



**Working Table I Meeting  
Sofia, 17 May 2005**

PROGRESS REPORT

**EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE (ERI SEE)**

The Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) is a tool for supporting implementation of education reforms in the region, taking into account both country-specific needs and challenges, and present trends in the development of the envisaged European Area of Education. ERI SEE thus serves as a communication and capacity building interface between ongoing education reforms at national level and European trends and developments in order to promote common European standards in education. The mission and objectives of the Initiative rest on the **Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministers of Education and Higher Education of South Eastern Europe** signed in Nicosia, Cyprus, in 2003. Ministers from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, PISG Kosovo/UNMIK, Romania and Serbia, the Task Force Education and Youth/Enhanced Graz Process and the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe signed the Memorandum of demonstrating their commitment to the ERI SEE' s reform agenda.

Institutionalisation Processes

During this reporting period the Task Force Education and Youth continued its focus on the Educational Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe.

The main bodies of the Initiative – the Governing Board and the Consultative Body – **were set-up and held their constitutive meetings in November 2004** in Zagreb, Croatia. The Task Force Education and Youth is Co-Chair of the ERI SEE Governing Board, the Director of Working Table I of the Stability Pact is represented in the Consultative Body of the Initiative. For the composition of both, the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body see <http://www.erisee.org>

Upon completion of the respective election procedure, at its session in Zagreb the Governing Board appointed Ms. Luminita Matei from Romania as the first Executive Director of the ERI SEE Secretariat. Meanwhile the establishment of the regional office in Zagreb has entered its final stage and is expected to be completed within the present quarter.

The infrastructure and programme of ERI SEE are funded by the Austrian Development Agency, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of Croatia, Bureau CROSS – The Netherlands, the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Research – Romania and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Working Program 2005

The Task Force Education and Youth has actively participated in the design and drafting of the **Working Program 2005** of the Initiative, and is closely co-operating with ERI SEE on its

implementation. In 2005 ERI SEE focuses on **capacity building measures for SEE in key areas of educational reform** with a special focus on ongoing and future EU integration processes and with respect to the shared goals and objectives of the “Education and Training 2010”. Hence in 2005 the Secretariat is organizing a series of thematic seminars and conferences.

The first workshop (May 6-8 in Bucharest) concentrates on **relevant aspects of the participation in the new Integrated Lifelong Learning (LLL) Community programmes**. It draws from the active contributions of EU Member states, but also from the huge wealth of experience available in the region from the candidate countries - in particular Bulgaria and Romania which are participating in the current Community programmes in the field of education and training (Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci), and which will also actively contribute to the event. The workshop is intended to support preparation for participation in the Community Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme (Western Balkan countries are envisaged to be eligible to the new ILLP from 2007 on).

**In June 2005** ERI SEE is organising jointly with the European University Association a **seminar on higher education**, following the Bergen conference within the Bologna framework. Participants coming from the Ministries of Education and Higher Education and universities from the region together with international experts will debate on the challenges facing the implementation of the objectives set by the Ministers of Education in the context of the Bologna Process.

For the **the second half of 2005** the Governing Board of ERI SEE identified the need for an expert workshop on **investment in education**. Deficits in funding and know-how for securing funding are considered a topic of high priority at each level of education in the region.

Additional information on the ERI SEE Working Program 2005 can be found under [www.erisee.org](http://www.erisee.org)

## **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON “GOVERNANCE AND EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION”**

In 2003, working group co-ordinators and Task Force members agreed that the focus of the Task Force’s future work will **shift from project level to a long-term systemic approach**. In this sense one of the priority tasks of the TFEY/EGP became transferring the ownership for regional co-operation to South Eastern Europe. The process of shifting ownership to the region is being carried out within the **Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe** (see above)

In the path of these shift in approach and six years after its initiation, from January 27 to January 29 2005 the TFEY/EGP organized an international conference under the title “Governance and Education for Sustainable Development and European Integration”. The conference provided a forum for structured discussions among institutional actors from the EU education and training fields and their counterparts from the South Eastern European region, as well as from international organisations.

Apart from evaluating the work of the TFEY in the past years the conference reviewed education in a wider context, namely in terms of the role of governance in education for economic development, social cohesion, innovation, culture and diversity. The topics in focus at the conference were **educational co-operation and reforms** in the course of

social, economic and political development in SEE in view of both **the EU integration of the region and the strategies for achieving the Lisbon goals on European level.**

The conference recommendations underline the perspective of enriching education reforms in Europe through the notion of “Learning Society” as key to economic prosperity. **Highest priority** has been ascribed to **continuing education reforms** in South Eastern Europe and the European Union which would foster **ownership, assumed responsibilities, empowerment, self-awareness, creativity and motivation for continuing learning.**

In this sense the recommendations from Graz stressed also the importance of the mission of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe for supporting education reform efforts through regional cooperation and information exchange at both regional and European levels. The need for quick, effective and feasible steps towards fulfilling the overall objectives of ERI SEE, also through a series of capacity building measures for the region was underlined as well. Additional information on the conference can be found at [http://www.see-educoop.net/graz\\_conference2005/index.html](http://www.see-educoop.net/graz_conference2005/index.html)

On the occasion of the conference the work of the Task Force Education and Youth has been evaluated by two external institutions. In the 2005 the University of Ljubljana has published a report on the contribution of the Task Force Education and Youth/Enhanced Graz Process to the Development of Education in Southeast Europe: [http://www.see-educoop.net/graz\\_2003/downloads/05\\_zgaga.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/graz_2003/downloads/05_zgaga.pdf) ) At the same time another study on the Enhanced Graz Process was published by the Graduate Institute of International Studies Geneva focussing on its contribution to peace education in SEE: [http://www.see-educoop.net/graz\\_2003/downloads/05\\_schwarz.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/graz_2003/downloads/05_schwarz.pdf).

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

The Task Force Education and Youth also put emphasis on the continuation of its efforts to strengthen cross table co-operation in the framework of the Stability Pact, especially in the field of parliamentary co-operation. It also participated in a workshop on “Training for Employability”, which was organised under Working Table II jointly with ETF and OECD and held in April 21-22, 2005 in Thessaloniki, Greece.

WT I GK 02/05/2005