

**Sarajevo Conference on Higher Education
Building Capacity for Change in the Western Balkans**

The Education Reform Initiative of
South Eastern Europe – a regional cooperation
platform

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Content:

1. About ERI SEE
2. ERI SEE supported regional cooperation in the priority areas
 - Lifelong Learning
 - European Qualifications Framework and national qualifications frameworks
 - Quality and Equity in Education
 - The “Knowledge Triangle”: education, research and innovation
3. Challenges ahead

Commitment to regional cooperation - policy level

Nicosia 2003 – Memorandum of Understanding on
strengthening regional co-operation

initiated by the Ministries of Education and Higher
Education in SEE and the Task Force Education and Youth

May 2007 - **Istanbul Memorandum of Understanding**
between the Ministers responsible for education, science
and research in SEE, the Stability Pact and the Task
Force Education and Youth

Membership and context

European Integration
Process

Lisbon strategy

Education and
Training 2010
ET 2020

Bologna
Process

Copenhagen
Process



Education for All
Millenium Development
Goals

SEECIP

The Initiative

2004 - Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) initiated as a regional platform for co-operation in the education area & interface between on-going national reforms in SEE and current trends and developments in the education sector at EU level

Governing Board: ERI SEE members and Austria as Co-chair of the TFBHC of the RCC

Consultative Body: RCC, donor countries Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and relevant international organisations, institutions and associations: CoE, ETF, EUA and OECD.

Croatia hosts the ERI SEE **Secretariat** since 2004.

In 2006 the ERI SEE Agency started its work.



- Lifelong Learning
- European Qualification Framework and national qualifications frameworks in SEE
- Quality Education and Equity in Education
- The “Knowledge Triangle” – education, research and innovation

Lifelong Learning: activities 2004-2009

- Exchange of information on the development of strategies for LLL
- Capacity building for:
 - Opening and running the Community programme of LLL
 - Preparation of ToR and project fiches for IPA and ENPI funds
- Established the SEE network of VET agencies and institutions
- ERI SEE Internet forum on LLL
- Provision of information on LLL on the ERI SEE website



EQF and national qualification frameworks in SEE: activities 2005 - 2009

- Special sessions of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body on the developments at European and national level
- Expert meetings for exchange of information and sharing good practice between SEE countries on the development of NQFs
- ERI SEE forum on qualifications frameworks
- Provision of information on EQF and NQFs on the website

Quality education and equity in education: activities 2005-2009

- Regional networking of experts in assessment and evaluation
- Regional events on:
 - Equity in education – challenges for SEE
 - Education Policies for Inclusion in SEE
 - Teacher training for inclusive education in socially and culturally diversified societies
 - Investing efficiently in education
 - Use of ICT in education and training
 - EDC/HRE Networking in SEE
- Internet forum on quality assurance
- Provision of relevant information on ERI SEE website

The “knowledge triangle”: education, research and innovation – activities 2005-2009

- Regional Follow-up meetings after the Bologna Process Ministerial Conferences
- Support to cooperation with different actors of the Bologna Process
- Quality assurance and accreditation: round tables, peer-learning visits
- **Follow-up to the Bucharest conference:** joint regional workshop of the ERI SEE and KulturKontakt Austria on evidence based policy making (to take place in Vienna, Austria)
- ERI SEE forum on the Bologna Process
- Relevant information on the “knowledge triangle” provided on the ERI SEE web site

**Peer-learning and networking visit of SEE experts to the Public Accreditation
Agency for Higher Education of Albania (PAAHE)**

June 2009
Tirana, Albania

- 5 participants: 2 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2 from Kosovo¹ and 1 from the RCC; numerous Albanian experts from PAAHE, the Albanian Accreditation Council, Albanian HE institutions;
- Activities:
 - Exchange of information about the existing systems in the participating ERI SEE members;
 - On-site information on the work of the Agency;
 - First external evaluation meeting to a private HE institution;
 - Internal QA system discussed at a private non-profit, cross-border HEI;
 - Meeting with the Albanian Accreditation Council;
 - Final meeting of external evaluation for accreditation purposes of a potential HEI;
 - Meeting for evaluation of the peer-learning visit and recommendations.

¹ Under the UN Security Council Resolution 1244

Peer-learning and networking visit of SEE experts to the Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education of Albania (PAAHE)

- Conclusions:
 - Highly appreciated. Format to be recommended for future activities;
 - Visit and meetings with all relevant players in the system;
 - On-site visits particularly important;
 - Rich documentation provided to the participants;
 - European networking and internationalisation of QA bodies is crucial for SEE.
- Recommendations
 - Continuation of peer-learning, with more SEE countries on board;
 - Small groups preferable;
 - Regional events on different QA in HE topics;
 - ERI SEE to support round-visits around the SEE region;
 - SEE QA bodies and institutions to welcome involvement of international experts in different procedures and working processes;
 - Strengthened bilateral and regional cooperation of SEE QA in HE structures;
 - Joint QA projects;
 - RCC will support regional cooperation;
 - On QA issues ERI SEE Agency to communicate directly with the QA institutions as legal entities.

The “knowledge triangle”: education, research and innovation – challenges

Firmly address **brain drain** by creation of favorable environment, international cooperation and networking with the diaspora.

Higher education sector:

- Opening-up towards the wider society, cooperation with the business and other sectors
- **Synergy** among the Bologna actors, actions and activities
- Organisational challenges:
 - Enforcement of the recently adopted national legislations on **integrated universities**
 - **Diversification of HE** supported by strong quality assurance systems
- **ECTS and curricula reform**: enabling smooth selection of modules from different faculties within the same university, more profound curricula reforms, increased student mobility
- Application of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education
- Mutual cooperation and development of joint programmes leading to joint degrees
- Increased role of universities in LLL
- Student involvement
- Increased internationalisation of educational and scientific cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.

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