

**Regional Report
on the Development and State of the Art
of Adult Learning and Education**

South East Europe

confintea VI — 6th International Conference on Adult Education



Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes

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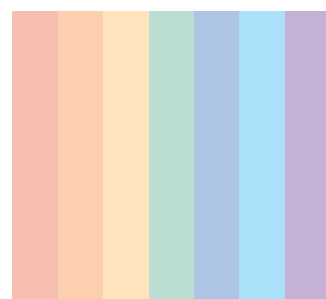
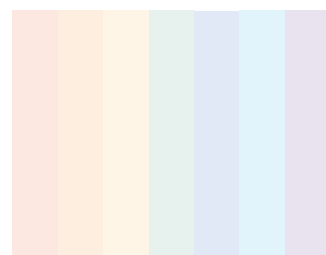
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Stabilitätspakt für Südosteuropa
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Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
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Regional Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education South East Europe

Confintea VI – 6th International Conference on Adult Education

Report prepared in 2008 by a team of international experts,
as part of the "Lifelong Learning Advocacy Project" (LLLA)
Coordination: *dvv international* – Regional Office for South East Europe

Impressum

Publisher:

dvv international
Institute for International Cooperation
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Print.BG (Sofia)

Copies:

1000

The LLLA Project was kindly supported by:

Bundesrepublik Deutschland / Auswärtiges Amt

Published in 2009

The LLLA Project

Confintea VI – the world wide forum for adult learning and education – will be held Belém, Brazil, from 19 to 22 May 2009. Its main aim is to renew the international momentum for adult learning and education and to redress the discrepancy between the insights and discourse on the one hand and the lack of systematic and effective policies and conditions for adult education and learning on the other hand.

Confintea VI is primarily an intergovernmental conference. However, the nongovernmental organizations in the field of adult learning and education have achieved an ever greater importance in the national and international *Confintea VI* consultation process by providing expertise, data, and information and building coalitions with the ministries responsible for the elaboration of the national *Confintea VI* reports.

Against this background evolved the Lifelong Learning Advocacy (LLLA) project.

It is an initiative of *dvv international* in South Eastern Europe aiming at promoting lifelong learning in the region by empowering adult education experts to conduct more effective lobbying and advocacy for lifelong learning, using in particular the upcoming *Confintea VI* – as both an advocacy tool and a mid-term goal.

For this purpose, during the year 2008 a series of meetings and seminars were held in Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Romania, which gave impetus to the elaboration of the country reports on the development and state of the art in ALE.

LLLA project was presented by selected outstanding adult education experts at the Pan-European *Confintea VI* Preparatory Conference in Budapest, Hungary, 3-5 December 2008 and will be further disseminated at the *Confintea VI* in May 2009 in Brazil.

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Abbreviations

AE	Adult Education
ALE	Adult Learning and Education
ARrK	Adult Education in Kosovo (dvv office)
AES	Adult Education Society (Belgrade)
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation Programme
CoE	Council of Europe
CRNPS	Centre for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
EfA	Education for All
ETF	European Training Foundation
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Union
FOOOR	Functional Basic Education of Adult Roma
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IPA	Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (EU Programme)
IT	Information Technology
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LLLA	Lifelong Learning Advocacy Project
NAVET	Bulgarian VET Agency (NAPOO)
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSI	Open Society Institute
PARSh	Adult Education in Albanian (dvv office)
REF	Roma Education Fund
SEE	South East Europe
SME	Small and medium enterprises
ToT	Training of the Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Part I: Introduction

1. Relevance of ALE in Europe

In a context marked by continuous social and political changes and growing complexity in Europe, adult education and learning has assumed a critical importance within lifelong learning and constitutes a key resource and indispensable tool for enabling people fully participate in their societies and take responsibility for their own lives. New legislation and policy development on a national and European level have manifested an increasing recognition of the economic, social and individual benefits in regard to adult learning and education. Several official documents of the European Union, incorporating more than half of the countries in the European region, confirm/ stick to this trend.

The European Commission first set the course with its communication *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* (2001) and the European Council reinforced the process with the *Resolution on Lifelong Learning* (2002). Both of these strategic documents have stressed the importance of lifelong learning and adult learning and their vital components such as competitiveness and employability, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development. Education and training are furthermore critical factors in achieving the Lisbon's strategy objectives of raising economic growth, competitiveness and social inclusion. Adult learning can be seen as an essential contribution through starting from the key competencies acquisition by all, through employability and mobility in a modern labour market, to better social cohesion, as well as to personal development and fulfilment.¹ For a good reason, in the context of the revised Lisbon strategy which places strong emphasis on knowledge, innovation and optimisation of human capital, participation of adults in lifelong learning was defined by the European Council in 2003 as one of the 5 benchmarks in the "Education and Training 2010" work programme - 12.5 % participation rate of the adult population in lifelong learning by the

year 2010². Adult learning and education is incorporated also in the Grundtvig programme within the framework of the European Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 which provides important practical support for adult learning policies implementation in the EU Member States.

Moreover, the lifelong learning discourse in Europe reflects the approach outlined in the *Communication on Efficiency and Equity*, stating that the reforms of the education and training systems should make them more efficient and more equitable in order to allow the EU to address the socio-economic challenges, namely the globalization and competitiveness of newly industrialised countries, demographic patterns in the EU (ageing population and migration flows), rapid changes in the nature of the labour market and the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICT). The lifelong learning principles are also integrated in the logic of the EU Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF) and the *Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance* (IPA), which have the potential to support the sustainable learning environment development and the human resource development strategies, by increasing competitiveness, adaptability and employability of the labour force in Europe. By initiating a consultation process involving Member States and relevant stakeholders, which has led to the formulation of an action plan "*It is always a good time to learn*" in 2007, the European Commission highlighted once again the importance of adult learning. Its main goal is implementing the five key messages stated in the Communication "*It is never too late to learn*", namely removing barriers to participation; increasing the quality and efficiency of the sector; speeding up the process of validation and recognition; ensuring sufficient investment; and monitoring the sector. Finally, the Council of the European Union called upon its Member States to "remove barriers to participation, to increase overall quality and efficiency in adult learning, to speed up the process of validation and recognition and to ensure sufficient investment in and monitoring of the field.", earlier in 2008.

1) Commission of the European Communities: Communication from the Commission, Adult learning: It is never too late to learn, Brussels, 23.10.2006COM(2006) 614 final.

2) Commission of the European Communities: Commission Staff Working Document, Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training, Indicators and benchmarks, 2007.

2. The Global Context of ALE and LLL in Europe - CONFINTEA VI

As it has been mentioned above, the EU institutions and its Member and Candidate States continually strive to raise the political and public awareness in the importance of lifelong learning regionally. Moreover, they are not alone in this critical endeavour. Globally, there are various international initiatives supporting the promotion of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning around the world. UNESCO's International Conference on Adult Education (*CONFINTEA*) is the most important one. The sixth conference edition will be hosted by Brazil, in Belém from 19 to 22 May 2009.

CONFINTEA VI aims to renew international momentum for adult learning and education, and to redress the discrepancy between the insights and discourse on the one hand and the lack of systematic and effective policies and conditions for adult education and learning on the other hand. The overall mission of *CONFINTEA VI* will be to draw attention on the relation and contribution of adult learning and education to sustainable development, including social, economic, ecological and cultural dimensions. *CONFINTEA VI* will also offer an opportunity to articulate adult education and learning within the major current international policy frameworks in regard to education and development: the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). Finally, *CONFINTEA VI* will engage in producing the tools (e.g. benchmarks) to ensure that previous and future commitments to adult education and learning will be implemented.³

The preparatory process for the conference is coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) which is in charge of adult learning, non-formal education and lifelong learning, in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and Regional Bureaus and the *CONFINTEA VI* Host Country. It includes the national reports preparation of on the adult education state of art which will constitute a major input for drafting the regional reports. Regions are five as follows: Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia and the Pacific; Africa; the Arab States; Europe and North America and Israel. Moreover, this process will deliver critical data for the preparation of the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) and will finally be included in the

working document at the *CONFINTEA VI*. The national reports for *CONFINTEA VI* play furthermore an essential role beyond the preparatory process for the UNESCO conference because they offer an excellent opportunity for each Member State to assess progress of the national EFA agendas, regarding literacy, adult learning and non-formal education, improve the data collection in Adult Learning and Education, as well as establish an ongoing and sustainable cooperation process between the stakeholders on national and international level before and after *CONFINTEA VI*.

The Regional conference for Europe, North-America and Israel (also referred to as Pan-European *CONFINTEA VI* Preparatory Conference) was hosted by the Government of Hungary from 3 to 5 December 2008 in Budapest. The Regional Conference in Budapest had the overall objective to prepare the basics from a regional perspective for the global *CONFINTEA VI* Conference, by generating the key issues, challenges and forward-looking strategies to renew policies and actions in adult learning and education. The issues, challenges and strategies should reflect the regional local concerns and position the region within the global context. The Conference was also a forum for presenting and disseminating best practices and innovations. The finalization of a regional synthesis report prepared on the national reports basis of delivered by the UNESCO Member States in the Region was one of the main conference outputs. This report is of a great political relevance, because it will constitute the regional input to the global document to be adopted at *CONFINTEA VI*. Thus, through its strategic policy proposals, recommendations and suggested benchmarks, it is potentially powerful to influence the global policy strategies, recommendations and tools, to mirror the increasing relevance of adult learning and education and to ensure the further development, implementation and monitoring of policies at local, regional and global level.

3. Adult Education in Europe – a Diverse Phenomenon

The review of the European and international endeavour to raise the political and public awareness of the importance of lifelong learning given above, suggests that lifelong learning is generally well known and few people today would question the need for adults to update regularly their skills in line with labour market needs, and for governments and social partners to provide a supportive environment for skills acquisition and actualization. However, we should carefully consider the "European Region" as a whole one because the rich history of adult edu-

3) UIL NEXUS -Special issue of the electronic newsletter of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), *Confintea VI Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (2009)*, August 2007.

cation in Europe varies greatly on a region and country basis. First of all, a differentiation between North American or 'Anglo-Saxon' models and the continental Europe is needed. Furthermore, we should take into consideration the broader differences between the different regions of the continental Europe itself – on one hand, the countries of Mediterranean Europe from Portugal to Malta and Greece, the new EU member states of Central-Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Balkans and as a separate group the countries from the Western Balkan, which encompass the new EU candidate countries and potential candidates where things are quite different from the rest of Europe and still rapidly changing in the last two decades. On the other hand, there are the Nordic countries with the strongest and most distinct adult education tradition within Europe and some other Western European countries which are close to the approach of the Nordic countries but using other forms of folk high school, workers' education and popular education in trying to achieve comparable ends.⁴

Bearing in mind these regional differences, also in terms of the Pan-European CONFINTEA VI regional conference, which encompasses Europe, North America and Israel, preparing a separate report about the sub region – South Eastern Europe, including in particular Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Romania, seems to be reasonable and valuable for several reasons.

First of all, the countries in the South Eastern Europe have been often neglected in the general European and international debates on adult education and lifelong learning policy development. This is, for the most part, due to the post-war situation in the region, in particular in the Western Balkan countries which have faced and continue to face unprecedented changes in the political, economic and social spheres. Although the historical background in Bulgaria and Romania differs slightly from the rest of the countries in the Western Balkans, both have inherited the nature and legacy of adult education from the Soviet period and are still undergoing transformation processes, similar to the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. As the youngest EU Member States, they are endeavouring to bring their policies and practice in the large field of Lifelong Learning in line with those of the EU. Looking at the South Eastern Europe region as a whole, we could sum up that the broad context of Adult Education and Learning (ALE) considerably differs from that in the more industrialized countries, in several terms:

- recent political and civil conflicts, in particular in the countries of Former Yugoslavia

- fractured multiethnic and multicultural societies, depleted infrastructure and poverty;
- challenges of establishing democratic and transparent institutions and practices;
- challenging transition to a market economy;
- the need to build institutional and legislative frameworks;
- the need to strengthen the private sector and achieve a higher level of macroeconomic stability and sustainable development;
- the under-developed labour market;
- high levels of unemployment/long-term unemployment and the low education and skills levels of the labour force;
- labour shortages/'brain-drain' and
- the need to establish an adequate system of social and health protection.

Further, referring to the global context of adult education and lifelong learning, and CONFINTEA as an essential component within it, we should point out the representation of the relevant countries in this most important international forum for articulation of the issues and setting the milestones in the field of ALE. Looking back in the recent CONFINTEA history - the CONFINTEA V in Hamburg/Germany in 1997, which was considered a landmark conference, establishing a holistic understanding of adult learning and education within the perspective of lifelong learning and the subsequent Mid-Term Review in Bangkok/Thailand, in 2003, we can easily notice that none of the countries (although some of them were represented with national delegations), had prepared a national report in order to be considered in the adult education development on the global level in Hamburg, and only Macedonia and Serbia participated in the mid-term review conference in Bangkok, both with reports and delegation. Therefore, most of the SEE countries mainly describe the current state of the art of ALE and point out some trends in the last few years rather than developments since 1997. This fact might be a kind of limitation for potential comparison attempts with other countries in the Pan-European region, but could be justified by keeping in mind the fractured developments in the last 2 decades in the SEE region which makes it almost impossible to present a flawless ALE development between the last two CONFINTEA as in other European countries.

In this context, pushing up the topic of adult learning and education higher on the political agenda in the reform process in the South Eastern European countries and bringing them closer to the achievements of their European neighbours, requires additional attention to be paid to their specific developments as well as additional efforts from all actors involved, in terms of new skills for building trust and reconciliation between divided communities.

4) European Association for the Education of Adults: *Adult education trends and issues in Europe*, Restricted tender N0. EAC/43/05 as completed by 11th of August 2006.

4. Background and Purpose of this Report

Against this background, the regional report on the development and state of the art of adult education and learning in South Eastern Europe has emerged as a result of a project initiated by the regional office of the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (dvv international) at the beginning of 2008.

Dvv international established several offices in South East European countries shortly after the political changes of 1989 which was the starting point of today's strong local offices and partner organisations network.. Together, they help modernise local structures of adult education (AE) and vocational education and training (VET), while contributing to raising public awareness of the needs of lifelong learning (LLL). In these countries, they help adjust the education systems to EU standards, thus offering support to local authorities and organisations in their efforts to integrate into a modern Europe. For the citizens of SEE countries, the work of dvv international focuses on:

- employability: becoming competitive on national and international labour markets,
- tolerance: contributing to the foundations of democracy and civil society ,
- integration: participating in all aspects of society.

In the context of the dvv international advocacy and dissemination work of the lifelong learning ideas across the region, the project Lifelong Learning Advocacy in South Eastern Europe also evolved. The project is being implemented as a part of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe under the support of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Foreign Office in Germany.

The main aim of the project is promoting lifelong learning in the region by empowering adult education experts to conduct more effective lobbying and advocacy for lifelong learning, using in particular the upcoming International Conference on Adult Education – CONFINTEA VI – as both an advocacy tool and a mid-term goal. Beyond this most important goal, the project aims at:

- further development of the established networks between the different stakeholders in lifelong learning (ministries, adult education providers, social partners, NGO sector, international organisations) at local, national and regional level;

- strengthening the position of the civil society sector in the national and international decision-making process;
- raising the public awareness of the lifelong learning importance for personal and professional fulfilment in the rapidly changing globalized world nowadays.

The project is being carried out in the following series of stages in order to achieve its ambitious aims.

The first preparatory seminar in Tirana, Albania, brought together representatives of different stakeholders in the adult education field – Ministries of Education and of Labour and Social Affairs, parliamentary education committees, national VET agencies, adult training boards, employment agencies, universities and of course the civil society sector, mainly dvv international and other local NGOs. One of the main aims of the seminar was to create a common, shared vision and understanding of the way in which national reports should be prepared for CONFINTEA VI, looking at potential problems and suggesting how these might be tackled. The adult education specialists at this seminar learned about the international framework for lifelong learning and adult education advocacy , and about the power and interaction opportunities of the different actors. The participants have also become more familiar with the elements, tools and techniques of advocacy and agreed on common actions for lifelong learning advocacy at national level, which had to result in the creation of coalitions and networks involving different actors (various ministries, employers and trade unions, other NGOs, private providers, UN agencies and other international organisations, etc.).

In the project second stage, the trained adult education specialists in the project countries of South Eastern Europe managed to initiate and/or join already established networks for preparation of the national reports for CONFINTEA VI, using the acquired advocacy skills and techniques. Despite the contextual differences between the eight SEE countries, one common feature should be highlighted in the national reports preparation process. In all of them, the initiative came by the dvv international office which proves once again the power and influence of the civil society sector in the region. It is regarded as one of the main driving forces in transition countries, where governments are not stable and persistent enough to ensure sustainable development and public support for what are unpopular reforms in all spheres (political, economic and social); NGOs not only have the expertise but are also closer to hard-to-reach parts of the population. Partnerships with the NGOs are therefore needed, at local as well as at regional and international level.

In the last, third stage of the project, a second consultative meeting took place in Podgorica, Montenegro, where the same expert group from Tirana gathered to sum up the results of the consultations processes about CONFINTEA VI. In addition to identify and analyse the challenges and problems on the one hand and the successes and good practices on the other hand. Furthermore, the participants finalized the structure of the current regional report on the state of the art of Adult Learning and Education in South Eastern Europe which is based on the national reports, on the input from the both regional seminars of the LLLA project and other sources. This regional report will be presented together with the national reports at the CONFINTEA VI preparatory conference for Europe and North America in Budapest. The most distinguished representatives of the participating countries in the SEE region will be sent to the conference in Budapest, either as part of the national delegation (where possible) or as civil society representatives.

The final aim of the Lifelong Learning Advocacy Project is thus to ensure that adult education organisations in South Eastern Europe make the greatest possible contribution of achieving the goals of CONFINTEA VI.

parisons between the situation in the SEE region and the rest of the European countries are made in order to highlight some deficits and/or progress made by the SEE countries.

5. Structure of this Report

The structure of this regional report of South Eastern Europe has been elaborated and finalized by the adult education experts in the second regional workshop of the project, based on the results of the previous trainings and consultation also with other additional European and international information sources.

The second part of the report will present in details the political, economic, and social background of the adult education situation in the countries of South Eastern Europe in order to clarify the understanding of the problems and positive ALE sector developments in the region. The third part will then present the CONFINTEA VI consultation process in the SEE countries, discussing the similarities and differences on a process level. It will summarize the main challenges and successes/good practices along the main topics in the guidelines for the national reports: legislative and policy frameworks of ALE, financing of ALE, provision of ALE and institutional frameworks, participation in ALE, quality and staff in ALE, research and innovations in ALE, and adult literacy. The final fourth chapter will point out the key issues and trends for the future of adult education in the SEE region. Furthermore, it will define the expectations and recommendations on CONFINTEA VI from the SEE region point of view. Throughout the report, a number of references and com-

Part II: Background of Adult Learning in South East Europe

Analyses carried out by ETF¹ have shown that, generally, the former adult education infrastructure in South Eastern Europe has collapsed altogether, rather than being a strategic lever for economic and social progress. The new democracies in former socialist countries like Albania, Bulgaria and Romania are facing the difficult task of developing a new and a modern adult education system. All these countries need to overcome the gap between actual adults learning needs of and still a very poor provision. Traditional oriented school systems, inflexible and still rather conservative, are not able to cope with the new problems and challenges. The state is usually not capable or willing to give a priority to adult education. Therefore, other mechanisms had to be developed to help adult education to meet the demands of new political and economic realities. A short overview of the adult education context will be provided

1) The following overview refers to the report *Designing Adult Learning Strategies: The Case of South Eastern Europe*, prepared by the European Training Foundation, and published by the European Commission in 2006, available online on the website of ETF, www.etf.europa.eu.

in the following chapter for a better understanding of the difficulties many of the Balkan countries still have in establishing the lifelong learning and adult education system,.

1. Adult Population – Educational Attainment Levels and Skills

The quality of the labour force in terms of skills and attitudes in Former Yugoslavia, before the war, was traditionally considered to be a strong point for the positive economic performance of the country, both within the socialist block and in comparison with other European countries which are today EU members. However, the countries of South Eastern Europe have faced major economic and social challenges after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The economic transition and privatisation reforms have had a major impact on the skill needs by the enterprises, and have led to high unemployment, especially long-term unemployment. Despite the efforts of these countries strengthening their economies, economic growth has been slow and job

Table 1: Educational attainment rate of the population aged 15-64				
Country	Year	Low	Medium	High
Western Balkan Countries				
Albania	2004	59	32	9
Bosnia & Herzegovina	2004	39	51	10
Croatia	2003	30	54	16
Kosovo	2003	62	37	1
Macedonia	2005	41	45	14
Serbia	2005	30	53	17
Montenegro	2005	22	61	17
European Union				
Bulgaria	2005	28	51	22
Romania	2005	27	62	15
EU-15 (old member states)	2002	35	43	21
EU-10 (new members 2004)	2002	19	66	11
Source: Labour Market Reviews, ETF Key Indicators, Eurostat				
Note: low: completion of primary education at best; medium: completion of secondary education (ISCED Level 3) high: completion of tertiary education (ISCED levels 5 and 6)				

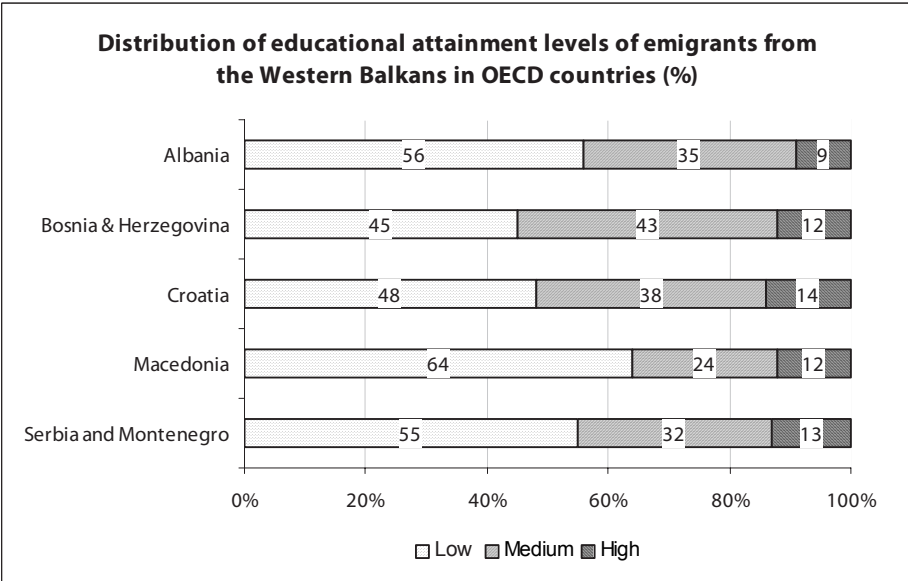
growth minimal. Poverty and social exclusion have increased, and the social and economic discrepancies between people with market-relevant skills and those with obsolete or low skills continues to widen. In addition, the education system suffered damages and lost in value and quality as a consequence of the wars which led to losing contacts with the European trends in education, exclusion from existing experts' networks and know-how.

Measuring the actual knowledge and skills of the population is a challenging task, because of the lack of specialised surveys in the Western Balkans. The educational attainment levels, quoted in the international literature, are here only partly useful, because they do not take into consideration knowledge and skills that have been developed informally through work, training and other experience. Nor do they account for skills depletion in cases of unemployment, inactivity or work experience that does not keep up the knowledge and skills acquired at school. The last point is extremely important for the Western Balkans, as large sections of the population have faced long years of underemployment, hidden or open unemployment, and involvement in low-skill, low-value-added subsistence activities during the ethnic conflicts and subsequent adverse economic situation. Nevertheless, an examination of educational attainment levels can provide a picture of where the major gaps are. (The following analysis is based on the report Labour markets in Western Balkans, prepared by the European Training Founda-

tion, published by Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2007.)

Despite important differences across countries and territories, the average percentage of the population in the Western Balkans with a low level of education is relatively high, substantially exceeding the percentages in the new Member States (EU-10) in all countries and territories of the region, and those of the old Member States (EU-15). The fact that a high percentage of the population have low educational attainment can appear as an important challenge for the further socio-economic development of countries and territories. On one hand, it endangers social inclusion, as people with low educational attainment generally are involved in activities in agriculture and other precarious subsistence activities in the informal economy. Such activities do not permit these individuals to upgrade their skills and find better opportunities in the labour market, and thus they enter a vicious circle of poverty, low education and skills. On the other hand, it represents a weak point for the further economic development of the countries and territories, as a relatively high proportion of the population have limited ability to be involved in higher-productive economic activities.

With the exception of Albania and Kosovo, the majority of the population in the Western Balkans has a medium level of education that covers mainly (but not fully) graduates of vocational education. Evidence from unemployment registers and LFSs



The data on immigrants come from the censuses in OECD countries carried out from 1995 to 2003. The figures show the education level attained by the emigrants in OECD countries.

has demonstrated that people with medium levels of qualification have poor labour market outcomes. This can be attributed to a general lack of demand (with the decline of the employment rates in industry), but also to the fact that they are unable to adapt to new economic trends. During the communist regime, little attention was paid to transferable skills as it was expected that workers would have a job for a life in the chosen industry. The main focus was put on general education and vocational training in order to achieve the goal of „universal personal development“.

Lack of adaptability implies a double-negative effect: first, it has an individual cost in terms of joblessness, and second, it risks delaying the economic restructuring process and hampering future economic development, as effective reallocation of resources will become more difficult and well-qualified labour will become more scarce. At the same time, the evolving impact of the global knowledge economy has increased the pressure on the economy to raise the quality and level of skills, and on workers to upgrade their competencies in order to remain employable. Key skills (such as ICT, communication in the mother tongue and foreign languages, entrepreneurial attitude, team work and positive attitudes to work) are increasingly important for employment and self-employment. Ad hoc skill surveys of employers undertaken by EU-funded CARDS programmes have already demonstrated skill gaps in the described soft skills.

Despite these general trends, the current demand for skills in local labour markets may not yet reflect such skill shifts, because transition is ongoing and economic growth is slow. In closed labour markets characterised by low technology, the demand for skilled labour is low and enterprises, as a rule, have no difficulty in recruiting staff. Closed labour markets cannot absorb large numbers of highly skilled workers, and many people migrate to find employment abroad. Experience from other transition countries demonstrates that highly educated people were the first to leave their “secure” jobs in declining industries voluntarily in search of opportunities in more productive activities, thus contributing to labour reallocation. Moreover, they are overrepresented among entrepreneurs, thus contributing to the economic restructuring process. Also, in the long term, the further development of the countries and territories of the region and their inclusion in the knowledge-based economy will require highly educated people who are able to promote innovation and apply new technologies.

2. Educational Attainment and the Issue of Social Cohesion

The distribution of educational attainment is important for explaining the disparities in earnings and poverty. Although no systematic evidence on this issue can be provided at this stage for the Western Balkan countries, there are indications that the distribution of educational attainment across population groups and regions presents inequalities.

An analysis of urban/rural data from the LSMS for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2004) demonstrates for example that population in rural areas is less educated. This is probably due to the migration of the well educated people to urban centres in search of better employment opportunities. In the long run, the lack of well-educated population in the rural areas could become a further obstacle for their economic regeneration, and could create a further problem for social cohesion. Furthermore, a recent ETF study on the access to education and employment of ethnic minorities in the Western Balkans² reveals that people from ethnic minorities generally (though not always) have lower educational levels than the population as a whole. This is particularly true for Roma populations all around the region, which have extremely high level of very low educated people. The low educational attainment levels of ethnic minority groups becomes an additional issue for social cohesion, in particular when ethnic minorities are geographically concentrated in economically deprived regions.

3. Migration and Brain Drain

As a result of the adverse political and economic situation and the lack of employment opportunities in the region, all Western Balkan countries have experienced large population outflows. Although migration provides people with opportunities for employment, experience and work skills, the downside is that it reduces the supply of skills needed when economies start to grow.

The massive outflow of people is believed to have created a serious brain drain. Several studies, conducted by NGOs and universities in Albania, Croatia and Macedonia support the fact. The intellectuals, young scientists and university graduates have the highest propensity to migrate. However, there are no consistent data to support the argument that higher-educated people have been overrepresented among the total number of emigrants. As the OECD survey below shows, and keeping in

2) ETF, *Ethnic minorities in the Western Balkans and their access to education and employment*, ETF internal document, Turin, 2005.

mind the data about the educational attainment levels in the WBA countries in Table 3.1 (see page 8), there is not a disproportionate tendency among higher-educated people to emigrate.

4. Labour Market Needs Analysis and Skills Forecasting

The challenge for transition economies is to address skill mismatches and skill shortages. These difficulties are compounded by the varying pace of economic, technological and social change, by the uncertainty of future economic development, making the identification of specific training needs difficult, and by the scale of skill deficits. The enterprises that are under the greatest pressure need to adopt appropriate short-term measures for human resources development. They also need to be forward-looking and to put in place measures that anticipate future skill needs. In practice, this means adopting a range of measures and a systematic approach to strategic human resources planning that is linked to business development.

There is an urgent need in the Western Balkans to strengthen the analysis and forecasting of labour market needs at national, regional and sector level, in close cooperation with the social partners, and taking into account EU prospects and international trends on qualifications and skills. There is a particular need to improve data collection and to increase the capacity to carry out analyses in a consistent way among ministries and statistical offices, and in accordance with EU standards. Fortunately, most countries in the region have recently been covered by the Eurostat LFS.

Responsibility for developing skills is shared between enterprises, government and individuals. Governments and employers have a common interest in economic growth, wealth creation and social progress. Individuals, too, need to take responsibility for developing their skills both for career progression and for continuing employability in more turbulent labour markets. Continuous investment in skills throughout life is much more important today and requires an injection of substantial new financial resources from enterprises, individuals and governments. Many institutions, enterprises and individuals are ill-prepared for the complexity and scale of the changes which are fundamentally transforming work and social life. EU-funded CARDS programmes and bilateral cooperation projects have introduced methodologies for improving the communication between economic actors (such as employers, public employment offices and regional development agencies) and education through piloting activities. WBA countries also have access

to approaches developed in other transition countries such as Romania, where VET schools, labour offices, regional inspectorates, municipality and canton representatives, employers' associations and trade unions, both at canton and region level, are involved in the design and the regular monitoring of Regional and Local Education Action Plans. However, these pilot schemes have not yet had an impact at a system level.

5. Conclusion

While the EU integration process is a major incentive for most of the countries in the region, in particular for states such as Croatia and Macedonia, which have the status of official candidate countries, in South Eastern Europe it is much more the impact of transition that is the driving force for the development of adult learning. There is a need to adapt to the competitive open labour market, which includes both the employed and the unemployed. This means a widespread need for new or more advanced occupational and technical skills, together with new key skills. In particular, there is a need to improve the relevant employability skills of disadvantaged people (young drop-outs, displaced persons, etc.). There have been many developments in training opportunities for adults in South Eastern Europe in the past few years, primarily initiated by donors, e.g. in the development of active labour market measures, the reform of vocational curricula and schools, retraining programmes, specific training programmes for disadvantaged groups, etc. Adult learning provision through international projects became popular, widespread, and more common than any traditional form of adult learning and education. New approaches and methods are used, new topics are introduced and educational landscape became very diversified and dynamic. However, adult learning initiatives, supported by international donors have often been at ad hoc basis and have generally remained attached to donors' own projects, thus lacking financial and institutional sustainability.

When describing the background situation in South Eastern Europe, one final remark is needed in regard to the two countries in the region which have recently become EU members – Bulgaria and Romania. They have a similar Soviet-dominated historical background which also determines similar socio-economic, political, education and cultural reforms after the changes in 1989. Since then, both countries, similar as the other countries in central and Eastern Europe, have been in transition period which could be described as a *doubled transition*. Firstly, in moving from a socialist totalitarian regime to a market economy, they have faced huge problems in adapting their educational sys-

tems to the new economic situation. Secondly, they are constrained in adopting the educational goals and approaches of their national educational systems to that of EU standards.

Both countries have undergone a serious and widespread reform process in the education and training sector aiming at developing sustainable systems in compliance with the European standards and capable to provide valuable and competitive knowledge and skills, thus ensuring adaptability of the education system. In the broader European context of Lisbon agenda, Education and Training Work Programme 2010 and the Lifelong Learning discourse, both countries have to increase their efforts in order to achieve the Lisbon goals and the idea of “Making Lifelong Learning in Europe a Reality”. National Lifelong Learning Strategies are already on the way, which will establish the legal framework for adult education, lifelong learning objectives are integrated in the most important national strategic documents as The National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP) in Romania and National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 in Bulgaria, in the Operational Programmes for Human Resources Development, and in the National Employment Strategies and Strategies for Continuing Vocational Education etc. However, the countries are facing a number of challenges in the implementation of these strategies, as for example:

- The existence of a historical delay with regard to the provisions of the Lisbon Strategy, followed by the insufficient development of a lifelong learning culture;
- The lack of a systemic and coherent debate involving ministries, public institutions, civil society and businesses in the development, implementation and monitoring of lifelong learning policies;
- The lack of global approaches in lifelong learning policies, which should consider the entire path of an individual learning and training and a unique vision, both pre-school education, compulsory education and initial training, and the continuing adult education and training;
- Lack of correspondence between the priorities of the education policy documents and the financial resources allotted to their attainment;
- Insufficient commitment of the responsible actors in the development and implementation of human resources development policies.

Reviewing the background situation of the countries in South Eastern Europe, we could summarize that the ALE challenges in the EU are multiplied in South Eastern Europe, where the adult

phase of lifelong learning has - for the first time since the collapse of politically-controlled top-down ALE provision – begun to reappear on the political agenda in the form of vocational training to address high unemployment and low economic activity. Pressing issues include deficiencies in: the status of ALE; policy; legislation; social partner and civil society involvement; resources; VET and labour market match-up; transparency of qualifications; staff skills; political attention to ALE for social and cultural purposes; ‘learning culture’ among the population.

Most of these issues will be analysed in further details in the next chapter revealing also common trends and problems with the other discussed countries in South Eastern Europe but also showing progress and positive developments like in the other EU Member States, particularly the 10 new ones from Central and Eastern Europe.

Part III: Confintea VI in South East Europe

The Confintea VI Consultation Process in SEE Countries

Before going into a detailed description and analysis of the most important *Confintea VI* thematic issues, defined in the UNESCO guidelines for the national reports, it is essential to dwell on the *Confintea VI* consultation process in the 8 countries participating in the *dvv international* project LLL Advocacy in South Eastern Europe for two reasons. First of all, the overall political and public awareness of the international framework and developments of lifelong learning in most of the countries was considerably low, thus the forthcoming international conference was a beneficial occasion for highlighting the global importance of the topic in relation to other major developments, such as Education for All (EFA) Agenda, Millennium Development Goals (MDG-s), as well as United Nations Literacy Decade (UNDL) etc. Secondly, *Confintea VI* became great opportunity for the civil society organizations to reinforce their advocacy and lobbying activities in order to push the topic adult education and lifelong learning higher on the political agenda. As already described in the first chapter, the national reports for *Confintea VI* played an important role in the participating countries in several terms. First, they were used as advocacy tool at national level for increasing recognition by the governments of adult learning and education for addressing other challenging issues as employability, poverty, social inclusion, migration, demography etc, for engaging various stakeholders and strengthening networking and for raising issues such as financing, legislation and professionalization in adult learning and education area. Furthermore, the national *Confintea* reports offered a good occasion for developing methodology – e.g. to start collecting data and information on adult learning and education in a systematic and comparable way, to develop instruments for monitoring and evaluation, standards and criteria for quality assessment and insurance, for benchmarking etc. Last but not least: Adult education experts in the countries of South-Eastern Europe used the preparatory process as a chance to improve communication, to share experiences and acquire new information, strengthen regional cooperation and European integration processes in the area of adult education and through it, establishing cross-border networks, launching plans and projects.

Though there are many shared historical and cultural traditions, depending on the specific political context three main groups of countries can be distinguished in South Eastern Europe, in

accordance with the duration and efficiency of their preparation for *Confintea VI*.

First, there is a group of countries which manage to establish good cooperation with the relevant stakeholder during the preparation of the national report, find important supporters and build coalitions through good advocacy work. This applies mainly to Macedonia and Serbia.

Macedonia was the first country that succeeded in preparing the national *Confintea* report which was presented as a draft at the first LLLA training in April 2008 in Tirana, Albania. The process was launched by the Ministry of Culture, where the UNESCO National Commission is located.

Due to the active role and advocacy work of *dvv international* in Macedonia, a national expert Commission of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia could be set up very soon. The group consisted of 11 experts from various ministries involved in the adult education policy, as well as representatives from the VET Centre, the National Employment Agency, the Civil Servants Agency, the Agency for Youth and Sport, Economic and Crafts Chamber, the association of the units of the local self-government, the National Office for Statistics, the University of 'St Cyril and Methodius' and *dvv international*. The experts in the Commission used their broader networks (government institutions, international organisations, NGOs, local self-governments, social partners, private adult education providers, experts for adult education etc) in order to present an adequate and up-to-date review of the situation and the progress in adult education and lifelong learning in Macedonia.

The main success factors in the case of Macedonia were the commitment of the Deputy Minister of Education as well as the motivating role of the coordinator of the group from the Ministry of Education and Science, who also attended the LLLA preparatory seminar in Tirana. Furthermore, the overall political support in the field of adult education (Law on adult education was adopted in early 2008, a government's campaign "Knowledge is a power" ran for several months), the active role of the NGO sector, including the initiative, expertise and financial support from *dvv international* and the adequate division of responsibilities at the beginning of the process, have led to

the successful elaboration and submission of the National *Confintea* report in Macedonia.

Serbia is another successful example. They succeeded in preparing a national *Confintea VI* report on time in spite of the fact that the Serbian Ministry of Education and Sports has not recognised the importance of the adult learning and education yet. The successful elaboration of the national report was realized due to the advocacy efforts and an established relationship between distinguished adult education experts from the civil society (*dvv international*), government (Ministry of Education) and research organizations (the Faculty of Philosophy–Adult Education department). Here, again, the deputy Minister of Education, who was in charge of the preparation of the UNESCO report, delegated the task to the best experts in the field of adult education and lifelong learning. The representative of the Ministry of Education, responsible for adult education, who participated both in the preparatory seminar in Tirana and the consultative meeting in Podgorica in the frame of the LLLA project, initiated the building of an official working group which consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, National Employment Service, Institute for Improvement of Education, Faculty of Philosophy – Department for Adult Education, Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy of Faculty of Philosophy, NGO „Adult Education Society“ (*dvv international*).

Despite of significant problems in gathering systematic and updated data (after 2000) due to the difficult socio-economic and political situation, which caused considerable reduction in all sectors, including education, the experts' group managed to collect and analyse data with consultant services from economy, financial and statistic sector which illustrate the fractional and unevenly developed system of Adult Education in Serbia.

Three main factors could explain the successful elaboration of the national report in Serbia - first the motivating role of the group's coordinator from the Ministry of Education and her solid professional background in the field of ALE. Moreover, the strong commitment of the Faculty of Philosophy – Adult Education department whose distinguished experts with long experience in the field most contributed to the process of gathering and analysing data, using the resources of the University unit – students, researchers etc. And last but not least, the engagement and the advocacy role of the representatives of *dvv international* („Adult Education Society“) in Serbia, whose director is among the authors of this regional report and in the coordination team of the regional LLLA project. Again, the division of responsibilities and the financial support from *dvv international*

in Serbia have considerably contributed to achieving the report on time.

At this stage it is important to highlight one major difference between the both countries described above – namely the political context. While in Macedonia the favourable political context was an important supporting factor for the *Confintea VI* consultative process, the political situation in Serbia was more an impeding one. However the established advocacy coalitions and the commitment of outstanding adult education experts in different fields played an important role for overcoming the differences and finding a common solution with a view of *Confintea VI*.

Beside these two examples for successful advocacy work combined with favourable political context, there is a second group of countries, which made moderate progress in preparing the national report for *Confintea VI*. This group includes **Bulgaria, Romania, and Montenegro**. There are similarities between these countries in the way that the preparation process for *Confintea* has been initiated and has operated in general. Some of the obstacles these countries faced include slow bureaucracy, or more specifically the problem of identifying the right institutions in charge of the report, as well as the problems with the low level of commitment by the government and poor communication between public institutions and the ministries. Factors like these have slowed down the process of setting up an official working group and thus the preparation of the report and have led to delays in submitting the reports. It has to be highlighted at this stage that in the three countries the process has been initiated by the adult education experts (NGO-sector-*dvv international* in Bulgaria and Romania, and governments' institutions – National Adult Training Board in Romania, and National VET centre in Montenegro) who participated in the preparatory training in Tirana in April 2008 in the frame of the LLLA project in South Eastern Europe. Therefore, this is clear evidence for the successful achievement of the project goals – namely to empower the adult education experts in South Eastern Europe in terms of more effective lobbying and advocacy for lifelong learning at national, regional and international level. Finally, one more commonality could be pointed out here – the EU integration process, which is still a leading motivating factor in the three countries, two of which are already EU member states. In this context, the pressure to catch up with the other more developed countries in the EU is very high and is the main driving force for ongoing reforms including in the field of lifelong learning.

Unfortunately, each government of this region has to manage a lot of specific competing priorities, and in times where critical reports of the European Commission are re-emphasizing problems such as: corruption, the need to continue the reform within the justice system, and the importance of transparent and efficient management and control of EU funds, little attention is paid to education sector as a whole, and even less to adult education. This requires more creativity and expertise from the part of the civil society to make the governments realize that the connection between a learning society and a knowledge economy, if competitive and sustainable enough, will bring more and better jobs and in return, a greater social cohesion.

In the case of **Montenegro**, the *Confintea VI* consultation process was initiated by the representatives of the national VET centre, more precisely from its Adult Education Department that attended the LLLA seminar in Tirana. The Ministry of Education that is responsible for all educational levels incl. adult education, authorized the national VET centre in Montenegro to prepare the *Confintea* report, with consultation by other important stakeholders such as social partners and adult education organizations. The institutions involved include the relevant ministries, Employment Agency, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Agency for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, the Centre for Human Resource Development, and the Centre for Development of the Civil Society Sector and the social partners.

The experts pulled out the data from already existing documents and strategic papers, such as the Law on Adult Education, the Strategy for Adult Education 2005-2015, Adult Education Plan 2006-2010, Strategic Plan for Educational Reform 2005-2009, which were all adopted during the reform process in Montenegro in order to quickly adjust the national adult education policy to the European standards and integrate the country in the EU.

To sum up, there are two main “success factors” in the case of Montenegro – on one hand the established network of relevant institutions and organizations dealing with adult education, first and foremost the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training which is the leading actor in the field of ALE in Montenegro, plays important coordinating and motivating role. And on the other hand – the recent development with the establishment of the National Law and National Qualification Framework (to be adopted by the end of 2008 by the National Parliament) which determines the conditions for assessment and recognition of knowledge, competencies and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning gives an

additional impetus to the process. This framework will provide equal access to professional training of young and adults, and enable them to upgrade their qualification and improve their key competencies in various ways. Moreover, the NQF will improve and make the linkages between formal and non-formal education more visible.

In **Romania** the CONFINTEA VI consultation process visualizes again the synergy effect of good advocacy practices and favourable political context for successful promotion of adult education and lifelong learning. The adult education experts who attended the first LLLA preparatory training in Tirana, initiated meetings with the responsible persons from the UNESCO national commissions, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social affairs, National Adult Training Board, and NGO representatives – *dvv international* in Romania. Thus, they managed to establish an interministerial working group under the chair of the deputy Minister for Education. A similar working group elaborated in 2006 a strategy for adult education and lifelong learning, which facilitated the process as well as the content of the work, considering the already available resources and more or less systematized data. Again, the appropriate selection of the 14 experts in the working group, the adequate division of responsibilities, the overall awareness (including political) of the importance of the ALE and the commitment of *dvv international* were the main success factors.

The process in **Bulgaria** followed a similar course. The main difference here is the very cumbersome communication and coordination between the involved ministries and their various departments. As a consequence, despite the initial willingness of the Ministry of Education and Science to set up an official working group with the involvement of the different stakeholder, the process took much longer than the envisioned period of two months. Thus, the informal working group was established in this case by the *dvv international* representatives and consisted of members from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, University Faculty of Pedagogy (experts in andragogy), NAVET and other NGOs dealing with adult and vocational training. After finalizing a draft version of the report, this was submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science, the directorate responsible for UNESCO affairs, and was reviewed and finalized by several other directorates in a period of 3 months (July-September). To sum up, despite of the lack of overall political support for the topic of Adult Learning and Education, due to the commitment of *dvv international* and its advocacy practices (both, at formal and non-formal level), the *Confintea VI* national report was achieved at the end.

When speaking about successful examples we should always measure the success in achieving the reports against the general political and socio-economic background in the respective countries. This is particularly relevant in the next 2 country examples – Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which will not be clustered together as a separate group but pointed out as exceptional cases.

Kosovo is such an exceptional case, first of all, because of its peculiar political situation – its political status of an independent country is questioned by most international organisations, first and foremost the UN. Accordingly there is no UNESCO national commission, and no official ways to participate in inter-governmental international conference (such as *Confintea*). This was of course a serious obstacle to preparing a national report for a *Confintea VI*, and it is much more difficult for the civil society sector to carry out advocacy with the government and to convince it of the importance of adult education and lifelong learning. However due to the persistent and efficient advocacy work of the *dvv international* in Kosovo, a national consultation process was launched, albeit later than planned.

After the preparatory LLL Advocacy training in Tirana, an additional workshop aiming at raising the public and political awareness took place in Prishtina in June 2008. The seminar, initiated and organized by *dvv international* in Kosovo, gathered important representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Trade, The Pedagogical Institute, the University of Prishtina, the National Employment Promotion Office, as well representatives of other international NGOs working in the field of adult education and vocational education and training – Swiss contact, GTZ, and UNICEF. The experts were very motivated to push the topic *Confintea VI* on the political agenda of the government which could help to improve the international approval and recognition of this young state. They elaborated a national *Confintea VI* Action Plan for Kosovo whose implementation has led to the establishment of an official working group consisting of 8 experts from the relevant ministries under the efficient coordination of the Ministry of Education and Science. The main problems which the experts faced in the process of elaboration of the *Confintea* national report in Kosovo were the old statistical data which is not reliable –and lots of materials from international projects (CARDS, ETF, GTZ, UNDP reports etc) which cover some aspects of LLL – like employability, human resource development, vocational education and training, democratic and peace education and which results are not systematized yet. However, the main strategic documents adopted recently – LLL strategy 2005-2015

and the Plan for Development of Kosovo are a good basis for pulling out the most important information in the field, taking in consideration all dimensions of ALE – vocational and non-vocational (non-formal and informal) adult education. The report was finalized at the end of October 2008 with the financial support of the regional office of *dvv international* in South Eastern Europe.

Bosnia & Herzegovina is another exceptional case which should be given special attention. The greatest obstacle in the *Confintea VI* consultation process was the legal system in the country. The government is acting in 14 separate administrative bodies, so called cantons. This means 14 ministries of education with their own law-making, administrative procedures and educational systems. This administrative system together implies unclear responsibilities for preparation of such an important national document, thus made it more difficult in this country to identify the people responsible for UNESCO affairs – UNESCO national commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Education. However, after several unsuccessful attempts to establish contact with the right persons in the ministries, the *dvv international* representatives decided to use their internal and external expertise (network of local and international NGOs) in order to prepare a short and concise report, based on the existing strategic documents such as the development strategy of vocational education and training of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the draft law on adult education in Republika Srpska. Having completed the national *Confintea VI* report is not an end itself. Rather, it is the long-term goal to improve the communication and cooperation processes in Adult Learning and Education within the federal, multiethnic and multireligious country. It is a fact that the NGO sector is regarded as one of the main driving forces in countries in transition, where governments are not stable and persistent enough to ensure sustainable development and public support for what are considered unpopular reforms in all spheres (political, economic and social); NGOs not only have the expertise but are also closer to hard-to-reach populations. Therefore, NGOs should be considered as a strategic partner in the decision making process regarding essential topics as adult education and lifelong learning. In any case, the government should play the leading role with regards to inter-governmental conferences such as *Confintea VI*.

Finally, we need to mention **Albania**, although it was the only country that did not succeed in preparing the report. The reasons for this are multiple – on the one hand difficulties with identifying the responsible people for the UNESCO conference, on the other hand, the lack of political will and understanding for the significance of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

and lack of responsible bodies and unclear sharing of responsibilities in the area of ALE. Furthermore, there were problems with collecting data even about education in generally, lack of positive tradition in ALE that one could rely on, hence not enough expertise in the field. Similar to the other countries, there was low prioritization of adult education on the political agenda of the decision makers and politicians. However, there are some positive developments in the field, mainly in the NGO sector, and with the support of international donors.

As the end of this short overview of the *Confintea* consultation process in the eight SEE countries, three main findings should be pointed out.

Firstly, NGOs did give a strong impetus and participated actively both in the establishing working or expert groups and in their activities. NGOs are, in any case, one of the main providers of adult learning and education, not just by compensating activities and areas neglected by the government or its institutions and bodies, but sometimes even by covering whole areas, that the governments do not have capacities to handle.. The experiences from the NGO sector have the special importance for the *Confintea* preparatory process, since it is the information and data about non-formal learning could be obtained primarily from the NGO. Partnerships with NGOs are therefore needed, at local, regional and international level.

The good cooperation and coordination of the relevant actors preparing the report reveals high level of commitment and the responsibility of the institutions involved in the field of ALE to care for the developments in the field and approach and solve the problems together in a holistic way. In the countries where the decision makers are not really concerned about the topic and did not make the necessary efforts to set up a working group consisting of representatives from different areas for the preparation of national report, the structure of the adult education and lifelong learning is also dispersed. There are different initiatives and projects by international donors, NGOs, and ministries, but they are not coordinated, hence the results are short-term and not used for further development in a coherent way, which would help to achieve sustainability in the long run. Thus the preparatory process itself could be seen as the indicator of the level of development of ALE in respective countries.

The final remark goes back actually to one of the main goals of the LLL Advocacy project in South Eastern Europe – to promote lifelong learning in the region by empowering adult education experts in the region to conduct more effective lobbying and advocacy for lifelong learning, using in particular the upcoming International Conference on Adult Education – *Confintea VI* – as

both an advocacy tool and a mid-term goal. Without a doubt, in several countries *Confintea VI* was successfully utilized as a very effective advocacy instrument to push the national government from rhetoric to action, combining on the one hand “international” (standards, benchmarks) and “internal” pressure (civil society), building coalitions with supporters –NGOs, international organizations, creating lobby groups with distinguished experts in the responsible ministries, offering training to political decision-makers to raise awareness and change their attitudes. As a result of all these advocacy actions and techniques, even some of the unwilling governments decided to support the *Confintea VI* consultation process, even though formally, because of their fear to be blamed for or even excluded from the international arena by not being presented as a country in the global report and/or conference document at such a high-ranking UNESCO conference.

Keeping in mind the difficulties and good practices mentioned, we will next put into focus in the five topics which were highlighted in the UNESCO guidelines for the national reports.

1. Policy, Legislation and Financing

Following the country reports and using a holistic overview of the adult education in South Eastern Europe, it could be stated that the transition process, which all of the countries in the region are undergoing, can simultaneously hinder and be a driving force for a development. Since 2000, a number of discussions and implementations of education systems reforms have started in the countries of the region. Through different processes and particularly by legislation actualization and adoption in the field of the education or in different parts of the system, a lot has been achieved, however without a comprehensive lifelong learning perspective. This policy making process is supported by a range of donors, mainly by the EU CARDS programme, but also by the World Bank, the Council of Europe, the ILO, the UNDP, the Soros Foundation, and many bilateral donors which play a substantial role. as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark, Canada and the USA. , The governments of South Eastern Europe have undertaken many actions and particular steps in bringing the countries up to the standards of EU and OECD countries, building on this support and the good practices transferred through international projects for exchange of experience and know-how

The important role of some major international organizations regarding capacity building, providing profound analysis and recommendations etc. for the development of Adult Education and Learning in the SEE region should be highlighted:

- The **European Training Foundation (ETF)** is a specialised agency of the European Union based in Turin, Italy. Its main role is to support transition and developing countries in applying human resource development strategies to the local socio-economic development. Contributing to the enlargement process by supporting the education, labour market and training systems modernisation and reform in the candidate (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey) and potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo) is one of the main activities of EFT. EU assistance through the IPA (instrument for pre-accession) covers mainly such activities as institutionalization and democratisation, support of economic and social development, promotion of regional and cross-border cooperation and some alignment with the acquis communautaire of the EU. Further assistance is foreseen for the preparation of Community structural and rural development funds implementation after accession.

In the last decade ETF's work in the SEE region has been focused on disseminating information about key EU policies and VET programmes (Copenhagen/ Maastricht process). The appointed National Copenhagen process coordinators managed to establish dissemination structures in some of the countries. A series of regional and national events were held to stimulate debates on key reform issues of mutual partner country/ EU interest. In addition, to keep counterparts up-to-date on EU policy developments, the ETF produced several newsletters. Since 2007 ETF has been trying to move from a "information dissemination" phase to the next step of embedding the debates into ongoing reform discussions and activities, as well as establishing better links with the EU projects and the IPA programming framework in the SEE countries.

- For or more than 40 years, **OECD** has been one of the world's largest and most reliable sources of comparable statistics, and economic and social data. The major organisation's activities are monitoring trends, making economic developments analyses and forecasts and studying social changes or evolving patterns in trade, environment, agriculture, technology, taxation and more, as well as collecting data. Although all of the SEE countries are not OECD member states, they are involved in different OECD's processes on education whereas the activities are almost entirely on voluntary basis by OECD (Directorate for Education), non-OECD countries and other institutions. OECD research and activities related to non-OECD economies aims to contribute to their economic growth, social development and good governance practices. In the SEE region in particular, several reviews have been carried out by OECD non-member economies unit (NME) .The conclusions of these reviews provoked activities in response to specific policy areas. For example, NME is currently participating in a project on "Education for Disabled and At-Risk Students in South Eastern Europe" in collaboration with the Education and Training Policy Division,.
- On behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)**, through local offices and numerous projects, supports transition and reforms in the countries in South Eastern Europe and promotes the regional cooperation and the economic and political stabilisation in the region. By strengthening the cooperation between the state

and civil society GTZ supports citizens' participation in the given reform processes. Most of the initiatives, projects and activities have as a primary focus education/adult education; but they also covers issues such as employability, sustainable economic development, financial reforms, free market development and a competitive economy, youth empowerment, peace building and crisis prevention, EU-compliant laws etc. . Most of these projects mainly consist of educational and training activities - based on short or long-term forms - trainings, courses, seminars, both formal and non-formal, designed for various target groups, curriculum development, and strategic policy making etc. In this way, the adult learning and education landscape in South Eastern Europe has been enriched by GTZ - both as a provider itself and as a capacity builder - supporting local providers. Since the very beginning of the reforms GTZ has been active in all countries of South Eastern Europe and conducted remarkable projects in contributing overall reforms and an improvement of adult education various areas. .

- The **Council of Europe** (CoE) aims to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts

on the protection of individuals. CoE goal is to protect human rights by focusing especially on minorities' rights, democracy and the legislation authority, its main activities are in the field of democratic stability in Europe, Europe's cultural identity and diversity, social cohesion. Since the political changes in South Eastern Europe have started, CoE supported the new democracies via local offices, which provide projects, a support of the local organizations, networks of CoE coordinators, programs development and implementation , curricula design, teaching and training materials, regional exchange, trainings, seminars, conferences and many other events.. Main areas of education supported by CoE are the following: education for democratic citizenship and human rights, education of minorities, particularly Roma population, intercultural education, history teaching, language policy, higher education support, specific programmes for education of professionals and experts, etc. CoE also has significantly contributed to both use of relevant, current trends in content of adult education, and new, contemporary, teaching methods in adult education and learning.

1.1. Policy and Legislative Framework

Currently, governments and ministries of education in the South Eastern Europe countries begin recognizing the importance of adult learning and education. A process of discussion and adoption of adult education and lifelong learning strategies have been implemented in the most of the countries. in. This process is hindered further by the fact that many countries lack specific legislation on ALE. More detailed review is provided in the Table 3 below.

Two trends are illustrated by the table: firstly, in all of the countries, adult education and lifelong learning are becoming of an importance and particular ALE strategies and legislation have been adopted. These trends are mainly supported by the civil society sector, followed by the private sector as well as international organizations such as EU, UN, OECD, *CONFINTEA VI*. Secondly, in all of the countries in SEE reviewed, the focus of adult education is put on vocational education and training, while the role of ALE in achieving civil integration, social cohesion and promoting democratic values and institutions is less emphasized.

phased. Thus, the institutional and the legislative framework related to the vocational education is much more developed – VET strategies are already existing in most of the countries, while adult education strategy is not available yet or is in a process of creation, e.g. Short- and Medium-Term Strategy of Continuing Vocational Training 2005-2010 in Romania; or VET Development Strategy 2007-2013, agreed by all local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, due to several reasons, the adult education is still the most neglected part of the education system. . To begin with, adult learning is a very wide-ranging as a concept and as a practice. Starting from the demand for skills by employers about their workforce, young people who early school leavers as well as well-qualified young people entering the labour market, skilled adults who want to bring up to date their skills, low skilled adults who need basic literacy, mathematical, scientific and vocational skills, unemployed people of a different age and with differently skilled who need to be more adaptable and flexible for the new trends in the labour market

and many vulnerable or special groups that need training and employment support. Adult learning policies have to underpin and be integrated into the countries' economic, employment and social policies and measures. In this way they consequently cross the boundaries of different Ministries which are in charge with economy, employment, social and financial issues. This multidimensionality of ALE induces difficulty in identifying a one separate authority in charge for the overall ALE policy making and implementation and requires more cross sector efforts for a cooperation and coordination.

The low level of commitment within government and ministries to transform adult learning can be seen as a next problem in the field. Responsibilities for different aspects of adult learning are split among different ministries and incorporated into broader areas of responsibility, so the exact visibility of adult learning within ministries can be considered quite low. Ministries of education often assume the lead position in adult learning, but very often their structure is not adapted to deal with the wide-ranging and cross-cutting issues it encompasses. Therefore, the ALE fragmentation implies the need for clear roles and responsibilities definition, and also calls for a shared vision and common understanding of all ministries involved in the development and implementation of credible, coherent and comprehensive adult learning policy.

Unfortunately, in most of the South Eastern Europe transition countries the partnership culture is not still sufficiently developed and involvement in governance of the social partners and other stakeholders remains at the level of rhetoric. However, there are a few good examples for successful cooperation of various stakeholders in the field of ALE in the establishment of a single responsible body monitoring and coordinating the progress in adult education and lifelong learning development.

Two structures have been created in **Macedonia** by the government taking on the responsibility for the development and monitoring of adult education and its various dimensions. (See the box on this page, right.)

One of the youngest states, **Montenegro**, also managed to achieve great progress in adult education development in the last 5 years, including establishment of an independent body called a *Council for Adult Education*. (See the box on page 22.)

Beyond the diverse nature of adult education and the dispersed responsibility it is detrimental, another difficulty in developing a comprehensive policy on ALE is that there is the lack of sufficient information about learning demands and skill needs of

Advisory and Coordination Institutions in Macedonia

The Council for Adult Education is an advisory body that proposes the strategic issues for preparation and implementation of the policy for development of adult education. This council deals with the following issues:

- Proposes a strategy to the Ministry for development of education in context of lifelong learning;
- Follows the realization of the annual action plans for realization of the strategy for development of the education of adults;
- Proposes to the Ministry national qualifications and standards of profession;
- Proposes ways of funding the programs for adult education for which there are allocated finances in the budget of the Republic of Macedonia
- In cooperation with the municipalities, it submits proposal for the development of network of the educational institutions.

Beside this advisory body, there is also another independent body: the **Centre for Education of Adults** in which are concentrated the main policy making and strategic coordination tasks in the field of ALE, such as:

- Supporting the social partnership on all levels and phases of the process of planning, development and realization of the adult education;
- Preparing concepts, programmes and standards for education of adults and create mechanisms and tools for verifying these;
- Checking and verifying the conditions of the educational providers of adult education services;
- Supporting career development and professional orientation of the participants in ALE.

Institutions in Montenegro

The **Council for Adult Education** in Montenegro was created in 2007 as the highest-level professional authority responsible for adult education. It was established on tripartite principle: one third of the members of the Council for Adult Education are proposed by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau for Educational Services, one third by the Centre for Vocational Education (VET Centre) and the Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare, and one third by the Association of Employers and the Trade Unions.

The Council has altogether 9 members and is composed of representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Trade Unions, Ministry of Education and Science, adult education providers. The Council established a Commission for Programmes, Organizational and Normative Issues which has 7 members, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare, the Employment Agency, Bureau for Educational Services, Association of Employers and NGO sector.

Its main tasks include:

- To approve catalogues of knowledge and examination catalogues;
- To define and adjust curricula for adult education and training and equally valid education standard in educational areas (occupations);
- To approve textbooks and teaching aids, etc.

enterprises and individuals. There is just limited information on current needs and trends but no research is available in future skill needs of the economy and society. This makes it virtually impossible to determine rationally what the priorities in adult learning should be. There is also no central information on training offers, although some of the gaps are well known in general terms, such as the lack of training opportunities in new technologies, entrepreneurship, management training and training for small and micro, and medium-sized businesses. The precise needs of the long-term unemployed individuals are not enough explored, since there is no assessment of their current

knowledge levels, which could provide for adequate training courses.

This problem is related to one of the major problems in all project countries in South Eastern Europe – namely the lack of systematic approaches in collecting data on ALE as well as the lack of specific statistical data on ALE. Most of the countries in the region only have basic information on employment, labour market and educational attainment levels from national census data, from labour force surveys and household surveys. The information is not comprehensive. Very few data exist, for example, on participation or investment in on-the-job training by employers for their workforce. The quality, reliability and 'updatedness' of data are also variable. Forecasting tools for anticipating future skill needs and occupational change are being developed under various EU-funded projects. Data collection and labour market intelligence have an important role to play in enabling and sustaining policy development and delivery in adult learning. They are strategic policy tools for decision-makers because they enable a detailed analysis to be made of trends and patterns in participation by enterprises and individuals and in investment made by them and government. They enable an analysis to be carried out of trends in the upgrading of skills of employees, job seekers and disadvantaged groups in line with changing labour market needs. They are essential for setting baselines to allow monitoring and evaluation of interventions. It follows, therefore, that the quality, scope and reliability of data and labour market intelligence and the robustness of the analysis are critically important. Attention must be given to ensuring adequate mechanisms for collecting information, and to collecting sufficient information relevant to adult learning.

Relevant adult learning data sets could therefore include¹:

- Educational attainment and skill levels of the working-age population (e.g. 15–64 years), broken down by employment status, region, gender, age group and other characteristics, such as disability, ethnicity, demobilised soldiers and people displaced by war;
- Numbers or rates participating in on-the-job and external adult learning provision (employees, specifying those working in small and micro enterprises, unemployed individuals, inactive people seeking work, redundant workers or workers under threat of redundancy, disadvantaged groups or individuals), broken down by region and categorized by level

1) ETF, Designing Adult Learning Strategies: The Case of South Eastern Europe, published by the European Commission in Turin, 2006.

of skill or qualification, economic branch or occupation, gender, age group and other characteristics,

- Financial investment in adult learning by employers, government and individuals, broken down, for example, by economic sector, size of enterprise, employment status, gender, age group and other characteristics.

In South Eastern Europe there is a need in the short term to develop a strategy for data collection for adult learning, labour market intelligence and future skills forecasting. The aims of the strategy would be to increase the quality and number of relevant datasets, to fill gaps, and to systematize mechanisms for collecting data and developing capacity to analyse trends and forecast future needs. Here again, the countries can draw on EU sources to contribute to the funding for data collection and analyses.

In the medium term, information on participation in and the funding of formal adult learning provision can be collected systematically. Public and private providers, including NGOs that provide training, could provide participation data at the time of enrolment with suitably designed enrolment forms. Collecting data on participation in on-the-job or off-the-job training outside public provision undertaken by employers could be more problematic, but the information could be systematized if data on investment in training were included in companies' annual business reports. This will be a medium-term development and one which is likely to cover only larger enterprises.

It is obvious that one of the main problems for the SEE countries is the fact that they do not have precise benchmarks and indicators in any area of adult learning and education. Compared to the European countries, which do have such benchmarks and indicators, SEE countries cannot formulate neither straightforward goals/priorities of adult education policy, nor concrete ways of their implementation. For that reason, educational policy for ALE is more declarative and put in general terms, without clear sharing of responsibility and expectations among different

Table 3: Adoption of strategies and laws for adult education in SEE countries (as in autumn 2008)

Country	Adult Education Strategy	Adult Education Law
Albania	–	–
Bulgaria	Midterm Lifelong Learning Strategy 2007-2013, adopted on 30.10.2008	Not yet
Bosnia and Herzegovina	–	Draft law on Adult Education only in the Republika Srpska (June 2008)
Croatia	Strategy on Adult education adopted in 2004; Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Adult Education (2004)	Adult Education Act adopted in 2007
Kosovo	Mainstreaming with Europe: an adult learning strategy for Kosovo (2005–2015), 2004	Law on Education of Adults (adopted in 2005)
Macedonia	Programme for Adult Education in context of lifelong learning	Law on Adult Education and (adopted in Jan 2008)
Montenegro	Strategy for Adult Education 2005-2015 (2006) Adult Education Plan 2006-2010 (2006)	Law on Adult Education (2007)
Serbia	Strategy for the development of Adult Education in the Republic of Serbia (2006) and Action Plan for its implementation 2007-2009	Not yet
Romania	Draft of national LLL Strategy in preparation	Not yet

stake holders. Without concrete and reliable data, adult education policy cannot manage to be make the shift from “rhetoric to practice,” as the case in some EU countries.

Concerning the legislative framework, the situation in SEE countries and EU countries is similar: adult education is less regulated by the state than other areas of education, which leaves space to the pluralistic and flexible character of adult education and learning. But this low level of regulation in developed countries increases the pluralism and flexibility of the system, as well as the responsibility among those in charge, and in less developed countries it remains an area of irresponsibility or lack of clear responsibilities, undefined standards and low quality.

Drawing a comparison between the EU countries and the SEE countries, some common tendencies can be identified: in virtually all countries exists specific legislation covering continuing VET, less countries have put in place specific legislative frame-

works for formal ALE (Armenia, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, TFYROM, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Portugal, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and USA) and only a few countries have legislation covering non-formal ALE (Belgium (Fr), Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands and Sweden)²

For the SEE countries it is moreover apparent that legislation is considered as a critical first step in the development of ALE. The government's actors find that legal regulations are crucial

2) Draft Report on Adult Learning and Education in the UNESCO Region of Europe, North America and Israel, prepared by Helen Keogh 26.11.2008, presented at the CONFITEA VI Preparatory Conference: 3-5 December 2008, Budapest (Hungary)

to push forward adult education in their countries. However, the drafting of laws for ALE is not always preceded or accompanied by a parallel development of coherent policies, strategies and actions, some of which, such as the development of a partnership approach, require more than a legal structure. Thus, we could say, that some legal regulations have been established even too early: Due to the insufficient development of the whole adult education system, the regulations cannot be really implemented in the practice. On the contrary, most of the "older" EU member countries introduced AE laws in order to better regulate an *already developed adult education system*. The advantage of this approach is that legislation in this way helps to raise quality. To sum up, ALE legislation plays more the "push" role in the SEE countries and a "pull" role in the EU countries.

1.2. Financing of Adult Education

Taking into the consideration the wide range of adult education learning and its ambitious objectives - to raise skill levels, assist the workforce to adapt to the open market, contribute to increased competitiveness and combat social exclusion through developing employability skills, it is obvious that funding of adult learning provision and developments cannot be financed from the public purse alone. All stakeholders, government, employers and individuals need to contribute to the financing of adult learning and education.

When speaking about financing of Adult Learning and Education two main issues should be considered. The first is to ensure an adequate level of investment in adult learning. This means increasing the aggregate level of finance from all sources. Incentives are needed to encourage (co)investment in learning by companies and individuals. The second aim is to ensure a fair distribution of adult learning, which is currently biased in favour of the more advantaged members of society (i.e. better educated and better-off people who come from the larger urban centres where there are more adult learning offers) and in larger enterprises or certain sectors. Before starting the discussions on how to ensure the balance of efficiency and equity gains, the SEE countries need to have an idea of the total current public, private and donor expenditure on adult learning and who benefits from it. Such data is hardly available and in most of the cases, not reliable enough.

Regarding the public investments, the **state budget** allocated to education is considerably low in the SEE countries (around 3.5 % in 2006) compared with an EU25 average of 5.22 %. Moreover, there is evidence of decreasing priority being given to education within government expenditure, since these figures have decreased markedly in recent years. Surprisingly, Kosovo is an exception to this trend – the government is planning an increase of the expenditure on Education – up to 7.4 % of total expenditures for the year 2009. This fact is corresponding to the governments priorities in the coming years, among which education has been recognized as the main factor for human resource development which in turn play a key role for the economic development of the country. In this context, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo has declared the coming year as the year of support for lifelong learning and education of adults, which will surely contribute to promoting the adult education and lifelong learning development in the country, and increasing investments in human resource development.

Only in few countries in South Eastern Europe the government has allocated specific budget to adult education within the educational sector. This is valid for example for Macedonia, where special bodies have been established for the development and coordination of adult education and which accordingly need funding for the efficient implementation of their tasks and re-

sponsibilities. The government of Macedonia notes a first-time allocation in the 2008 budget to provide tuition for adults who have not completed primary education and for adults in prison. The government in Montenegro has also foreseen funding for the adult education programme within the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science for 2007 and has planned substantial increase in 2008. These funds were mostly used for covering costs of schools for elementary education of adults (salaries for performers of the programme for elementary education of adults or fees to institutions for covering the costs of programme implementation per learner). Ministry of Education of Serbia has allocated certain amount of money in the budget to "adult education and other types of education." But the list of beneficiary organizations of this budget shows that just part of them really work in the area of adult learning and education, while many of them cannot be included in this group, even if adult learning is understood in a very broad meaning. Furthermore, there is no clear set of criteria for the eligibility of the adult education organizations for those government's funds.

Public funding for adult education is also included in various development programmes of other ministries which have direct or indirect link with adult education, such as: trainings of the employees in certain departments; trainings for prevention and protection; trainings to improve the competencies (gaining new qualifications or re-qualification); professional development; various forms of educational and informative campaigns etc. Another essential part of the state budget is enclosed in the budget of the National Employment Services for financing active labour market measures, as training of unemployed, with focus on specific target groups as young unemployed adults, school drop-outs, older people etc. These data are in most of the cases easy accessible and rather reliable, thus the Employment Offices statistics are an important source of information on ALE.

The State may further contribute by maintaining education institutions, making rooms available for adult learning, and covering the salary costs of teachers and trainers providing adult learning, and the costs of computers and other equipment and materials, while individuals normally pay their own direct training costs. However there is no exact information on either the public contribution or the percentage split between the state and individuals. Furthermore, as already mentioned in the previous section, information is missing about the actual investment by companies in terms of how large the investment, training of the workforce, or of the total investment by individuals in public and privately provided training. All the participating countries have recognised the importance of data and information and

are making efforts to improve the supply and quality of their statistical data and labour market intelligence.

Building on the current information available, several findings can be pointed out. *First*, the authors of the reports state that the companies should be most interested in human resources development (HRD) because it brings them a higher profitability; hence, they should bear the basic responsibility for their own HRD. Still most of the SEE countries report that employers frequently show little or no interest in upskilling employees or, if aware of the importance of upskilling, are not able or willing to fund it. Serbia reports that a few employers do cover upskilling costs but that the majority does not recognise a need for ALE. In all SEE countries SMEs are the least likely to invest in upskilling their workers. One of the reasons for this is the fact that it is easier and more favourable for the companies to employ new workers with higher level of education which are free available on the labour market. Still, the question remains if their knowledge and skills are updated and adequate to the requirements of the new jobs. As Romania notes, according to a 2006 survey of the investments per employee in the Romanian enterprises, the discrepancy between Romania and the rest of the EU-27 remains approximately the same as it was in 1999. This means in particular that investment per employee by Romanian enterprises was three times less than the then EU average and in many situations, the responsibility for training is 'transferred' by the enterprise to the employee. Raising participation levels in enterprises is therefore a major challenge. *Second*, all government-sponsored programmes for supporting training by companies can be seen as positive in the way that they send explicit signals to employers (and to the employees who benefit) that training is important. Programmes open to all, or to a broad group of beneficiaries, are too costly, so consensus has to be reached on who should benefit (specific beneficiaries) or what types of training should be supported by public funds. It is important that these programmes recruit the intended target groups and that they meet their agreed objectives (as the grant schemes of the Operational programmes for HRD of the European Social Funds in the EU Member States). Although bureaucratic requirements to participate in such schemes need to be kept to a minimum, guarantees must be built into programmes to ensure the proper use of public funds, and sanctions imposed in the case of misuse. Since companies benefit from the training undertaken, shared funding arrangements that commit government and companies is appropriate in most cases. Co-funding also gives companies a stake in implementing the scheme, and is more likely to increase effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Governments are responsible for

the efficient use of public funds: care must be taken to ensure that state funds are not 'wasted' on companies who would train without state support (the issue of 'deadweight losses'), and that companies who benefit from state-funded training do not gain too great a competitive advantage over those who do not (the issue of market distortion).

Governments play a leading role in encouraging and stimulating learning by companies, their employees and other individuals, and they use a variety of approaches and incentives. One incentive is to allow enterprises to offset the costs of training against their tax liabilities. Another is to use public funding to lever in private sector funds in order to share the costs of strategic developments that have mutual benefits for enterprises and government, for example the development of national vocational qualifications. A further approach is to optimize or pool public funds already in the system, for example by using a proportion of funds available to small and medium-sized companies for business support to provide training for them.

A *third* key issue is gaining the consensus of the key stakeholders on government funding priorities in adult learning, and sharing responsibility for addressing them. Employers' main responsibilities lie with running their companies, but they would be ready to work with government on these priorities if their needs were also being addressed. Negotiations between the key partners are needed. For example, the funding of training for unemployed people might be shared between the government and companies, if companies were interested in recruiting new people. In general, governments tend to intervene with public funds for adult learning where there is market failure and/or when it is a political priority to do so, for example through apprenticeship schemes, and the promotion of skills for small businesses and for disadvantaged groups. A major gap exists in South Eastern Europe regarding the funding of training for low-skilled disadvantaged people who are no longer registered as unemployed. In all of the SEE countries investment in ALMs (active labour market measures for those adults who are unlikely/unable to self-finance or to be financed by employers (incl. low skilled workers, unemployed adults, individuals outside the labour force, immigrants, displaced people, people with low education levels, etc. falls far short of requirements. The majority of reports note the public supply-side funding for formal 'second-chance' provision, typically accommodated in mainstream schools. Literacy learning is funded in many countries, apart from those where it is considered that national literacy levels do not warrant such intervention. Governments need to intervene in this field, as most disadvantaged people

cannot afford to pay for learning, although reaching them is problematic

Last but not least the substantial financial support, received by the South Eastern European countries for education and training purposes from many donors should be mentioned. The donors include the EU (through the IPA (Instrument for Preaccession Assistance) or ENP (European Neighbourhood Policy) structures, - CARDS and Phare Programmes, the EU Social Fund, the Grundtvig Programme within the EU Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, ETF, Cedefop, European Agency for Reconstruction), national governments of some EU Member States, international NGOs, and foundations as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Kultur Kontakt – Austria, GTZ, British Council etc. as well as the World Bank and the European Investment Bank. The international projects usually bring very useful and valuable results, the problem is, that they are not coordinated and the progress is not being monitored after the end of the projects. One important task for the governments should be therefore to map the current level and pattern of donor support, and to take ownership of it. There are several areas for which donor provision or support of technical and expert advice is particularly useful for adult learning, e.g. management and entrepreneurship training, training for redundant workers or unemployed adults, guidance, statistical data collection and analysis, labour market assessment, the development of national qualifications, quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation.

South Eastern European countries still have some way to go in establishing a sound basis for funding of adult learning. The lack of adequate and sustainable resources hinders its development. In most of the countries, expenditure on education and training is seen as a cost by individuals and employers rather than as an investment for the future. Nevertheless, creative solutions can be found for encouraging companies and individuals to participate more widely in education and training. There are likely to be donor or other funds available in all countries which could be pooled, or funds that could be redistributed to adult learning. However, the population groups and economic sectors that should be targeted by national programmes will need to be prioritized. In Montenegro for example participants in an elementary literacy programme received the equivalent of the minimum wage as a participation incentive.

A common problem of all developed and SEE countries is the lack of sufficient and stable financing for adult education and learning, measured in terms of defined goals and tasks and in terms of real needs. The discrepancy between needs and avail-

able finance is even much bigger in SEE countries since the bigger the needs, the less financial resources are available. Different strategies of SEE countries often include plans for increasing the investment in adult education within the state budget, in order to get closer to the EU standards, but there are several problems hindering the realisation of these ambitious plans:

- the slow planning process of the SEE governments cannot keep pace with the dynamic economic development so that 5 % increase of ALE allocated budget planned in 2008 and realized in 2009, has much lower impact than intended the dynamic of economic developments);
- steady changing government's priorities often lead to reallocation in the state budget, so that even the small scale investment plans often do not come to realization;
- there is lack of formal and informal instruments to monitor and control the adequate spending of the planned resources for ALE by the government;

It is difficult to use available data on finances for further estimations because they are rather vague and it remains unclear how much from overall budget for education is allocated to adult education and to what extent it is supported by the state. The countries having more precise data on that can more easily set benchmarks and standards they want to achieve and undertake concrete steps in this direction, while the SEE countries are "fighting the unknown enemy" - insufficient financial support. Another disadvantage of the SEE countries in finding sufficient and adequate funding for ALE is the lack of EU instruments as the European Social Fund, which plays an important role for the Human Resource Development in the EU countries. In the SEE region, ESF is applicable only in the two youngest Member States - Bulgaria and Romania, which as recent development show are not prepared enough to properly implement the funding schemes and to absorb the grants mostly due to lack of administrative capacity of the government's institutions.

2. Quality of ALE: Provision, Participation, Achievement

The following chapter aims at bringing more clarity to the chaotic and unclear system of provisions of adult education, which again lacks clear roles and responsibilities and makes it more difficult to create a comprehensive and systematic overview of all types of providers, programmes, target groups and programme costs in the countries in South Eastern Europe.

Comprehensive information about the adult education systems could hardly be given, since it is difficult to identify a clear system of adult education anyway. It is in the very nature of adult education and learning to be pluralistic, complex, not completely structured, with areas overlapping with other parts of educational systems (also social, economic system etc). But for the countries in South Eastern Europe one could say that the idea of adult education is more applicable in the region as a multivariate social phenomenon (C.Titmus) and not as a system. There are no clear hierarchic subsystems, adult education is partially regulated, it is not just dynamic, but also chaotic. Its open struc-

ture, its borders - very permeable to outside and overcutting inside, its extreme heterogeneity and uncertain maintainability - make it not easily catchable. Even a model of "educational chain" (J.Knoll) as a continuum of learning opportunities could not be applied, because the stages of lifelong learning process cannot be linked - there are gaps both in vocational education (especially between secondary school and university level) and in general non-formal education. Even further are modern attempts to create evidence-based adult education system. So it is more appropriate here to describe some elements, parts of the system, or some levels - as most reports do. The contemporary efforts in many countries of South Eastern Europe to structure providers, introduce more regulations into the dynamic practice, bring forward quality standards - show a clear tendency toward establishment of modern adult education system.

2.1. Provision of Adult Education

Describing the provision problems in regard to the adult education in the countries in South Eastern Europe starts with the definition of **what constitutes an ALE provider**. A number of providers do not recognize themselves as providers of ALE, because e.g. adult education is seen by them as their secondary but not major activity. Moreover, in most of the countries an unclear criterion exists about the role and status of ALE providers which make them less visible to the public. Most of the outlined problems with the identification and visualization of ALE providers reflect the problems with the definition of adult education itself. Therefore, at this stage, it might be useful to highlight the three main types of adult learning and education according to the most spread in Europe CEDEFOP terminology:

Formal learning: Learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective

Non-formal learning: Learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learn-

ing objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

National Registers Making Providers Visible

Romania: The National Register of Accredited Training Providers for Adults is updated and published through the Vocational Training Portal:

<http://portal.mmssf.ro/Portal>

Bulgaria: The integrated Informational System of the National VET Agency and the Employment Agency in Bulgaria includes all licensed Centres for Continuing Vocational Training:

www.navet.government.bg/bg/inf_syst

Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or “incidental”/ random).

There is a wide range of providers of adult learning in South Eastern Europe, both formal and non-formal, although there are substantial differences in numbers, coverage and quality of providers within and between the countries in SEEs. Although adult learning was severely affected by the collapse of the former totalitarian system, the impact of the decline in adult learning was not evenly spread across the region. Provision was always more developed in Croatia than, for example, in Kosovo, and continues to be so today. What is valid for all the countries in the region, is the poor ‘material base’ of the overall education system since 1997 which has been focused primarily on the provision of initial education and training.

In general, there are several *main groups of providers*:

On the one hand these are the **providers within the public sector** (ministries, national agencies – e.g. state service agency, employment agency, formal educational institutions – elementary and secondary schools and universities, workers’/peoples’ universities, public VET centres etc). The main focus lies mainly on the provision of continuing vocational training, both for employed or unemployed persons. The bodies offering VET courses are either accredited VET centres (e.g. in Bulgaria and Romania) or vocational secondary schools and colleges, and higher vocational and higher education institutions for adults (e.g. in Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia etc.). These types of public education and training institutions not only provide opportunities for obtaining different levels of vocational qualification according to the individual needs and corresponding to the labour market requirements, their curriculum and learning outcomes (diploma) are nationally recognized and will be transferable also within Europe, once all the countries start applying their National Qualification Frameworks in accordance to the EQF. Data on the providers of vocational education and training is relatively easy available in the countries where national registers exist as e.g. in Romania or Bulgaria (see the box above, p. 29). The Romanian register of accredited training providers covers all types of providers - public institutions, private bodies, NGOs as well as initial VET schools which are spread all over the country.

Among the public institutions providing adult education and training important role in all countries play the Employment

Bulgarian Experience: The Cultural Center Network

The Project “Social Development and Civic Involvement through the Cultural Centre Network” (for short: the “Proékt čitálišta”) gave considerable impetus to the cultural centre system in Bulgaria. It ran for three years (2001-2004), sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Science as well as international organizations (USAID, UNDP, MATRA), which contributed a combined total of 2.5 million US dollars. A coordination office was set up in Sofia, with six regional offices in the provinces. The aim was to strengthen the role of cultural centres as traditional education centres in Bulgaria, and to modernize them so that they could make an input to regional development. The initiators sought support from the local authorities, NGOs and the regional economy. 300 cultural centres were entitled to participate in all project activities and calls for tenders. Another 600 cultural centres had access to a restricted range of activities. The cultural centres taking part could apply for financial support for their activities. Modern methods of working in the cultural centre environment were also promoted by means of model projects. In addition, a training and advice system for cultural centres was introduced. After the end of the Project in 2004 the office coordinating the project was transformed into an independent foundation which continues to work towards the same ends, and the range of cultural centres participating is no longer restricted.

Agencies which training courses are targeted at improving employability, adaptability and competitiveness of mainly unemployed persons in accordance to the needs of the labour market but also employed people in improving their knowledge and skills. Thus, they play a multiple role - from preparing labour market surveys and needs analysis for staff, through provision of expert assistance to employers in preparing and delivering training programmes, and informing, advising, selecting the best suitable trainees, and securing an adequate funding. However, in most of the countries in SEE active labour market programmes remain very much under-resourced and in many places they are largely devoted to the improvement of public employment rates.

Another string that should be outlined here is the historical tradition of the so called **Open Universities** or **Worker's and People's (Folk) Universities** in most of the countries in Former Yugoslavia. Although their role and numbers have significantly decreased in the last 15 years, they are still a supporting pillar of the adult education systems in these countries. As a whole, people's universities offer formal vocational training courses and, more generally, non-formal training: languages, IT training, citizens' education and general knowledge education. Despite the situation during the socialist period, most of these institutions are now receiving no financial support by central or local sources. In most of the countries there is no centralised source of information about the number of participants, the types of programme or the quality of provision in these institutions.

The long term tradition in the countries in South Eastern Europe is connecting adult education institutions with the cultural community centers and this is still obvious today: Cultural centers offer for example language and IT courses, and people's universities organize exhibitions, concerts and similar cultural events. In Bulgaria e.g. exist the so called cultural community centres "Čitálišta" whose history could be traced back to the 19th century. They usually work very closely with the local authorities, especially in regard to the funding and staff, and their activities cover almost all aspects of the culture life – singing, dancing, theatre courses, as well as foreign language, ICT training and vocational training. Securing an adequate funding is one of the biggest problems that these general adult education providers face, because in the last few decades the state budget was considerably or even totally cut off. The **Project "Čitálišta"** in Bulgaria can be considered as a good example for encouragement for modernization.

Finally, the adult elementary schools or adult basic schools have to be mentioned. Adults have an opportunity to complete elementary school in four years, which normally takes eight years to complete in such institutions. The training is organized and implemented in accordance to the special plans and programs. Instruction is performed as regular and preparatory, related to the individuals' age, psychological and physical abilities and the ability for self-education. However, a negative trend can be observed in the last years in regard to the widening gap between the increased needs for basic adult education (considering the high number of illiterate population or people without basic education in some of the countries (Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo) and the inadequate number of basic education schools and their decreasing activities. Another problem deserves attention here: the so called "East European syndrome of 'everybody-can-read-and-write-because-everybody-went-through-schooling'"

which as pointed out by some countries in the SEE region (Bulgaria, Romania) sends literacy towards the bottom of the political agenda and public interest". Thus, in these countries various initiatives in the private sector and civil society are exerting pressure to put literacy training on the public agenda.

The following big group of adult education and training providers which have sprung up in the past ten years meeting market needs are the providers in the **private sector** – companies, private training centres and commercial providers. In general, there are no consistent data on the number and types of courses provided by the private company's training centres as well as on the number of individuals undertaking training within these centres. Usually they tend to offer courses in skills which are mostly a labour market demand (all of the so called key competencies: ICT, foreign languages, management and entrepreneurial skills, negotiation, communication, team working skills etc.).

Enterprises in recently accepted EU member states and South Eastern Europe are mainly micro or small enterprises; many of them proceeding in the service business and resources for on-the job-training are severely limited. In addition, many larger enterprises are unwilling to spend money on CVT so the state continues to dominate and the main focus is formal school-based initial training. Eurostat Survey on Continuing Vocational Training for the period 2000-2005 shows that the number of enterprises (in particular SMEs) in Bulgaria and Romania providing training for their own employees is considerably low compared to the other countries in Europe (see the example in the box on page 32).

However there are some pilot projects demonstrating strong commitment of employers contributing to the labour market training. For example, in a number of countries (*such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia*) training needs analyses have been conducted through *ad hoc employers' surveys*. The *Swedish methodology*, based upon regular surveys of employers on their employment forecasts for 6 and 12 months, *has been piloted in Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia*, with very positive results. The introduction of *Change Agent Teams (CATs) in VET schools*, with the identification of teachers as 'external' change agents who could develop systematic links with businesses and municipalities in the school's environment (as seen in a Serbian VET school), also seems promising, though it also demonstrates how difficult such a process is. With the participation of employers working groups for a definition of new curricula occupational standards have been established; in particular the trend-setting companies, and more recently, sector committees have been set up in Serbia.

NGOs (both local and international), social partners – in particular chambers of trade and commerce, trade unions and trade associations, professionals' organizations, as well as religious organizations constitutes the **third main group of providers**. NGOs became one of the most important pillars of the education system and especially adult education in the South Eastern European region in the last two decades. Their main role in the transition to a democratic society lies in the area of non formal education, which is not always well-known or widely accepted, and consequently has a relatively low support. External support for popular/liberal ALE continues to be vital in this area; the civil society organizations play a key role in the development of adult education by initiating and creating strategies and education policies. A numerous researches have been conducted by them, significant participation in projects and active contribution to the implementation of governments' strategies and action plans can be observed; they are experienced in working with sensitive and hard reachable groups in the societies. In brief, NGOs play a significant role in developing policies, providing supplementary and corrective activities in the existing education system. Local NGOs usually have a variety of financing sources - international donors, state and local communities' budget etc. Thus, the sustainability of their mostly project based activities is based to a great extent on big international organizations such as USAID, British Council, *dvv international*, Open Society institute, UND, Roma Education Fund, Council of Europe, GTZ, BCIF etc. In the last decade, the NGOs have covered almost all areas of adult education and training as follows:

- Development of education opportunities for all;
- Raising the education level of the population;
- Promotion of effective training institutions;
- Teaching and learning improvement;
- Initial training system strengthening and professional development of teaching and management staff;
- Providing quality assurance
- Relation between formal, non-formal and informal education;
- Promotion of lifelong learning and lifewide learning
- Fostering active citizenship;
- Creating conditions for voluntary activities;
- Prevention of exclusion and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups;
- Strengthening of research and innovative systems;

Lack of Training in Bulgarian Companies

According to the Eurostat Survey on Continuing Vocational Training for the period 2000-2005, the Bulgarian enterprises are on the second last place (26 from 27 EU Member States) in Europe for offering continuing education and training to their employees. While the tendency in Bulgaria is concerning: The percentage of enterprises investing in the training of their employees in Bulgaria has remained almost the same from 28% in 1999 to 29% in 2005. In Romania, this percentage has increased almost 4 times: from 11% (1999) to 40% (2005). Furthermore, the chance to get training in the smaller and medium enterprises (10-49 employees: 6%) is twice as small as in the larger enterprises (50-249 employees: 12%)

- Linking education and research with the labour market development,
- Development of information society;
- Democratic, intercultural and peace education;
- Education for sustainable development;
- Key competences training (soft skills) – social, communication, team work skills, non-violent communication etc.
- Strengthening of the higher education sector;
- Strengthening of regional and European cooperation;
- Capacity strengthening and change management.

It would be hardly possible to describe all relevant activities implemented by local and international NGOs in the countries in SEE. A remark should be made however: the transition process which all countries in the region are going through can both hinder and be a driving force for their development. The ongoing reforms of the legislation framework and the institutional capacity development offer a wide range of opportunities for advocacy activities on behalf of the civil society sector by influencing the reformation process in the desired direction. On the other hand, the dependency on external/donor resources makes NGOs' activities and projects not sustainable enough achieving an impact on a system level.

The comparison with the developed European countries will give a similar picture of a dynamic area, where the pluralism of

providers can be seen as the main feature. Rather similar groups of providers could be identified (with an exception of the church as provider, which can not be considered as a significant actor in SEE countries due to the recent political history), although the range of mutual responsibility and shared activities are not quite the same.

Furthermore, can be noticed, that traditional adult education institutions are disappearing in the SEE countries. Folks and workers' universities still exist, but they have lost their status and did not manage to meet the higher demands of the new developments. On the other hand, countries like Germany or

Scandinavian countries still rely very much on their traditional institutions like folk high schools. The tendency shows that Eastern European countries are trying to find new frames and forms for their adult education provision, finding their own way between traditionalism and modernity, with numerous issues facing them. For that reason the landscape of adult education providers is crowded and dynamic, but still very unstable. Drawing a conclusion, it is not easy to create a comprehensive, functioning and sustainable **system** of adult education and learning in the SEE region.

2.2. Participation in Adult Learning and Education

Most of the countries in the SEE region do not conduct comprehensive national surveys in adult learning participation. The data available provides mainly information about adults in the formal education system, while in the non formal education there is usually no tracking or data gathering systems in place, which makes it hard to estimate participation in this area. The main sources for data provision on participation rates in ALE are the above described adult education providers which also deliver information on the access to programmes, and the motivation and profile of target groups/learners. Other important data providers are the National Institutes for Statistics (census), annual reports by bigger training providers (NGOs, but also social partners – chambers of commerce, professional organizations, national and international companies), as well as national reports of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Finance, some independent surveys, studies and researches, National Registers for records of accreditations (e.g. number of certificates awarded), reports from international actors – EU, ETF, Cedefop, OECD etc. There is a need in the short term to develop a consistent and coherent methodology for data collection on participation and non-participation in adult education, and moreover, on the reasons for non-participation. Such information could provide crucial answers about the needs and interests of the population in the field of AE.

Despite the recognition of the benefits of education and training to groups and individuals facing the risk of social exclusion, there is strong evidence along all countries in SEE, and also within the wider European continent, that the participation of disadvantaged groups in all kinds of adult education (formal, informal and non-formal) continues to be lower than that of

other groups. The lack of relevant skills and qualifications increases the risk of social exclusion of marginalized groups of the society which is even higher in the context of rising demands for knowledge and competencies in the labour market. This vicious circle could be broken down if more attention is paid to reducing barriers to learning in order to encourage participation generally, and specifically of groups who are currently excluded or underrepresented. Otherwise there is a risk of widening the existing social divides.

On the one hand this imposes challenges for the state to create an enabling learning environment which is motivating, encouraging, and supporting for adults least likely to participate in learning – people with low educational attainment levels who are more at risk of losing their jobs and becoming marginalized. On the other hand, the employers, who traditionally are sponsoring training for their highly skilled and skilled workers, have to start to increasingly address the training needs of employees with lower educational attainment or skill levels.

Even though national studies and statistics are not directly comparable, a number of common participation patterns appear throughout a wide range of such studies. While countries do not differ very much in levels of participation, the structures of participation patterns are similar, e.g.

- Participation in adult learning declines with age – especially in vocational and work-related fields. Older people are considered a socially marginalized group, educational offers for them are very small, and there is lack of responsive mechanisms to their specific needs and all of this has negative impact on their motivation for learning;

- Participation rates increase as the level of education of the participants rises;
- The worse the social situation, the less likely people are to take part in adult education;
- Participation is lower in rural than in urban areas;
- Ethnic minorities take considerably less part in adult learning than the native population which is due partly to their lower socio-economic status, language barriers as well as stigmatization and prejudices concerning them (esp. in the case of Roma ethnic minority);
- Participation in non-formal and informal learning is much higher than in the formal adult education which is due to the reduction of formal adult education in the '90s (caused by wars, economic crisis, countries' isolation and other factors), and the expansion of organizations of non-formal education which have responded to increasing educational needs in different sectors.

In addition, some of the countries, in particular *Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia*, a growing numbers of participants is observable in training programmes of the National Employment Offices (both for unemployed and employed) according to the statistics of these Employment Offices which can be pointed among the best developed ones. These are usually vocational training courses, ICT ones, or foreign languages, in regard to the labour market demands. The programmes are targeted to the main disadvantaged groups: long-term unemployed, women, young people, Roma, people with disabilities, unemployed aged over 45, single parents, people in rural areas and others. The statistics shows that the young people show highest participation in the offered training. Most of the trained people are young people under 25 years old and between 25 and 34 years old willing to improve their qualification by developing key competencies and skills, thus, to increase their adaptability to the changing labour market and their flexibility.

In other countries, such as Serbia, there is a trend of larger participation of women (especially in NGOs), agricultural population, ethnical minorities (especially Roma people), refugees and IDP (internally displaced persons), employed - especially at management level, older people etc. Some of the sectors where participation in education has increased because of growing interest are the following: adult education in human rights, democracy and civil society; education in sustainable development, trainings in entrepreneurship, education in health care and prevention, IT literacy, and foreign languages learning. In Montenegro, for example, active participation in adult

education courses can be observed in bigger national and international companies such as *Tobacco Company Podgorica, Montenegrin Commercial Bank, Atlasmont Bank, Čelebić*, 16. February, *Bega Press, Elko Team*. According to the data of the Union of Employers there are various forms of education and training for the employees in these companies.

Finally, it should be pointed out that some of the countries which are already EU Member States as Bulgaria and Romania, or are officially recognized as a candidate country and negotiations for accession have been opened – such as Croatia, are included in the Eurostat study on Lifelong Learning from 2006. The methodology used was for measuring participation in learning activities as the proportion of persons aged between 25 and 64 years taking part in the twelve months before the study in any type of education, training or learning, i.e. in at least one of formal, non-formal or self-directed learning. According to the results the Bulgaria and Romania have the lowest participation rates in LLL compared to the rest of the EU Member States (both 1.3%, of the adult population), while the European average of participation in Lifelong learning was 9.6 % in 2006.

The OECD survey for 2008 provides similar data. This rises additional concerns and requires more efforts of all stakeholders in strengthening motivation for participation in adult education and lifelong learning in order to reach the benchmark of a 12.5% participation rate in 2010 (the EU benchmark for lifelong learning in the context of the Lisbon strategy).

Various reasons can be listed for such a low level of participation in adult education in the SEE countries, both on the demand and supply sides. The former include the life-situations of adults and their attitudes towards learning while the latter are policy-related, information-related and provider-related. Mentioning just the most important ones:

- Education and learning lost their value in the post-socialist countries and tend to become more and more formalized, equating education with certification and formal degrees;
- The transition economy still does not demand high level knowledge and competencies and is not based on the principles of continuing education and lifelong learning;
- Quality of life and existential problems are generally more important than investments in adult education and learning;
- The traditional forms of financial support on the part of the state to educational initiatives of individuals outside school, at the workplace etc. are disappearing;
- Many adults in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe have the traditional view of adult education in its pure com-

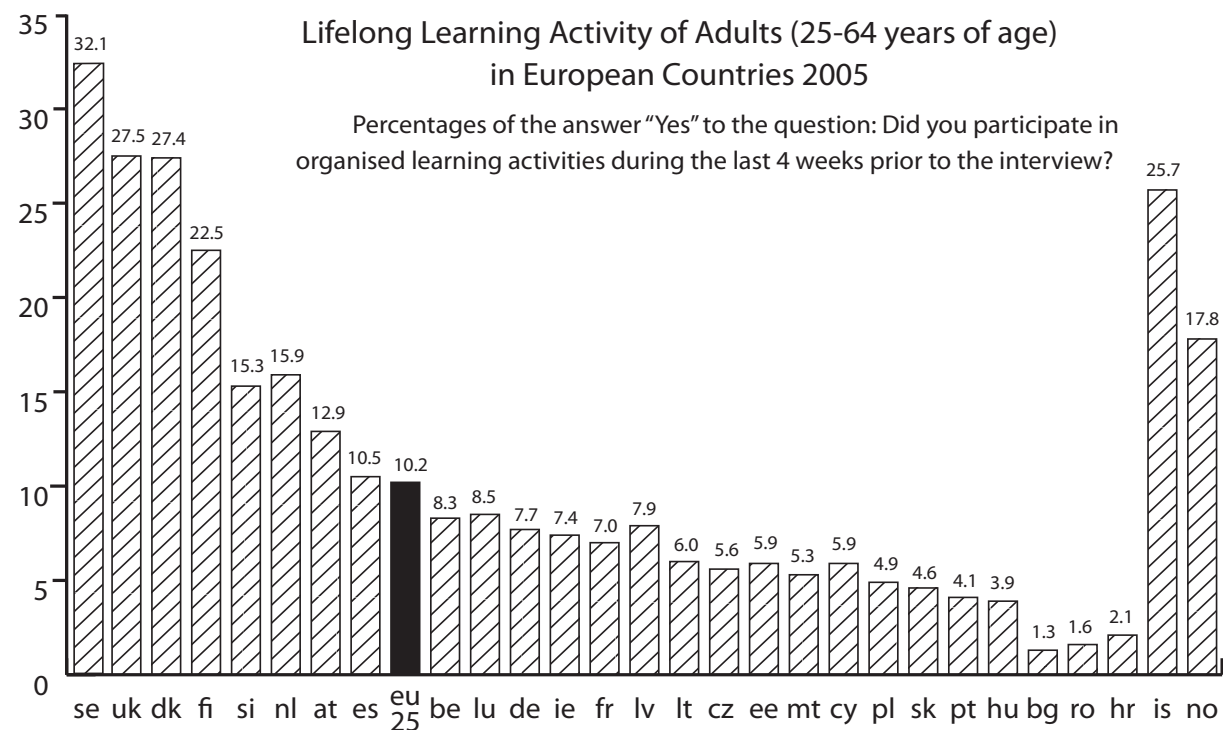
pensatory function: By participating in further education they would show and admit that they have missed learning and education when they were youngsters, when it was the “proper time for it”. Therefore they feel ashamed to participate in continuing education, considering it more as punishment for their failure in the past.(Strewe 2007)

- In many SEE countries ALE providers infrastructure is inadequate and this is often considered as a key reason for non-participation. Also the multiplicity of providers and their invisibility make it difficult for the learners to find the adequate training.
- The unwillingness of employers to support employees’ ALE is a further big barrier to participation in recent member states of the EU and South Eastern Europe. In this context, it is nec-

essary to look beyond traditional institutions to consider the role of non-formal and informal learning in the community, the workplace and the home.

Addressing barriers to participation, both on the supply-side and demand-side, joined-up action is required on all policy fronts to create enabling legal, governance, financial, access, learning, qualifications and quality frameworks and explicitly targeted interconnected measures to create the environment and conditions that encourage and support the adults least likely to participate to engage with ALE.

A further remark is due here regarding the appropriateness of drawing comparisons, based on the above mentioned Eurostat Labour Force Survey which shows that participation in adult education in South Eastern Europe is considerably lower than



Source: Eurostat database table lfsi_edu_a (from Labour Force Survey), accessed on 20 April 2007.

Countries listed here are Sweden (se), United Kingdom (uk), Denmark (dk), Finland (fi) Slovenia (si), Netherlands (nl), Austria (at), Spain (es), Belgium (be), Luxembourg (lu), Germany (de), Ireland (ie), France (fr), Latvia (lv), Lithuania (lt) Czechia (cz), Estonia (ee), Malta (mt), Cyprus (cy), Poland (pl), Slovakia (sk), Hungary (hu), Romania (ro), Bulgaria (bg), and for comparison Iceland (is) and Norway (no). EU25 is the average of the 25 EU member countries (prior to 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania joined the Union). The chart has been taken from *Adult Education and Education Politics in Bulgaria*, by Ch. Geiselmann, J. Theessen: Bonn 2007, p. 257.

for example in Scandinavian countries (1.3% in Romania and Bulgaria vs¹. 51% in Finland). Possible interpretations would question the methodological approach used in the survey. Although researchers used the same methodological approach for all countries (same indicators, same questions), it could be discussed if the choice of the sample and the collection of data were appropriate, having in mind the fact that many learning activities among adults in South Eastern Europe are not being recognized as adult learning and educational activities, even by individuals themselves, because of the rather traditional, school-like understanding of learning and education. Especially non-formal and informal learning are rarely seen as adult education - by policy-makers, media, individuals, with the exception of small group of experts. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of ALE makes it more difficult to visualize what kind of learning activities fall in the scope of ALE. Also the activities of many adult education and learning providers are not recognized as such (formally they belong to other sectors) and they are often not included in surveys and research. Finally, there is lack of experience and tradition in conducting such type of research in the SEE countries, and will take time for the institutions as well as for the learners themselves to get used to it and to implement it properly.

However, at this stage, it has to be highlighted that measures to mobilize learners and to increase participation have been undertaken in all of the reviewed countries in South Eastern Europe by addressing the different types of learning barriers mentioned above. Probably, the most popular and effective campaign not only in the region, but also in the wider European context is the Adult Education Festival (or Lifelong Learning Week) and Fairs which have been organized in the last 8-9 years, usually in cooperation of *dvv international* offices in the countries with other national and international stakeholders. These festivals are open for the wider public, and therefore the citizens of various age groups have the possibility to participate in the events and get informed about the available opportunities for their further education. Such campaigns are essential in terms of developing and fostering a learning-for-all culture, raising overall awareness of the value and the benefits of learning not only for better employability, but also for personal fulfilment and/ active citizenship.

Furthermore, in several countries specific programmes targeted at the learning needs of socially and economically disadvantaged groups have been developed, usually funded by international organizations and NGOs. Here are some exam-

ples: education and training programmes for people from rural areas run by the public employment services In *Romania*, the National Programme for Literacy and Vocational Training of Roma People in *Bulgaria*, the project "Developing skills for Kosovo reconstruction and restoration needs" targeting mainly demobilized soldiers, unemployed young men, invalids and other vulnerable groups, Roma Education Program in *Macedonia*, Serbia and Montenegro, programmes for promoting and retaining employment of unemployed and also employed people by developing key competencies such as entrepreneurial skills e.g. the so-called mock companies in Kosovo which are a simulation of real companies to enable development of entrepreneurial skills of students.

Finally, information, guidance and counselling systems should be mentioned, because they are crucial for facilitating access to learning and in motivating learners to find their place in increasingly complex learning systems and into the labour market. They play an even more important role in the countries in SEE in the context of growing flexibility of labour markets and rapid changes in the economy which have led to increasingly insecure employment and the need to change jobs and occupations more frequently.

According to ETF studies of the policies, systems and practices in career guidance in Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo in 2004, and in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania in 2005, career guidance in particular for adults, is still an underdeveloped element in education and labour market reforms in those countries. There is still a lack of comprehensive and systematic policy approach to guidance covering the whole education spectrum and labour market system. Even though, it is outlined in a national strategy, it has not yet emerged in practice. Some of the main reasons for this are: limited public and private resources for career guidance services, no centralized databases on adult education providers and courses in most countries, very high proportion of informal and even underground employment which, by definition, does not fall within the formal career guidance services which are mostly provided by the public employment offices and very few private employment services, which act mainly as job brokers and head hunters rather than career guidance provider.

Even though it is not possible to solve all these problems in the short term, the emerging lifelong learning strategies and legislation in the countries of SEE offer a lot of opportunities for further development of the career guidance services in these countries and several good practices in this direction should be highlighted here: (See the text box.)

1) http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress08/report_en.pdf

Career Guidance Projects in South East European Countries

Career guidance and counselling in Montenegro

On the initiative of the Employment Agency, prompted by the ETF's career guidance review, the establishment of a Centre for Information and Professional Counseling began in 2005. The Centre is based in Podgorica and will operate at a national level

Career guidance projects in Kosovo

The Italian government is funding several projects with focus on career guidance and improving employment opportunities of the Kosovo population.

One of the main aims of the project "Developing skills for Kosovo reconstruction and restoration needs" was, to develop capacities for strengthening the work of Kosovo institutions in providing advisory and professional guiding services and other assistance to unemployed persons. Direct project beneficiaries are management and personnel of vocational training institutions, as well as the staff of Employment offices and regional and municipal services which are involved in the training and pre-qualification program.

Another project for employment and income generation focuses on promotion of self-employment through seminars in guidance and days of enterprise events which are included in the educational activities – as part of school programs of last grade of secondary school and institution/ pro-

grams for training adults. The career guiding sessions are organized by the public employment services and are followed by preparation of a detailed self-employment programme for those people that have shown skills and initiative to begin their own economic or business activity.

'How to seek a job actively' guide in Bosnia and Herzegovina

This booklet is the first publication of its type to be produced since the war. It was recently followed up with a similar guide produced at canton level, reflecting the local labour market situation and needs.

Regional training centres for adults and job clubs in Serbia

In close cooperation with the public employment service, regional training centres are expected to provide some career guidance activities, including information, counseling and guidance in the selection of programmes, training, and career guidance in education, according to individual preferences, the needs of the local community and the labour market.

Job clubs help unemployed adults and employed people at risk of becoming unemployed with their career planning and help to motivate them to actively search for a job, as they are expected to take more responsibility for looking for

a job. Job clubs help to strengthen the ability of adults to analyse their potential, knowledge, experience and qualifications, and the competencies needed in the labour market. Job clubs use a range of approaches including teaching, simulation, practice and performing in real situations, and analysing and improving performance based on feedback.

The PARSH and career development projects in Albania

Under the PARSH project an NGO adult training organization (the Albanian office of *dvv international*) published a printed directory of training provision in Tirana that is updated on a biannual basis. In addition, a Soros-funded career development project that finished in 2005 provided training for employment service staff in the adaptation and development of tests, inventories and tools to aid career choice.

Centres for employment in Macedonia

Apart from hosting job clubs similar to the ones in Serbia (see above), employment centres have some career information and guidance functions. Information on occupations, and career guidance based on an analysis of a person's professional interests and their general and specific abilities, is provided along with advice on training and new employment.

2.3. Monitoring and Evaluating Adult Education

Quality is multifaceted: information and guidance; needs analysis; relevant learning content matching actual needs and demands; delivery; learning support; assessment approaches; recognition, validation and certification of competencies. Most of these elements are still in the early stage of progress in the countries in South Eastern Europe.

The introduction of a National Qualification Framework (NQF) in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework in the Western Balkan countries is one of the major steps in achieving a quality assurance based on learning outcomes of the learning programmes. Although a slight progress in this direction can be observed, the adoption of NQFs has been currently recognized in all countries as a crucial step towards modernization of the VET systems, improvement of the labour market conditions, and creating references to Bologna process reforms in higher education. However, establishing national qualification frameworks is a difficult process, as international experience has shown. In Romania, for example the process was initiated in 1996 and currently the objective is to have a complete instrument ready by 2008. The complexity consists of the need of involving several partners in the approach, and creating a consensus among them on number of interrelated decisions. Further, a balance must be struck between analysing and creating standards for specific skills, economic sectors or occupations, without creating a system with built-in rigidities that inhibit movement within the labour market. The framework for skills and competencies recognition must be flexible and must reflect the fact that individuals will change industries far more than they would have done in the past. The classification system needs to facilitate this movement. Consequently, it cannot be expected each NQF to be narrowly based on local current skills or industry patterns. It must involve systematization of the skills and knowledge which are relevant to the needs of a modern economy. The qualification framework must also consider how key competencies such as language, information technology, team working and communication skills, can be integrated with the vocational training that is appropriate to a particular occupation. One of the biggest challenges for all countries is the translation of agreed occupational profiles into learning outcomes. Based on an on-going work in Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania the assumption is that it would be easier to reach such an ambitious objective as the introduction of NQF in the smallest countries. Thus, in 2007 the EU agreed

to finance Montenegro's development of a qualifications framework - where a National Commission had already been established in 2006. Macedonia also reports the implementation of a NQF pilot project in the period 2005 - 2008. In contrast, the lack of cooperation between the main ministries in charge in Serbia and Croatia, as well as the fragmentation of responsibilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, may seriously hamper the process. However, a dedicated ETF conference in Zagreb in October 2006 demonstrated that there is a significant awareness and an on-going discussion among stakeholders in all countries can be observed.

Validation of the prior learning and experience of the individuals can be considered as another aspect of assessing learning outcomes. Such validation systems assess prior and experiential learning and provide evidence of individual's competencies. They serve mainly the individual learner needs, in particular those individuals who seek integration or re-integration into education and training, the labour market and society. Furthermore, they enable the transfer and acceptance of all learning outcomes across different education and training systems, and both help to improve access to learning and shape learning curricula by providing a point of reference for further learning. Only few countries in the EU have in place a comprehensive system of validation of a prior learning (e.g. France), consequently it is not surprising that this process is at its very beginning in South Eastern European countries. However, a progress has been already achieved in some countries e.g. *Romania*. A Sectoral Committee for Education and Training, Research-Development and Sports with various responsibilities among which validation of the qualifications within a specific sector was established in 2006. Beside this, pilot projects under the Leonardo da Vinci programme of the EU - REAR WINDOW - (Transparent qualifications in the engineering sector) and VINEPAC (Validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators) are fostering the progress in the validation of competencies acquired in non-formal and informal learning contexts. An instrument for recognition of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning was developed initially in 2002 under a Leonardo da Vinci project "Assessment and Recognition of Work Experiences and Non-formal learning (ARWEN)" in *Bulgaria*, too. The instrument consists of a number of tools for tracking prior achievements acquired through non-formal and informal learning and their

recognition in regard to the young people. Furthermore, an inter-institutional working group has been set up, currently (2008) under another EU funded project. This group includes social partners and ministries, and aims to develop a comprehensive and coherent validation model of non-formal and informal learning (with definition of responsibilities, standards, legislation etc.), which will be tested in the course of 2009 in 3 vocations - carpentry, processing industry, and in the field of the social services.

Other countries have already planned the first steps in this direction – for example quoting the establishment of an independent institution in *Kosovo*, responsible for the definition of standards in education, and validation of education and training for employees in the education system. Another example is the Agency for Standards and Assessment in *Bosnia and Herzegovina* that will be in charge of the creation of standards for the

accreditation and procedures and indicators for the evaluation of learning programs/modules. Further, a National Evaluation Agency has been established in Macedonia which has a way to go to meet the European standards prescribed for QA agencies. Serbia notes that although some ALE-applicable instruments have been developed by the Institute for the Improvement of Education and the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, ALE is still looking for ‘a real place’ in both of them.

To sum up, all countries in the SEE region are still at the very beginning of introducing QA systems, indicators and quality management tools in ALE, mainly for VET institutions. The QA approaches are mostly related to formal ALE and usually lead to the establishment of national or regional governmental bodies with a remit, specific or part of wider responsibilities, to monitor and/or evaluate education as whole, including ALE.

2.4. Status and Training of Adult Educators

2.4.1. Qualifications and Training

Since adult education covers broad range of levels and areas of education and learning activities, as well as formal and non-formal learning, the national reports from SEE countries show that there is no consensus about required qualifications of the staff engaged in this area. Required qualifications for the teachers employed in the system of formal adult education are the same as for all other teachers – university degree is required. At some faculties this degree includes basic pedagogical, didactical and methodical knowledge and competencies – mostly teachers faculties, but teachers in other professions (technical for example) gain just knowledge and competencies related to their special area and not to the teaching activities. Even if there are some subjects related to teaching, didactics and pedagogical approaches, they do not include the competencies needed for the educational work and teaching of adults.

Although no systematic data exist on the teachers engaged in the area of formal learning, there is a requirement in almost all SEE countries for the teachers to possess a university diploma. However, in many cases, they still do not have adequate knowledge and competencies to teach adults and need some additional training.

This is not very surprising when comparing with the situation in the rest of the European region: in most of the European countries there is no clear view on standard competences or skills needed to fulfil the professional tasks in ALE, partly due the diversity of the field. Generally, the occupation of teacher or trainer of adults is not a regulated profession, and standards of qualifications and competence are only beginning to emerge, frequently with application to vocational ALE only.

National reports from the SEE countries highlight the fact that governments and NGOs do organize numerous train-the-trainer (ToT) and similar forms of training for adult education staff, where they could obtain some knowledge and competencies needed for their teaching activities with adults. Unfortunately, none of the countries has collected comprehensive data on the number of such courses, duration, content, participants, and evaluation – except for some single activities/projects of this kind. It could be concluded that the qualification and competencies of the teacher in adult education are lower compared to that of the teachers employed in the formal educational system. All types of education outside of the formal system do not undergo quality assurance control and do not have certain standards to define precisely who, at what level, with what kind

of competencies and under what conditions could work in the field of adult education.

Romania is one of the exceptions, where some occupational standards for “trainers” have been developed in 2006, also in a framework of recognition of competencies acquired in non-formal learning. They have been validated and regularly updated by a special body “**Sectoral Committee for Education and Training, research-Development and Sport**,” which also aims to extend it to all categories of trainers with a common framework and to develop the higher education programmes in the area of ALE. Romania has further a special body in charge for accreditation of trainings – the National Adult Training Board, which gives permission to numerous public institutions, NGOs and companies to offer train-the-trainer programs.

The picture looks considerably better when referring to the situation of the continuing education of the staff working in the area of formal education, incl. here all kinds of teachers. It is often required from them to participate in some kind of further education and training and some countries even introduced a “license” for the teachers (for example *Macedonia*). There are certain attempts in SEE countries to introduce some kind of certification for adult education staff or even use some already functioning European certification systems (as PERT Computer passport, XPERT Personal and business skills, EBCL (European Business Competence* Licence) etc., but this process is still highly unregulated and in the very beginning. However, there are numerous activities of this kind, such as andragogic summer schools, so called “andragogic academies” etc.

Many institutions and companies do organize various types of training for their employees. In the national reports it is mentioned that ToT is very often important part of these trainings, which aim at improving the overall quality of trainings of their employees, but also their social skills, human relations in the company, working atmosphere etc. There is also a clear tendency in some sectors to establish their own training and certification systems, such as legal and justice system, health services, and social care system. Very often these types of training are financially supported via projects and by international donors (for example in **Romania**). NGOs are also one of the main providers of such types of trainings, but no appropriate data exist on that as well, except for several reports on some good practice examples (for instance **Romania** and **Serbia**).

In general, teachers have been very active in participating in pilot projects on developing and implementing new curricula, and disseminating the outcomes of pilot approaches. In Croatia teachers have played a positive role in promoting a VET reform.

Overall, where they have been implemented, the introduction of Change Agent Teams (CATs) in VET schools has proved its efficiency, and has promoted new open and flexible learning approaches. Teachers have also demonstrated a high level of motivation when participating in weekend training courses (**Montenegro** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina**) and in summer work (**Kosovo**).

It is obvious that all the countries do make strong efforts to improve education and training of adult education staff. This can be concluded from the strategies that countries developed, from adoption or drafting laws on education or adult education, to development of reform and policy papers.

Attempts have been made to lobby for and to initiate further professionalization of adult education and learning in SEE, starting with the Declaration of ministers of education signed in Skopje 2003, where consensus was achieved on the design and introduction of requirements for adult educators at the university level in the countries of the region, where some activities already took place (New Bulgarian University, University of Iasi in Romania).

However, results are mixed, since most initiatives linked to in-service teacher training have been fragmented and have been hampered by the lack of expertise and the limited availability of modern teaching equipment. Despite the support of different donors (e.g. in Macedonia - World Bank, CARDS, USAID, the Bureau for Development of Education), the policy makers lacked a national strategy and in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina the initiatives only had limited impact.

Furthermore, pre-service teacher training in most countries still suffers from a lack of relevance for VET teachers (Montenegro), and is hampered generally by the too traditional and academic approach of the Faculties of Pedagogy in universities, even when practical training is provided. Many donor-funded projects have tackled these issues and promoted interactive methods of learning and efficient management of classrooms. Initiatives such as the ETF VET Teacher and Trainer network (VET TT Network) set up in 2002 play a positive role in supporting the process of sharing innovation and good practice by a ‘community of practitioners’ in South Eastern Europe. In Montenegro where there is a shortage of trained staff and no organized system for training of staff, andragogic training is one of the priority goals for the coming period. A modular programme for the short-term trainings of adult education staff has been developed and the implementation started already. Another example for good practice in Serbia is illustrated in Table 5 (page 38).

2.4.2. Adult Education as a Specific Profession

In spite of the general recognition that professionalization in the field contributes significantly to its recognition and development, the progress made in the SEE countries is relative low. In most of the countries the question of the professional status of adult educators is still unclear. Some explicit statements in the national reports say that adult educator does not belong to the list of professions, officially elaborated and recognized (except in **Serbia**, where *andragogy* is officially recognized as a specific profession and is listed in national nomenclature of occupations).

Occupational Standards for Adult Educators in Romania

In 2001 an occupational standard for "Trainer" was developed with four units of competencies: training planning; training delivery; trainees' assessment; review and promotion of the training programs. In 2007, this standard was reviewed and has 8 units (training planning; training delivery; trainees' assessment; use of advanced training methodology; marketing of training; planning of training programs; organization of training programs; evaluation, review and quality assurance for training programs).

Professional Development of Teaching Staff in Macedonia

In 2006 in the Bureau for Development of Education and in 2007 in the Vocational Education and Training Centre, specific sectors for professional development of teaching staff and advisory professional work were established, with the aim to develop programs and criteria for professional development of teaching staff, in order to establish a reliable sustainable system of a number of accredited training and service providers that will meet the respective standards for quality of the programs for professional development of teachers and school staff.

However, in the discussion about staff working in this area, several approaches can be highlighted.

The broadest approach or definition is that adult educators are all people working in this area. Another approach claims that adult educators are just experts in a certain profession, who are working accidentally in the field of adult education. Sometimes they are considered simply as members of the teaching profession, not regarding the target groups - children, youth or adults. There is also an approach considering the managers, HRD-specialists, leaders, facilitators, trainers as adult educators. Many countries report that awareness-raising campaigns like adult learning festivals did help to identify those professions as an area of adult teaching and did contribute to the building of their professional identity as adult educators.

In some countries (Serbia) the preparation of adult education staff takes place at the university, and accordingly adult education is identified as a specific profession usually called "andragogues" (experts in adult education and learning). Also **Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina** have some specialized courses about adult education in the frame of their pedagogy studies. Courses on adult education can be furthermore found in the curriculum of teachers faculties.

Only in **Serbia**, there is a study group called Andragogy (at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade), providing a complete four-years course in adult education (bachelor degree), a one year master's course, and three years of doctoral studies (see the teaching programme, listed below and on the following page).

Master's studies in Management of Adult Education are being offered in **Bulgaria** (at the *New Bulgarian University* in Sofia), and in **Romania** (Master's studies in adult education at the University of Iași and at the University of Timișoara) offering an European Degree (EMAE).

2.4.3. Proportion of Adult Educators and Facilitators

Since there are no exact data on the number of teachers, trainers and facilitators working in the area of adult education, it was not possible to indicate the proportion of adult educators in relation to the overall number of teaching personnel. Another problem lies also in the fact that the number of the full-time employees is much lower than the number of part-time and honorary staff in adult education, who consider adult education just as their second job.

The difficulties of specifying and defining adult education as a profession influence also the estimation of the proportion of adult education staff. Keeping this in mind, should all adult educators, trainers, andragogues, facilitators, adult teachers, HRD, lecturers, educational managers and cultural workers be considered as adult education staff for the purpose of these statistics? The national surveys report on all those various professional modalities, but do not give figures for comparison.

2.4.4. Terms of Employment and Remuneration

The terms of employment for this professional group are usually similar to those for other teaching professions, at least for the full-employed. For the part-time and honorary staff there are no exact data, just vague estimations. Salaries in educational sector are usually lower than in other public funded sectors

Bachelor's, Master' and Doctoral Studies in Adult Education in Serbia

Basic studies

Semester I

- General Andragogy
- Basics of Pedagogy
- General Psychology
- Statistics in Educational Researches
- Foreign Language

Semester II

- Adult Education History
- Logic with the Methodology of Science
- Life Span Development Psychology
- Psychology of Personality
- Foreign Language

Semester III

- Comparative Andragogy
- Adult Education – Economic Aspects
- Learning Psychology
- Sociology of Education
- Foreign Language
- One of the following courses: Contemporary Trends in Pedagogy; Basic of Psychology of Work; Introduction to Philosophy; ICT in statistical researches.

Semester IV

- Andragogical Didactics
- Basics of Social Psychology
- Adult Learning
- Foreign language
- One of the following courses: Introduction to Sociology; Psychology of Human Relations at Work; Introduction to Ethics; Counselling Skills.

Semester V

- Adult Education and Work
- System and Organization of Adult Education
- Introduction to the Methodology of Adult Education Researches
- One of the following courses (1): Learning Theories in Adult Education; Policy and Strategy of Adult Education; Roles and Functions of Adult Educator; Methodic of Civic and Intercultural Education; Training Skill Analysis; Basic Adult Education and Key Competencies.
- One of the following courses (2): Consumer Behaviour and Marketing; Theory and Practice of Psychotherapy and Counselling; General Psychopathology; Sociology of Mental Health; Stress at Work.

Semester VI

- Adult Education Planning
- Social Andragogy
- Methods and Techniques of Adult Education Research
- Adult Education Management and Marketing

Semester VII

- Human Resources Development
- Family Andragogy
- Andragogy of Media and Communication
- One of the following courses: Heritology; Museology; Introduction to Cultural Heritage Studies.

Semester VIII

- Vocational adult education
- Leisure Andragogy
- Two of the following courses: Education and Leadership; Learning Organization; Quality in Adult Education; Human Resources - Recruitment and Selection; Education of Elderly; Prison Education; Adult Education and Recreation; On-line Education;
- Internship

and adult educators share the destiny of the teaching profession. The conditions for the employment of adult educators are directly linked to their status in their countries. Typically, in SEE countries, teaching has a low status, and salaries are extremely low. As a consequence of the low salaries, many teachers have a second job.

However, there is a trend for individuals with professional knowledge and competencies in adult education and learning

to find employment in the area of Human Resource Management (HRM) and Human Resource Development (HRD) in large companies. Remuneration there is usually much better than in the public sector.

The comparison with more developed European countries shows that in general terms adult education as a profession faces similar challenges all over Europe. As already mentioned, it

Master studies

Semester I

- Methodology of educational researches
- One of the following courses (1): Curriculum Development and Competencies; Europe as Learning Society and Management of European Projects.
- One of the following courses (2): Management Models in Education; Career Development and Guidance; Human Resource Development.
- One of the following courses (3): Leisure, Communications and Adult Education; Social Policy and Adult Education.
- One of the following courses (4): Environmental Psychology; Cognitive Development; Cultural-Historical Psychology Society and Politics; Psychiatric Sociology.

Semester II

- Research work in one of the chosen areas
- Final paper – MA thesis

Doctoral studies

Semester I

- Theoretical and Methodological Problems in Adult Education Research

- One of the following courses: Knowledge Economy and Adult Education; History of Modern Adult Education (XIX and XX century); Management and Leadership in Adult Education; Education and Communication of Adults; Education and Socialization of Adults; Human Resource Development and Knowledge Management; Adult Development – Implications for Education and Learning.
- Research work
- Preparation of the Doctoral Thesis

Semester II

- One of the following courses: Andragogical Aspects of Organizational Learning; Global Problem and Perspectives and Adult Education; Family Life Education; Trends in Development of Adult Education System; Vocational Education and Training for Adults; Theories of Leisure and Adult Education; Adult Education and Learning Philosophy.
- Research work
- Preparation of the Doctoral Thesis

Semester III

- One of the following courses (1): Knowledge Economy and Adult Education; History of Modern Adult Education (XIX and XX century); Management and Leadership in Adult Education; Education and

Communication of Adults; Education and Socialization of Adults; Human Resource Development and Knowledge Management; Adult Development – Implications for Education and Learning.

- One of the following courses (2): Epistemological Foundations of Social Research Methods; History of Sociological Theories; Political Sociology; Consumers Psychology; Sociology of Culture;
- Research work
- Preparation of the Doctoral Thesis

Semester IV

- One of the following courses: Action Researches; Quantitative researches; Qualitative Researches; Theoretical, Historical and Comparative Researches.
- Development and Presentation of the Research Project
- Research work
- Preparation of the Doctoral Thesis

Semester V

- Research work
- Preparation of the Doctoral Thesis

Semester VI

- Research work
- Preparation of the Doctoral Thesis



Teacher Training and Train-the-Trainers in Adult Education, Project in Serbia

STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

Role and Function of Teacher and Trainer
Teaching Styles in Adult Education
Communication Models and Competencies in Adult Education
Seminar Design
Program Design
Psychology of Adult Learning
Traditional Methods in Adult Education
Active Learning and Interactive Teaching in Adult Education
Visualisation, Presentation, Moderation
External Evaluation
Internal and Self-Evaluation
Group Dynamic and Interaction in the Learning Group
Moderation of Small Groups
Moderation of Big Groups and Organization of Events
Coaching in Adult Education
Management of Adult Education Institutions
Management of Adult Education Projects

2002 - 2003

FIRST PHASE OF THE PROJECT

Training for Adult Educators

Establishing the Expert Group
Development of the Program
Setting up the Team of Multipliers
Training the Trainers / Multipliers
Multiplication Sessions in Different Regions
Evaluation of the Program

2004 - 2007

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Tailor-Made Programs for the Specific Target Groups

Labour Market Councilors
Trainers in Foreign Language Education
Trainers in IT Education
Police Academy and Army Forces
University Professors and Teachers
Judges and Prosecutors
Vocational Schools Teachers
Elementary AE Schools Teachers
Professionals in NGO sectors

is seldom seen as a specific profession with clear distinction from the other similar professions. The reasons are, on one hand, the diversity of the field of adult education which is crosscutting various areas. On the other hand adult education is a young profession – with relative new professional identity and distinctive knowledge and competencies. A further European phenomenon is also the fact, that compared to other professions there are much more part-time employees than full-time employees in the field of adult education. This is one of the reasons why it is not easy to decide about the core competencies for adult education staff – there are numerous projects dealing with this problem both in the EU and SEE countries.

However, there is a significant difference between EU and SEE countries: In spite of the “unclear identity”, the professionals in adult education in developed countries do have many opportunities for education, in-service and pre-service training and further professional development. In the SEE region the need for better provision, training and learning opportunities for adult education staff is recognized, but they are still far from being achieved at satisfactory level. Adult education staff is rarely organized in professional associations, and even if such associations do exist, they do not have enough social power and influence to protect the interests of their professional staff

3. Research, Innovation and Good Practice

3.1. Research Studies in the Field of Adult Learning

In all countries of the SEE region there is a clear idea of the importance of research as one of the most crucial factors for improvements in the ALE field. Still, all national reports claim that there is a lack of a systematic approach to research, as well as the lack of sector approach in research on adult education and learning within countries. In addition, the overall volume of research is limited, which is partly due to the lack of institutions addressing the topic and the lack of available funding. However, in all countries in the region there are notable research studies related directly or indirectly to adult education and learning, focusing on certain aspects of ALE. It is obvious that research landscape in SEE, in spite of all the problems reported (lack of institutions, financial support and personnel) is rather lively and diverse. Some of researches are directly addressing adult education and learning as the topic, while most of them focus on issues not directly related- but their results have also certain relevance.

The main research organizations are not mostly the traditional ones (institutes, universities), but they are spread in several areas, encompassing:

- Public/state budgeted organizations, ministries, agencies, VET-centres - they conduct research on various topics about education, mostly related to policy, strategy and reforms;
- Public and private companies – undertake research mostly for their own needs, for the development of strategies and

projects, often related to an ongoing education and training of the employees or the labour force as;

- Agencies and centres for *public opinion* polls, provide data and surveys not just on *public opinion*, but also on various aspects of everyday live and working life of the population;

Kosovo: Research for Rural Development

Many governments all around the world have expressed their commitment to reduce poverty and hunger and to respond to the needs of their population thorough primary education. The Government of Kosovo is a partner in the global project (based on partnership) *Education for Rural Population*, which is led by FAO as part of the global initiative *International Union against Hunger and for Education for All*. Results of the studies of FAO experts prior to the design of the *Strategy for Rural Development* in Kosovo have served as a base for development of other strategies and activities, which derive from the recommendations of these experts.

Important Studies from Bulgaria

Fundamental studies on Adult Education in Bulgaria are:

- Boyadzhieva, P., et al. (1994): *Education Outside School*;
- Atanasova. M., Petrov P.: *Adult Education*;
- Gyurova, V.: *Andragogy. The Art of Training Adults*.
- Tsakova, Y. (comp.): *Lifelong Learning – Definitions, Dimensions, Strategies*.

- International organizations, programs and projects (World Bank, UNDP, FAO, *dvv international*, GTZ, OSCE and many others) turned to be the main upholders of research on adult education, which is conducted in cooperation with above mentioned organizations and with some state budgeted institutions. These research studies are usually part of certain projects – playing the role as one of the measures or steps in the project development cycles;
- Universities and institutes conduct scientific research and cover the whole range of individual researches, mostly presented at national and international conferences, congresses and seminars;

- NGOs provide an important framework for a number of researches of very diverse nature. They cooperate closely with other partners and supporters.

The pred type of organizations conducting or supporting research varies from country to country. While in Kosovo most of the researches were conducted by or together with the international donor- and other organizations, in Romania and Bulgaria, thanks to their EU membership status, numerous researches have been implemented via projects, within the EU-programs like Grundtvig, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus, FP6. Governments and ministries were more or less involved in the research activities depending on the level of their commitment and engagement in the reform process,

3.1.1. Key Studies in Adult Education

Since there is no systematic approach within the research on adult education and learning, it is difficult to identify the priorities and the key studies, especially because the picture differs considerably from country to country. The main studies could be roughly grouped according to their aim and to the use of results as follows:

- Aiming the development of strategic documents, policy papers, action plans, reforms, the establishment of institutions, improvement of educational practice;

Romania: Special Chapter on ACE

In 2006, the Institute for Education Sciences (ISE) in Bucharest has published the first national official diagnosis on the state of the art of adult education from an LLL perspective. Since 2005, there is a special chapter on ACE in the yearly report regarding the state of the national system of education. This reporting is done against the trends set at European level for achieving the "Lisbon 2010" targets. Also the two progress reports on this issue, published at European level, based on a comparative view against the benchmarking system set up, was an approach with a strong impact at the policy level as well, as the yearly national report on the state of education system in Romania includes now specific data about ALE as well, so the direct link between research and policy being set.

Research in Romania

Examples of research projects carried out by the Romanian Institute for Adult Education (RIAE):

- ACCED (2004-2006) - "Continuing Education Designed for Counsellors Working in Adult Education", G1 project;
- LLL-EDC (2005-2007) - "Lifelong Learning for democratic citizenship in Europe", Socrates-Grundtvig project;
- NetTrain (2005-2007) - "Cooperation and network competencies for key persons in the adult education", G1 project;
- VINEPAC (2006-2008) - "Validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators", Leonardo da Vinci;
- ELDERLY NEVER LONELY (2005-2007) - "Equal Treatment and Human Dignity for Elderly People";
- EAGLE (2006-2008) - "European Approaches to Inter-Generational Lifelong Learning", G1 project;
- INCLUD-ED (2006-2010) - "Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education", FP6 project.

- Improving the educational practices in the area of vocational education and training;;
- Studies prepared by a single institutions or by organizations with the purpose of internal staff' knowledge and education improvement - ministries, public administration, educational institutions, and companies;
- Studies oriented towards investigation of the situation, conditions, needs and other aspects in single areas of ALE, in order to define steps and measures for particular projects;
- Research focused on public opinion or population profile;
- Fundamental and applied studies in research institutions for scientific purposes.

The type of studies and the priority issues are changing in time. In the context of transition in all countries in SEE, research is playing an important role (although to a different extent), often

as a kind of accompanying phenomena or measure in regard to the changing reality, reforms etc.

3.1.2. Major Issues Addressed

There is a whole range of topics addressed by studies and they reflect the variety of forms and types of adult education and learning in the SEE countries. They focus either on some target groups or on the specific area. The most frequent research issues are:

- Adult education and learning surveys, *country reports*, state of the art studies etc. This type of research has been observed as predominant just after the transition, when the countries started with their education and training systems reforms and needed these type of studies showing them the appropriate direction in the reform process (Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo);
- Numerous studies are related to *labour market analysis*, labour force needs, acquisition of knowledge, know-how and competencies, employability chances on the dynamic labour market, employment projections, *vocational education and training*, standardization, certification and national qualifications, and all other areas related to various problems of the world of work. By usually involving several social partners this type of research has been conducted in all countries in the region;

- Education and training of *ethnic minorities*, especially Roma. Almost all countries report on some research on Roma population including following issues: level of education and qualification, access to educational provision, barriers, motivation for learning and so on;
- In addition, there are studies in the broader area of *social inclusion*, including various vulnerable groups like women, rural population, elderly, disabled persons and others;
- Research focused on *specific educational issues* and quality in certain areas - various groups of teachers and their competencies, school curricula, competencies, books, teaching methods and tools, standardization etc.
- Some *specific research topics* could be found as well: analysis of important documents and papers, institutions and regulations; career guidance and counselling; the role and importance of mass media in education etc.

3.1.3. Key Findings and their Impact on Policies and Practice

Because of the heterogeneous nature of the studies, their variety and number, it is not possible to list all the results and findings of the individual research studies. Although they would give precise idea on single areas listed above, they could be just illustrated by several examples of best practices.

The use of results and findings depends on the type of research and its purpose. The surveys, country reports and state of the art studies have been often used by educational authorities in the reform processes. The best practice examples and results of very successful projects are also being used for improving educational practice, but unfortunately unsufficiently. This applies especially to the projects conducted by NGOs - they hardly find a way to transcend into the educational mainstream, lacking dissemination and sustainability. It seems that countries are not making the full use of the potential of the research findings.

More efforts have been evident in the research related to the labour force, vocational education and similar areas. Aiming at bringing the world of work and world of education together, they were intentionally looking for the results that would support this main goal. Indeed, some improvements have been made, although efforts in this direction have to be further intensified.

Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy in Belgrade

There is only one institution, specializing at research in adult learning and education field: the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. With financial support from the Ministry of Science, this institute works on researches about various topics of adult education and learning. These researches are oriented to particular problems of adult learning and education within specific scientific disciplines. Results of the researches are published in professional magazines, mainly in journal "Andragogical studies," books, monographs etc.

3.2. Innovations and Examples of Good Practice

Many projects and researches in SEE countries represent a kind of innovation for each country or region, simply because they brought about some changes in the traditional forms of education for adults. Project approach alone is relatively new, although more and more widespread in the course of the past decade. The changes in all areas initiated changes in adult education and learning in SEE introducing for example competency based programs, interactive methods and workshops in adult education, learner-centered approach in this area. Once again should be highlighted the role of national and international NGOs in conducting research and innovative studies and approaches with partly participation of state actors (ministries, agencies) and scientific institutions (universities, research centers etc.)

Some of the innovative approaches and examples of good practices were already mentioned in other parts of this report in the context of the specific topic.

3.2.1. Examples for mobilizing and involving learners in programme design

There is a specific project that all the countries mention in their reports and consider it both innovative and useful for the promotion, lobbying and advocacy for lifelong learning and adult education - events known under several names: Lifelong Learning Week, Adult Education Festivals, Lifelong Learning Days, Adult Learners' Week. They have been organized in all the countries for several years with the big success in facilitating environments that are conducive to learning and that consider adult learning as a right and a tool for equitable and sustainable development, in mobilizing learners and potential learners, providers, media and policy makers. Some of the countries are also involved in the UNESCO's International Adult Learner's Week and its network of similar events, partners and coordinators.

Lifelong learning festivals are a strong instrument for advocacy, but at the same time they are a good way to involve learners, to foster engagement, active citizenship and self-confidence, both among learners/potential learners and providers.

Adult Education Festivals in Macedonia

Also in Macedonia, Lifelong Learning Festivals have become a tradition. They are organized by the local office of *dvv international*, which introduced a new dimension in the promotion of adult education, which significantly attracted the attention of the education policy makers to this important issue.

Paolo Freire's Literacy Concept Applied in Macedonia

The UNICEF literacy programme for adults represents a successful implementation of the literacy concept of Paolo Freire in Europe. This programme managed to mobilize the population, above all the marginalized groups for improved participation in education and to raise the awareness of the local self-government for this population and its needs.

Adult Education Festivals in Montenegro

For a number of years now, the Centre for Vocational Education (VET Centre), in cooperation with social partners, promotes adult education by organizing "Adult Education Festival"... It represents a very good method of promoting programmes, projects and activities related to adult education and learning, promotion of various paths and ways of learning and acquiring education, promotion of adult participation in learning and education, and promotion of individual achievements in learning and education.

3.2.2. Examples of targeting learners with special educational needs – Second Chance ALE

Although there are many examples for creative ways to reach “the unreachable”, to include marginalized and vulnerable social groups, some of the most creative and most successful approaches in SEE countries have been focused on the Roma education, mainly in the form of Second Chance ALE.

Roma people in the region are a special target group. Probably because of different social, economic and cultural reasons it is particularly difficult for them to enter and re-enter the educational process. The Roma projects are usually targeted at young adults and include literacy, basic education and vocational training. In *Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo* there are for example Roma projects called “*Second chance*” that established many ways to attract and motivate Roma to go to school and remain in the educational process with tailor-made curriculum, attractive teaching methods, flexible organizations of instruction, scholarships etc. “*Second chance*” schooling initiatives not only have proven effective in involving ethnic groups in education, but generated in some countries (*Serbia, Bulgaria*) proposals for changes in legislation and financing.

“Second Chance” Project in Montenegro

In 2007, the Roma Scholarship Foundation, the Employment Agency of Montenegro, the Centre for Vocational Education and *dvv international* started their joint project “*A Second Chance – Social Integration through Adult Literacy and Vocational Training*”. Its intention was providing a literacy programme for illiterate adults in Montenegro, especially domestic Roma (aged 15 and older). The “*Second Chance*” project was funded by the European Union through the European Agency for Reconstruction. The project established a link between the world of education and the world of labour, by combining functional literacy and vocational education for simple occupations. The goal of the project was providing elementary functional literacy and vocational training of Roma in two towns of Montenegro (Podgorica and Nikšić), which have the largest number of Roma population. (See www.isi-mne.org)

3.2.3. The Innovative Character of Examples

The innovative character of the examples could be justified as follows:

- They establish a new, functional relationship between education and training and the labour market;
- They have a systemic character - the results pilot some new solutions for educational problems and test new models, forms, methods. Thus they “imitate” and test the macro phenomena at system level at the micro level;
- They manage to use adult education as an instrument for solving problems in other areas or improving the situation in various fields (poverty reduction, democratization process, social inclusion);
- They contribute significantly to vital changes of certain social groups;
- They are very creative in terms of used model, approaches and/or methodologies.

Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning in Bulgaria

An instrument for recognition of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning was developed for the first time in Bulgaria in 2002 under a Leonardo da Vinci project “*Assessment and Recognition of Work Experiences and Non-formal learning (AR-WEN)*”. The instrument consists of a number of tools for tracking prior achievements of young people acquired through non-formal and informal learning and their recognition. One of the main deliverables under the project is a Methodological and Operational Guide which presents the objectives and content of the instrument, its structure and outlines the guidelines for using the different tools and their application in practice.

4. Adult Literacy

4.1. Definitions of Literacy

In the SEE countries, literacy is considered to have a very strong relationship with elementary education. Very often, the illiterate person is considered to be someone without elementary education. The formal statistics of these countries give two or more detailed categories – ‘illiterate people’, ‘people without any education’ and ‘people without completed elementary education’ (for instance Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro). The result of this approach is that there is apparently lower number of illiterate persons, which decreases the gravity of the problem and it remains unclear; what level of literacy do the individuals possess who do not have elementary education?

It is interesting to compare the conception and data on literacy with those in EU countries. In their national reports it is hard to find the category “completely illiterate” – in the meaning that exists in the SEE statistics. For instance, the German national report says that there is: “a very small number of people in Germany who are totally illiterate. The most common form of illiteracy is functional illiteracy. Moreover, no statistics are available in support of this assumption.” In the SEE countries the quantitative indicators usually prevail over the question of differentiating between levels and forms of literacy while most of the EU countries deal with the issue of “quality of literacy” and its types and forms, e.g. the estimation in the German report that 10 % of the population has “very low level of literacy” and 30 % with “low level of literacy.”

So, the available statistical data on the number of illiterate people for this region fluctuates between 3-4 %, but it is unclear what kind of indicators have been used to measure the illitera-

cy. In most of the reviewed countries standardized methodology and instruments of European or international organizations have not been used (with the exception of *Romania*) and the national census remains the only statistical indicator, although a very unreliable one, for the state of affairs in the area of literacy. Consequently, even if some statistical data about literacy is provided, in almost all national reports it has been analysed from the point of view of functional (il)literacy. It is regarded in a broader context, including more competencies than reading, writing and calculating skills. The classic definitions of literacy are being extended with other competencies and skills, use of knowledge and learning to learn skills – in this way being closer to the conception of functional literacy. This broader understanding applies not just to the definition – the best practice examples from almost all the countries show that many additional life skills and key competencies are being included in programs of literacy, campaigns, projects and measures (for example the project for illiterate mothers from the rural area - in *Macedonia*; The workplace literacy, numeracy and language - project from *Romania* and functional education for adult Roma – project from *Serbia*).

Functional Adult Literacy has been identified as one of the major tools for poverty reduction or eradication (for example by the World bank, UNESCO etc) and functional adult literacy skills are of special importance for the empowerment of rural communities.

National reports show a clear tendency towards acceptance of the conception of functional literacy and towards reforms of the educational system that could enable the broader implementation of this conception beyond single projects. In all countries

Effective practice

Literacy Education for Roma Families in Romania

Promoter Centre Education 2000+: aims to engage Roma children and their families in school based and school related activities and to support them to acquire literacy skills in order to empower them and support their participation in the life of the community.

Effective Practice

“Second Chance” Education in Romania

The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, Centre Education 2000+ and a number of prisons promote programmes and projects meant to give adults the opportunity to learn how to read, write and use numbers and thus complete their primary or secondary education.

there are similar problems when it comes to concrete steps to reduce the numbers of illiterate persons and to establish functional literacy as the standard to be achieved. The following barriers and problems have been identified:

- Lack of common indicators and benchmarks, reliable research instruments and methodology for measuring the level of functional literacy;
- Lack of instructions and organizations that would implement programs of functional literacy and functional basic education of adults (for example: 13 schools for elementary adult education in Serbia, 13 in Macedonia, 3 in Montenegro)
- The existing educational system lacks the programs for functional literacy – the existing literacy programs are either slightly adapted programs for the children or obsolete, not adapted to the real needs of the target groups of adults;
- The staff in existing educational institutions does not have relevant competencies and adequate training for developing functional literacy with adults;
- The prevailing knowledge-based approach in curriculum and evaluation does not comply with the real nature of functional literacy, which is much more outcome oriented;
- Literacy activities are usually not systematic, not co-ordinated, seldom publicly funded and there is no strategic or legislative framework in which to embed their outcomes.

Beside the common problems of the countries in the SEE region regarding the acceptance and implementation of functional literacy, and finding efficient ways for solving the illiteracy problem, the countries also have the following issues in common:

- Very high number of early school leavers and drop-outs as potentially new illiterate groups;
- High discrepancy in literacy level among urban, suburban and rural (for example: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Macedonia);
- Significantly higher number of illiterate women and girls (for example: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo);
- The ethnic groups seem to have lower education and the rate of illiteracy among them is much higher than within the majority group. This especially applies for the Roma population (for example – around 80 % of the Roma is illiterate in Montenegro, 25.6 % illiterate Roma and 36.27 % Roma without completed elementary school in Serbia);

Effective practice

“Functional Basic Adult Education for Roma” in Serbia

One of the examples of effective practice is a project focused on the reform of formal system of primary education of adults, with the objective to make it more flexible and sensitive to adults needs, especially to the needs of target groups: **»Functional basic adult education for Roma«**, a project of the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy, the Ministry of Education of Serbia, the National Roma Council, the Adult Education Society and other partners. The project was funded by the Roma Education Fund, with Governments commitment for co-financing.

The main idea of functional basic education implies simultaneous acquisition of elementary education and the initial vocational instruction and training, that is, obtaining the first qualification. The project aimed to develop both programs for elementary comprehensive education and for vocational training, both leading to recognized certificates, whereby the main principle is to develop target group and labour market oriented curricula.

Further aims of the project are to create and develop a system of functional basic education for adults which will provide them with better access to basic education and represent the second chance for Roma, but even more enable them inclusion into the system of education and above that social inclusion and integration. The project also tries to increase their motivation for acquiring elementary and professional education and to increase employability among Roma. The project thus contributed significantly to poverty reduction and to achieving EFA goals in Serbia. Based on the project's results, the new model of functional basic education for further group of adults was proposed, especially for various marginalized groups, with the new legislative framework and the new mechanisms of financing.

- One of the main providers of literacy programs in the region are NGOs, whose programs mostly have pilot character and which are not sustainable in the long run and whose results, although often very good, have not been really captured and measured by surveys and do not flow into the educational mainstream;

Among the above mentioned problems, the countries of SEE differ from the EU countries particularly when it comes to social groups who are jeopardized by the problem of illiteracy. While in the EU countries the migrants are one of those groups, the SEE countries do not have this kind of problem, because they are usually the country of origin for the emigrants. However, the ethnic composition of South Eastern Europe is very diverse and countries are responding to the needs of internally displaced groups, migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities, especially Roma adults whose educational attainment is typically low.

One of the first steps to improve the literacy level and functional literacy skills for adults would be to face the real extent of the problem. It could be done via better methodology and systematic collection of data, including more data and indicators in the already existing national census on the one hand, and/or developing other measures, instruments, surveys. SEE countries should take more actively part in international surveys like IALS and LAMP.

4.2. Policies and Priorities in the Area of Literacy

National reports from SEE vary when it comes to the policy developments in the area of literacy. The strategic solutions and priorities are different, or put in different order and with different significance:

In *Bulgaria*, for those who did not have completed basic education, with special focus on Roma, strategic papers are developed, a project-approach prevails, international support plays an important role, NGOs are one of the main provider;

In *Kosovo* the focus lies on the special groups: early school leavers, drop-outs, young women and girls and ethnic minorities, especially Roma;

In *Macedonia* there is a big concern about the increased number of illiterate people; focus is put on drop-outs, illiteracy among women and national minorities; A special law on the Education of Adults was established to reduce the number of illiterate people and reduce the difference in male/female literacy levels.

Romania does not face the problem of illiteracy among women, but there are three groups at risk: those who never attended school, early school leavers and those with completed basic education, but are low skilled in either reading, writing or numeracy; In *Romania* the literacy problem is not really recognized as such and tends to be put at the bottom of the political agenda and public interest". However, initiatives in the private sector and civil society are exerting pressure to put literacy training on the public agenda

In *Serbia* special attention is given to the reform of the system of basic education for adults, which would enable various target groups to achieve a high level of functional literacy within the formal system. There are also numerous projects for single target groups (Roma, women);

In *Montenegro*, most illiterate people fall under the category 60 + year old, but also women and people in rural areas are struck by illiteracy;

Effective practice

"Access of Vulnerable Groups to Education" in Macedonia

An excellent example of efficient practice and innovative programme for literacy is the UNICEF programme 'Access of Vulnerable Groups to Education' (2000) in Macedonia, that later became the subproject 'Increasing the Inclusion of Student from Rural Environments' within the project 'Education for All'. The illiterate mothers (Macedonian and Roma) that have children of preschool age were the target group for this project. Original material for teaching literacy skills to adults was created for the needs of this programme by the employees of the Pedagogy Institute of the University 'Sv. Kiril i Metodij' in Skopje, who were also the trainers of the educators that did field work. The originality of the study material was that it was based on the Paulo Freire literacy gaining method, placing the key study motive in the care of illiterate mothers for the development of their children. Learning about the development characteristics of their children and about the preventive measure and health protection for children, the adults acquire their first experiences in the world of literacy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina face the problem of extremely decentralized political structures in the country, having 10 cantons and 13 ministries of education, which makes it almost impossible to get reliable data, based on the same, comparable methodology, thus makes difficult every attempt to have systematic, sustainable, encompassing actions on eradication of illiteracy.

All SEE countries pay a special attention to Roma population in the context of literacy; they are almost all members of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, launched in 2005 seven - (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia). and they all have projects targeting this group. Many Roma have limited future opportunities to break out of poverty due to low human development status and long-standing discrimination, especially because of the low level of literacy, poor access to education, bad health and living conditions and limited opportunities for participating in social and political life. For these reasons literacy programs are instrument for tackling all the other problems of Roma population. As the Roma Education Fund which supported many projects for Roma in South Eastern Europe stated in 2004 "Because of their younger demographic profile, Roma represent the future of many Central and East European states. Countries cannot afford to lose their potential contribution."¹

4.3. Examples of Effective Practice and Innovative Literacy Programmes

Please see the respective sections in the country reports for Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, where outstanding examples are presented.

4.4. Gender Focus in the Literacy Policy

Although educating and empowering women and girls is at the heart of the literacy efforts around the globe, and it will probably remain like this (the data suggest that the gender parity target formulated in the Dakar Framework for Action, MDG etc.) will not be met by 2015 at all levels), for the countries of SEE it does not seem to be a serious problem. It does not imply that the equality in the area of education is already achieved, but it is certainly not one of the priorities. For example, all the countries of the region share to a great extent the problem of predominance of Roma population among the illiterate people. Still, the figures show that in all SEE countries there are more illiterate women than men and the enrolment of girls in the pre-school

and primary education is still lower than among boys. In many projects in the SEE region gender issue is highlighted as the most important aspect of the target group, especially in the literacy and basic education projects for Roma and for population in rural areas. There are some exceptions, like Kosovo, where young women and girls are marked as the most important target group and literacy project are often dealing with them.

4.5. Literate Environment

The national reports do not tackle the problem of building a literate environment through policy and programs. Only Romania lists all the efforts done in the area of culture, mass media etc, that support the literate environment.

Although all the countries have this kind of data, the fact that they do not mention them in this context might be a signal that potentials offered by media, cultural institutions and similar, are first not being recognized as possible channels to support literacy programs and second, are not being fully used for this purpose. Since the researches show that literacy efforts cannot be efficient unless additional efforts are not done to create the environment conducive to sustainability of the results and systematic use of them, it would be necessary to include various partners in order to take advantage of all the opportunities given.

Literate environment

Statistical Data from Romania

Daily newspapers: 145

Non-daily newspapers: 320

Other periodicals: 1608

Number of book and pamphlet titles: 7 874 000 (35 per 1000 persons)

National libraries: 19 035 000 volumes, 77 000 registered users, 738 000 loans to users.

Radio receivers: 7 200 000, this is (319 per 1000 persons; 41 % of the households)

Television sets: 5 250 000 (233 per 1000 inhabitants; 97 % of the households)

PCs per 1000 inhabitants: 80

1) Roma Education Fund: Summary Document, prepared for the Donors' Conference, Paris, December, 2004.

Part IV: Conclusion

1. Main Achievements and Constraints for ALE in South East Europe

As already mentioned at the beginning of the report, the main push factor for the reforms of the adult learning and education policy in the countries in South Eastern Europe, is the transition impact, set against a backdrop of the global knowledge economy. The ongoing transition in all spheres of life means that the demand for new competencies is widespread and not limited to certain sectors or skill levels, although there is a gradual shift to higher skills. Thus, adult learning provision must be able to identify and address skill mismatches, shortages and deficits at all levels and of all types. It must be much more market-oriented.

When looking back to the measures and developments in ALE described in the previous chapter, several conclusions can be drawn:

First of all, although the situation varies greatly in the different countries (e.g. between Croatia and Macedonia which are now closer to the EU Membership and Albania, where the prospect of accession is more distant and the resources available for education are scarce and decreasing), there are a lot of similarities in the ways in which reforms in ALE and LLL have been approached and conducted so far as a result of the EU accession context, as well as the way that donor programmes for the region have been designed and implemented. These similar reform approaches have to do a lot with the similar historical background and common traditions in the countries in SEE. All of the countries in Former Yugoslavia have had a strong adult learning tradition in the past. However, adult learning has declined as the economic and social situation deteriorated and the normal life has been dislocated by war. This is partly valid for the other countries as Bulgaria and Romania and to some extent in Albania, which also had well developed adult education systems during the socialist regimes, not disregarding the differences between the regimes, of course. After the changes in 1989, due to the lack of resources and priority changes in the government's policies, adult learning and education experienced a fast downward trend, which is beginning to improve in the last years, especially due to the EU accession of the newest Member States Bulgaria and Romania.

With regard to the policy framework of Adult Learning and Education, clear priorities and tasks for the future can be identified

in many policy documents - Lifelong Learning and Adult Learning strategies, as well as in the legislation (adopted or in the process of adoption) - Laws on Adult Education and Continuing vocational education and training. Moreover, there have already been some achievements in the fields of governance, decentralization, curriculum development, teacher training and retraining, qualification frameworks, certification systems and higher education. The recent progress linked to the Copenhagen process on modernization of vocational education and training systems and the active dissemination process of its messages (thanks to the ETF but also to the Education Reform Initiative for South East Europe -ERISEE and the EU CARDS programme), some countries, such as Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia, seem to have achieved a good consensus among the main stakeholders and have taken further steps forward in the reform process.

Both types of factors – the *external* ones: support by international donor programmes and EU integration perspectives and the *internal* ones - common traditions, and ongoing reforms in the context of transition regarding education and training, labour market and social policy, have determined a very dynamic development in ALE in all the reviewed countries in SEE. In fact, most of the reforms are often donor driven, not coordinated, scattered and not followed up by proper dissemination strategies and mainstreaming actions. However, thanks to these international programmes, many national, regional and local actors have demonstrated goodwill and commitment for the projects and for further reforms. Furthermore, the programmes fostered the cooperation between the public administration, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, e.g. trade unions, chambers of craft and commerce and employers' associations, and enabled more advocacy actions regarding the different problems which can be approached through ALE – human resource development, poverty eradication, employability and social inclusion, migration, "brain drain" etc. Last, but not least, the growing private sector and the slowly increasing interest of the companies to invest in their human resource development, also in cooperation with the state and the social partners, is a positive trend, which in the long run will raise the awareness of the employers and the individuals of the importance of lifelong learning.

Although a lot has been done and is still being developed in the field of ALE in the countries in SEE, there are some major constraints and weaknesses which should be mentioned as follows:

First, still *low priority* is given to education and training of adults by the governments in all SEE countries. Although there are many signs that reforms are in progress, initiatives are developing and many strategic papers and laws are under scrutiny, general and vocational adult education is not currently a strong priority for governments. There is yet no clear vision on the part of the political decision makers and employers that human capital development is a key requirement for the future. It goes without saying that political issues are predominate in all countries and unfortunately adult education suffers by this fact¹. Public and private investments in education as a whole are very low, and the lack of consideration for efficiency and equity issues in funding has damaging effects in particular for the groups at risk, e.g. young drop-outs, ethnic minorities, especially Roma people, immigrants, people with disabilities, displaced persons etc.

Inappropriate and outdated governance schemes present a further constraint for the development of ALE in the SEE countries. Governance issues have been mentioned above at various stages. It is about the lack of inter-ministerial coordination, coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders in order to ensure flexible links between different educational training systems and between education components and employment. It is decentralization, and partnership at all levels, with particular reference to social partnership. It is also about the dominant role taken by Ministries of Education in on-going reforms, often in isolation and without proper consideration for other partners. It is finally about the internal functioning of the administration, with the lack of sufficient well-qualified staff, the "spoils system" at all hierarchical levels, in relation to any political change in the government, the persistence of bureaucratic approaches, and the lack of an information system and of transparent procedures. The described situation not only allows for arbitrary decisions and generates inefficiency; it makes governments' commitments unreliable and uncontrollable. The external infrastructure of ALE is at least as important as its relevance for ensuring employability and adaptability of the people at the dynamic changing labour market, because having a

well-functioning system with qualified staff, transparent procedures and fair regulations is part of the Copenhagen criteria (concerning the rule of law and the adaptation to the market) for successful EU integration.

Another issue to be highlighted here is the *sustainability issues in the context of fragmented donor assistance*. As discussed above, almost all on-going reforms are supported by EU programmes and other multilateral or bilateral donors. In comparison with the donor assistance given to education and training reforms in Central Europe to the former candidate countries, it seems that a substantially higher number of donors are involved, working with weaker and smaller administrations. Beyond the capacity of countries to absorb these programmes, there is the question of the sustainability of the reforms following donor interventions. It is a question of funding for activities that have been developed through pilot approaches, and which need now to be expanded to the whole country, recognized and included into the system of education, which could ensure the sustainability of the results achieved and of the good

Effective practice

SMILE and History project: cooperation beyond borders

The project SMILE ("SEEding for Multiethnic and Intercultural Learning Experiences") of *dvv international* in South East Europe (SEE) works to build regional cooperation in the fields of intercultural learning and human rights education. Through seminars and workshops, it brings together adult educators from across the SEE countries in order to provide networking opportunities, and to offer tools and ideas for increasing reconciliation and intercultural learning across the region.

The "History project" of *dvv international* in SEE "Remember for the Future" also addresses issues of reconciliation and strengthening democracy in South Eastern Europe by implementing multilateral initiatives in history education which encourage mutual understanding. Its main goals are to create a common space for dialogue as a ground for bringing awareness and secured future, to set a new approach to different history stories in order to provoke a dialogue between people who shared common past, and to create a positive attitude towards the common history roots in South Eastern Europe.

1) These are linked to the anniversary of the Dayton agreements in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the recent proclamation of the independent status of Kosovo, to the already officially recognized independence of Montenegro, to the negotiations for EU accession of Macedonia and Croatia and the prospective opening of such negotiations between Serbia and the EU.

practices It is a question of real appropriation of the contents in order to avoid the risk of empty rhetoric. It is also a question of motivation and empowerment of actors, synergy of their efforts, both on the part of the donor organizations and the government. Finally, it is a question of continuity, consistency and capitalisation. The development of professional networks and partnerships and of appropriate institutions such as VET agencies or Adult Education councils and centers should allow for improved sustainability, though only if this is accompanied by a huge effort in terms of capacity building.

Moreover, there is *insufficient cooperation and exchange between the countries in SEE*, although there are some good practices mostly in the projects conducted by NGOs, many of them supported by international organizations (as the current project Lifelong Learning Advocacy, launched by *dvv international* in the eight countries in the region, the SMILE and the History Project; see text box on p. 56). This is a particularly important issue taking into consideration the relative scarce appropriate human resources in the public administration but

also in the private organizations in these countries. Another problem is the risk that isolated approaches could create barriers between the countries when the development of economies and labour markets already requires that workers be geographically mobile across the whole region, but also within the whole European continent.

Finally, a very important factor still hampering the development of ALE is related to *valuing learning* in general and *creating a learning culture*. In the reviewed SEE countries there is still **a learning-for-all culture** missing, which could motivate (potential) learners and raise overall participation levels by making learning more desirable in terms of active citizenship, personal fulfilment and/or employability. However, some steps have been undertaken in this direction (lifelong learning festivals and other campaigns related to education and training, development of informational, counselling and guidance services, raising awareness of the individual/social/economic benefits of learning, developing learning opportunities by focusing on individual needs and innovative pedagogies, etc.)

2. Perspectives and Recommendations

Picking up the issues we have addressed in the previous chapter, the following perspectives and recommendations for the future development of ALE in the SEE countries can be stressed.

First of all, it is important to create *an enabling environment and point out the main milestones for adult learning policy*. This includes:

- A *unified and coherent government approach* involving all the relevant ministries and other responsible authorities to develop integrated policy, comprehensive strategies and action in adult learning. Changes in governance are necessary to create a framework that empowers stakeholders and enables government to work in partnership with them, creates commitments and mechanism. As concrete steps in this direction could be considered an agreement within government of a timetable for an increased budget to be allocated on education and learning, specifying the share to be spent on adult learning, and definition of the criteria for financing of ALE;
- Acknowledging the stronger role of the *social partners* in the process of HRD, in particular regarding funding of the employee learning, embedding a culture of a continuous workforce training on-the-job, raising participation levels and providing incentives and rewards for learning, contributing to infrastructure developments (e.g. sector skill needs and national qualification frameworks and standards) and continuing training provision.
- *Partnership building and networking* across the government–employment–learning–civil society span at all levels to promote a culture of learning, raise awareness of the value of learning, increase participation in learning of all segments of the population, and develop the training market and lifelong learning infrastructure. Partnership are needed also on a sub national level (e.g. allocation of funds, preparation of financial reports by the NGOs in the field of ALE, identifying specific learning needs and developing appropriate programmes to meet them, etc.);
- *Maximizing public funding and co-funding of adult learning* and establishing a sound financial basis for adult learning, pump-priming developments, optimizing public funding leveraging in additional resources, clustering funds directly to individuals/enterprises, and providing financial incentives and rewards.
- *Enabling profound analysis*: start collecting robust data and conduct systematic adult learning research (e.g. learning methodologies, potential demand for learning, working with 'reluctant' learners, motivation, reducing barriers) in or

der to better identify and analyse the labour market/sector skill trends, and anticipate and respond to the future human resource needs.

- *Capacity building* for ministries, social partners and other stakeholders to engage in effective partnership and ensure continuity, consistency and capitalization of the international experience and expertise acquired through the donor programmes; *Capacity building* is furthermore needed for professionals providing adult education and training, counselling and guidance services, developing research etc.
- *Promoting learning generally* and for specific communities, but simultaneously focusing on the development of the training market and quality improvements.

Furthermore, looking *at policy reform level* and taking into consideration the scarcity of resources related to education and training in all South Eastern European countries, *priority should be given to several policy areas*:

- Modernization of vocational curricula in line with labour market trends: incorporating broader occupational, key competencies and basic foundation skills, advanced vocational training, modularization and methods of recognizing and validating prior learning and experience.
- Developing vocational standards and national qualification frameworks: standards to steer curricula and syllabus design and implementation, national qualification frameworks, and certification awarded by independent qualification bodies.
- Quality assurance embedded in every learning stage, i.e. inputs, process and outputs: licensing, accreditation of institutions and courses, monitoring learning processes and outcomes.
- Systematic monitoring and evaluation of strategies, action plans, programmes, courses: assessment of progress, performance and cost-effectiveness against identified targets and milestones and as a steer for future action.
- Initial and continuing professional development of teachers and trainers of adults, managers, and other professionals, such as researchers and career counsellors. In accordance with the Maastricht Communiqué which underlines the priority of examination of the specific learning needs and changing role of vocational teachers and trainers, and of the possibilities of making their profession more attractive, including continuous updating of their professional skills, more attention has to be paid to promoting innovative pedagogies, making a shift from teaching to learning, and placing the learner at the centre. Here, it is also important to identify all the areas

where adult educators are engaged and to define professional standards for the Adult Educators by building on examples from more advanced EU countries.

- Responsiveness to the needs for enterprises and individuals to develop and adapt skills: expansion of in-company learning, practical learning workshops, learning as part of a cluster activity, training needs analysis, learner-centered methodologies, customized products, short courses, and customised counselling and guidance.
- Developing the training market: expanding and diversifying formal and non-formal training opportunities, creating a level for public and private providers, and developing flexible modes of learning (e-learning, open and distance learning).
- Development of more complex programmes and in parallel support services for disadvantaged groups of the population. For instance, in terms of offering training for the unemployed, one should consider how to increase the numbers of unemployed people who would benefit from this training and to help them go back to work. This means providing sufficient funds for employment agencies to develop active labour market measures and related services. In addition, employment service staff has to be able to fully assess the needs of unemployed people and provide appropriate counselling. These services also need to be available to those who are not registered as unemployed but are without work or who are marginally employed, and, in the longer-term, potentially to all adults who need to use such services.

3. Expectations of Confintea VI

When speaking about strengths and weaknesses of the ALE in the SEE countries, one should also consider the opportunities for further development at global level. First and foremost, the upcoming *CONFINTEA VI* which could have great impact on regional and national level. In the most countries *CONFINTEA VI* is mostly seen as an instrument to influence policy and practice of adult education and learning on national level in terms of:

- International support and promotion for the acceptance of adult education as an investment in countries facing transition,
- Support and assistance for implementation of international instruments and standards for research, follow up and evaluation in adult education,
- Implementation of unique methodology for statistical follow-up and scrutiny of results in adult education,
- Support for development and introduction of quality system, accreditation and certification of informal adult education,
- Expert and financial support for accomplishment of EFA and MDG objectives on national level.
- to identify new financing possibilities for adult education and learning (both on national and international level), taking into consideration efficiency and equity issues,
- to establish benchmarks for internationally applicable/adaptable tools in order to measure progress and to ensure implementation of the governments' commitments,
- to raise the general awareness (in the media, among the policy makers, the people) of the importance of ALE in the dynamically changing world,
- to improve all levels of adult literacy, by focusing on "functional literacy",
- to promote the idea of learning from others and with others, for what the following slogan is the most appropriate "think globally, act locally". The essence of that slogan is expressed in the fact that it is necessary to know different mainstreams and experiences in worldwide movement for education of adults,
- to help consider ALE as a key-mechanism for solving the upcoming issues of our reality: eradication of poverty, environment protection, improving well-being of the population, demographic developments, gender, race and class issues, migration and mobility, globalization (cultural and economic),
- ALE as a fundamental human right, which should serve the personal and professional development, thus contributing to the establishment of an active democratic society, which is indispensable for achieving a learning society in Europe in the context of the Lisbon Strategy.

The main expectations of the SEE countries on *CONFINTEA VI* can be summarized as follows:

- to foster exchange of experiences, sharing of good practices, innovative approaches and ideas not only between governments but also between all type of national and international actors,
- to intensify the flow of information, as well as acquire new information on global and regional developments in adult learning and education,
- to improve communication, cooperation and partnerships more in regional and global networks,
- to increase efforts for professionalization within the ALE field (in terms of professional growth and quality in adult education) in order to make one step further towards becoming a "learning society",
- to ensure the adequate response to the learning needs of all adults through appropriate learning and life skills programs,

CONFINTEA VI could thus generate commitments to adult education and learning and their implementation at all levels, which could be highly supported by intensive regional and international cooperation, related to all particular issues of adult learning.

The goal is better positioning of adult education and learning on the educational landscape of South Eastern Europe, and a new constructive positioning of this region in the process of European integration, as well as in the international exchange on global level. Facing the new global crises in the reshaping world, adult education and learning, both as an aim and a tool, is of utmost importance for the forthcoming challenges.

CIP – Katalogizacija u publikaciji
Nacionalna i univerzitetska biblioteka
Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo

374.71 (4-12)

SOUTH East Europe : regional report on the development and state of art of adult learning and education Confintea VI – 6th international conference on adult education : report prepared in 2008 by a team of international experts, as a part of the Lifelong learning Advocacy Project (LLLA).

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COBISS.BH-ID 17255430