

Novi Sad Initiative - Building Capacity for Change in WB Region

MILESTONES OF THE NS INITIATIVE

'Novi Sad Initiative' is a process addressing the hardest issue in higher education reform in the region which has not been included in Bologna agenda so far, the reform of higher education institutions. The main idea behind the initiative is to involve all parties in the region with responsibility in higher education and provide assistance from international organizations and individual EU and Regional experts, and to build on examples of best practice from other parts of Europe.

The initiative evolved from the European experts' seminar on institutional reform which took place in Novi Sad on October 28-30, 2005, now known as the "Novi Sad Initiative". After the follow up Dubrovnik Conference on Higher Education, two years later, the Novi Sad Initiative became a process with a series of biannual conferences and a steering group envisaged to monitor the process between the events.

There are two major phases in the realisation of the Novi Sad Initiative:

Preliminary phase (2005 - 2010) includes organisation of three conferences on higher education institutional reform (Novi Sad, Dubrovnik and Sarajevo) and organisation of two Summer Schools (Dubrovnik and London):

Milestones for 2005– 2010:

1. Three conferences on higher education institutional reform
 - Novi Sad October 28-30, 2005,
 - Dubrovnik October 29-31, 2007
 - Sarajevo in October 29-31 2009

The forthcoming Sarajevo Conference on Higher Education 2009 is the third in the series of biannual conferences on higher education sustaining the 'Novi Sad Initiative'. It aims to support reform of Higher Education institutions in the Western Balkan region and to explore the possibility for collective convergence of the region's Universities to EHEA and EU policy in higher education

2. Summer Schools on emerging issues in higher education for higher education policy maker and administrators from the WB region – first to take place in in London in July and second in Dubrovnik, in September, 2010. They will be announced during the Sarajevo Conference.

Mature phase (2011 - 2015) will include drafting of the report on state-of-the-art of the higher education macro structure and policy in WB region, drafting and adopting of Regional higher education Policy Paper, implementation of Policy Paper through several task-force groups along with a series of training courses for the current and future staff of institutions with responsibility in higher education, establishment of Training and

Documentation Centre in Novi Sad and organisation of last three biannual conferences (Tirana, Skopje and Novi Sad).

Milestones for 2011– 2015:

3. A comprehensive report on state-of-the-art of the HE structure and policy in WB region will be drafted by regional and EU experts to include:

- strengthening university management and governance
- concept of integrated university and central services
- professionalisation of the public management and administration of higher education through the creation of competent intermediary bodies
- autonomy and accountability concern/reflect the changing relationship between the university and the state
- funding of higher education institutions
- amending higher education legislation
- regional cooperation through European programmes supporting higher education

4. A monitoring expert's group will be established to provide a continuous evaluation of the reform process in the region between two biannual conferences.

5. Summer Schools on emerging issues in higher education for higher education policy maker and administrators from the WB region - to take place in London in July and Dubrovnik, in September, 2011.

6. Fourth Conference in the series of biannual conferences on higher education institutional reform will take place in Tirana on 29-31 October 2011 where the report on state-of-the-art of the HE structure and policy in WB region will be presented. It is expected that the highest representatives of all higher education institutions from the Region will take part.

9. A Joint Regional Policy paper for a collective convergence with EU higher education policy will be drafted at the [first meeting of the Strategic Working Group in Dublin](#) at the beginning of 2012 (representatives of all HE public authorities from WB and EU plus individual experts). This document will then widely discussed in the region and adopted on the [second meeting of Strategic Working Group in Stockholm](#), at the end of 2012.

: . A series of seminars and training courses (training of trainers) will be launched in the Region - during 2012. This 'train-the-trainer' packages which will enable attendees to cascade the knowledge acquired from the courses, to all levels within local institutions with responsibility in higher education. Trained policy makers and administrators will then work directly with the staff employed at their higher education authorities and universities, structured to meet specific needs. Feedback report from attendees will also be drafted in order to be able to adjust training course for the future use. It is expected that European Training Foundation will involved at this stage.

; . Summer Schools on emerging issues in higher education for higher education policy maker and administrators from the WB region - to take place in London, in July, and Dubrovnik in September 2012..

12. Two task force groups will be established at the beginning of 2013:

- Academic Task Force Group from the representatives of the higher education authorities from the region to implement joint regional policy paper and develop recommendations and guidelines for drafting procedures, documents, amendments of laws etc ...

- Students Task Force Group will try to recommend minimum standards in students participation in governing bodies of higher education institutions, students organising and to prepare standards for university legal frameworks for student services..

The results of the Task Force Groups will be discussed on the [third meeting of the Strategic Working Group in Vienna](#) in September 2013.

13. Summer Schools on emerging issues in higher education for higher education policy maker and administrators from the WB region - to take place in Dubrovnik in September and London, in July, 2013.

12. The fifth Conference in the series of biannual conferences on higher education institutional reform will take place in Skopje on 29-31 October 2013, where the results of Task Force Groups will be announced.

13. Training and Documentation Centre will be established in Novi Sad to ensure sustainability of projects activities and serve as meeting points for higher education policy makers and administrators in the Region during 2014..

14. Fifth Summer School on emerging issues in higher education for higher education policy maker and administrators from the WB region - to take place in Dubrovnik, from 26 September to 2 October, 2014.

15. Closing Conference in the series of biannual conferences on higher education institutional reform will take place in Novi Sad on 29-31 October 2015, ten years after the beginning of Novi Sad Initiative, to summarise the outcomes of Novi Sad Initiative.