

ERI SEE

EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE
OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE



**Implementation of the ERI SEE
Work Programme 2013
ACTIVITY REPORT**

February 2014

Centre for Education Policy

ERI SEE

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SUMMARY

Key **ERI SEE achievements** in 2013 were:

- enhanced institutional cooperation in vocational education and training in South East Europe
- initiated policy dialog on and cooperation in the field of reducing early school leaving and dropping out of school in South East Europe
- strengthened cooperation between decision makers, researchers, practitioners and key stakeholders in education policy in South East Europe
- supported country initiatives in the domain of mutual policy learning and cooperation in the field of education, particularly through the support to joint TFBHC and ERI SEE clusters of knowledge, as well as interaction with the ERI SEE countries and bodies which lead to identification of additional policy areas of importance for regional cooperation
- increased visibility of ERI SEE in light of the establishing the ERI SEE Secretariat
- supported activities related to development of the SEE 2020 Strategy and its dimension D. Education and Competences

The ERI SEE Interim Secretariat supported the work of the Chair of the Governing Board, the co-chairs and the member countries as asked, in particular through facilitating communication, organisation of the Governing Board meetings and maintenance of the information tools. In addition, the ERI SEE Interim Secretariat provided support to the member countries and the Regional Cooperation Council in the process of development and preparation of the South East Europe 2020 Strategy and its dimension D. Education and Competences which is specifically aimed at developing education sector contribution to the development of regional economies.

ERI SEE achievements were accomplished through the following **activities** in 2013:

1. 17th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body, 20-21 March, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
2. 6th meeting of the South East Europe Regional VET Network (SEEVET-Net), 8-9 July, Belgrade, Serbia
3. Regional conference *Stay@School* The Challenges We Face - Early School Leaving and Drop Out in SEE, 11-12 December, Belgrade, Serbia
4. Permanent cooperation and coordination with RCC and other responsible organisations and bodies in charge for development and preparation of the South East Europe 2020 Strategy
5. Activities under the work programmes of four Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE clusters of knowledge:

5.1. Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET (Romania)

- VET cluster meeting within the Romanian Education Congress, 14-15 June, Bucharest, Romania
- Regional Workshop “Work Based Learning - Success Factors and Challenges”, 5-6 December, Vienna, Austria

5.2. Development of National Qualifications Frameworks (Croatia)

- International Seminar „Regional capacities for quality assurance and their relation to development and implementation of NQFs“, 28 June, Biograd na Moru, Croatia

5.3. Teacher Training (Montenegro)

- Kick-off meeting, 22 February, Podgorica, Montenegro
- 2nd Regional Meeting, 19 September, Podgorica, Montenegro

ERI SEE ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO THE ERI SEE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2013

1. To enhance capacity for independent implementation of policy and reform evaluation and monitoring with an aim to contribute to policy formulation of SEEVET-Net Institutions and continue to support institutional cooperation in vocational education and training in South East Europe

SEEVET-Net Work Programme 2013

6th meeting of SEEVET-Net linked to a one day seminar on validation of non-formal and informal learning in VET

The 6th meeting of the SEEVET-Net was organized in July in Belgrade, Serbia by the Centre for Education Policy/ERI SEE Interim Secretariat, with the support of the Institute for Improvement of Education/Centre for VET and Adult Education of the Republic of Serbia. The event brought together the representatives of the national VET institutions from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia, as well as the representatives of the European Training Foundation (ETF), and the National Tempus office in Serbia. Apart from Bulgaria and Croatia, all other SEEVET-Net members were present at the meeting.

The meeting was organised as a two day event. The first day was dedicated to the SEEVET-Net annual meeting and enhancement of institutional cooperation through discussion on the future regional priorities. The new Chair of the network for the period of 2013-2014 was elected from the VET and Adult Education Centre of Serbia. With regards to the future cooperation and activities for 2014, the SEEVET-Net members identified the following topics to be tackled within the Work Programme for 2014:



- Exchange of experience in implementation of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)
- Development of post-secondary non-tertiary education

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- Development of school culture and school leadership
- Further work on VET graduate tracer studies as the instrument of evidence based policy making
- Introduction in models of Quality Assurance systems in VET and presentations of good practice examples
- Improvement of work-based learning of students in VET
- Licensing of VET teachers

The second day of the meeting was organized in a format of a workshop on validation of prior (including informal and non-formal) learning in VET, as this topic had been identified as a regional priority by the SEEVET-Net members in 2012. The workshop facilitator was Ms. Aušra Fokienė (PhD), expert in validation of prior learning (VPL) methodology, from Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania). Having in mind that the countries from the region are at different stages of introducing a VPL system in VET, the participants were introduced to key terms, purpose and target groups in VPL. Furthermore, the participants had the opportunity to go in depth of VPL methodological issues and main parameters: principles, the specificity of assessment in VPL, VPL structure and main actors. At the end, the VPL models and good practice examples were presented. The participants expressed their thanks to the organizers for delivering this kind of a training workshop.



The Agenda of the meeting is provided in the Annex 1. The meeting materials are available at the [ERI SEE web page](#).

Furthermore, in 2013, ERI SEE continued to support cooperation between SEEVET-Net and Cluster of Knowledge: Modernizing VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET. SEEVET-Net members were actively involved in development of the [Compendium of Good Practices in Improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET](#) as the main cluster output, aimed to facilitate creation of knowledge, support to policy development, and provide inputs for policy in action and policy evaluation. Synergy between these two regional initiatives dealing with VET is essential in order to avoid overlaps.

2. To initiate policy cooperation in the field of reducing early school leaving and dropping out of school in South East Europe and to strengthen cooperation between

decision makers, researchers, practitioners and key stakeholders in education policy in SEE

Regional Seminar on early school leaving and dropping out of school

Centre for Education Policy/ERI SEE Interim Secretariat, organised a regional conference entitled “Stay @ school: The Challenges We Face - Early School Leaving and Drop Out in SEE“ that took place on December 11-12, in Belgrade. The conference gathered around one hundred participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia. The national delegations included decision makers, representatives from ministries and other relevant state institutions, representatives of research community and academia, teachers and school principals, as well as representatives from numerous international organizations (RCC, ETF, and Tempus office in Serbia).



Early school leaving (ESL) and dropping out of school are complex social phenomena and global challenge for governments. All countries face the trend of increased demand for higher educated and skilled labour force. Still there is a lot of room for manoeuvre in setting the measures for decreasing the number of pupils that leave education without qualifications. Efficient prevention of ESL and drop out can enhance economic growth, employment and social development. As such, it stands for one of the greatest educational challenges in the region, and reducing ESL and drop-out is a shared objective of SEE countries. Tackling ESL and drop out require multi-level interventions and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Therefore, the main objectives of the conference were:

- to look into the current 'state-of-play' in different countries with regard to early school leaving and drop out – facts and figures
- to address key challenges and possible solutions
- to facilitate peer-learning among countries on successful models towards combating early school leaving and drop out

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- to discuss on different policy approaches for addressing the early school leaving and drop out issues
- to exchange the information on governmental/local policies/initiatives and measures respond to the identified state of play as well as on projects and initiatives implemented

The participants at the conference concluded that the SEE governments are becoming aware of the problem and sense of urgency for tackling the issue is gradually increasing. However, many SEE countries reported that existing legislation in this area is still fragmented and insufficient, pointing out the lack of comprehensive strategies. While there are some measures in place, they usually refer to intervention or compensation measures, rather than focusing on prevention. Besides, there is no



Regional Conference Stay @ School

strong political commitment followed by adequate financial allocations directed at systematic prevention of early school leaving. Intersectoral cooperation is not strong enough to approach the problem comprehensively from multiple angles and dimensions. Above all, the unique understanding of the issue and its importance yet has to be achieved by all relevant actors on both national and local levels, as well as among actors in various sectors.

The discussions at the conference showed that various definitions of ESL and drop out are present in the regional legislative frameworks. In most cases the ESL and drop out are defined in relation to primary education as the only legally compulsory education level in most countries in the region. Sometimes the definitions of drop out are extended to refer to children that are not included into the education system. Some countries do not tackle ESL as such, but only refer to drop out. Thus, defining the issue is a particular challenge for policy makers as it has implications for setting the indicators, prospective measures and their successful implementation.

Generally, SEE countries still miss sufficient data on the issue, both quantitative and qualitative. Although many state institutions are more or less collecting some type of data, there are different methods in place, and thus limited use of even the available data.

There was the common understanding among conference participants that dropping out from school is a process, rather than a one-time conscious decision and consequently the policies and measures to tackle drop out need to take that into account.

The participants concluded that affirmative and positive approach is needed in all stages of combating early school leaving and dropping out.

The participants identified the following activities as priorities:

- Systematic resolving of issues connected to data and its collection, such as adjustment of definitions, clear set of indicators and variables for measurement, reliable sources of information, unified methodology that allows comparison, providing qualitative data as support to quantitative data, timely collection of data etc.
- Reaching common understanding of the problem and achieving satisfactory level of intersectoral cooperation are essential in successful prevention of ESL and drop out. Only limited results can be expected until all actors in charge start to use the „common language“ and to validate all aspects of the issue, especially its complexity and connection to overall national growth and increased social inclusion.
- Raising awareness at all levels to tackle the variety of factors influencing ESL have to be done through various campaigns that are conducted regularly.
- The conference participants highlighted the necessity of individual approach to every pupil in need. Numbers are illustrating a lot, but not sufficient, information to understand personal situations, reasons for ESL and drop out and to reveal particular obstacles. When deciding about set of measures, it is crucial to provide flexibility for recognition of personal circumstances and to tailor the approach to the very child.



The Agenda of the conference is provided in the Annex 2. The meeting materials are available at the [ERI SEE web page](#).

- 3. To provide support to country initiatives in the domain of mutual policy learning and cooperation in the field of education, particularly through the support to joint TFBHC and ERI SEE clusters of knowledge, as well as interaction with the ERI SEE countries and bodies which lead to identification of additional policy areas of importance for regional cooperation**

Activities under work programmes of 4 knowledge clusters organized by the leading countries: VET (Romania), NQF (Croatia), Evidence based policy making (Serbia), Teacher training (Montenegro)

Centre for Education Policy as the ERI SEE Interim Secretariat was actively involved in the organisation of all the Cluster meetings (VET-Romania, NQF-Croatia, Teacher Training – Montenegro) by giving expert support to the preparation of the meetings' content, as well as in providing the technical organisation support.

Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of knowledge: Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET

[Compendium of Good Practices in Improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET](#) as the envisaged Cluster output is finalized and available at the ERI SEE web page. It has been created with the strong involvement of representatives of SEEVET-Net, as well as representatives of the national ministries of education. The Centre for Education Policy, acting as the ERI SEE Interim Secretariat, has had the important role in facilitating this collaboration and has successfully ensured synergy between the activities of the SEEVET-Net and the VET cluster. As the coordinator of the Cluster, on behalf of the Romanian Ministry of National Education, the Romanian National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development gave invaluable guidance in the process of Compendium preparation. The Compendium of good practices contains eight chapters and presents the main output of two years of common work and cooperation. The good practice examples were integrated in one of the chapters reflecting the areas of interventions to make VET more attractive and develop the VET quality approach. Relevant examples were selected at national level by each participating country, while Romania representatives collected the examples and the information needed. The essence of identifying and sharing good practices in the Compendium is to learn from others and to re-use knowledge, and the biggest benefit might come out of the well-developed processes based on accumulated experience. This compendium shows the wide scope of education reforms in VET currently being implemented in South Eastern Europe.

In order to continue the successful work in the previous two years, the Romanian VET Centre with the support of ERI SEE Secretariat organized the VET cluster meeting as part of the Romanian Education Congress, on 14-15 June in Bucharest. Next to the representatives of the VET Cluster, the representatives of the Working Group 4 of Priority Area 9 “Invest in people and skills” of EU Strategy

on Danube Region attended the meeting. The representatives of these two regional initiatives discussed potential cooperation in the area of VET. The overall objective - to support the regional cooperation in VET based on the specific needs of both VET systems and providers in view of mutual learning, regional exchange of experience and good practice and for nurturing the national VET reforms - was agreed by the participants. The participants agreed that the specific objectives will refer to knowledge transfer on the national developments on promoting VET excellence, developing policy learning practices and strengthening the exchange of information and good practice as well as supporting intra-country and inter-country co-operation on VET on the specific VET thematic areas/topics agreed by the participants.

Increasing the quality of VET provision has been a key area for the exchange of experience between the Cluster on VET and the network of SEEVET institutions, both under the ERI SEE umbrella. With regard to high quality VET provision there is an increasing focus on the role of work based learning in this context. Most countries with the strong and attractive VET sector have elements of work-based learning included in their VET provision. The forms of work based learning and their organisational frameworks differ widely, from short internships as part of a predominately school based VET provision to work based learning in the framework of a dual system. The VET system in Austria combines both school based VET with shorter forms of work based learning and VET pathways in a dual system. Taking the broad range of possibilities within Austrian VET as examples, the KulturKontakt Austria organized the Regional Workshop “Work Based Learning - Success Factors and Challenges”, on 5-6 December, in Vienna. The workshop gathered the representatives of Cluster on VET as well as the network of SEEVET institutions and provided an opportunity to discuss the framework conditions, success factors and challenges of the various formats of work-based learning with peers from SEE and Austria and to identify priorities in the expansion and qualitative enhancement of work-based learning.

Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge: Development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia with the support of ERI SEE Secretariat organized the International Seminar „Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training in the context of NQFs, EQF and QF-EHEA -promoting trust between the sectors?“ in Biograd na Moru, Croatia, on 27th June. Separately, the next day, on June 28th, the Seminar „Regional capacities for quality assurance and their relation to development and implementation of NQFs“ of the NQF Cluster of Knowledge was held at the same place.

The international seminar has been organised in order to further explore some of the Conclusions from the EU Irish Presidency Conference on Quality Assurance in Qualifications Frameworks (Dublin, March, 2013). The main aim of the Seminar was to facilitate the dialogue between the main actors in higher education (HE) and vocational education and training (VET), underpinning the issue of exchange and mutual learning about different and similar quality assurance (QA)

arrangements in order to promote their greater compatibility. The purpose of the Seminar was two-fold. Firstly, it addressed the issue of QA systems in HE and VET in relation to the development and implementation of national qualifications frameworks reflecting and responding to the EQF and QF-EHEA. Secondly, the Seminar tackled the issue of different QA arrangements for facilitating recognition of qualifications, both in HE and VET.

The purpose of the NQF Cluster Seminar was to address the issue of QA systems in relation to the national qualifications frameworks. In particular, Seminar aimed to review regional QA arrangements, with respect to vocational (VET) and higher education (HE) and to contribute to efforts of understanding how these respond to development and implementation of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). The Seminar was divided into 3 thematic sessions covering issues related to existing national arrangements for quality assurance in HE, national arrangements for quality assurance in VET, and effects of development and implementation of NQFs on quality assurance in education. The seminar was concluded with discussion on future regional activities in this area. The participants expressed positive opinion about the Cluster's work and Croatian chairing of the cluster and suggested that regional cooperation in the area of NQF development is essential to the countries. Both events were attended by the representatives of all ERI SEE member countries.

The materials from both events are available at the [ERI SEE web page](#).

Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge: Teacher Training

A focus on teacher professional formation and growth has been an increasing policy imperative for countries across the world, as well as international bodies such as the European Union (Key data on education in Europe, Eurydice 2012, and Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications, EU 2005) and OECD (2005). In the same time, strengthening the quality of teachers has been a constant focus of education policies in SEE countries. A number of initiatives have been launched and implemented for the development of standards of teacher competences, systems for career advancement and systems for teacher support and assessment. Within many national and international programmes aimed to strengthen the competences of teachers in pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education, a number of training events have been organised to increase the capacities of teachers in the application of contemporary models of teaching and learning. As a result of these initiatives, the use of contemporary forms of teaching and learning by teachers has been gaining momentum, but the impression remains that it is still insufficient. The creation of a new teaching and learning culture appears to be in progress, but the dynamics of its coming to life have been rather slow.

Having that in mind, and in the line with the need for the voice of the region to be heard, at the end of 2012, the TFBHC launched a call for collection of successful ongoing national or regional projects and initiatives whose goals are in accordance with four strategic objectives identified in the

“Education and Training 2020”. A number of project descriptions from the region were compiled and after the consultations with the regional partners from the ERI SEE member countries, it was decided to pursue the topic of Teacher Training and Teacher Professionalism.

Montenegro and its Centre for Vocational Education expressed interest in taking over the lead of this Cluster around the topic of Teacher Training.

The kick-off meeting for the initiation of this new regional Cluster was successfully organized on 22 February in Podgorica, Montenegro, by the Montenegrin VET Centre with the support of TFBHC and ERI SEE. This meeting gathered the participants from Austria, Albania, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia, who are dealing with the questions of Teacher Training in their professional life. The aim of the meeting was to allow regional stakeholders to outline the current state of play in their countries in the field of teacher in-service and pre-service training, and to discuss and identify challenges on the cross national level. Based on the discussion, the participants had an opportunity to discuss possible joint, regional actions in this area.

Numerous issues were raised and discussed, and it was evident that this topic draws a huge amount of attention in the whole of the region. It was concluded that continuous improvement in education is not an option but a necessity. Teachers are central to that process; not simply as implementers of externally-devised approaches, but as the key players in ensuring relevant and high-quality education for all young people. In that sense, the activities in this area should contribute to the strengthening of teachers’ profession in SEE countries as well as to support bridging gaps between teacher education policies and practice. In addition, it was concluded that, if possible, conduction of a baseline study in this field would be desirable.

All meeting materials are available at the [ERI SEE web page](#).

A follow up meeting was successfully organized on 19th September in Podgorica, Montenegro by the Montenegrin VET Centre with the support of TFBHC and ERI SEE. The meeting has been a further step in the already initiated peer learning process on Teacher Training.

The meeting theme has focused on Development of teacher professionalism in communities of practice, as one of the regional priority topics identified by the country representatives at the previous event. The participants discussed the essential role that teachers have in the education system and have agreed that many new challenges have been put in front of the teachers with the ongoing education reforms in the region. To support the teachers in performing their essential roles a wide range of opportunities for their continuing professional development, as well as a healthy and learning-friendly climate in schools where they teach and learn need to be provided to them.

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The participants raised a series of questions to be addressed in future regional cooperation in the area of teacher training:

- Creating school climate enabling collaborative learning among teachers
- School Leadership
- The role of school management in support to teachers work
- How can a state help establish well-performing QPD systems?
- How to motivate teachers to participate in QPD?
- How to use teachers associations in QPD?
- Instructional leadership that facilitates school-based QPD
- How to support and network teachers – development of the regional list of priority area in which teachers need to be supported and establishment of sustainable ways of teachers' networking
- Evaluation of the impact of teacher trainings
- Training needs analyses in in-service teacher training in SEE region

All meeting materials are available at the [ERI SEE web page](#).

4. To increase visibility of ERI SEE in light of the establishing the ERI SEE Secretariat

Governing Board Meetings

The 17th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body was held on March 20-21, in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, gathering the members of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body or their replacements, representatives of international organisations and the ERI SEE Interim Secretariat. The meeting, organised jointly by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the Centre for Education Policy (CEP), was attended by 7 out of 10 members of the Governing Board.

The aim of the meeting was to summarise achievements in 2012 as well as to discuss future perspectives of cooperation within the ERI SEE. The meeting also provided the opportunity to discuss the role of the ERI SEE in view of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training and other regional initiatives. More precisely, the meeting addressed the following: information on the Host Country Agreement on Establishment of the ERI SEE Secretariat in the Republic of Serbia and discussion about further steps; update on the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training; update on RCC activities; update on Task Force activities; update on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region; presentation of the ERI SEE progress reports for 2012; presentation of the ERI SEE Budget and Work Programme for 2013; update on activities in 2012 and plans for 2013 under the work programmes of the three joint TFBHC and ERI SEE clusters of knowledge. Some of the important documents related to the functioning of the ERI SEE Governing Board (such as the Rules of procedure of ERI SEE Governing Board) were adopted at the meeting.

Governing Board adopted the ERI SEE progress reports for 2012 as well as the ERI SEE Budget and Work Programme for 2013 (both prepared by the Centre for Education Policy).

The second day of the meeting provided an opportunity for the ERI SEE Governing Board to acknowledge the creation of the South East Europe 2020 Strategy - a regional response to Europe 2020, as well as to discuss and define possible role of the ERI SEE in the process of development and implementation of this important strategic document. Regional Cooperation Council is responsible for the coordination and preparation of the SEE 2020 Strategy with the SEE governments. However, for each dimension of the strategy a regional organisation will be nominated to coordinate the process of consultation, data gathering and data analysis with the respective Ministries during the process of development of the Strategy. By championing the development of the SEE 2020 Strategy, RCC hopes to provide an anchor for regional reform and shift regional cooperation towards more coherent, result-oriented approaches. ERI SEE Governing Board strongly supported RCC's efforts in the process of development of the SEE 2020 Strategy and expressed readiness of the member countries to contribute to development and implementation of the Strategy in the area of education. ERI SEE Governing Board also expressed interest and readiness to coordinate future activities related to education dimension of the Strategy. This dimension is specifically aimed at developing education sector contribution to the development of regional economies.

The Agenda of the meeting is provided in the Annex 3.

Networking with ERI SEE institutional partners and facilitation of information exchange

Most of the CEP's networking activities in 2013 were related to the coordination of the process of development of the education dimension of the SEE 2020 Strategy, upon conclusions from the ERI SEE Governing Board meeting. In this respect, the representatives of CEP participated in the Workshop on Education in SEE 2020 Strategy, held in Sarajevo, on 16 April, organised by the RCC, as well as the Second Meeting of the South East Europe 2020 Coordination Board held in Sarajevo, on 18 July.

In addition to that representatives of CEP as the ERI SEE Interim Secretariat took part in the workshop "Regional cooperation structures – avenues for Kosovo's participation", that was held in November 2013 in Pristina, organized by the Kosovar Civil Society Foundation in partnership with British Council. The workshop was an opportunity to gather Kosovo* civil servants and media who deal with this topic to discuss the lessons learned of regional cooperation in SEE, the RCC Strategy SEE 2020 as well as regional initiatives active in various fields, education being one of them. In this

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respect ERI SEE initiative was presented within the part of the workshop dedicated to developments and challenges in the field of reforming education in the WB region.

The representatives of CEP as the ERI SEE Interim Secretariat took part in the FRAME¹ project kick off regional event on 17-18 September in Danilovgrad, organized by the ETF. The main purpose of the conference was to share first experience and lessons learnt from Montenegro and Serbia on the Foresight exercise. The conference addressed the following areas of discussion: Review of the pilot experience and the experience from Turkey; Foresight: from methodology to context to implementation; Links with on-going regional activities.

In order to reach its widely set objectives of supporting education-related reforms in South East Europe, ERI SEE facilitated information exchange through regular updates of the ERI SEE website. The library of documents of ERI SEE thematic areas: (Lifelong learning; Qualifications frameworks; Quality and equity in education; Knowledge triangle: education, research and innovation), as well as the information about ERI SEE and partners' activities were regularly updated in 2013. Moreover, the library per each ERI SEE member country was updated with the most relevant documents on education and training.

Handing over activities

Since the last ERI SEE Governing Board meeting, held in Sarajevo in March 2013, there has been noteworthy progress with regards to the establishment of the ERI SEE Secretariat in the Republic of Serbia. According to the information available to the ERI SEE Secretariat, the Host Country Agreement (HCA) as the legal base for the establishment of the Secretariat has been signed by the following countries: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova and Montenegro. The fully functional Secretariat should be established in the Republic of Serbia immediately after the finalisation of the signing procedure. In addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, the Regional Cooperation Council is actively involved in the procedure of establishing Secretariat, by giving their full support in facilitating the process of HCA signing among the ERI SEE countries.

¹ The FRAME Initiative has been developed in response to a number of key policy drives at European and regional level, in particular the EU2020 Strategy for Growth and Jobs, Education and Training 2020 and the South-East Europe Strategy 2020 towards Convergence and Growth. A common challenge is a call for more forward-looking, innovative and evidence-based approaches to policy development in the area of skills and human resources development. FRAME helps all the Enlargement countries to meet this challenge through the use of foresight methodologies for the design and implementation of a national Skills Vision for 2020 with joint priorities and a common roadmap involving multiple stakeholders. FRAME will also assist each country to review institutional arrangements to implement the vision and agree on monitoring mechanisms throughout its implementation. The results of FRAME will feed into IPA II 2014-20 programming. The project was launched in Montenegro and Serbia in early 2013 and will continue in the other countries of the region in the second half of 2013.

In addition, at the 17th ERI SEE Governing Board meeting, held in Sarajevo in March 2013, the Governing Board decided to prolong the mandate of Centre for Education Policy as ERI SEE interim Secretariat until a Director of the ERI SEE Secretariat is appointed and all obligations are transferred to the newly established Secretariat.

As stated in the ERI SEE Work Programme for 2013 and the condition under which CEP will host the ERI SEE Secretariat, the transformation process and the founding of the ERI SEE Secretariat in Serbia is not in any way CEP's responsibility.

Nevertheless, CEP conducts all the ERI SEE planned work and continues to support all the activities, including the ones regarding the establishment of the ERI SEE Secretariat, as long as they are in the CEP's scope of work.

Education, ERI SEE and the SEE 2020 Strategy

The year 2013 was marked by an enhanced institutional cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council within the framework of developing a regional growth strategy titled "[SEE 2020 – Jobs and Prosperity in European Perspective](#)".

The Strategy lays out the region's growth and development priorities in five pillars – (i) integrated, (ii) smart, (iii) sustainable, and (iv) inclusive growth, underpinned by (v) good governance. The adoption of the SEE 2020 Vision was followed during 2012 by the agreement on 11 regional headline targets backed up by 77 national targets to guide the common regional action towards the end of the decade.

In addition to adopting these targets, the SEEIC Ministerial meeting held on November 9, 2012 in Tirana also mandated the SEEIC and the RCC to coordinate the development of the SEE 2020 Strategy and present it for adoption during 2013. This mandate was reconfirmed by the Formal meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the South East Europe Cooperation Process held on 30 May 2013 in Ohrid which adopted the RCC Strategy and Work Programme for 2014 – 2016², with the main task of coordinating the development and implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy.

Following these developments and in line with the targets agreed by the SEEIC Ministerial meeting held in Tirana in November 2012, under each pillar several content *dimensions* with key *programme* points were defined with an aim of achieving the defined targets. For each dimension a regional organisation was nominated to coordinate the process of consultation, data gathering and data analysis with the respective Ministries during the process of development of the Strategy and

² RCC Strategy and Work Programme for 2014 – 2016 are available at <http://www.rcc.int/pages/0/29/strategy-and-work-programme-2011-2013>

will continue to coordinate the dimension activities in the phase of implementation and monitoring of the Strategy in the upcoming period. Under the pillar II. Smart growth dimension D. Education and Competences is specifically aimed at developing education sector contribution to the development of regional economies. At the 17th ERI SEE Governing Board meeting held in Sarajevo, on 20-21 March, ERI SEE has been appointed as the coordinator of the dimension D. Education and Competences of the pillar II. Smart Growth.

Following the Governing Board meeting in Sarajevo the members of the Governing Board were consulted through a workshop on Education in SEE 2020 Strategy organised by RCC in Sarajevo on 16 April, and through an online voting system regarding the dimensions programme main targets.

In close cooperation with Mr Mladen Dragasevic, the RCC responsible for the coordination of the Smart Growth pillar, the ERI SEE Secretariat distributed the draft versions of the SEE Strategy to which the members of the Governing Board were invited to provide expert feedback in particular to the dimension D. Education and Competences, but also to other parts of the Strategy.

Furthermore, to ensure effective coordination of the overall Strategy a coordination board was formed in Vienna on the 23rd May 2013. The first meeting of the SEE 2020 Coordination Board was held in Vienna on 23 May 2013. The meeting was organized with the objective of formally establishing the Coordination Board for the SEE 2020 Strategy, composed of the representatives of the RCC and the Dimension coordinators. This opportunity was also used to exchange information between the RCC and the Dimension coordinators on the current state of play and the level of progress achieved in the development of the SEE 2020 and individual inputs per each dimension. ERI SEE Secretariat took part in the coordination board meeting organized by RCC in Sarajevo on 18 July and provided a comprehensive report from the meeting to the ERI SEE Governing Board.

Finally, the Strategy was adopted by the Ministers in charge of the Economy of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia in Sarajevo in November 2013. Following the adoption of the Strategy the regional coordinators will continue to play an important part in coordinating regional activities aimed at the implementation of the Strategy in close cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council.

The ERI SEE Secretariat would like to take the opportunity to emphasize the support provided by the Regional Cooperation Council, in particular Mr Mladen Dragasevic and Mr Sanjin Arifagic, in the process of developing the ERI SEE capacity to take up the coordination role in the development and implementation phase of the Strategy.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

6th Meeting of the South East Europe Regional VET Network (SEEVET-Net)

8-9 July, 2013

Belgrade, Serbia

Venue: Hotel Moskva, Conference Room "Terazije"

Monday, 8 July, 2013

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 13:00 - 14:00 | Lunch |
| 14:00 - 14:30 | Meeting opening and welcomes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Gordana Mitrović, Head of the Center for Vocational and Adult Education of the Republic of Serbia➤ Zekjir Zekjiri, Chair of the SEEVET-Net |
| 14:30 - 14:45 | Presentation of SEEVET-Net achievements in 2012/2013 and remaining activities in 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Jasminka Čekić Marković, Director, Centre for Education Policy/ERI SEE Interim Secretariat |
| 14:45 - 15:00 | Election of a new Chair of the SEEVET-Net (one year mandate) |
| 15:00 - 15:15 | Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of knowledge: Modernizing VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET
Update on activities and plans for 2013
Dana Stroie, Head of training programmes and quality assurance, National Centre for TVET Development, Romania |
| 15:15 - 15:30 | Coffee break |
| 15:30 - 16:15 | SEEVET-Net Work Programme for 2014
Discussion on the topics to be included in the Work Programme for 2014
Proposition on future cooperation and activities |
| 20:00 | Official Dinner |

Tuesday, 9 July, 2013

10:00 - 17:00

Workshop on validation of non-formal and informal learning: experience, processes and perspectives

Facilitator: Aušra Fokienė, expert in VPL methodology, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Morning session

Lecture and discussions:

VPL – (new) service in VET?

Contextual discussion

Main methodological issues

Coffee break

Lecture and discussions:

Building VPL system at a national, institutional levels

Main parameters of the VPL in VET: principles, the specificity of assessment in VPL;

VPL structure and main actors

Examples of VPL practice

Lunch break

Afternoon session

Modelling the VPL methodology basing on national context: discussions and teamwork

Coffee break

Modelling the VPL methodology basing on national context: teamwork and concluding remarks

Regional conference

Stay@School

The Challenges We Face - Early School Leaving and Drop Out in SEE

11-12 December 2013, Belgrade, Serbia

Venue: Tulip Inn Putnik Belgrade, Conference Room "Nevski II", Palmira Toljatija 9

Agenda

Wednesday, 11 December, 2013

- 09:30 – 10:00 Registration
- 10:00 – 10:30 **Meeting opening and welcomes by:**
- Muhedin Fijuljanin, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia
 - Jasminka Čekić Marković, Centre for Education Policy/ERI SEE interim Secretariat
- 10:30 – 11:30 **Introductory speeches**
South East Europe 2020 Strategy
- Nand Shani, Regional Cooperation Council
- Early school leaving and dropping out of school as a global challenge**
- Mariano Fernández Enguita, Complutense University of Madrid
- 11:30 – 12:00 Coffee break
- 12:00 – 13:00 **Early school leaving and dropping out of school from EU perspective**
- Boris Jokić, Institute for Social Research in Zagreb
- Is There Anything Specific about Early School Leaving in SEE? A Review of Research and Policy**
- Ivana Jugović, Institute for Social Research in Zagreb
- 13:00 – 13:30 Discussion and Q&A
- 13:30 – 14:30 Lunch
- 14:30 – 15:30 **Expert panel I**
State of play in SEE – fact, figures and more...
- Bardhyl Musai, Center for Democratic Education, Albania
 - Dukagjin Pupovci, Kosova Education Center (KEC), Kosovo³
 - Nada Stoimenova, Ministry of Education and Science, Macedonia
- 15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

³ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

- 16:00 – 17:00 **Expert panel II**
State of play in SEE – fact, figures and more...
- Olga Temnicova, Theoretical Lyceum “L. Deleanu”, Moldova
 - Nataša Vlahović, Bureau for Education Services, Montenegro
 - Biljana Stojanović, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Serbia

17:00 – 17:30 Discussion and Q&A

20:00 Official dinner

Thursday, 12 December, 2013

- 10:00 – 11:30 **Practices towards reducing ESL and drop-out**
- Mary Gordon, National Educational Psychological Service, Ireland
 - Corian Messing, The Netherlands Youth Institute

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee break

- 12:00 – 13:30 **Expert panel III**
Learning from each other - concrete projects and initiatives
- Jana Krautberger, Reduction of Early School Leaving of Young People (RESLEA), School Centre Velenje, Slovenia
 - Mihai Iacob, Institute of the Educational Sciences, Romania
 - Suzana Pecakovska, Foundation Open Society-Macedonia
 - Jelena Zajeganović – Jakovljević, UNICEF Serbia

13:30 – 14:00 Concluding remarks & Presentation from General Rapporteur

- Žaklina Veselinović, Centre for Education Policy/ERI SEE interim Secretariat
- 14:00 – 15:00 Lunch

The 17th meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body

20-21 March 2013, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
 Venue: Hotel Radon Plaza, Red Conference Hall, 13th floor

Wednesday, 20 March, 2013

09:30 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:30	Welcome by the Host and Opening Remarks Ms. Jelica Minić, Head of Expert Pool, Regional Cooperation Council Mr. Radivoje Mitrović, State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Republic of Serbia
10:30 – 11:00	Information on the Host Country Agreement on Establishment of the ERI SEE Secretariat in the Republic of Serbia - tentative timetable and the next steps Mr. Pavle Janković, Head of Department for Regional Initiatives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia
11:00 – 11:10	Adoption of Agenda Adoption of Minutes of the 16th Meeting of the ERI SEES Governing Board and Consultative Body
11:10 – 11:30	Presentation of the Rules of procedure of ERI SEE Governing Board-discussion on possible amendments and adoption Presentation by the Centre for Education Policy
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 – 12:10	The Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training Ms. Helen Skikos, Policy Officer, DG for Education and Culture, European Commission
12:10 – 12:20	Update on the RCC novelties Mr. Mladen Dragašević, Head of Building Human Capital Unit, RCC
12:20 – 12:30	Update on the RCC Task Force Fostering Building Human Capital novelties Mr. Anton Dobart, TFBHC Co-Chair
12:30 – 12:40	Update on the EUSDR novelties Mr. Jürgen Schick, EUSDR PA 9 coordinator
12:40 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 14:50	ERI SEE Activity Report for 2012 ERI SEE Financial Report for 2012 Presentation by the Centre for Education Policy
14:50 – 15:40	Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Clusters of Knowledge

Update on activities in 2012 and plans for 2013:

Romania: Modernizing VET system - improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET

Ms. Zoica Vladut, Deputy Director, National Centre for TVET Development, Romania

Croatia: Development of National Qualifications Frameworks

Ms. Loredana Maravić, Head of Department for International Cooperation, European Affairs and Lifelong Learning, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Republic of Croatia

Serbia: Evidence Based Policy Making in Education

Ms. Jelena Marković, Education and Human Capital Development Coordinator, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Republic of Serbia

15:40 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 16:30	ERI SEE Work Programme for 2013 ERI SEE Budget for 2013 Presentation by the Centre for Education Policy
16:30 – 16:45	Prolongation of mandate of CEP as ERI SEE Secretariat interim Structure
16:45 – 17:15	Report of the Working Group established at the 16th Meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body
17:15 – 17:30	Summary and Closing Remarks

Thursday, 21 March, 2013

9:30 – 9:50	South East Europe 2020 Presentation by the RCC Secretariat
9:50 – 10:10	Smart Growth pillar of the SEE 2020 – Conclusions of the first Workshop - potential role of ERI SEE Presentation by the RCC Secretariat
10:10 - 11:00	Discussion
11:00 - 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 - 12:45	Continuation of discussion
12:45 - 13:00	Conclusions
13:00	Lunch