to regional networking of experts in quality assurance. The forum moderator is from Serbia.

The moderator of this forum took part to the workshop on advanced training on e-moderation, organised and implemented by the University of Teacher Education Central Switzerland (PHZ) (Lucerne, Switzerland, 24 - 25 June 2009).

3.5. Provision of relevant information on quality and equity in education on the ERI SEE website

The library of documents on quality and equity in education available on the ERI SEE web page was updated periodically.

4. Output 4: The knowledge triangle (education, research and innovation) has strengthened in South Eastern Europe

Implemented activities:

4.1. Participation to the International Conference ‘Fostering and Building Human Capital for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in South Eastern Europe’ (Bucharest-Romania, 6-7 March 2009)

The first international conference of the Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital (TFBHC) of the RCC took place on 6-7 March 2009 in Bucharest, Romania. Over 210 decision-makers and representatives of the European institutions and international organisations, Ministers of Education, Science and Research, Labour and Social Affairs from SEE countries, representatives of the RCC and regional co-operation networks and initiatives, non-governmental organisations, experts, researchers, students, international donors and representatives of the media took part to the conference.

Five plenary sessions of the conference provided rich information on: the European and regional context and key actors of human capital development; presentation of experiences and future challenges of building human capital; the human capital in a changing policy context and provided recommendations for future actions. Five parallel sessions covered: human capital in a changing policy context – internationalisation and globalisation; effective policies for building human capital – using evidence and trends; fostering human capital for labour market needs and competitiveness; human capital contribution to sustainable development; TVET and HE modernisation in Romania through Phare projects – challenges for building human capital in a changing society.

The ERI SEE work was presented on 6 March, during the plenary session “Building Human Capital – Experiences and Future Challenges”.

The draft Conclusions of the Conference will be discussed and the final document will be adopted during the Second meeting of the TFBHC (Zagreb, Croatia, 24 June 2009). The ERI SEE involvement in the follow-up activities will be discussed with the members of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body.

4.2. Support to the networking and peer-learning among SEE bodies of quality assurance in higher education, Tirana, Albania, 11-14 June 2009

The recommendation ERI SEE to continue the support and organisation of events on peer-learning among SEE bodies for quality assurance (QA) in higher education (HE) and to build expertise for external evaluation was formulated at the SEE meeting on regional cooperation in quality assurance in higher education, which took place back to back to the Workshop on Regional Cooperation for QA in Higher Education, linked to the CEE Network Assembly meeting of QA Agencies in Higher Education (Durrës, Albania, May 2008).

As a quick response to these needs identified at the first Regional (SEE) QA in HE meeting, the Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education of Albania (PAAHE) and ERI SEE agreed to co-organise the “Peer-learning and networking visit of SEE experts to the Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education of Albania” which took place in Tirana, Albania on 11-14 May 2009 at the premises of PAAHE.

Total of 5 participants took part at the peer-learning visit at PAAHE, representing two SEE national agencies: two participants from the Higher Education Development and QA Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and two from the Accreditation Agency of Kosovo⁹. Staff member of the Building Human Capital and Parliamentary Cooperation Unit of the Regional Cooperation Council also took part to the visit.

The intensive programme enabled acquiring knowledge and information on the practical work, as well as exchange of information about the developments in the countries involved in the peer-learning visit and sharing good practice examples. The QA systems of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo¹⁰ were presented; acknowledgement with the organisation and practical work of APAAL was enabled; the visitors took part to the first external evaluation meeting of the private HE institution “Marin Barleti”; the UniZKM – accredited, non-profit, cross-border HE institution was visited and the internal QA system was discussed; meeting at the Albanian Accreditation Council took place, as well as participation to the final meeting of external evaluation for accreditation purposes of the HE institution “Polis”. The peer-learning visit concluded with an evaluation session and provided conclusions and recommendations for future regional cooperation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The participants extended their thanks and appreciation for ERI SEE and PAAHE for supporting, hosting and organizing the peer-learning event. They proposed, discussed and finally adopted the following conclusions and recommendations:

- **The density of activities and efficiency in organizing, the practical approach and getting to know the practical aspects of the systems, practices and specificities in the field of QA in HE of the countries involved in the peer-learning event proved the usefulness and relevance of this format of capacity building measures for organizing further events at regional level.**

⁹ Under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

¹⁰ Under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

- The participants appreciated the opportunity provided during the two-days event to meet almost all actors and to discuss different components of QA (organization of the national structures: Agency & Council, self-evaluation, external evaluation, decision making process);
- The importance of the *on site* visits was emphasized and they were considered as extremely valuable for familiarizing with both the procedural and practical approach to QA in HE.
- The participants appreciated the mole of knowledge and information they got on the Albanian HE system, and on the QA institutions, bodies and practices. They highlighted that the free and interactive exchange of ideas, opinions and practices was very useful and instructive.
- As during the first regional QA meeting in Durres in 2008, participants stressed once again the outstanding importance of European networking and internationalization of QA bodies in the region. Such approach would increase the relevance of the efforts of the SEE countries to become part of the European Higher Education Area.

Recommendations for further regional cooperation

- The organization of peer learning visits to continue in the future, but to ensure involvement of representatives of a higher number of SEE countries;
- The peer-learning to be organized in small groups, since they enable more efficient work and focus on practical issues;
- Regional events to be organized with the objective to discuss different aspects of QA (e.g. the European and international perspective of QA institutions and practices; identification of the state of art of QA, common problems and difficulties, as well as possible solutions);
- ERI SEE to support round-visits around the SEE region;
- SEE QA bodies and institutions to welcome the involvement of international experts in different procedures and working processes;
- Support to be provided for exchange of expertise between the agencies and to support building and strengthening the bilateral and multilateral relations between the SEE agencies for QA in HE;
- Preparation and implementation of joint, QA centred projects, involving both agencies and HE institutions from two or more countries from the region (regional projects) to be supported;
- The Regional Cooperation Council expressed readiness to support the regional networking activities by focusing on building wider networking, linking and collaboration, and through linking with RESPA for human capacity building amongst agencies' staffs and peers;
- The participants recommend to ERI SEE, for issues directly related to QA, to keep direct contacts with and to act through the legal national institutions that are in charge of QA.

4.3. Regional seminar on “Evidence Based Policy Making”, Vienna, Austria, 9-10 November 2009

The regional workshop on “Evidence Based Policy Making” took place in Vienna on 9-10 November 2009 and was organised by KulturKontakt Austria, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development and the ERI SEE in the framework of the TFBHC of the RCC.

The International Conference on “Fostering and Building Human Capital for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in South Eastern Europe”, organised by the TFBHC (Bucharest, 6-7 March 2009), highlighted the importance of evidence-based policy making in the field of education. Further exchange of experience amongst policy makers on effective approaches to evidence informed policy making has therefore been included as one of the priorities of the action plan of the Task Force.

This regional workshop on evidence based policy making offered a platform to continue the discussion process initiated in Bucharest. Taking research in current key areas of education development as examples the workshop focused on the interaction between educational research and policy development in order to enhance the innovation capacity of education systems in the development towards quality, equity and efficiency. The thematic focus was on teacher evaluation (e.g. TALIS), the impact of external student assessment on education systems and the impact of international studies (e.g. PISA).

4.4. Sarajevo Conference on Higher Education “Building Capacity for Change in the Western Balkans”, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 30-31 October 2009

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia approved the request of the “Novi Sad Initiative” ERI SEE to be involved in the co-finance the third conference of the Initiative. The conference was jointly organised by the Universities of Sarajevo, Novi Sad and Zagreb, under the auspices of the RCC and brought together participants from European higher education institutions and public authorities.

The conference addressed the relevance of sustained and improved effective investment into education systems in the period of crisis, as such investment is the only path to prosperity. With regard to the effective and coherent implementation of the Bologna reforms, the following factors were identified as crucial to be addressed: the lack of societal debate on education policy; the lack of stakeholder participation in decision-making; lack of university autonomy, as well as lack of professional administration in higher education.

The conference recommended that a range of concrete actions should be developed and pursued in response to the need for regional cooperation, with the role of the RCC and the ERI SEE to be maximised in such activities. The conference recommended that by targeting additional financing on sustainable reform measures, the overall efficiency of funding would be greatly enhanced, and both the quality of higher education and the quality of life in the region would steadily improve.

4.5. Enabling efficient networking of Bologna Process actors including participation to the Workshop on advanced training of e-moderators

The internet forum established in 2008 continued to function as a regional platform which provides support to regional networking of Bologna Process actors. The forum moderator is from Croatia.

The moderator took part to the workshop on advanced training in e-moderation (Lucerne, Switzerland, 24 - 25 June).

4.6. Provision of relevant information on the “knowledge triangle” on the ERI SEE web site

The library of documents on “the knowledge triangle” available on the ERI SEE web page was updated periodically.

5. Output 5: The SEE Education Initiative is recognised as a reliable regional partner in the education sector of South Eastern Europe

5.1. ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body meetings (10th meeting, Zagreb, Croatia, 23 June 2009 and 11th meeting, Zagreb, Croatia, 16-17 November 2009)

10th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body

Under the Moldovan Chairmanship-in-office of the SEECF, the Moldovan authorities as hosts and the respective regional structures worked on preparation of joint and back-to-back meetings of the TFBHC of the RCC, the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body and the E-SEE Initiative. The meetings were scheduled to take place in Chisinau, Moldova, on 29-30 April 2009. Due to lack of quorum for the meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, the meetings were cancelled. The 10th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body took place in Zagreb, Croatia on 23 June 2009, back-to-back to the Second meeting of the TFBHC of the RCC.

The meeting addressed: briefing on the recent activities of the RCC Secretariat in the priority area of Building Human Capital; report on ERI SEE activities in the period January-June 2009 and outlook of the activities July – December 2009; development perspectives of the ERI SEE legal and organisational aspects (session supported with input from the Legal Adviser of the RCC Secretariat); financial implications of the potential legal and organisational restructuring and organisational issues.

Conclusions and recommendations of the meeting:

- The Chair of the ERI SEE Governing Board to launch a second round of distant voting for adoption of the draft ERI SEE Activity Report and Financial Report 2008 and of the Proposal for Adjustment of the “Internal Organisational Rules of the Agency for the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe”;
- The Chair of the ERI Governing Board to invite the countries which have not nominated National ERI SEE Contact Points (NCPs) to give priority to this activity.
- Working Group comprising of experts from ERI SEE donors and the ERI SEE members to be established, with the task to analyse the current status and to elaborate the possible modalities for future organisational and legal restructuring of ERI SEE. The working group is to provide a basis for discussion during the 11th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consulta-

tive Body. In context of its mandate, the Working Group to evaluate also the interest of the ERI SEE members for sustaining the concept of a rotating seat of the ERI SEE Secretariat (as foreseen with the Founding document).

- ERI SEE to move towards outcome-oriented reporting with the objective to evaluate the real impact and sustainability of the work.
- The future ERI SEE work to encompass the most suitable instruments for development of and support to regional cooperation and networking, including the project-oriented work based on the use of funds that support regional cooperation and development (e.g. the IPA and ENPI funds).
- Having in view that the decision on the announcement of a public contest for Executive Director of the ERI SEE Agency has to be made by the ERI SEE Governing Board at least three months before the expiration of the current mandate, it was agreed the decision to be made by applying a distant voting procedure, in accordance with Article 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the ERI SEE Governing Board.

Follow-up event: 1st meeting of the Working Group “Enhancing the Contribution of ERI SEE in Building the Knowledge Societies: Desirabilities, Imperatives and Development Perspectives, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 7-8 October 2009

The 1st Working Group Meeting was organised by the ERI SEE Agency in cooperation with the TFBHC and the RCC Secretariat. The RCC Secretariat hosted the meeting, which took place in the premises of the Secretariat in Sarajevo-Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 7-8 October 2009. Total of 18 representatives of the Chairmanship of the TFBHC, the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, the RCC Secretariat, members of the Working Group from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia and staff members of the ERI SEE Agency took part to the meeting.

The meeting collected an initial round of initiatives and recommendations relevant for the process of adaptation, complementation and enhancement of the regional cooperation in education and training, in particular ERI SEE in view of strengthening the commitment and increased ownership of the process.

General Findings

The significance of ERI SEE as facilitator of information transfer on current EU discussions to the region in accordance with its current mandate has been acknowledged.

Clear commitment of SEE countries to regional ownership of ERI SEE is necessary in the upcoming period, proved by active engagement in shaping the future ERI SEE priorities and instruments for cooperation, as well as in the development and implementation of ERI SEE work programmes.

Activities for adjustment of the current organizational structure of the ERI SEE Secretariat with the objective to establishing a sustainable, regionally owned and co-financed structure are to be initiated.

ERI SEE will continue to be in need of political mandate from the region for its future operation. The existing mandate should be updated in accordance with the changed landscape for regional cooperation.

Recommendations for the ERI SEE development process

In order to efficiently manage the complex and demanding process ahead, defining of immediate and longer term priorities for the work of ERI SEE, and the need to operate on both expert and political levels, the development process should be differentiated.

Political level

- Joint lobbying efforts for keeping fostering and building human capital high on the political agenda for SEE development, with education and training as one of the key components.
- The substantial changes of the political context and the changed cooperation landscape in SEE call for adjustment of the current political mandate of ERI SEE.

Organisational level and funding

- Initiation of transformation of the ERI SEE Secretariat into an international organisation, thus providing the legal basis for a sustainable, regionally owned and co-financed structure under the auspices of the RCC.
- Despite no examples of practice exist in the context of international organisations, in principle, there is no legal prohibition on maintaining the principle of the rotating seat and hosting the ERI SEE Secretariat. Downside of this approach would be necessity to negotiate and enter into a series of host country agreements with interested ERI SEE members, what might be a cumbersome process. The interest of the ERI SEE members to host the Secretariat, including ensuring higher national budget for co-financing the Secretariat would be decisive in this regard.
- The current status of ERI SEE funding¹¹ channelled by the ERI SEE Secretariat (for 2009 the total budget €219.726 was ensured by the Governments of Austria (20%), the Netherlands (14%), Switzerland (32%) and Croatia (34%) as the host country of the ERI SEE Secretariat) is not expected to change significantly with the national contributions of the SEE countries ensured in accordance with the Decision of the ERI SEE Governing Board on the Financial Contributions from the ERI SEE Members as of 2008¹². Following the political process “from assistance to cooperation” and the general trend of moving towards increased ownership of the regional cooperation as of 2008, the donors expect increased regional commitment, reflected both in participation in joint activities and in stronger & more balanced financial commitment to ERI SEE. Transformation of the legal status of the ERI SEE Secretariat into an international organisation would provide a legal basis for a balanced co-financing by the ERI SEE members.
- Ensuring accessibility of member and donor funding as well as the possibility for ensuring co-financing ERI SEE through projects supported with Multi-Beneficiary IPA/ENPI funds.

Content level

- The most important link between the regional ERI SEE context and the national context are the members of the ERI SEE Governing Board. Regular communication, feedback on the national developments and on the topics with potential for regional cooperation, active contribution in the period of preparation and adoption of ERI SEE Work Programmes, continuous engagement in the period of implementation of the regional activities agreed with the Work Programmes, and following-up the dissemination of the knowledge and skills acquired with the regional activities would substantially contribute to increased ownership and commitment to the Initiative. The work of the Governing Board members is supported by the National ERI SEE Contact Points.

¹¹ The information is based upon the ERI SEE budget 2009.

¹² The Decision was adopted through a distance voting procedure in March 2008.

- The Ministries responsible for education of SEE countries are invited to ensure sufficient budget for covering the costs of participation of the national member to the regular meetings of the ERI SEE Governing Board (twice a year, meetings hosted by ERI SEE members). In context of the current crisis and until further notice, based upon a request, costs for participation to the Governing Board meetings can be covered by the current ERI SEE donors.
- Ensuring proper participation and representation to ERI SEE events and other activities would increase the quality of ERI SEE work, as well as the impact of the regional cooperation at national level and will show ownership and commitment to regional cooperation. Within the context of approved ERI SEE work programmes, direct communication and cooperation with relevant SEE institutions in the implementation phase would contribute to ensuring proper participation and representation.
- Efforts to improve the functioning of the channels of communication between the ERI SEE Secretariat and the national authorities (including the completion of the network of National ERI SEE Contact Points) would increase the ERI SEE efficiency, quality of work, commitment and ownership of the Initiative. Within the context of approved ERI SEE work programmes, direct communication and cooperation with relevant SEE institutions in the implementation phase would contribute to increased efficiency.
- Re-shaping the ERI SEE work by identifying the ways how to optimize the regional cooperation with the objective to increase its added value and contribution to the specific processes which are on-going in different SEE countries by:
 - Identification of priority areas in which mutual learning and exchange of good practice would be valuable;
 - Fine-tuning of the ERI SEE instruments¹³ for regional cooperation:
 - The seminars and workshops which were the most frequently used ERI SEE instruments for peer-learning to be enriched with increased number of peer-learning visits, which have proved to lead to good results so far.
 - Establishing peer learning clusters of ERI SEE countries, European countries, as well as international organisations and institutions, interested in specific topics of education and training.
 - Continuation of the support to the networking of the newly established national institutions in SEE (e.g. SEE VET network, the network of centres for external evaluation in primary and secondary education, the centres for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education, the ENIC/NARIC centres).

11th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body

The Eleventh meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body took place in Zagreb, Croatia, 16-17 November 2009. It was held back-to-back with the TFBHC meeting of senior officials from the Istanbul MoU region “Overcoming the economic crisis: The role of human capital development” (18 November 2009).

The meeting provided the opportunity for a briefing on the RCC work in support to fostering human capital development in SEE and addressed: the challenges and development perspectives of ERI SEE at political, structural & organisational level, as well as at content level (outcomes of the 1st meeting of the Working

¹³ Currently, seminars, workshops on thematic areas, peer-learning visits, Internet based, e-moderated forums on thematic areas, ERI SEE blog and the most frequently used ERI SEE instruments.

Group “Enhancing the Contribution of ERI SEE in Building SEE Knowledge Societies” followed by a brainstorming session); the ERI SEE Activity Report July-November 2009, the ERI SEE Financial Report January-November 2009, and the draft ERI SEE Work Programme and Budget 2010. The Proposal for Improvement of the Methodology for Evaluation of the Impact of ERI SEE Activities at National Level was discussed and future steps were agreed (more information on this topic is provided in part 5.7. of this Report).

For the first time, the thematic session on regional cooperation (17 November) provided the opportunity for the participants to be acquainted with quality assurance projects in SEE supported by the Netherlands and to discuss the potential for enhanced networking based on the outcomes and the partnerships established with the projects. This thematic session also addressed the novelties in the development of NQFs in SEE (more information on this topic is provided in part 2.1. of this Report).

Conclusions and recommendations of the meeting:

- ERI SEE transformation process:
 - Initiation of a process of transformation of ERI SEE into an international organisation and a letter of the Chair of the ERI SEE Governing Board to the SEE Ministers responsible for education initiating preparation and adoption of a new MoU/Joint Document (to be sent in December 2009).
 - The ERI SEE Agency to elaborate a strategy paper on the status quo, future perspectives, funding options and financial implications of the transformation process (in December 2009).
 - The ERI SEE Chair and Co-Chairs in cooperation with the RCC to prepare an internal discussion draft of the MoU/Joint Document (February 2010).
 - The ERI SEE Agency to prepare an overview on the funding possibilities (February 2010).
 - Organisation of the drafting session of the MoU/Joint Document with all interested parties at the beginning of March.
 - Feedback round to the draft MoU/Joint Document to be completed before the meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body.
 - Adoption of the final draft MoU/Joint Document at the 12th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body (April 2010).
 - Consultation process in the SEE countries on the MoU/Joint Document.
 - Signing/adoption of the MoU/Joint Document at the 23rd Session of the CoE Conference of Ministers of Education (Brdo, 4-5 June 2010).
- The ERI SEE Agency to commission preparation of an expert survey on the possibilities for ERI SEE involvement in EU funded projects (March 2010).
- The opportunities for enhanced regional cooperation in the areas of quality of education and the NQF development, elaborated during the thematic session on 17 November, to be taken into consideration in the future ERI SEE work programmes.
- The ERI SEE Governing Board considered the Proposal for Improvement of the Methodology for Evaluation of the Impact of ERI SEE Activities at National level as a relevant source of information and recommendations. Concrete activities for its’ further refining and implementation are to take

place following the completion of the process of transformation of ERI SEE into an international organisation.

- ERI SEE Activity Report July-November 2009 and the Financial Report January – October 2009
 - Aiming to enable smooth implementation of the ERI SEE work programmes which are becoming increasingly demanding regarding the number, the scope and the diversity of the regional activities, careful planning and distribution of the tasks to the human resources of the ERI SEE Secretariat and a more substantial involvement on the ERI SEE NCPs in support to the ERI SEE Secretariat were recommended.
 - Having in view that each year the exercise of planning the national budget for the following year by the donor countries and the ERI SEE members takes place in the second half of the current year, the ERI SEE financial reports submitted to the Governing Board in this period are to present an overview of the budget spent and to refer to the forecast of the expenditures expected by the end of the current year.
- Draft ERI SEE Work Programme and Budget 2010
 - The documents are to be re-drafted by taking into consideration the conclusions of this meeting related to the ERI SEE transformation process.
 - The number of activities is to be reduced, with focus on sustaining the networking of the newly established national institutions responsible for different areas of education in SEE and on the establishment of two clusters of knowledge.
 - Aiming to enable informed decision of the Governing Board on the continuation of the ERI SEE forums and the blog, an evaluation of the actual usage of these platforms to be planned in 2010.

5.2. Establishment of the network of national ERI SEE contact points (NCP) and Workshop of the ERI SEE NCPs (Zagreb, Croatia, 21-22 December 2009)

Aiming to enable smooth implementation of the ERI SEE work programmes which are becoming increasingly demanding regarding the number, scope and diversity of the regional activities, the ERI SEE Governing Board supported the initiative of the ERI SEE Secretariat for establishment of a network of National ERI SEE Contact Points (NCP) in 2009.

Upon invitation of the Chair of the ERI SEE Governing Board, the Ministers responsible for education of the ERI SEE members have nominated seven NCPs so far. Currently, the network consists of the NCPs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. The network will be completed upon nomination of NCPs from Albania, UNMIK/Kosovo and the Republic of Macedonia. More information on the members of the network of ERI SEE NCPs is provided in Annex 1.

The establishment of the NCPs contributed to:

- Increased efficiency ERI SEE, including increased participation of national experts to different ERI SEE capacity building measures.

- Increased horizontal networking among the SEE countries in the area of education and training.
- Increased ERI SEE visibility at national level.
- Increased ERI SEE sustainability, as the contact points function within the Ministries responsible for education of the respective SEE countries.
- Increased regional ownership of ERI SEE, thus contributing to the overall objective for development of sustainable regional cooperation.

Increased efforts of the members of the ERI SEE Governing Board from the countries which have not nominated NCPs are necessary in order to complete the network.

The Workshop of the ERI SEE NCPs (Zagreb, Croatia, 21-22 December) gathered together the NCPs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia and Montenegro and the staff members of the ERI SEE Agency. It provided the opportunity to meet each other, to be acquainted into more details with the work of ERI SEE and to discuss the future work of the NCPs.

Presentations provided by the staff members of the ERI SEE Agency, followed with brainstorming sessions addressed:

- The ERI SEE – objectives, mission, membership, partnerships, structure, thematic areas and activities;
- The roles of the NCPs in support to the ERI SEE activities:
 - Organisation of different ERI SEE capacity building measures (seminars, workshops, meetings, peer-learning missions, placements etc.).
 - Provision of official national reports on the progress of development of different segments of the national education system.
 - Support from the NCPs to improvement of the ERI SEE website:
 - Updating the Library of SEE documents on education on the ERI SEE website.
 - Awareness rising on the ERI SEE forums on lifelong learning, quality assurance in education, assessment and evaluation in education, national qualifications frameworks and the Bologna Process.
 - Promotion of the ERI SEE work in the SEE countries, the region and in wider context.
- Support to the work of the members of the ERI SEE Governing Board:
 - Contribution to the development of the ERI SEE yearly work programmes.
 - Support to the implementation of the yearly work programmes.
 - Collection of information and support to the preparation of the National ERI SEE Reports.

The members of the network visited the premises of the ERI SEE Agency.

5.3. Enhanced ERI SEE visibility and networking

The work of ERI SEE was presented at different meetings and other events relevant for the cooperation in education and training. Examples of some meetings:

- Sarajevo, 5th March 2009, meeting organised by the Regional Cooperation Council: “Exchange of Views between the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Board and the Representatives of Regional Co-operation Taskforces and Initiatives in South East Europe Operating under the Auspices of the RCC and /or with which the RCC has regulated appropriate relationship and coordination of activities through specific arrangements”. The questionnaire with relevant information on ERI SEE was completed and submitted to the RCC for further use and input in the database.
- Bucharest, Romania, 6-7 March 2009, International Conference on Fostering and Building Human Capital for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in South Eastern Europe
- Nova Gorica, Slovenia, 8-9 June 2009, EREF 2009 (European Regional Economic Forum).
- Astana, Kazakhstan, 6-18 September 2009, International Conference “Fighting corruption and good governance”. For the purpose of the Conference, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova and Montenegro provided information on the national efforts to fight corruption, including corruption in education. In the framework of the on-going process of rapprochement to the EU, the fight against corruption is increasingly gaining importance and national strategies to fight corruption have been developed. There is potential for exchange of information and experience in SEE on the implementation of the strategies, including the area of education.

5.4. Improvement of the ERI SEE web site

In January 2009 the re-design on the ERI SEE web site started. The site was re-designed by the staff members of the ERI SEE Agency, without outsourcing. The web site is based on Drupal as a web-content-management-system.

The content on the site was re-designed and re-organised. Fig. 1 presents the first page of the re-designed site.



Fig. 1 Screen shot of the first page of the red-designed ERI SEE web site

Based upon the recommendations of the Workshop on advanced e-moderation, the possibilities offered by the ERI SEE website were enriched. The ERI SEE

blog was developed and became operational in September 2009. The first posts on the Bologna Process and quality assurance in higher education have been put on the blog.

The ERI SEE Facebook was established as the opportunity for expert networking.

Banners and bookmarks for increased visibility of ERI SEE were designed and published. They were distributed to the moderators, as well as on different occasions.

The statistics of the traffic viewed on the ERI SEE web site January – December 2009 is presented in Fig. 2.

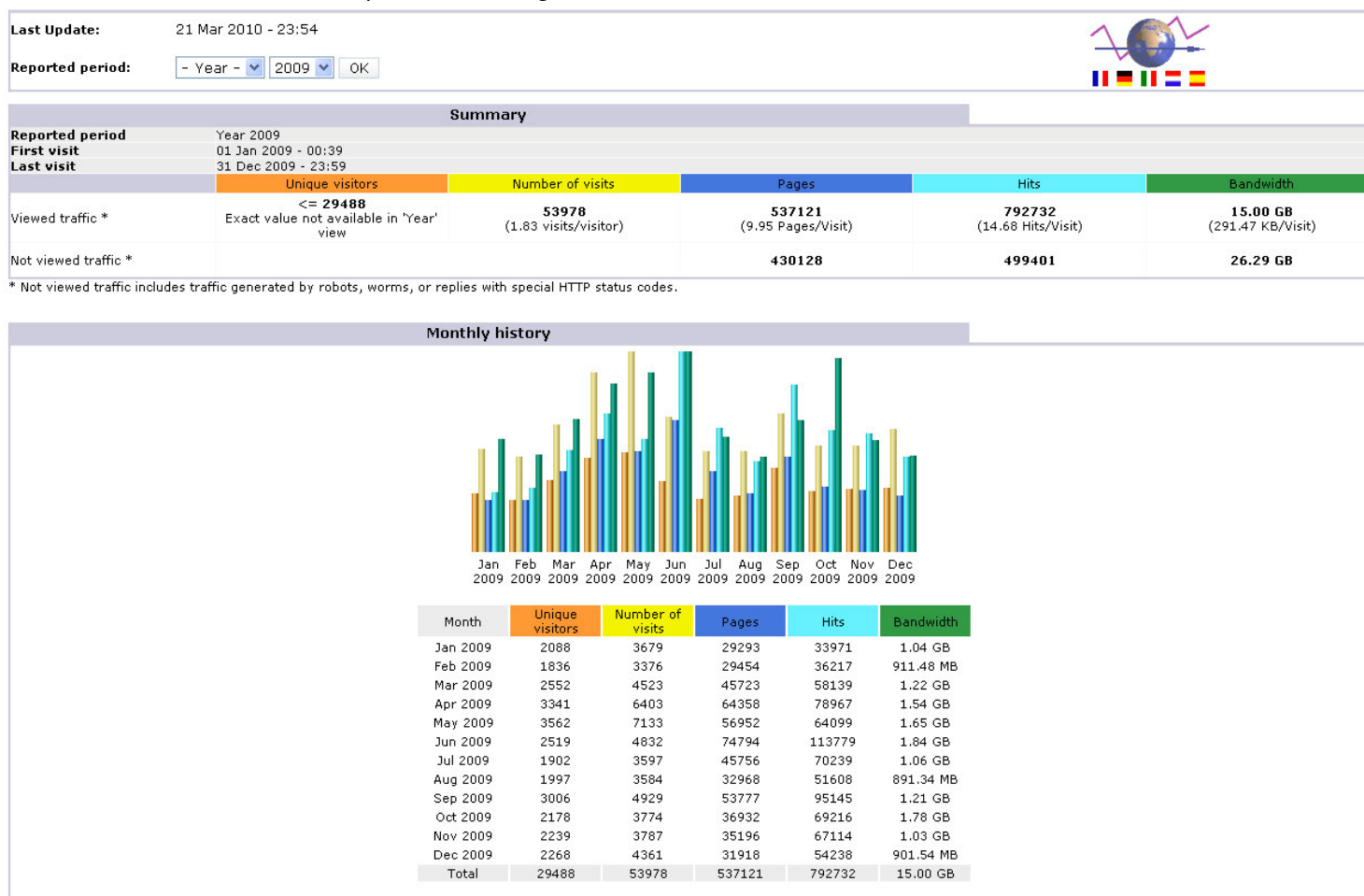


Fig. 2 Statistics of the traffic viewed on the ERI SEE web site January – December 2009

Table 1 - Summative statistics of the ERI SEE website

Type of statistics	For the period 2007-2009	For the year 2009
Unique visitors	47.488	29.488
All visits	80.974	53.978
Pages preview	792.914	537.121 (app 10 pages per visitor)
Hits		792.732

Table 2 - Statistics per search engines for 2009

- Google	2.881
- Yahoo!	1.054
- Windows Live	276
- Unknown search engines	186

Page rank 5

5.5. Office management and administration

Activities for office management and administration are taking place on a daily basis.

In September 2009 the ERI SEE Governing Board adopted the proposal of the Chair of the ERI SEE Governing Board for adjustment of the Internal Organisational Rules of the Agency for the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe.

5.6. Planning and reporting activities

The ERI SEE Activity and Financial reports 2008 were prepared and approved by the Governing Board members in a distance voting procedure.

The ERI SEE Activity Report January-June 2009 was prepared and presented at the 10th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body.

The ERI SEE Activity Report July-November 2009 & Financial Report January – November 2009 and the draft ERI SEE Work Programme and Budget were presented at the 11th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body. Preparation of updated draft documents was agreed based upon the discussion and the recommendations.

Activities related ERI SEE financial reporting

Twofold financial reporting activities took place in 2009:

- *Reports in accordance with the obligations defined in the agreements signed between the ERI SEE Agency and the donor countries Austria, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland.* Separate external audits of the ERI SEE accounts according to the generally accepted accounting principles were carried-out in the period January – March 2009. Audited financial reports were submitted to the counterparts for the following agreements:
 - Agreement between KulturKontakt Austria and the ERI SEE Agency for co-financing of the activities in accordance with the ERI SEE work programme in 2008. The report was submitted to KulturKontakt Austria in March 2009.
 - Agreement between CROSS/EVD on behalf of the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the ERI SEE Agency for co-financing of the activities in accordance with the ERI SEE work programme in 2008. The report was submitted to CROSS/ECD in March 2009.

- Extension of the Agreement between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the ERI SEE Agency for co-financing of the activities in accordance with the ERI SEE work programme in 2007 by 31 December 2008. The report was submitted to SDC in March 2009.
- *Financial reporting towards the national authorities of the Republic of Croatia:*
 - Final financial report of the ERI SEE Agency covering the period January-December 2008 was prepared and submitted to the Croatian Financial Agency and the State Auditing Office of the Republic of Croatia (February 2009).
 - Periodical financial reports covering the periods:
 - January-March 2009;
 - January-June 2009;
 - January-September 2009.

5.7. Review and recommendations for improvement of the existing methodology for evaluation of the impact of ERI SEE activities at national level

The experience from the 2007 survey of the ERI SEE impact at national level, carried out in the framework of the discussion process “From Assistance to Co-operation”, and the outcomes of the national ERI SEE reporting exercise introduced in 2008, proved the added value of the evaluation. Aiming to strengthen this mechanism, the existing methodology was reviewed by the Swiss company Project Cycle Support GmbH. The Proposal for Improvement of the Methodology for Evaluation of the Impact of ERI SEE Activities at National Level (Proposal) was presented to the ERI SEE Governing Board (at the 11th meeting, Zagreb, Croatia, 16-17 November 2009).

The Proposal provides: evaluation of the framework conditions for efficient impact evaluation, quantitative and qualitative assessment of the first round with conclusions & recommendations and elaborates a proposal for an improved evaluation system. The improved evaluation system builds upon: recommended modifications of the existing template for evaluation of the ERI SEE impact at national level (the template was used for preparation of the National ERI SEE Reports presented in Annex 3), modifications of the existing template for evaluation of the ERI SEE events by the participants (example provided in Annex 2), increased role of the ERI SEE NCPs and strengthened coordination role of the ERI SEE Secretariat.

The ERI SEE Governing Board considered the Proposal as a relevant source of recommendations for improvement of the existing methodology for evaluation of the impact of ERI SEE activities at national level and recommended concrete activities for its' further refining and implementation to take place following the completion of the process of transformation of ERI SEE into an international organisation.

EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL IMPACT OF ERI SEE ACTIVITIES IN 2009 (BASED UPON EIGHT NATIONAL ERI SEE REPORTS)

In accordance with Article 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the ERI SEE Governing Board, eight members of the Board submitted annual national reports (national report). Albania and UNMIK/Kosovo did not submit national reports, but experts and high level officials were involved in some ERI SEE events 2009. The national reports are integral part of the ERI SEE Report 2009. The full content of the reports is presented in Annex 3.

Total number of 144 experts and high level officials from national structures responsible for educational policy planning and implementation (Ministries, agencies, offices at national, regional and local level, higher education institutions, primary and secondary schools and NGOs) were involved in ERI SEE activities in 2009. Table 3 presents the distribution of the participants to different events per ERI SEE members.

Table 3 – Statistics of the participation of representatives of ERI SEE members to the events in 2009

Event	ERI SEE Member									
	AL	BA	BG	HR	MK	MD	ME	RO	RS	UNMIK/ Kosovo
Seminar "Preparation of Terms of Reference and Project Fiches", Zagreb, HR, 27-28 Mar.		2		5	2		2		2	2
Seminar: "Teacher Training for Inclusive Education in Countries with Diverse Social and Cultural Contexts", Zagreb, Croatia, 28-29 May	2	2		11	2					
Peer-learning visit of SEE experts to the Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education of Albania, Tirana, AL, 11-14 Jun.	6	2								2
Tenth meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, Zagreb, HR, 23 Jun.		1		2			1			1
Regional Workshop "Evidence Based Policy Making", Vienna, AT, 9-10 Nov.(Co-organised event)	1	1	2	2		2	2	2	3	1
Advanced training of the e-moderators of ERI SEE forums. Luzerne, CH, 24-25 Jun.	1	1		2					1	
First Working Group meeting, Sarajevo, BA, 7-8 Oct.		1		2		1	2		1	
Third regional conference under the "Novi Sad Initiative", Sarajevo, BA, 30-31 Oct.		13		7			2		5	
Eleventh meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, Zagreb, HR, 16-17 Nov.		1		2			1	1	1	
Meeting of the SEEVET Network, Sarajevo, BA, 10-11 Dec.	2	6	1	2			2	1	2	
Seminar "Assessment and Evaluation in SEE Versus Future Challenges", Zagreb, HR, 17-18 Dec.		2	1	5		2	2	1	3	
Workshop of the National ERI SEE Contact Points, Zagreb, HR, 21-22 Dec.		1	1	1			1			
Total number of participants per ERI SEE members	12	33	5	41	4	5	15	5	18	6
TOTAL number of participants from all ERI SEE members	144									

All ERI SEE members have used the standard from with 6 guiding questions for the national reports. The outcomes of this exercise and the recommendations were summarised around the following points:

1. ERI SEE activities of interest for its' members and reasons for absence of participants to some events

All ERI SEE activities have been of interest for the participants from the respective countries. The topics of the capacity building measures (seminars, workshops, peer-learning visits) were in line with the national priorities of the education systems and had potential for mutual learning and exchange of experience at regional level. The activities under the "ERI SEE Development Process" contributed to increased commitment and efforts for increased ownership of the Initiative.

Different reasons have caused the absence of national representatives from some events. To mention but few: financial difficulties, scarce human resources and high workload at the home institutions, organisational changes at the home institutions, elections, visa and language problems etc. Montenegro has pointed out that a longer period is needed to develop a regional cooperation culture.

2. Dissemination within the national context

Different approaches to dissemination of the knowledge, skills and good practice experiences acquired with involvement in ERI SEE activities have been used: written reports to the home institutions, which have been often shared with other institutions that develop activities in the areas which have been addressed with the specific ERI SEE activity; use of official communication tools (e.g. circular letters); the knowledge acquired has been shared with colleagues at the work place/at sector level and with other stakeholders; involvement in ongoing discussions on educational reforms; informal dissemination among colleagues; presentations at seminars and other events; use of the web sites of the institutions in order the widespread the information; etc. Aiming to increase the impact of the reports and to valorise as much as possible the presentations made during the ERI SEE events, Romania has introduced a section of conclusions and recommendations in the reporting forms. ICT platforms are widely used for dissemination, in particular the e-mail as a common tool.

Depending on the topics, the dissemination has targeted different institutions and stakeholders: Ministries with different levels of the structures (national, regional, local), national institutions responsible for policy creation and implementation, primary and secondary schools, higher education institution, NGOs. As part of the reporting on the regional cooperation, Montenegro reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on ERI SEE. Following the first meeting of the Working Group, ERI SEE and the future challenges have been presented to all organisational sectors of the Ministry of Education, the Institute for Improvement of Education and the Institute for Quality and Evaluation of Serbia.

3. Added value of the ERI SEE activities for the national agenda and for the institution(s)

Added value at individual level: mutual exchange of good practices, identification and clarification of field-specific difficulties, update on the novelties at European level and in the wider European Area of Education, widening the professional contacts and the cooperation within the region: dissemination of good practice examples and

exchange of information. Added value is the opportunity for networking and communication with peers (enabled with ERI SEE events and with the ICT supported platform for communication). Moldova has stipulated the added value provided by ERI SEE in the frame of the TFBHC Mobility Programme for capacity building in regional cooperation.

Human resources development is the most important *added value for the institutions* (Ministries of education, national institutions, primary, secondary and higher education institutions). Exchange of experiences and awareness on good practices in the region provides added value and enables feedback to the education reforms, particularly in policy development and implementation in the areas of quality of pre-university and higher education, equity in education and VET development. Increased capacities of the staff members for preparation of project proposals, in particular for IPA/ENPI funds have contributed to institutional involvement in projects relevant for education reforms aiming at improvement of the national socio-economic context. The recently established national structures in different areas (assessment and evaluation at pre-university level, quality assurance in higher education, VET etc.) have declared a great need for capacity building and peer-learning. ERI SEE provides opportunities for developing and strengthening institutional contacts and co-operation.

Added values for the national agenda: exchange of experiences and awareness on good practices in the region provides added value and enables feedback to the education reforms, particularly to policy development and implementation in the areas of quality of pre-university and higher education, equity in education and VET development. The First meeting of the Working Group has provided the opportunity for the SEE countries to update their priorities for regional cooperation in line with the changed national contexts and to commit themselves to new instruments of cooperation. All ERI SEE activities in 2009 have offered opportunities to enhance the cooperation between the countries of the region.

The capacity building measures for the moderators of ERI SEE forums have contributed to increased quality of the support to regional cooperation and networking supported with this ICT based platform.

4. Thematic areas that need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work programme

The relevance of the reforms and the national progress have been identified as important to be followed-up regionally in the next work programme, with focus on: NQF, quality assurance at different levels of education, lifelong learning and building capacity for fund raising, in particular for IPA/ENPI funds. All ERI SEE members have developed intensive activities for VET development and this is an area with a strong potential for regional cooperation.

Some countries have recommended a follow-up at regional level in the areas: equity in education; recognition of qualifications; the knowledge triangle with focus on higher education and a follow-up event on evidence based policy making.

5. Recommendations for continuation of activities with the next work programme

The SEE countries have recommended continuation of the following ERI SEE activities: capacity building for preparation of project proposals and implementation of EU funded projects (with focus on IPA/ENPI projects and involvement in the Lifelong Learning Programme); training of professionals on quality of education at all

levels; teacher training and professional development of teachers; establishment of SEEVET-net as a significant step towards formalisation of the cooperation of the SEECP members in the area of VET in the context of lifelong learning; further dissemination of information on ECVET and the EQARF; implementation of lifelong learning/adult education strategies; social partnership in the VET sector.

The national reports have recommended introduction of new topics for regional cooperation: capacity building of policy makers for policy learning, strategic planning, managing of the reforms in education; entrepreneurial learning; higher education (funding models; academic mobility: regulated professions, including harmonisation of the national legislation with the EC Directive EC/36/2005); NQF self-evaluation and comparison with other SEE countries (upon achieving the necessary level of NQF development).

Focus on peer-learning visits as a valuable instrument for capacity building and regional cooperation is recommended. Moldova has pointed out the TFBHC Mobility Programme for capacity building in regional cooperation. Romania has re-iterated the conclusions of the regional network of national institutions for assessment and evaluation in pre-university education that regional cooperation could be possibly supported by projects funded with ESF/Multi-beneficiaryIPA/ENPI funds.

Serbia has stipulated the importance of further promotion of regional cooperation.

Members of the network of National ERI SEE Contact Points

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dragana Popović
Ministry of Civil Affairs
Sector for Education
Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 3
71 000 Sarajevo
BiH
Tel: +387 33 492 516
Fax: +387 33 492 627
E-mail: dragana.popovic@mcp.gov.ba

Bulgaria

Jasmina Saraivanova
Expert
Directorate for European Integration and International Cooperation
Ministry of Education and Science
2A Kniaz Dondukov blvd.
1000 Sofia
BULGARIA
Tel: + 359 2 92 17 635
E-mail: j.saraivanova@mon.bg

Croatia

Hrvoje Pavletić
Associate, Directorate for International Cooperation and European Integration
Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
Donje Svetice 38
10 000 Zagreb
Croatia
E-mail: hrvoje.pavletic@mzos.hr

Republic of Moldova

Victoria Isac
Senior education expert
International Relations and European Integration Department
Ministry of Education and Youth
1, Piata Marii Adunari Nationale, Chisinau
Tel: +373 22 23 80 61
Fax: +373 22 23 27 85
E-mail: international@edu.md

Montenegro

Jelena Abramović
Department for International Cooperation
Ministry of Education and Science
Vaka Đurovića bb
81 000 Podgorica
Montenegro
Tel: +382 20 410 151
Fax: +382 20 410 152
E-mail: abramovicjel@gmail.com

Romania

Roxana Fratila
Adviser for European Affairs
General Department for European Affairs and International Relations
Ministry of Education, research and Innovation
28-30 General Berthelot Street
I/010168 Bucharest
Romania
Tel.: +40 21 405 62 31
Tel.: +40 21 405 63 77
Fax: +40 21 312 66 14
E-mail: roxana.fratila@medu.edu.ro
roxana.fratila@gmail.com

Serbia

Gabriela Bratić
Head of the Department for EU Integration and Projects in
Education
Ministry of Education
Department for EU Integration and Projects in Education
11 000 Belgrade
Nemanjina 22-26
Phone: 00 381 11 3616 595
Fax: 00 381 64 813 41 18
gabriela.bratic@mp.gov.rs

Example of a completed evaluation form for an ERI SEE event (summative table based upon the individual inputs)

 Ministry of Science Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia	 ERI SEE EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE	
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Regional seminar

"Assessment and Evaluation in South Eastern Europe Versus Future Challenges"

17-18 December 2009, Zagreb, Croatia

EVALUATION FORM

1 The topics of the Seminar were covered adequately

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
			8	7
Comments:				

2 The content of the Seminar was logically sequenced and stimulating

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		2	7	6
Comments:				

3 The format of the Seminar (presentation on each topic, discussion, working groups, etc.)

Not Satisfied at all	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Fully satisfied
		2	3	10
Comments:				

4 The level of discussion/interaction among the participants (*peer-learning*)

Not Satisfied at all	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Fully satisfied
			5	10
Comments:				

5 Professionally, the Seminar was useful for me

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		2	4	9
Comments				

6 Personally, the Seminar was a rewarding learning experience

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		3	5	7
Comments				

7 I am satisfied with the quality of the venue and catering

Not Satisfied at all	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Fully satisfied
		2	2	11
Comments:				

8 I am satisfied with the rest of the facilities

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
			5	10
Comments:				

9 In your opinion, how could this event be carried out in a better way?

Choose 1 subject or topic – explore this in more details and not on a general level. Approach the topic from a problem solving approach. Display examples of tests & assessments. Work in teams and let the teams present their solutions.

Longer lunch breaks

Prezentacije učesnika je trebalo objaviti na sajtu ERI SEE-a prije početka seminara da bi se na pravi način upoznali sa razmišljanjima. Hvala!

It has been good, enough!

Thank you!

The same way.

I have experienced a very pleasant meeting.

National ERI SEE Reports

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina
2. Bulgaria
3. Croatia
4. Republic of Macedonia
5. Moldova
6. Montenegro
7. Romania
8. Serbia

Missing reports:

Albania

UNMIK/Kosovo

National Report
Bosnia and Herzegovina

- 1. Which ERI SEE activities of the last work plan did your country identify of interest and why? Please, explain the reasons if there was no participation to one or more activities from your institution/country, if applicable.**

In accordance with official ERI SEE invitation letters, B&H representatives participated in events planed in ERI SEE 2009 Work Programme as follows:

1. Two participants form B&H took part on the Regional seminar on teaching training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural context held on 28-29 May 2009 in Zagreb. Having in mind importance of the role of teacher today in diverse social and cultural society we found this opportunity valuable to obtain new knowledge and exchange experience with participants coming from other countries.

2. Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance in B&H is newly formed state agency. Peer learning and networking visit of SEE experts to the Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education of Albania held on 11-13 June 2009 in Tirana was useful for Director and Deputy Director of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance. From their reporting this visit was of utmost importance as for widening views of functioning and organisation of the agency.

3. Status of potential candidate offers to B&H opportunity to use IPA funds for components 1 and 2. With reference to this, we found interesting to take a part in the seminar "Writing of project proposal, Terms of Reference and Project Fiche" held on 27-28 March 2009 in Zagreb. Two representatives of the Ministry of Civil Affairs attended the Seminar.

4. Representative of the Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education attended the Advanced training of the e-moderators of ERI SEE forums (24-25 June 2009, Lucerne, Switzerland).

5. Bosnia and Herzegovina representative participate to the ERI SEE 1st Working group meeting in Sarajevo.

6. Bosnia and Herzegovina was co-organizer of the Meeting of the network of national VET agencies and institutions of SEE: "Quality of Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning and its Role in the Development of National Qualification Frameworks". The meeting held on 10-11 December 2009 in Sarajevo. Since Bosnia and Herzegovina is in process of development of the National Qualification Framework we found it as an opportunity to host SEE county representative and share experience, challenges and constrains. Bosnia and Herzegovina was represented by large delegation: 3 representatives of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, 2 representatives of the Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education and 1 representative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Science.

7. Two representatives form the Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education took a part in the seminar Assessment and Evaluation in SEE Versus Future Challenges. The seminar was held in Zagreb 17-18 December 2009.

8. Also, B&H ERI SEE Contact Point attended the meeting of the ERI SEE Contact Points held on 21-22 December 2009 in Zagreb.

All these events offered opportunities to enhance cooperation within the region and share experiences to tackle issues posed by both Bologna Process and latest trends in education generally.

2. What mechanisms of dissemination have been used and which institutions have been involved? What was the way for and the scope of dissemination of results from the ERI SEE events in your institution and/or for relevant stakeholders in your country?

The Ministry of Civil Affairs, Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education and within activities to come, Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance has been involved. Dissemination of results is performed in written Reports prepared for the Ministry and Agency and all materials are disseminated among staff in mentioned institutions.

However, it is important to mention that the period of preparations for running fully operational institutions (Agencies) is still under way. So it needs to be taken into account the process of capacity building, which is in its very inception phase and still needs to be developed in accordance with identified priorities.

3. Please comment on the added value of the ERISSE implemented activities by your country and suggest some evidences in this respect explain: was there an added value through ERI SEE activities for the national agenda in your institution/country?

Added value of the ERI SEE implemented activities lies in mutual exchanging of good practises, identification and clarification of field - specific difficulties and sharing and harmonizing of latest trends in determined fields and widening of professional contacts and cooperation within the Region.

4. Based on your national context, please identify which thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan and why.

As "top-list" HE topics in Bosnia and Herzegovina are:

- NQF
- LLL
- Quality assurance in education
- IPA – Strategic Coherent Framework, National Program and other documents referred to IPA component 4 and DIS (Decentralized Implementation System).

These are identified within the BP and are very important elements to be developed for its full implementation.

5. Please suggest activities to continue during the next ERISSE work programme and justify.

Training of professionals and development of assessment;

(It is necessary to improve comprehensive understanding of key element in assessment process such as interpreting analyses, writing reports/dissemination of results-not only about the content but also about how to write technical papers, item selection, finalizing items for trial or production, specifying samples, etc)

Workshops with experts in determined field;

Peer learning;

(Most valuable aspect is to work alongside the other researchers and learn how to approach and tackle problems)

6. To which ERI SEE activities did your Ministry provide in kind or financial contributions and to what extent? Why did your Ministry decide to support specifically these activities? Please attach the Euro counter value of all your contributions also in the respective spreadsheet of annual activities provided by the ERI SEE Secretariat. Please quantify in-kind contributions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was co-organizer of the Meeting of the network of national VET agencies and institutions of SEE: "Quality of Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning and its Role in the Development of National Qualification Frameworks". The meeting held on 10-11 December 2009 in Sarajevo. Since Bosnia and Herzegovina is in process of development of the National Qualification Framework we found it as an opportunity to host SEE county representative and share experience, challenges and constrains.

As foreseen in the ERI SEE financial rules and in accordance with the letter of invitation to co-organize the Seminar Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina organized a diner for participants of the meeting. Financial contribution for this event is approximately € 750.

Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina has also proposed covering of costs for GB member biannual meetings for the 2010 budget which will be adopted by the end of the year.

ERI SEE

EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE
OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

National Report

Bulgaria

- 1. Which ERI SEE activities of the last work plan did your country identify of interest and why? Please, explain the reasons if there was no participation to one or more activities from your institution/country, if applicable.**

The ERI SEE activities current topics for Bulgaria. Bulgarian representatives did not participate in some of them mainly because of the great official load in the period, the current financial crisis, and the national elections.

- 2. What mechanisms of dissemination have been used and which institutions have been involved? What was the way for and the scope of dissemination of results from the ERI SEE events in your institution and/or for relevant stakeholders in your country?**

To disseminate information on upcoming events and results of already held events letters and reports to various stakeholders were prepared.

- 3. Please comment on the added value of the ERISSE implemented activities by your country and suggest some evidences in this respect explain: was there an added value through ERI SEE activities for the national agenda in your institution/country?**

In 2009 we had again the good opportunity for establishing and maintaining working contacts, for disseminating examples of best practices and exchanging of information.

- 4. Based on your national context, please identify which thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan and why.**

- 1. Lifelong Learning Programs.*
- 2. The knowledge triangle „Education – Research – Innovation”.*
- 3. Quality Assurance.*
- 4. Academic mobility.*
- 5. Models for Higher Education funding.*
- 6. Vocational Education and Training.*

The topics are current for Bulgaria and cover areas for which are prepared or being under preparation programs and / or strategic documents.

- 5. Please suggest activities to continue during the next ERISSE work programme and justify.**

Organizing and holding of peer learning activities, seminars and conferences related to current issues in the field of education and training.

- 6. To which ERI SEE activities did your Ministry provide in kind or financial contributions and to what extent? Why did your Ministry decide to support specifically these activities? Please attach the Euro countervalue of all your contributions also in the respective spreadsheet of annual activities provided by the ERI SEE Secretariat. Please quantify in-kind contributions.**

Bulgarian representatives participated in the following events of the ERI SEE Events 2009:

1. *1st Working Group Meeting, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 7-8 October:*
 - *meals and per diem – 105 EUR;*
 - *insurance – 2,36 EUR.*
2. *Regional Workshop "Evidence Based Policy Making", Vienna, Austria, 9-10 November (Co-organised event):*
 - *meals and per diem – 210 EUR;*
 - *insurance– 3,54 EUR.*
3. *Meeting of the SEEVET Network, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10-11 December:*
 - *meals and per diem – 40 EUR;*
 - *insurance– 3,11 EUR.*
4. *Seminar "Assessment and Evaluation in SEE Versus Future Challenges", Zagreb, Croatia, 17-18 December:*
 - *meals and per diem – 120 EUR;*
 - *insurance– 2,36 EUR.*
5. *Workshop of the National ERI SEE Contact Points, Zagreb, Croatia, 21-22 December:*
 - *meals and per diem – 31,5 EUR;*
 - *insurance– 1,50 EUR.*

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EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE
OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

Annual National Reporting Questionnaire

Croatia

(based upon the feedback of two participants to the ERI SEE seminar on writing Terms of Reference and project fiches)

- 1. Which ERI SEE activities of the last work plan did your country identify of interest and why? Please, explain the reasons if there was no participation to one or more activities from your institution/country, if applicable.**

Regional seminar on writing project proposals - Preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR) and Project Fiche - 27-28 March 2009, Croatia, Zagreb. Possibility to exchange data and to discuss them. Learning into details about drafting project fiches and ToR.

- 2. What mechanisms of dissemination have been used and which institutions have been involved? What was the way for and the scope of dissemination of results from the ERI SEE events in your institution and/or for relevant stakeholders in your country?**

Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA), Croatia, has participated in the above mentioned activity with 3 participants. Result (improved skills in writing project proposals) is implemented in every-day work. Dissemination has been organised within the International Department in Agency.

- 3. Please comment on the added value of the ERISSEE implemented activities by your country and suggest some evidences in this respect explain: was there an added value through ERI SEE activities for the national agenda in your institution/country?**

Added value was for our institution, we have informed about what is going on around the neighbouring countries, in which direction they are going regarding EU integration and using IPA components.

- contribution in enhancing absorption capacity of public institutions is noted
- contacts with other colleagues/participants in region.

- 4. Based on your national context, please identify which thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan and why.**

More workshops and good practice regarding other regional IPA projects.

- 5. Please suggest activities to continue during the next ERI SEE work programme and justify.**

More workshops and good practice regarding other regional activities with the main purpose of using IPA funds.

Sharing experiences in effective development in Teacher Training and Development of teachers throughout their professional career

- 6. To which ERI SEE activities did your Ministry provide in kind or financial contributions and to what extent? Why did your Ministry decide to support specifically these activities? Please attach the Euro counter value of all your contributions also in the respective spreadsheet of annual activities provided by the ERI SEE Secretariat. Please quantify in-kind contributions.**

The financial contribution of Croatia to ERI SEE is presented in the ERI SEE Financial Report, both the portion of the budget administered by the ERI SEE Agency and the financial contribution for office rent channelled directly by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports to the Centre of Technology Transfer (CTT).

ERI SEE

EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE
OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

National Report Republic of Macedonia

1. Which ERI SEE activities of the last work plan did your country identify of interest and why? Please, explain the reasons if there was no participation to one or more activities from your institution/country, if applicable.

The Republic of Macedonia identified as interest a number of ERI SEE activities of the last work plan, which included:

- a. Per learning networking visit of SEE experts to the Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education in Albania;
- b. Regional seminar on writing project proposals Preparing of TOR and Project Fiche;
- c. Regional seminar on Teacher training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts;
- d. Advanced training of the e-moderators of ERI SEE forums;
- e. Regional seminar on Teacher training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts;

The Bureau for Development of Education is interested in developing and improving inclusive education, its curriculum, as well as teacher training and providing support to primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia. Accordingly, The Bureau for Development of Education participated on the Regional seminar on Teacher Training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts in Zagreb, Croatia on the 28th and 29th of May 2009.

In order to support the on-going intensive work on preparation of project proposals under the IPA, as well as of project proposals to be supported from different financial sources, IPA representatives were present on the seminar on writing project proposals, terms of reference and project fiche. Around 20 participants from respective Ministries and other SEE institutions as well as experts from the donor countries took part and contributed to the seminar.

Also, within the frame of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, the Republic of Macedonia identified the modernisation of the educational and training system (with a view of improving its adaptability to the labour market demands), promoting life long learning and ensuring equal access to quality education for all, irrespective of ethnic origin, as major fields of interest. These fields were made as priorities within the framework of Component IV : Development of Human Resources of IPA for the Republic of Macedonia.

2. What mechanisms of dissemination have been used and which institutions have been involved? What was the way for and the scope of dissemination of results from the ERI SEE events in your institution and/or for relevant stakeholders in your country?

The Bureau for Development of Education participated on the Regional seminar on Teacher Training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts in Zagreb, Croatia on the 28th and 29th of May 2009. Several presentations for inclusive education were presented on the seminar by experts from respective institutions of the European Union.

The Bureau for Development of Education disseminated the results of the seminar on a sector level (the Sector for Development of Education, Standards and Curricula and the Sector for Researching Education), as well as the advisor for special needs students' education. The Bureau for Development of Education has developed inclusive education, especially in primary schools. A new curriculum for special needs students' education in secondary schools will be prepared in 2010. Also, the advisor for special needs students' education visited special needs students' schools, permanently giving the regular support to the teachers, presenting the curricula, as well as improving the methods of teaching and working with special needs students.

The participants of the event Regional seminar on writing project proposals "Preparing of TOR and Project Fiche" disseminated the results of the seminar on sector level and preparing TOR for IPA project. All IPA staff members within the IPA Structure of the Sector for European Union within the Ministry of Education and Science were trained and prepared for the preparation of Operation Identification Sheets, Twinning Project Fiches and/or Terms of Reference.

3. Please comment on the added value of the ERI SEE implemented activities by your country and suggest some evidences in this respect explain: was there an added value through ERI SEE activities for the national agenda in your institution/country?

There are a lot of results and added value through ERI SEE activities:

- a. Inclusive education reforms in primary and secondary schools;
- b. Development of the special needs students' education, as well as improving the quality of the curricula for primary and secondary schools;
- c. Teacher training for inclusive education;
- d. Development of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills according to Human Resource Development;
- e. Using peer learning as an instrument in the activities;
- f. Networking on a national, regional and international level;
- g. Establishing peer learning clusters of ERI SEE countries, EU countries, as well as international organisations and institutions ETF, Kultur Contact, OECD, WB;
- h. Participating in research according to reforms in secondary and higher education;
- i. Strengthening a new establish institutions for education;
- j. Building a culture of networking and partnership in the region and broader between the institutions and NGO and social partners.

4. Based on your national context, please identify which thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan and why.

The following thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan:

- a. Teacher training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts'
- b. Education of special needs students;
- c. Social inclusive education;
- d. Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education;
- e. Regional seminar on writing project proposals Preparing of TOR and Project Fish;
- f. Regional seminar on Teacher training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts;
- g. Advanced training of the e-moderators of ERI SEE forums;
- h. TT networking-teacher and student mobility (secondary education);
- i. Management/leadership of schools, educational institutions;

- j. Capacity building of the policy makers for education for policy learning, strategy planning, managing of the reforms in education, decentralization;
- k. Social inclusive education –TT, curricula, additional activities;
- l. Development of the National Qualification Framework and professional qualification;
- m. Quality in the education.

Within the Operational Programme for Human Resource Development for Component IV of IPA for the Republic of Macedonia, the IPA Structure in the Sector for European Union within the Ministry of Education and Science identifies the following thematic areas that are in focus, based on the process of revision of the same operational programme:

For measure 2.1: modernizing the educational and training skills:

- a. Development of a National Plan/ Strategy for development of Secondary Vocational Education and Training;
- b. Development of integrated system for monitoring and support of the work of VET schools;
- c. Trainings for the Vocational Education and Training Centre staff and for school management staff for monitoring and support of VET schools;
- d. Strengthening of the system for career development and professional orientation for teachers, young people and socially vulnerable groups;
- e. Trainings for the teaching and managerial staff of VET schools for introducing the system for career development and professional orientation;
- f. Development of methodology for partnership and cooperation between the VET institutions and social partners;
- g. Trainings for the VET institution staff and social partners for introducing the methodology for partnership;
- h. Development of modules for strengthening applied practice in VET;
- i. Development of a system for recognition knowledge, skills and competences according to the European Qualification Framework (2005/36/EC).

For Measure 2.2: Enabling Access to Quality Education for Ethnic Communities

- a. Developing manuals for mainstreaming inter-cultural education;
- a. Trainings on inter-cultural education (Local Community Educational Units, school support staff, school management, teachers, parents);
- b. Development of mechanisms for addressing crisis situations in educational institutions;
- c. Trainings on conflict prevention and conflict resolution (Local Community Educational Units, school support staff, school management, teachers, parents);
- d. Supply of necessary books for inter-cultural education;
- e. Supply of teaching materials for schools in ethnically mixed communities;

For Measure 2.3: developing adult education and lifelong learning

- a. Supporting implementation of: the developed programmes, the pilot programmes the programmes for literacy and the programmes for fulfillment of elementary education for socially vulnerable groups for adult education;
- b. Development of teaching materials for the developed programmes for fulfillment of elementary education for socially vulnerable groups for adult education;
- c. Trainings of teaching and training staff for adult education;
- d. Establishment of a system for career development and professional orientation for young people, adults, unemployed and social vulnerable groups;
- e. Trainings for career development and professional orientation;
- f. IT system – development of data base tailored for adult education;

- g. Trainings for administration of the data-base tailored for adult education;
- h. Development of the strategy for tax reductions and promotion of adult education and learning;
- i. Development of municipal centres for human resources development;
- j. Establishment of local level network linked with the Centre for Adult Education for mapping the local labour market needs with reference to the educational opportunities;
- k. Trainings for local administration in regards to adult education and human resource development;
- l. Training of trainers for local administration human resources;
- m. Development of a system for recognition knowledge, skills and competences according to the European Qualification Framework (2005/36/EC);
- n. Supply of necessary equipment to schools for implementation of adult education;

5. Please suggest activities to continue during the next ERISSE work programme and justify.

Ministry of Education and Science suggests these activities as priorities:

- a. Policy development in order to enhance the innovation capacity of education systems in the development quality teacher evaluation, external student assessment of students, international studies'
- b. TT networking-teacher and student mobility (secondary education);
- c. Management/leadership of schools, educational institutions;
- d. Capacity building of the policy makers for education for policy learning, strategy planning, managing of the reforms in education, decentralization;
- e. Social inclusive education that would provide societies for equal opportunities and non discrimination, through education of students with special needs, education of vulnerable groups - people who live in poverty, people with special needs, minorities and women.
- f. Development of the National Qualifications Framework and professional qualification;
- g. Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education;
- h. Quality in the education through cooperation, mutual learning and teacher and student mobility
- i. Entrepreneurial learning (from primary to higher education);

6. To which ERI SEE activities did your Ministry provide in kind or financial contributions and to what extent? Why did your Ministry decide to support specifically these activities? Please attach the Euro countervalue of all your contributions also in the respective spreadsheet of annual activities provided by the ERI SEE Secretariat. Please quantify in-kind contributions.

ERI SEE

EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE
OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

Annual National Report

Moldova

- 1. Which ERI SEE activities of the last work plan did your country identify of interest and why? Please, explain the reasons if there was no participation to one or more activities from your institution/country, if applicable.**

We appreciate greatly the activity of ERI SEE and of those countries which organized different activities (conferences, seminars, work-shops etc) according to the ERI SEE Work Plan for 2009 year. Although we attended only some of them because of different circumstances (visa problems, small staff, language problems etc), we identified the workshop related to Evidence Based Policy Making and the one dealing with the Assessment and Evaluation in SEE countries of the highest interest for us because we are still in the process of reorganizing our Evaluation and Examination Agency into a National Accreditation and Evaluation Agency.

- 2. What mechanisms of dissemination have been used and which institutions have been involved? What was the way for and the scope of dissemination of results from the ERI SEE events in your institution and/or for relevant stakeholders in your country?**

The new experience, good practices, information (gained during these activities or from the information /materials of the events we do not attend) are disseminated on the web page of the Ministry of Education, during seminars, workshops, circular letters to educational institutions and organisations etc.

The following institutions have been involved in dissemination of the results of the ERI SEE activities: Ministry of Education, institutions of higher education, regional Education, Youth and Sport Departments, the Institute of Pedagogical Sciences, educational NGOs (one of them being the Public Policy Institute) etc.

- 3. Please comment on the added value of the ERISSE implemented activities by your country and suggest some evidences in this respect explain: was there an added value through ERI SEE activities for the national agenda in your institution/country?**

Good practices and experiences gained while participating in the ERI SEE activities are always an added value for our education reform, particularly in finding the right way for assuring and enhancing the quality of education in the institutions of higher education and in those providing secondary or vocational education, and in adjusting our educational system to the European one. Another important issue for the development of the education reform in our country is the capacity building, also a very important added value through ERI SEE activities.

We appreciate very much the added value provided by ERI SEE in the frame of the Capacity-Building Programmes for Regional Cooperation. 2 of our young colleagues participated during 2009 in this Programme. Their placement in Croatia and especially in ERI SEE Agency was of great importance for their activity in the ministry and they shared the experience gained there with their colleagues from the ministry and from other educational units.

The experience gained by our participants at the events organized by ERI SEE enhanced their knowledge in the aspect of assessment and evaluation, especially related to the External Assessment and evaluation of education and they intend to implement new methods in the assessment and evaluation procedure of the final exams for secondary school this year.

In October 2009, the representative of the Ministry of Education took part in the 1st ERI SEE Working Group Meeting Enhancing the Contribution of ERI SEE in Building SEE Knowledge Societies: Desirabilities, Imperatives and Development Perspectives for 2010 and beyond, held in Sarajevo. This enabled the participant countries to agree on further areas of collaboration and helped to define Moldova's priorities in reformation of the educational systems as well as to approximate them to the regional and EU tendencies.

4. Based on your national context, please identify which thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan and why.

- *Study visits related to the recognition of qualifications issue;*
- *Seminars related to NQF and quality assurance;*
- *Seminars, workshops, related to VET, non formal and informal education;*
- *Seminars related to Bologna process.*

5. Please suggest activities to continue during the next ERISSEE work programme and justify.

We suggest to continue the Capacity-Building Programmes for Regional Cooperation design for public officials working at ministries responsible for education for the 2010 year as well. This is the best instrument for knowledge transfer.

6. To which ERI SEE activities did your Ministry provide in kind or financial contributions and to what extent? Why did your Ministry decide to support specifically these activities? Please attach the Euro countervalue of all your contributions also in the respective spreadsheet of annual activities provided by the ERI SEE Secretariat. Please quantify in-kind contributions.

As regards the economic crisis that affected Moldova, the Ministry of Education can't afford any financial contribution to the ERI SEE activities.

The members of the teaching staff and the members of the ministerial staff can participate only in the activities that are completely financed.

National Report

Montenegro

- 1. Which ERI SEE activities of the last work plan did your country identify of interest and why? Please, explain the reasons if there was no participation to one or more activities from your institution/country, if applicable.**

Taking into account generous mission of ERI SEE we appreciate very much all efforts which Secretariat puts to identify the ways of contribution to education in order to overcome some obstacles and problems, in not so simple process of shaping new model of education. SEE countries are facing many challenges which need experienced and educated persons to be solved. At one hand, we consider our advantage the fact that Montenegro is small system which gives us possibilities to be clustered and concentrated, and at another hand, it enables us to be coordinated and have good links between each other.

Bearing in mind that we really do need diversified types of cooperation and regional exchange of good practice, we find that regional seminars organized by ERI SEE, especially those on writing project proposals and peer learning and networking of accreditation agencies as the best.

HEIs authorities are aware of the fact that it is necessary to change the quality culture. Therefore, QA center has been established with the principal task to prepare the long-term policy for development of quality assurance at the University of Montenegro. Quality assurance in HE is a process, so establishing close cooperation with QA agencies in the region must be priority for all of us. The fact that we have 'flood' of new private HEIs makes this cooperation more urgent. Also, we consider that very many benefits can be obtained from different types of international programmes and funds which imply qualified persons capable to write project proposals properly.

In the process of animation people in order to take part in such seminars we face some, at the first sight, strange reasons. As we have already said, our small system does not offer possibility to engage eligible persons always, taking into account that they are very occupied by the work at different projects. We need time, as country of transition, to develop culture of closer collaboration with our neighbours and to commit ourselves to be more active in finding out new modelities for future better understanding in context of social and economic progress of the Region.

- 2. What mechanisms of dissemination have been used and which institutions have been involved? What was the way for and the scope of dissemination of results from the ERI SEE events in your institution and/or for relevant stakeholders in your country?**

At the web site of our Ministry we regularly put information related to the seminars and workshops of ERI SEE. Also, we inform Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through reports of regional cooperation programme, about international organizations, initiatives and programmes. Majority of our HEIs are informed about ERI SEE mission and its importance.

We also inform on time, usually by e-mail, all potential participants about workshops and seminars in organization of ERI SEE.

- 3. Please comment on the added value of the ERISSE implemented activities by your country and suggest some evidences in this respect explain: was there**

an added value through ERI SEE activities for the national agenda in your institution/country?

Seminars and workshops organized by ERI SEE contributed to upgrading of human capacity, not only in the Ministry, but wider, at the University of Montenegro and some private HEIs equally included in all activities related to higher education reforms. Experiences and newly established connections between seminar participants, beyond doubt, will permit creation of more qualitative education system and climate of better understanding.

4. Based on your national context, please identify which thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan and why.

- Establishment of NQF;
 - Strengthening the links between higher education institutions and the labour market;
- Increasing the efficiency of studying;
- Implementation of the joint degrees;
- Harmonization with Directive EC/36/2005 with regard to regulated professions;
- Restructuring the models of higher education financing;

We want to create and put into force NQF, in the form of Law. The series of public discussions have been done in order to attract all stakeholders to take active participation and contribute with their comments to the elaboration of Montenegrin NQF. All important issues for HE reforms, such as NQF, financing of HE, quality assurance, recognition of diplomas, joint degrees, establishing closer links between higher education and the labour market etc. will be integral part of the future strategy of higher education development. Some of these issues will be supported by IPA and Tempus (through a direct support to the Ministry of Education and Science), and of course, by the state budget. By establishing closer cooperation with the labor market, higher education programmes will be constantly revised, taking into account the labour market needs, and in that way, more students will be attracted to study such programmes, which will result in the better efficiency of studying and higher employability rate. Efficiency of studying will be improved through engagement of consulting agencies, that will work in close cooperation with higher education institutions and assist the future students to choose the appropriate study programmes, in accordance with their interest and aspirations.

According to our Law on Higher Education, only universities can issue joint degree diplomas based on signed contracts between HEI. Given the fact that University of Montenegro is benefiting from the Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus Mundus – External Cooperation Window, and thus creates partnerships with many EU universities, it creates a good basis for establishing good cooperation and signing of agreements, on the basis of which, joint degrees could be issued in the future.

With regard to the harmonization of legislation with Directive EC/36/2005, Ministry of Education and Science has already identified relevant institutions that are directly affected by this Directive. Letter and the text of Directive have been sent to all of them to propose members in the WG. It is planned to organize two study visits to EU countries that are already implementing this Directive. Since we still do not have a list of regulated professions as such, although there is a nomenclature of professions, we are planning to create this list (each ministry for its area). For many of regulated areas, such as medicine, veterinary, engineering, architecture, law, there are professional chambers issuing working license for practicing those professions.

5. Please suggest activities to continue during the next ERISSEE work programme and justify.

As we mentioned above activities related to Law on regulated professions will be of enormous importance not only for Montenegro. Having in mind that our neighbours have the same situation in this area we suggest to initiate some steps in this sense. Organizing

seminars and workshops with participation of relevant experts in this field will be of huge help to all of us. Also restructuring of financial model of HE and enabling of equity are the top issues for the time being. Experiences and comments that were expressed at the just finished Conference related to financing higher education at a time of economic crisis, held in Beice, Montenegro, familiarized ourselves with different models of financing and some applicable solutions in successfully overcoming this very hard period not only in area of education, but in all spheres of civil society.

6. To which ERI SEE activities did your Ministry provide in kind or financial contributions and to what extent? Why did your Ministry decide to support specifically these activities? Please attach the Euro counter value of all your contributions also in the respective spreadsheet of annual activities provided by the ERI SEE Secretariat. Please quantify in-kind contributions.

CONTRIBUTION OF MONTENEGRO TO ERI SEE IN 2009

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Tenth meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, Zagreb, Croatia, 23 June |573,56 € |
| 2. Regional Workshop "Evidence Based Policy Making", Vienna, Austria, 9-10 November |650,00 € |
| 3. Third regional conference under the "Novi Sad Initiative", Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 30-31 October |440,00 € |
| 4. Eleventh meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, Zagreb, Croatia, 16-17 November | 574,45 € |
| 5. Meeting of the SEEVET Network, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10-11 December |243,20 € |
| 6. Seminar "Assessment and Evaluation in SEE Versus Future Challenges", Zagreb, Croatia, 17-18 December |275,80 € |
| 7. Workshop of the National ERI SEE Contact Points, Zagreb, Croatia, 21-22 December | ...250,00 € |

Total:3.007,01 €

National Report
Romania

- 1. Which ERI SEE activities of the last work plan did your country identify of interest and why? Please, explain the reasons if there was no participation to one or more activities from your institution/country, if applicable.**

All ERISSEE activities of the last work plan, the regional seminars and the regional conferences are of interest both for the participants nominated by the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, and for the policy makers.

The Romanian representatives participated in five events planned in ERISSEE 2009 Work Programme, as follows:

- 1. Seminar "Teacher Training for Inclusive Education in Countries with Diverse Social and Cultural Contexts", Zagreb, Croatia, 28-29 May - **1 participant**
- 2. Regional Workshop "Evidence Based Policy Making", Vienna, Austria, 9-10 November (Co-organised event) – **2 participants**
- 3. Eleventh meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, Zagreb, Croatia, 16-17 November – **1 participant (NCP)**
- 4. Meeting of the SEEVET Network, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10-11 December – **1 participant**
- 5. Seminar "Assessment and Evaluation in SEE Versus Future Challenges", Zagreb, Croatia, 17-18 December - **1 participant.**

- 2. What mechanisms of dissemination have been used and which institutions have been involved? What was the way for and the scope of dissemination of results from the ERI SEE events in your institution and/or for relevant stakeholders in your country?**

Each seminar / conference attended has been followed by individual written reports addressed both to the sending institutions, and to the Department of European Affairs and International Relations within the Ministry. The reports contained a section of conclusions and recommendations highlighting the implications for institutions and stakeholders. The scope of this means of dissemination was to valorise as much as possible the presentations made during the seminars / conferences at institutional level, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the participants attending the regional event.

As a mechanism of dissemination, we have also widely used focused presentations within the framework of the conferences, touching upon the various topics concerned by the events.

- 3. Please comment on the added value of the ERISSEE implemented activities by your country and suggest some evidences in this respect explain: was there an added value through ERI SEE activities for the national agenda in your institution/country?**

In our opinion, the highest degree of added value was brought by the activities of sharing experiences / mutual exchanging of good practices.

All ERISSE activities of the last work plan offered opportunities to enhance cooperation between the countries in the region.

4. Based on your national context, please identify which thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan and why.

Romania takes a great deal of interest in developing various areas, especially concerning VET (VET cooperation in order to enhance VET responsiveness to the labour market needs, in the current economic crisis), Quality Assurance, modernisation of Higher Education and NQF.

The thematic area of national evaluations and examinations is also of great interest, as well as the one dedicated to international comparative studies. As agreed among participants during the dedicated workshops / conference, further cooperation among individuals, institutions, countries in the region is of great interest.

5. Please suggest activities to continue during the next ERISSE work programme and justify.

Continuing the training for preparing the participation in community programmes and any other activities that support the capacity of the Ministry and the respective specialized departments to implement international projects.

ERI SEE forum on Assessment and Evaluation in Education and Training would be a good platform to support cooperation. While bilateral cooperation has been already explored in the region, cooperation at regional level would very much be encouraged by a common project possibly funded by ESF funds, this was one of participants' idea in the Assessment and Evaluations 2009 seminar.

6. To which ERI SEE activities did your Ministry provide in kind or financial contributions and to what extent? Why did your Ministry decide to support specifically these activities? Please attach the Euro countervalue of all your contributions also in the respective spreadsheet of annual activities provided by the ERI SEE Secretariat. Please quantify in-kind contributions.

Romania supported the participation of experts in some activities organized by ERI SEE (see annex)

Moreover, Romania was the host of the International Conference on "Fostering and Building Human Capital for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in South Eastern Europe". The conference was organized by the Chairmanship of the Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and took place in Bucharest on 6-7 March 2009. The participation of the members of ERI SEE Consultative Body & Governing Board was highly appreciated.

Financial contribution for this event (respectively for ERISSE representatives) is approximately 600 Euro.

Annual National Reporting Questionnaire

Serbia

- 1. Which ERI SEE activities of the last work plan did your country identify of interest and why? Please, explain the reasons if there was no participation to one or more activities from your institution/country, if applicable.**

The ERI SEE forums are very important because they provide interchange of experience and information regarding the issues related to Higher Education.

The Meeting of the SEEVET.NET in Sarajevo was helpful experience in regional cooperation for building human capacity and mutual learning by recognizing diversity of VET systems in the region.

During the Regional seminar on writing project proposals "Preparation of ToR and Project Fiche" (27.-28.03.2009, Zagreb, Croatia), Terms of Reference – Education for All, (Approach to the Quality in Education by the children from deprived groups) were analyzed. It was brought to the Seminar as the project draft. After presentations of the consultants about the phases of the Terms of Reference, the teams of SEE countries have analyzed their own project drafts, made certain corrections, and presented them to the whole group. Exchange on the group level and support of consultants contributed to development of the Terms of Reference.

The Working Group established for supporting the process of discussion on the development perspectives of ERI SEE (at political, organisational and content level) contributed to higher commitment and ownership of this initiative.

Due to some organizational changes in the Ministry of Education Serbian participants could not participate in some other ERI SEE activities.

- 2. What mechanisms of dissemination have been used and which institutions have been involved? What was the way for and the scope of dissemination of results from the ERI SEE events in your institution and/or for relevant stakeholders in your country?**

Prof. Veljko Malbasa, chair of the University of Novi Sad Quality Assurance Committee, took part in the advanced training of the e-moderators of the ERI SEE forums, which took place on June 24-25, 2009, in Lucerne, Switzerland. He posted several articles on the ERI SEE forum and prepared a flyer which was handed out to the participants of several international HE events.

The Ministry of Education, the Centre for Evaluation of the Quality of Education, the Centre for Improvement of Education and VET centre were involved in the process of dissemination of the results of the Regional seminar on writing project proposals "Preparation of ToR and Project Fiche" (27.-28.03.2009, Zagreb, Croatia). These Institutions exchanged their experiences related to the conclusions of the seminar. The experiences were exchanged in group work at the meetings held at the Ministry of Education. Certain corrections were brought to the Terms of Reference, to the Project Fiche and to the Logical Framework on the bases of suggestions made for the phases of the Project and on the bases of recommendations by the ERI SEE consultant at the seminar in Zagreb. These suggestions referred to the content of the Serbian project.

In Centre for Education Policy (CEP), Belgrade, information were shared about the Regional Workshop "Evidence Based Policy Making (Vienna, 9/10 November), and some of the presentations among CEP members and associates.

Dissemination of the activities and information from the event "Meeting of the SEE Regional VET Network" was done among the colleagues from the Institute for Improvement of Education.

Dissemination of the activities and information from the event "Assessment and Evaluation in South Eastern Europe Versus Future Challenges", was done among the colleagues from the Institute for Improvement of Education and the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation.

After the first meeting of the Working Group in October, a presentation on ERI SEE and future challenges in its work was made to representatives of all organisational sectors of the Ministry of Education, Institute of Improvement of Education and Institute for Quality Evaluation of Education and of the National Education Council.

3. Please comment on the added value of the ERI SEE implemented activities by your country and suggest some evidences in this respect explain: was there an added value through ERI SEE activities for the national agenda in your institution/country?

We are positive that the ERI SEE forums provide important channel for the regional cooperation and exchange of experiences in the area of higher education. The forums have not yet exploited their full potential, but look extremely promising. We do not see other instrument for networking of the regional experts in the field of Quality Assurance.

During the Regional seminar on writing project proposals "Preparation of ToR and Project Fiche" (27.-28.03. 2009, Zagreb, Croatia) the overall goal of the project was defined, as well as the specific objectives of the project and the suggested activities were analyzed regarding the target groups in educational institutions. The Logical framework matrix was developed. Special attention was given to the relevant country background with the purpose of gaining the recognition by the IPA board for the importance of this educational project in Serbia and on the regional level.

Regional activities are of great importance for us in disseminating the results of our work, building network of partners in the region, exchanging information, planning future activities, and so on.

The added value of the event "Meeting of the SEE Regional VET Network" was information gained about the ETF project "Cities and Lifelong Learning. Also, the contacts which were made among participants during the event, especially with the Dutch institution MBO Raad. Through ERI SEE activities, in general, added value was exchange of experiences of reform activities between the countries in the SEECP region.

The added value of the event "Assessment and Evaluation in South Eastern Europe Versus Future Challenges" was information gained about the institute CITO, which we would like to have as consultancy expertise, if financial resources are available or could be provided. Also, at the same event, the information was gained and the contacts were made with the institutes from different countries which could become our partners in some reform activities.

4. Based on your national context, please identify which thematic areas would need a follow-up or have to be included in the next work plan and why

The issues of quality in education should be promoted and strong networks should be established. This is important because the quality in education is the focus of educational reform in Serbia. Education standards and systems in Serbia should be aligned with the

European developments, and broad capacities and know-how in the region should be developed. We believe that a topic of evidence based policy making deserves further attention both in national and regional contexts.

Thematic areas needed in the field of VET that should be included in the next work plan as a follow-up are:

- knowledge acquired and the lessons learned in the process of establishing of VET agencies and institutions in SEE;
- transfer of the experiences of some EU Member States;
- better understanding of the main aspects of the work of the VET agencies;
- assessment and evaluation in VET.

So, it is important to make the roadmap for development of the SEEVET-net as a sustainable platform for mutual cooperation between the VET agencies and institutions of the SEECP region. The cooperation with EU partners will help members of the network being updated on the current situation of VET in Europe and the recent developments.

5. Please suggest activities to continue during the next ERI SEE work programme and justify.

There are many topics in the field of education that could be discussed in the similar future workshops. ERI SEE countries are implementing similar reforms in their education systems and could benefit greatly from sharing experience and expertise, such as:

- f. Establishment of SEEVET-net - is quite significant for the formalization of exchange of experiences in reform activities between countries in SEECP region.
- g. NQF – NQF development is a number one priority in our country. Now it is in the phase of documents' production, but there is a need for self-evaluation through comparison with other countries.
- h. Quality assurance and improvement in VET sector - development of the system of quality assurance in VET is underway, but there is a need for improvement. Also, there is insufficient information of developments in EU countries which are in accordance with EQARF.
- i. Lifelong Learning and VET – implementation of Adult Education Strategy is on early beginning, so there is a need for support for further developments.
- j. Social partnership in VET sector – it exists, but it is not institutionalized and there is a need to look up in different models.

We believe that Quality Assurance in HE, Lifelong learning, full implementation of Bologna processes and convergence to the EHEA is the most important issues for our country.

In addition, opportunity for development of projects should be given in order to provide involvement of as many educational advisors as possible (from the Ministry of Education, Professional institutions etc.). Regional exchange in the field of education should be further promoted.

6. To which ERI SEE activities did your Ministry provide in kind or financial contributions and to what extent? Why did your Ministry decide to support specifically these activities? Please attach the Euro counter value of all your contributions also in the respective spreadsheet of annual activities provided by the ERI SEE Secretariat. Please quantify in-kind contributions.

Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia did not provide any in kind or financial contribution to ERI SEE activities.