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Strikes and demagogy

The year starts with the strikes of teachers, is it something new in the South-eastern Europe? For sure you are going to say no. Last year also started with salary issues and strikes. Has anything changed between the authorities and teachers? No, the matters have become even worse. South-eastern authorities send bad messages, teachers reply with strikes. Problems of education pile up. It is obvious that the question of these relations is further complicated by politicians who do not regard education as their strategy orientation; because it would not bring short term political gains.

Subsequently, the question is whether there is any sense to strike for a minor increase that anyway would not improve the status of school teachers? Everybody is fully aware beforehand that there could not be any real fulfilment of teachers' requests, when one looks at the budget it is obvious that the state minimally invests in the education, regarded by the most politicians as an expense and a labyrinth to endangering their own carriers.

What would happen if teachers started negotiating with government about some strategic questions, for example about a percentage for education stipulated by the budget? What would happen if teachers said: we want average percentage of budget stipulated by the EU?! How would the government authorities act and how would they respond to these claims on various levels from cantons, entities or a state?

I am sure that the day is coming when teachers would put forward strategic instead of tactical claims, and then we shall witness the anger of the government. They would say that the claims were unreasonable and unreal, therefore could not have been asked for in the poor countries. However, up to that moment there would not be any status improvement to teachers. This will be the only way of education advancement being one of pillars of these states searching for their own future.

Therefore, in the coming years when the propaganda is made to enter Europe means not only the obligation of people but of the authorities, too. Europe has its own standards, obligatory both for those who rule and those who should execute them. Our task becomes to persuade politicians to turn from proclaiming Europe to undertaking steps, to separate more money for education and stop this agony or aspiration for unchangeable education, as it is to come very soon as it had been done in Slovenia or Croatia. When reform and modernisation are in question at present politicians are the breakers! It should be openly announced.

Contents

ISSUE TOPIC

First steps towards creating civic responsibility.....4

INTERVIEW

Joint problems.....6

SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Half way.....9

Polemics to the acceptance of varieties.....11

School books without monopoly cap.....12

VOCTIONAL EDUCATION

Europeans-educated, employed and personally satisfied

SOUTHEAST EUROPE

The state should stimulate the students.....16

Employers, what is it that you need?.....18

How can make it to Europe with illiterate people?.....19

A confirmation at the test of maturity.....20

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

(Un)fair game?.....22

SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Unwanted Guests.....24

World Linguistic Legacy under a Magnifying Glass.....25

Contributions to Pedagogical-Adult-Education Practice at the University.....26

DOCUMENT

Jan Figel, "Strengthening Education in Europe".....27

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First steps towards creating

There hardly could exist a state that in various ways has not organised programs for democratic and civic education, either in school or out of it, significantly supported by NGO's. In spite of the national curriculum variety relating to the status, scope, the name of the subject and choice of topics, it could be stated that the contents of program for democracy and civic education are mostly integrated into subjects dealing with issues of society and moral. As noted by Prof. Radmila Gosevic, ex-chief of Department for democratization of education, Ministry of Education and Sports Republic of Serbia, education for democratisation and civil society is considered to be a key element of education reforms in all countries.

-Every society recognises the importance of acquiring knowledge, trades and capabilities necessary to act in relation to the values of a democratic society, for infants, young and adults. Consequently, the education for democracy and civil society does not only mean formal educational system, but to be within informal education, too- as pointed out by Prof. Gosevic.

-School systems of European countries, have most common programs for acquiring knowledge on democracy, democracy values and principles, human and minority rights, programs transferring knowledge on democracy procedures and various modes of participation in public life, programs directed to improve communication and non-violent conflict resolution directed to application of teaching methods to induce critical and un-dogmatic opinion. Everybody agrees that education system has a key role in the process of democratisation of society and the mentioned programs should contribute the affirmation of difference, respect the freedom of choice, equality, ruling of law, nourishing dignity and self-respect, development of self-aware and responsible citizens..., these principles are more or less indicated in all civil education study books in ex-Yugoslavia countries. Although there has not been sufficient research to confirm the effects of these programs in practice, doubtless the introduction of the democracy education contributes to some changes in pupils, particularly in sense of different communication with their surrounding. The researchers point out that it might be too early to talk about the influence of the subject to form "active and responsible members of social community", so the education for democ-

Education for democracy and civil society are still far away from realization

racy might in advance determine some modes of social, economy and culture life within our region, but the expectations should be realistic, in relation to conflicts in past decade. Expected effects within particular states are also to be seen in future, as the experts of the issue point out that wider changes are needed both in the teaching of some subjects and change of the complete atmosphere at school. Developing awareness on human rights and freedom does not guarantee that the pupils will be ready to apply it in practice, as well as recognition of terms and responsibility and democratic procedures does not mean practice of democratic values, too.

Civil education as optional subject was introduced to schools for the first time in

Serbia in autumn 2001, to the first grade of elementary and secondary schools,

only a year later the subject won the status of obligatory optional, as well as religious education. Up to now, nine programs have been executed

in five grades of elementary and four grades of secondary schools. In spite of the

foreign experts evaluation after the first year of the program proposing that the

civil education should not be alternative to religious education, education

authority in Serbia up to present has not given up the concept. Prof. Radmila Gosovic thinks that the recom-

mendation was not accepted, as "complete reform of education was not continued creating possibility, space and way for all pupils to achieve knowledge and skills necessary for active and responsible behaviour in a civil society."

In 2002 NGO Civil initiatives were included in creation of curriculum to optional subject civil education. Contents we developed had concept to enable pupils' freedom of opinion and attitudes to improve communication skills, the development of critical facilities to argue and support one's own attitudes and responsibility for decision taking and acting. Execution of curriculum is based upon use of interactive and research methods of work-says Mr. Vladimir Jovanovic of Civil initiatives. Reminding that civil education curriculum has been developing from year to year, but teachers, parents and pupils did not have complete information on content and general goal of the subject. Our conversationalist points out that they mainly made their choice on the basis of their personal affinity or what they believed was the goal of the subject. Mr. Jovanovic thinks that it is still too early to evaluate results and effects of civil education, but it might be said that pupils liked the attractive, untypical manner of work, relation of their teacher with them, and respect and appreciation. As quoted, the greatest changes to pupils are visible in their social growth.

-It is very hard to consider the advantages of introducing this subject where it has happened and when it was immediately put into position of a subject as an alternative to Religious education.

However, as one of the basic civil rights is right to religion, deciding on Civil or Religious education in Serbia becomes political question, imposing questions and deepening divisions in modern or conser-

Project Citizen

Civil initiatives, in collaboration with Ministry of Education and Sports Republic of Serbia, since 2002 has carried out "Project Citizen", as a pilot program of civil education to grade 6 in 150 elementary schools.

"Project Citizen" promotes capable and responsible participation of pupils, their parents and teachers in local community life. Through the programme the pupils were introduced with their rights and obligations, as well as democratic principles and processes. In the course of a school year the pupils in classes worked together to detect problems of their local community, to collect and evaluate data on a chosen issue, to propose measures for its resolution, then to develop a relevant plan for the execution of the task. The execution of the program in school practice was constantly monitored and adapted to experience of teachers and needs of pupils. Relevant to the goal of activating school and local community to detect and resolve problems in their environment, we can say that the project was a success in raising awareness of real conditions within the community, perception of its problems, and primary activation to find solutions. Pupils who participated in the program are more aware of the need to be well informed and personally engaged. They evaluated team work higher than their mates who did not participate in this project. "Project Citizen" program was adapted for the school years of 2005 and 2006 and it was introduced as optional subject-says Mr. Vladimir Jovanovic, from Civil Initiatives.

ting civic responsibility

vative Serbia. This is also caused by the unclear image relating to the purpose of civil education, non-existence of curriculum to teachers and developed contents. The content of civil education has been dealing with themes of non-violent communication, recognition of both personal needs and other person's needs. Although needed, this was insufficient to develop an active and responsible civil society. In addition, a cultural civil background was not sufficiently developed. Apart from difficulties of introducing civil education subject, it can be definitely stated that the gains for pupils attending the lectures of the subject are great. They talk about different relations with their teachers, enjoy freedom of open discussion, ask questions, express their opinions, having the feeling that they may have influence and change things, they are included and they are being asked-claims Mr. Jovanovic

-Similar conclusions were reached in Civil initiatives as concluded by research on the manners and effects of religious education and civil education in schools in Serbia, executed by Institute for Pedagogy research in Beograd, in cooperation with Centre for empirical research of religion in Novi Sad in the year of 2003. The research covered parents of grade one elementary and secondary schools, at the end of first school year where these two subjects were optional. Generally speaking, civil education is mainly well accepted both by parents and pupils, mostly due to manner of work (as quoted by 64 parents and 53 pupils), and also by those whose choice was between the two "unavoidable evils". When we talk about predictable positive effects of the subjects, it could be concluded that they are mainly reflected in the plan of personal individual development. At present it is unrealistic to talk about the development of personal social competence.

-As the most common reason to opt for the subject, parents quoted their expected influence on personality and future positive changes in child's behaviour, while secondary school pupils relied on their personal interests and preferences or opinions of their same age friends. Even 57 percent of parents claimed that civil education met their expectations, and 47 percent of secondary school pupils thought the same. 64 percent of parents and 53 percent of pupils preferred the way of work during the civil education lessons. For younger children most appropriate way of learning was through games, movement, drawing; while for secondary school pupils it was crucial that they

could express their thoughts and that civil education teachers appreciated that. What the pupils disliked was related to some issues of the subject and the organisation of some lectures. For 84 percent of parents and 72 percent of secondary school pupils the curriculum was acceptable, while 18 percent of pupils thought that the curriculum was overloaded. The statistics show that pupils seem to be more critical than their parents: although for 90 percent of pupils lectures are understandable and for two thirds are interesting, nearly a third of those polled considered them to be unnecessary. It should be also noted that approximately a third of the secondary school pupils considered that civil education represented an additional obligation and burden, they had to study more while they were not interested in the issue.

Everybody agrees that the educational system has crucial role in the process of democratisation of society and above mentioned programs should contribute affirmation of the variety, recognise freedom of choice, appreciation of equality, legislative rule, nourishing dignity and self-respect, development of self-aware and responsible citizens..., these principles more or less are declared in all civil education study books in ex-Yugoslavia states

-Answering the question of what were the changes that had happened influenced by civil education, parents said that their children became more communicative, expressed their opinions and feelings in more open way, resolved conflicts with greater success with their mates and accepted obligations to higher degree than they used to.. The pupils thought that they were more willing to listen to others, that they became more tolerant, and had more respect for themselves and others. Half of the group claimed that they did not notice any changes. In the questionnaire they were asked to estimate the degree to which this subject had contributed to meeting their desired goals. The most common answers were that civil education contributed to better understanding of their own rights and obligations, civil education helped them to become better people.

-This school year, for the first time civil education was introduced in Montenegro to 20 elementary schools commencing the school year with new, reformed curriculum. The subject is compulsory for all pupils of grade six and seven, but could be found on the list of

optional subjects for grade eight and nine, as well as in all four grades of high school. In the course of teaching the subject, the attention was paid for children to adopt relevant knowledge about society, family, school, local community, some other social issues, to support the development of democratic attitudes and values and develop relevant social skills. Through this subject we want children to develop general values whereupon the complete educational system and society is based. Moreover, we want to develop civil education as principle of education, as style of behaviour and work, in such a way as to contribute to the improvement of the total democratic climate within the school - as quoted by Ms. Vidosava Kascelan from Institute for education of Montenegro.

-Prior to commencement of civil edu-

cation teaching, some remarks could be heard that both school management and teachers entered unprepared for the project, that some teachers did not have enough civil sensibility for the issues and also that some were teaching civil education only to complement their work norm. It was mentioned through media that some parents did obstruct the subject, considering civil education as a kind of political pressure. The teachers denied those allegations.

-As teachers initially educated for the subject did not exist, Ms. Vida Kascelan remarked that it was open for all teachers, but the priority was with social science, arts and language teachers. All teachers have to pass very serious training, done by Centre for civil education in cooperation with Institute for education, supported by OESC.

-Initial index showed that the subject was well accepted and children were very satisfied, that the training brought new spirit to schools. Primarily, introductory themes (family and school) were very close, training was organised to respect a child's experience, that children themselves recognised problems and tried to

resolve them. Judging by first impressions, we might expect the pupils to choose civil education as an optional subject in the period to come. The impressions were that pupils felt better as result of this subject training, mainly due to different kind of approach. They felt to be more respected, listened to and their opinions respected, consequently both teachers and parents were more satisfied. This should be the model that total education aspires to. Ms. Kascelan pointed out.

-Ms. Daliborka Uljarevic, executive director to Centre for Civil education, said that it is early to give complete evaluation of the popularity and acceptance of this subject adding that "public opinion of Montenegro has not been sufficiently informed about civil education concept, which should be changed in future".

-It is obvious that teachers are becoming more confident and give lectures on the subject with pleasure, compared with the initial fear at the beginning of the school year. Parents are without fear that this is to be an additional burden to already voluminous and demanding curriculum. The impression is that the children have already accepted different ways of working, and also current topics-said Ms. Daliborka Uljarevic.

-Ministry of Education of Montenegro did not introduce religious education as alternative subject to civil education, as estimated by our conversationalist "good, in relation not only to multi-cultural and multi-confessional structure of population, but to determination to create a civil society which cannot stand such divisions".

-In the Sarajevo canton civil education-democracy and human rights was introduced as a compulsory subject for the first time in the school year of 2001/2002. Pupils of elementary schools grade eight, in vocational secondary schools grade three, attend civil education two times a week. In the Sarajevo canton, this subject can be taught by teachers with relevant professional training, that is Certificate issued by CIVITAS.

-In schools of the Sarajevo canton, during the lessons of the subject, the issues on authority, responsibility, justice and privacy are discussed. By using interactive methods, pupils participate in the process of obtaining knowledge and skills, evaluation and self-evaluation. All these issues are very interesting to them. They like to participate with their own examples from their local surrounding, they are especially interested in research and propose measures of public policy. Pupils have already significantly succeeded to organise various activities, the best platform for their activity is the Pupil's Council. Evaluation was done at school by relevant teachers through dialogues with pupils and questionnaires. It was also performed organised by the Education-Pedagogy Institute of the Sarajevo canton, application to objective type tasks. The

subject was accepted by pupils and was very popular. Both teachers and parents were active participants in the process of democratisation through parents' meetings, council of parents, and other activities. During parents' meetings and council of teachers meetings, parents and teachers were very often presented research projects which had been done by pupils. School competitions of classes and sections, municipalities, cantons and B&H Federation were held. Activities to mark extraordinary dates (Child's Right Day, etc.) as well as various open or closed type manifestations to the local community (round tables, debates, exhibitions of pupils' works, ..)-says Ms. Sabaheta Zvizdic, assistant to Ministry of Education, Sarajevo canton.

- In Croatia in 1999 National program for Human rights education was completed, executed as a wide ranging social project covering all fields of education from pre-school training to secondary schools, education of adults, high education and education through media. Thus, modern national, European and international standards were achieved in relation to training for peace, human rights, democracy, identity nourishing, intercultural understanding, humanitarian rights research and feasible development, as quoted by the Institute for Education, Republic of Croatia.

- The evaluation research done in 2002 showed that the curriculum was executed in all schools, but its intensity and ways varied. Schools, in relation to their capabilities and needs, based upon National curriculum, developed various modes of human rights education, being recognisable and special within the school system of Croatia. Some schools had more that 20 projects and out-of-curriculum activities relating to human rights education, civil democracy education, intercultural education, education for peace and non-violent conflict resolution, and ecology education.

- In the Institute for Education it is pointed out that even now changes are visible due to influence of integration of education in human rights and democratic civilians. It is an issue on making difference between education process and planning, programming, and concentrate to active and interactive pedagogy involvement of a pupil in the process learning at school by research, thinking, making conclusions, reciprocal and mutual learning. New methods of learning and studying are more often used leading to active learning and inclusion of pupils. The essence of learning and teaching moves from reproductive memory to quality of obtaining essential knowledge and development of abstract skills - thinking, making conclusion, skills to separate essential from unessential...

Radmila Pejic



Ambassador Douglas Davidson, mission chief of OSCE, B&H

No matter the gloomy opinion I used to have relating to education, Bosnia and Herzegovina made incredible shifts in one single decade rising from the war devastated country and placing foundations to functional democracy system. It is far away from perfect, but there is not such a thing in any country. If it would overcome its painful ethnic divisions and direct towards democracy founded more to individual than national rights, I feel that it might soon find its deserved place within greater Europe family of democracy.

Joint problems

■ **OEBS Mission to B&H was engaged with the education reform since 2002. Could you cite related areas and define changes that have happened up to now?**

Definite changes came to a number of areas. At the moment I should cite some that I would like to point out.

Interim agreement on fulfilment of special needs and rights of child-returns was an important step to create a non-discriminatory system of education. We carried it out by providing conditions for both refugees and displaced children, their returning to communities they used to live before the war, to provide free school attendance.

All ministers of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed about the directives to writers and publishers of history study books, two most sensitive and jealously kept areas in all three curricula of the country, that they will, if agreed, I hope they will, finally offer their pupils basic understanding of history and geography of all three constitutive nations, as well as to the national minorities of the country. In the similar way we also witness the prominent development relating to the action plan of educational needs of the Roma and members of other national minorities in B & H, too. Here are some other signed documents, but, to cite Shakespeare, "they were more often appearing as violation than sticking to the rule". I am relating herewith to the State general law for elementary and secondary education, which was unanimously passed in the State parliament more than three years ago, as well as signing of the Bologna declaration and Lisbon identification convention relating to high education.

■ **One of the first items mentioned in the state strategy of the education system to the whole region is non political education. Up to what level it is possible to be achieved in B & H, what are the measures undertaken to support it?**

It is incredible how language penetrates everything we do. In the English language, we have different words for "system" and "policy". In all three constitutionally recognized languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as far as I know, all three constituent nations in principle use the same word for both cases - policy. This might appear as a problem, as between the two concepts we are talking about there exist important differences. It is quite permissible for the educational system to be an issue of dispute to the Council of ministers, Parliament, even in

political campaigns. But, it is not convenient for politics to interfere with school administrative activities. Unfortunately, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I have witnessed a number of times examples where schools were treated, even very successfully, as a subject of misuse of political parties. For example, in Republic Srpska, a few years ago, I found out that representatives of governing parties at that time appointed themselves to leading positions in schools. Similar things happen, more often, in Federation. Now, when there are school councils in the state, it seems to be one more possible way for politicians to appoint persons from their party to the governing posts. To me, it seems that it would be better for the directors and president of school councils to be appointed on their contribution and professional qualification basis, rather than political option basis. That is the reason why we keep insisting to divide system from politics, when education is in question.

■ **You have recently stated that one of your priorities in B&H is actually educational reform as it represents the future of the country. At the same time, the situation on site shows that, judging by recently done questionnaire, nearly a quarter of young people want to leave the country. What is the future of the country where its future is leaving out or has a wish to leave?**

The reform of education system by itself will not complete the "brain drain". The reasons are too complex to be discussed now. But, the results of the mentioned questionnaires show tendency that young persons cannot feel their future in this country. Until it does not offer economic chances, feeling of security and prospect of better future, the flow of young people is to continue.

The people of the country are clever, capable and diligent, many of them might successfully migrate and succeed abroad. It is quite certain that previous state education system did something correctly; personally I have met a number of young people who went to the best American universities and achieved extraordinary results. Wherever we look at, there are endless disputes - in the United States of

America, the United Kingdom, as in many other countries in Europe - how to educate children in best way to as be guarantee for the future. Should one be concentrated to practical subjects, as business, engineering, or for example, should insist on philosophy or history? Should mechanical memory and learning by heart be priority to creative and critical opinion? It is not up to me to offer answers to these questions. These are, as I have previously quoted, to be considered and decided upon by the leaders and educators. They are the ones who finally have to establish educational system to Bosnia and Herzegovina-naturally, through a dialogue and agreement with the citizens of this country.

However, I think we could agree about some reforms which are to improve conditions for young people here, and even could create a wish for them to stay in this country. One is, of course, a legal decree relating the high education law, enabling them to continue their studies at Europe universities, they could return with the diploma of those universities, which would be accepted by local employers. The other reform is to change the way of education finance, meaning that less is given to administration, more to schools. I could hear very often that many municipality administration discussions relating to education are abstract, as they cannot afford even heating of schools, not to mention equipment for science laboratories or computers for pupils. As long as this situation exists the country will sink deeper.

Finally, what is the most important from my point of view is, that the education system of this country must teach its pupils to be citizens of a multi ethnic society of democratic country. The government of the US calls this "Civil education". This does not claim that everybody should speak the same language or belong to one ethnic group. However, it claims that schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina teach all pupils that all of them live in one country, with joint history and geography and that their capital is neither Zagreb nor Beograd, but Sarajevo. At the same

Inefficient and expensive

■ **Would you please comment on the inappropriate and non-functional administration in the field of education.**

I can emphasize the obvious thing and it is the existence of ten cantonal ministers of education plus one district minister (Brcko), two ministers of entity as well as a coordination minister at the state level (civic questions), a lot of problems for one country, which is for the worse in a bad economic situation. I should draw your attention to the fact that none of the ministers didn't want to discuss with the rest. That means that the entire system is not only dispersed and inefficient, but also expensive bringing no benefit whatsoever.

time, the pupils should be encouraged to be tolerant, even to accept voluntarily their differences, not to be frightened by them. Such a change in the present system, as it seems, will give its contribution to the feelings of greater trust to the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, possibly, greater enthusiasm to stay and live in it.

■ **You have announced administrative joining of 50 schools. Could you explain what is it about, having in mind the curriculum differences, great variety of state groups of subjects (native language, history, geography..)?**

Unfortunately, something like that we have not proclaimed at all. I would like it to be possible, as the Law stipulates it, but we have not managed it. There are 50 extraordinary schools being created as "two schools under the same roof", on our behalf we gave our contribution to such situation, as the international community had supported creation of such schools to ensure more people to return. This was done in a period when a lot of children-returnees had a feeling - or a thought they had to go to school situated in a private house, and alike; at least providing a building for the school. But, the idea "two schools in one" should have been only a temporary solution. That it now has an aura of permanency is bad. All we asked the Canton authorities is to create a unique, joint administration, in other words, to have one school under one roof, not two. These changes should improve the situation as it would simplify and clear the school administration, save money that might be used more reasonably for infrastructure, while at the same time use of various curriculum should be possible. It does not seem to me that it is difficult to make or represents a threat, but at least the Canton minister of education would prefer to lose his job rather than try to carry it out, therefore it seems to me that I must have missed something preventing me to understand this complex issue. Up to now, not a single representative of the present system has been able to explain the issue to me.

■ **How do you see vocational education reform, which Europe considers to be the most important training for young people to get a job?**

This is important, especially if we take into consideration the number of pupils in secondary schools, applying to vocational and technical secondary schools, it is now necessary for them to be trained for jobs not from past, but future. But, I should rather leave this to the European Commission and the World Bank, as they are directly responsible for the issue.

■ **What do you think, what should young people personally do to improve the future conditions of life in their country?**

As I have earlier mentioned "Civil education". I consider the most important

thing young people should do is to take active participation in political life of this country. First of all, they are old enough to vote and should do that. This is one of the ways to push politicians to respond to their needs and claims. Additionally, they might get organized themselves into groups, to use wordings of the US Constitution, to ask retribution for their losses. Finally, I think that they should do what both their political leaders and parents very often have not been ready to do - to encroach the borders still separating ethnical groups of this country. Ten years after the terrible and cruel war, I am aware that it is not easy to do it. But, young people in this country, no matter to their ethnical background or place of residence, have many joint problems. If united in trying to resolve them, they should make great step towards their better future.

■ **Moreover, there is a great number of problems relating to high education. Could you tell us what is your attitude relating to the issue, as there was a failure to accept the Law on high education, old and useless equipment problems, classrooms, and difficulties faced by lecturers at the universities?**

Recently, a number of articles have been published in local papers dealing with high education problems. The greatest number of texts point out that Bosnia and Herzegovina extracts very small percentage from the government budget for high education, from such a budget it is not possible for universities to provide new equipment or to deal with problems of lecturers. It is said that professors use to repeat examination tests, as that is the way to earn extra money, very often they give lectures in other places. If all the above said is correct, this problem could only be solved either by appearance of great money flow, or the scope and number of high educational institutions to decrease.

We from OEBS could do little to improve the finance issues, apart from encouraging authorities to do something for the issue. But we can as we have already been doing, give proposal for the country to start alone with necessary reforms by passing a law on high education thus placing the state at the same level with what is called the "Bologne process". Even in the year of 1999, twenty nine European ministries of education met and decided to fund "Zone of European high education". Later, Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the process, but the passed law remained to be followed and work based upon the proclaimed principles to commence. But, some universities, even some cantons conduct the structure stipulated by the process - mainly create a single university instead of autonomous groups of faculties; it could be said that "one university, under one

roof" - this country is one of the last, if not the last in Europe to accept the claims of the Bologne process. It could be created by establishing necessary institutions at the state level. In this respect it has fallen well behind the rest of Europe. It is a pity, by respecting these European high education principles this country probably might commence improving finance status to its universities, as this Process, among other things, gives a chance to win the first degree diploma within three years, the second within two years. That is obviously shorter period than students spend at present at universities, as far as I know, at huge personal, university and country's expenses.

■ **Could you explain OEBS' attitude relating to equality of sexes, national minorities, people with special needs. In other words, what are the greatest problems this region is faced with in these spheres in the phase when a civil society has just been emerging?**

Regarding the issues we are very clear and precise: every child in Bosnia and Herzegovina must have right to equal education opportunity without discrimination on any basis: ethnic group, religion or sex. Bosnia and Herzegovina signed a number of international conventions containing the essential issues we are now talking about. This includes European convention on protection of human rights and elementary freedom, International convention on elimination of all kinds of racial discrimination and International agreement on economy, social and cultural rights. In a way, this obliges the present government of the country to ensure its fulfilment. But, the inspection of schools in various parts of the country, points out the fact that it is not the case when education is concerned. Estimations based on various reports show that more girls left elementary education, and gipsy children did not regularly attend schools. Therefore, it would be useful for the citizens to be organized and show out these failures for which the chosen and appointed representatives are responsible.

■ **How do you expect to see a democratic, civil society in South-eastern Europe?**

This is a too wide issue to be discussed on this occasion. What I can say is that, no matter the gloomy opinion that I had relating to education, Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced unbelievable shifts within one decade, the only decade raising from war torn country and putting the foundation to the functional democratic system. It is far from being perfect, but it does not exist in any country. If you manage to overcome the burden of ethnic divisions, and move to democratic system based upon more individual than national rights, I feel that soon it can reach its deserved place within European family of democracy.

Bojana Cebic

Half way

Thirty years ago, Eastern European dissidents started to use phrase the "civil society" in a new meaning, to describe opposition to repressive communist regimes and creation of alternative space for citizens fighting for freedom, human rights and market economy. Today, the state in this part of Europe is obviously better, due to efforts of civil movements and reforms of their governments. Even where obstacles to govern the country still exist, for the last years the society had numerous successes-the witnesses hereof are hundreds of thousands NGOs activists, at present successfully functioning within the region where they used to be arrested and imprisoned.

Complied with the standards of Freedom House, leading American non government organization for estimation of democracy, Eastern European countries have mainly turned a new page. Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia, used to be marked with black ink on " the map of freedom" indicating "the lack of freedom", now being registered as "free" countries. Even the countries indicated as "partially free" have made progress in this sense.

Three bars

Ms. Katherine Ficpatrick, American human rights activist, excellent authority to civil societies of Eastern Europe and ex-Soviet Union, said that nobody had expected such a resistant communist heritage, that irresponsible regimes - using terror as a method of government, had destroyed, then

Condition of civil society in ex-Yugoslav states, if everything is so good, why is everything so bad?

replaced the civil society with illusory similar organisations controlled by the state.

Dr. Ivan Sijakovic, professor of sociology at the Faculty of economy in Banjaluka, whose speciality is, among others, education of civil society, stated that political culture in ex-Yugoslavia (Serbia, Montenegro, B&H, Macedonia and Croatia) was burdened and enslaved in maelstrom of three dominant phenomena: a) partyocracy, meaning the dominance of many political parties over state and civil society; b) ethnocracy, meaning mode of dominance and rule of ethnic and national elements in form of myths and traditional symbols, in all spheres of social life, and c) theocracy, meaning dominant presence of traditional faith and religious characteristics as faith ideology to be imposed to civil society as the only "right" variant of spiritual, cultural and social way of life and behaviour.

These phenomena made three obstacles, three bars, preventing faster development of democracy, civil society, public opinion, freedom, autonomy and legal state as decisive elements to influence formation of a tolerant and civilised political culture.

Mrs. Zagorka Golubovic, long-time professor of anthropology and research fellow at the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory, states that in Serbia at present, there has not been any basic prerequisites to constitute a modern civil identity as a precondition for functioning of

autonomous civil society. The process is half-way through, civil awareness is slowly awakening, but periodically falling dawn. However, at present people in Serbia are not subjects any more, due to the fact that they understand that the government does not have absolute power over them with its unchanged, god-given power to which they have to bow their heads and be obedient unconditionally. They understand that the government is no longer unchangeable warning that this government can be replaced on elections, as they did with the Slobodan Milosevic's government in 2000. Still, the awareness has not been developed that the elections are not the only way to recall government for not listening to the public opinion, primarily acting for its own interest (to keep position of power), but instruments of control and resistance should be permanently developed, to emancipate political elite to rule democratically.

That the civil identity has not been constituted yet, says Ms. Golubovic, is proved by the fact that the population still opts between its national identity and recently acquired civil identity; this means that one part is subdued to nation authority, remaining within the frame of authoritarian identity, while the other partially goes out of the frame, but has not developed all civil attributes, which is proved by predominant readiness only to show disarticulated resistance (strikes not well justified to change the situation, but rather oriented to a narrow daily requests).

Under the shadow of the state institutions

Croatia is famous in this part of Europe for an extremely large number of non-governmental organisations (even estimated to 20.000). Moreover, such a huge NGO sector has a limited role. Their zones of interest are concentrated to sport and culture, with small number of members, partially causing inadequate influence of the most NGOs.

Situation in civil sector in Croatia is well illustrated by a conflict revealed at the beginning of February by "Civil society Forum" announcement relating to work of National Foundation for Civil Society Development in 2005. The announcement reproached the institution for the conflict of interest of its body members; non-existence of an independent complaint or supervising council; unclear evaluation of work; unclear results of finance balance; lack of program profile.. Further, the Forum challenged justification of finance assets distribution to some organisations.

Corruption and freedom of press/media

Pillar evaluation systems prepared by two independent and non-government organisations reveal more disturbing picture of civil society life, giving means to analyse two dominant pending issues of the region: corruption and freedom of press.

Transparency International (TI) has a scale of 1-10 for its index of corrupt perception, where 10 indicates "pure" societies as felt by citizens in questionnaires where both analysts and medias were consulted by TI. On the scale, some Balkan countries have very poor results, at the bottom of the list are: Serbia and Montenegro (2,3), Macedonia (2,3), Albania (2,5), Romania (2,8), Croatia (3,7), in comparison with relatively good Slovenia (5,9), Bulgaria (3,9), Czech Republic (3,9), Lithuania (3,8), Slovakia (3,7), Poland (3,6)..

List of elements relating to the freedom of media made by the Freedom House organisation has a scale from 1 to 100, where lower results indicate better legal and political protection of independent media, it is rather similar to the USAID feasibility index as well as the corruption index of Transparency International. It is a good source to find out why the countries show poor results when corruption is in question. If the total status of civil and political freedom in the last year is reviewed, Freedom House grades only Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia as "partially free", whereas all remaining countries of Eastern Europe as "free". But, when it comes to the analysis of the issue of media freedom, some countries have much worse status. Freedom House as "partially free" indicated media in the following countries: Albania (50), Macedonia (50), Bosnia and Herzegovina (49), Serbia and Montenegro (40), Romania (38) and Croatia (33). Not far from these countries is Bulgaria (30), it is proclaimed "free".

Up the issue of the mentioned announcement, the Forum had more than 15 organisations. Upon this fresh conflict the analysts concluded that wide platforms gathering great number of participants, as "Civil society Forum", could easily lose both their legitimacy and even basis of existence, when being used as an instrument to attack particular organisations, especially if the activities of the coalitions have been done without prior communication and solid agreement of all participants concerned.

Today, Serbia has a developed network of civil society organisations, with thousands of associations, expanding its activities within its territory. These associations have played an important part to mobilise citizens for democratic changes; civil society activities are to high degree out of the administration influence (although some civil society organisations after 5th October have become part of the state structure), but often off any influence on the work of the state bodies, but reasonably, they are more active at local level.

The reproach could be heard very often in public that civil society organisations are turned to themselves, actually to donors dictating more or less the nature of their projects

What does the civil society lack to act more consistently as an active social life participant, without standing in the shadow of the state institutions?

Mrs. Golubovic answers that civil society organisations are mainly engaged with marginal issues, not clearly connected to key issues of the society where transition has a very slow progress, for example, sale concepts of the state companies and institutions in the process of privatisation, modes and strategies for resolution of the unemployment, active measures to fight corruption and other abuses of the government;

organising consumers to protect their standards, and etc. That is the reason for the public criticism of the civil society organisations that are turned to themselves, actually to donors more or less dictating the nature of their projects (this is not the case with organisations dealing with problems of civil rights protection).

Additionally, western sources related to the resolution of actual issues slowly dry out (assuming that the civil society struggle was successful and came to its logical end). But, they are needed just now to complete the job. It is obvious, Ms. Ketrin Fitzpatrick concludes, that the region with about 114 millions of citizens in 15 countries has to prove or refute the thesis that strong civil societies create peace, prosperity and freedom, that cannot be achieved without significant aid coming from outside the region. After decades of civil society support the West has obligation to proceed permanent finance and technical aid, the American activist adds, as it has its own investment to the final result, that is creating more stable and prosperous societies.

Slobodan Dimitrijevic

USA aid to South-eastern European countries

The USA aid stipulated for South-eastern European countries for the budget year of 2007, sets aside approx. 274 million dollars; nearly two thirds of the sum, about 150 million dollars, is aimed to Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro.

The proposal submitted to the Congress by president George Bush, for SCG for the fiscal year of 2007, total sum of 70,5 million dollars is planned, about five million less than for 2006, while for Kosovo in 2007, 79 million dollars is planned, seven million more compared to previous year, as announced on the State Department web site.

When Serbia is concerned, the use of the aid from the American budget is related, by the special law, to fulfilment of relevant conditions, the most important is collaboration with the Hague tribunal.

The Support program to Eastern European democracies for the year of 2007, stipulates 273,9 million dollars for projects in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Albania, as well as for regional projects.

The greatest particular amount is planned for Kosovo, 79 million dollars, the quoted amount, should be primarily spent as an aid to construct institutions,

administration of legal system, reforms of finance system, support to local authorities, encourage inter-ethnic tolerance, civil society development.

The explanation quotes that the year 2007 will be of crucial importance for Kosovo, due to future status agreement.



No matter what the outcome of the status negotiation would be it is necessary that the USA aid program to be continued.

For Serbia and Montenegro the total of 70,5 million dollars is stipulated, that is 62 millions for Serbia and 8,5 millions for Montenegro.

The explanation is that SCG is the "centre of the Balkans" proceeding the robust aid program to this country is of vital importance for the success of the American foreign policy in the region. The support to SCG is directed to speed up the progress to Euro-Atlantic integrations, funds the SEED to help the fragile reform government of SCG to keep political and economical reforms. The greatest job, as quoted, remains in the legal sphere, privatisation, economic growth, putting law in effect and building democracy- areas of crucial importance for the stabilisation of SCG and transition of the country as a positive player of the region.

The SEED programs will be directed primarily to the young, as well as to the small and medium entrepreneurs to ensure the wider circle of citizens to feel direct benefit from the USA aid. These programs are of crucial importance as an aid to make future transition easier that will come upon the result on the final status of Kosovo, as quoted in the explanation.

The aid for the year of 2007 does not include Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, as countries that achieved sufficient progress in both political and economical reforms.

Polemics to the acceptance of varieties

It is necessary to talk to pupils about being tolerant, to accept varieties and to appreciate others, but it is insufficient for the deeper level of influence to an individual to act democratically. Education for democracy will be more effective and efficient if the pluralistic, cognitive style develops through the issue presentation of curriculum and encouragement to accept plurality of ideas through various subjects. Instead of talking about acceptable behaviour, the issues should be viewed as an issue, considering various options, to teach pupils to communicate in different manner and in that way to prepare them for life in democratic society—says Ms. Mira Djurisc-Bojanovic, scientific associate at the Institute for pedagogy research in Beograd, adding that majority of the world educational systems is faced with similar problems relating to this field.

She adds that there is, for example, an interesting multi-perspective approach to the history teaching in Denmark, Holland and Portugal, similar changes were planned in our country three years ago, but no more than that was done.

—Before the wars in ex-Yugoslav area, pupils were taught at schools about democratic values, freedom, equality, brotherhood, solidarity. Those existed in curriculum, but if you look at history and application of the curriculum in practice, it is obvious that it did not have sufficient effect. Everybody declared for democracy, but when you tried to express different ideas, to express opposite attitudes, it was obvious that we were not ready to apply basic principles of functioning democracy, that is a capability to accept and further examine, not to refuse point of view opposite to ours—says Ms. Djurisc-Bojanovic.

She observed that democratic education requests integrative approach, meaning that it does not come true only through relevant subjects and lessons, but should be included to all school activities. As she said, introduction of some special subject is not necessary and is a burden. The research of both UNICEF and Institute for pedagogy research that have been done in our country, shows that the teachers, pupils and professional associates agree that curriculum decrease is the most needed change in school.

—In comparison with other European education systems, Serbia and Russia are considered to be countries with the greatest number of compulsory subjects, in such a situation introducing new optional subjects would be burden, all children would not



be included. No matter that children like the way of work at civil education lessons and dealing with their problems, it would be more economical if home-room teachers are trained to deal with these issues at class meetings. Then, these lectures would be more useful, instead of being used for arguing on discipline and leave excuses. The weak side of the curriculum for education for democracy is that it does not differentiate pupils as to their predispositions to accept democratic or non-democratic opinion. The research shows that pupils in their development expect clear answers, meaning they could reach them by reconsidering various options—says Ms. Djurisc-Bojanovic.

Answering the question relating to compatibility of education for democracy to favour of national values in relation to activities during the nineties in the ex-Yugoslav area, our collocutor says that these two issues do not exclude each other.

—Education for democracy and national identity are not in opposition, on the contrary. Keeping the concept of plural education is desirable and opens space for developing personal and national uniqueness. Everybody has the right to hold the values of its nation and that should be the basis

of appreciating others. It is quite opposite when suspicion, non-tolerance and adversity to the difference result from authoritarian way of opinion—she points out.

Answering the question if there is a danger for democracy to be promoted as an ideology in the same way as it has been done with the Marx theory, our collocutor remarks that it could be avoided if a teacher encourages pupils' attitudes to the world full of alternatives, right and need of their reconsideration, if keeping discussions with arguments relating to controversy themes instead of issuing rules on ethic values.

Ms. Mira Djurisc-Bojanovic points out that democracy is the highest grade of responsibility to oneself and others, but the idea is often misused and equalled with an anarchy. The distorted red image was convenient to many in previous decades, under the cloak of democracy the worst dictatorships have survived. It is still too early to discuss the effects of curriculum for democratic and civil education, the world researchers are at the beginning, the path leading from a lesson and textbook to the creation of a responsible and competent citizen is very long.

Radmila Pejic

School books with

Printing textbooks for elementary and secondary school children is a very important job for every country, no matter where it is in the world, but it could also be a very profitable profession, in relation to number of pupils and book titles. According to researches and announcements of the authorities, both developed countries and those completed the transition route, overcome the infant's diseases of liberation of textbook publishing, as the rules of the game has been established long time ago leaving no space for prohibited trade. The market is the main regulator of the struggle for pupils and quality, without outer pressures, it is mainly judged by teachers and lecturers. At least they say so in public. In many countries: from Portugal, via Austria, to Finland and Hungary-it is common to print about 5 (sometimes to 15) textbooks per a subject, the country pays for basic school textbooks (however, in some countries like Bulgaria, publishers complain that they receive minimal price for their effort). In these regions parents do not buy books for their children, do not wait in lines in front of the book shops as schools do it for them.

As quoted by Mr. Preben Spete, director to the European Union for school textbooks, assembling 24 member states- a good textbook could be obtained only if there exists a clear rule, healthy competition, if de-monopoly is completed, if direct or indirect state control does not exist. Moreover, equal conditions for book printing are needed, too. A quality textbook is to be written between 15-18 months, the team engaged to the joint project should not have less than

Corruption

It is believed in Serbia that corruption in publishing (textbooks) is a word used too strong.

I'd rather think this is an issue of little monies or gifts-which we could call as a sale improvement but not a corruption. Last year we witnessed political pressure to directors, related to teachers' fear not to loose their job if saying their opinion or choosing textbooks of a wrong publisher, their fear and ignorance are more serious problem than a corruption. The most efficient mechanism to struggle against corruption in publishing, I can see in education of teachers (how to choose the best quality textbook), then to carry out the education parents, independent questionnaires, researching journalism, textbook evaluation and public analyses. Awarding prizes for the best textbook might help, only if the teachers propose not commissions that might be influenced. Naturally, improvement of material status of teachers is necessary, if receiving decent salary, they might not be challenged to take petty monies- says Mrs. Gordana Knezevic-Orlic, executive director to Publish company KLETT.

The countries of the region have mainly established printing rules on textbooks and number of publishers for each subject. The countries provide free of charge a basic set for each pupil, the rest is to be paid by parents

15 members. These are the European ruling standards. Upon hearing from private publishers that textbooks in Serbia are written for less than three months, Mr. Spete appraised it as absurd and non-serious.

In addition to the mentioned criteria, Mr. Spete points out the priority the autonomy of teachers and lecturers, not only to create teaching, but to choose textbooks, as they are more familiar with capabilities and needs of their pupils than school directors or ministers. But even they might be wrong evaluating the choice. It is easily resolved in some rich countries allowing teachers to replace, without any problems, the package of textbooks if after six months, for example, they realise that the textbooks of another publisher enable better results. However, these are rather exceptions than rule even in richer countries.

Up to the year of 2003 the Institute for publishing textbooks and teaching equipment, was the only one that existed in Serbia covering all educational needs of a million pupils and 120.000 teachers. Few years prior to permitting other publishers to print textbooks, the Institute, in relation to the curriculum changes, has started designing and unloading its contents of the exaggerated ideology and facts. Still, that was far from the European standards, even by the appearance in order to be cheap, the books were printed on the cheapest paper, due to an inappropriate binding they were very quickly transformed to "tattered" books.

In the year of 2003, some private publishers appeared at the market. Although, the complete job was accepted only as an experiment still having the status to be verified again every year, the new era on the textbook publishing market commenced. The Institute do not have the official monopoly, but the rest of outstanding publishers still complain about lack of fair play and established rules. New law on textbooks is not accepted although the document draft was prepared last spring. As explained by the Minister of Education and Sports of Serbia, Slobodan Vuksanovic, it was "tied up" nowhere, but the draft is only passing through a long procedure of approval from other Ministries and Secretariat for legal matters. He says that there is no penalty for their slow work. He does not even know if the text is to be agreed upon till this summer, as everything depends on speed of work in the Serbia Parliament.

It is interesting that the draft was coordinated, at least formally, by the private publishers' representatives. Although not a single of their requests or amendment was accepted, they accepted the text, controversy opinions were later heard that it was better for the draft not to be accepted, as the document later sent to the Parliament was not changed a lot, in relation to the existing paragraphs (from 1993) it actually represents only make up.

Still, there are some people who think that it is even better to have a bad law than none. Representatives of private publishers only rebelled fiercely against the provisions relating to the obligation of private publishers to print small number of copies, actually text books for national minorities, pupils with special needs and vocational secondary schools- as it is insisted by representatives of the Institute for textbooks and teaching aids.

The above said is actually the main argument of the Institute to fight for its position,



out monopoly cap

Privatisation

Last year Mr. Preben Spate, director to the Europe union of school textbooks was in Beograd. He criticized Serbia for being the only one on the old continent that has the state owned publisher. Serbia Government has announced that all public companies are to be privatised soon; therefore the criticism will be out of question if ownership transformation happens to the Institute.

as it prints all titles having a huge number of copy printing. Obviously it could less painfully stand the printing loss due to small copy printing, where the price per textbook is even five times higher than with other textbooks. In practice, the Institute boasts on its web site page, that it is the greatest publisher not only in Serbia and Montenegro but in the Balkans, relating to the number of published books and their copy printing.

Complied with its data the Institute publishes 2.300 titles per a year having 15 millions of printed copies, plus about 700 contemporary teaching aids, that comes nearly to 2 millions of copies. As the management estimated, the Institute made losses for about 100 titles of low printed copies.

Only three of eight other publishers (Creative centre, Educa and National book) print most of the titles for nearly all sub-

jects, but only for elementary school pupils of lower grades, actually where new curriculum is introduced.

-The monopoly has to be overcome as there are no reasons for the Institute to fight for the position. One should go to a competition game being correct from both parties and to have equal positions to everything. Textbooks issue must be resolved by the law. The most important is to draw such a schedule that allows all publishers to have right to print both high and low print textbook copies. If opposite, a non-loyal competition shall be created, people will exclusively print textbooks that bring money; in that case the state has to give subventions, which is not good, as our country is poor - says Dr. Rados Ljusic.

The dilemma on low printing textbook copies should be resolved, as quotes by the executive director of publisher KLETT Mrs. Gordana Knezevic-Orlic, as it has been done in other countries as an obligation.

-The Ministry announces a competition for textbook publishing in national minority languages, chooses two or more textbooks (or it could be done by the Councils of minorities), the publisher waives his copyright, the Ministry (or the publisher) prints sufficient number of copies, but the Ministry subsidises to have the same price. The state cannot force private contractor to work with loss. It is against all laws on private entrepreneur - says Mrs. Gordana Knezevic-Orlic. In majority of European countries there is no obligation to print textbooks for minorities. For example, in the Czech Republic the expenses are covered by the competent Ministry, in Hungary competitions are opened, the winners receive funds to print small number of textbook copies.

Although it is considered that there does not still exist fair play competition to printing textbooks in Serbia, the executive director to the publish company KLETT, still thinks that with its liberation, the process has started without return.

- This year, the pressure by the Ministry and the Institute has been less than it used to be last year. Last year, the curriculum for grade three was late, it was late with permission receipt, regardless the prohibited promotion and sale subscription to textbooks without the permission, but it was executed by the Institute. Last year, in such a way, the Institute pressed the directors, then prohibited distributors to sell textbooks of other publishers if they wanted to continue their cooperation with the Institute, and alike. This year, as it seems, teachers have realised that it is not their work is not same with any textbook, they heard other teachers' experience, obviously it moves slowly to the

desired direction- states Mrs. Gordana Knezevic-Orlic.

- In contrast to Serbia and some other countries, Slovenia and Croatia textbook publishing field did not have a monopoly (protected by law); therefore transition to competition was easier. Both countries had publishers that were strong and famous but not protected by the state. Textbooks printing was not legally regulated but by a simple Rule that created a good system. In Slovenia during a whole year a competition is opened; in December an official list of permitted textbooks for the following school year is issued and sent to schools. Publishers make presentations, teachers choose textbooks. There are distribution centres (bookstores) receiving orders from schools, taking books from publishers, making completes (for each school from various publishers) and distribute them to schools.

- If textbooks for national minorities are made (for example, primary to Italian minority ?) the Ministry opens a competition, publishers apply (offering titles in the Slovenia language), Minority council chooses two textbooks, publisher offers material without compensation, the Ministry finances translation and prints the approved number of copies.

The Printing system of textbooks in Croatia is very similar, additionally they have a clause stipulating upon the expire of three years of the permit issue, textbooks that do not pass over 10% (of market share) loose their licence. Their authorities consider that three years' period is sufficient for textbooks to be accepted or rejected in schools, but the specialists think that in such a way teachers carrying out experimental lessons are deprived of possibility to teach with quality, but not high copy print textbooks.

The mission of a textbook is not less important than a role of a teacher and lecturer, but could not be quite different from what was stipulated by the curriculum. However, school textbooks must be attractive, interesting, inviting and very well composed with simple and understanding language. They should be "packed" in such a way to endure fierce competition on media, above all the television and internet. The slogan that used to be actual "a book is the best friend" has been out fashioned for a long time. Modern generations are not very keen on reading, so the enterprise of textbook writing is more challenging to creative authors not starting their job only due to undertaken obligations or authors' fees but obeying standards of textbook quality and existing rules. There where they exist.

O.Nikolic



Europeans - educated, employed and personally satisfied

In the mid 80s countries the members of the EU started the negotiations about the common standards in further development and improvement of educational system. By the year 1989 the General Secretary of the European Council Recommendation was issued clearly specifying the direction in which the further development of the European education should lead to. That is the learned society of Europe where the education is synchronized with the system of employment. The ideal picture of the modern Europe would be the compatible social integration, employment and personal fulfillment of every citizen. Education is one of the most significant factors on which the society could be based.

- The accomplishment of this aim requires not only the significant changes in economy but also the modernization of the complete system of education and qualification and system of social security. European educational and qualification systems are specific and very diverse, inflexible even and unconnected even without that possibility. In the light of that picture the quality education and qualification should lead to the study for employment, by which the education, qualification and employment are connected, as it was emphasized by the experts - said Mathias Walter, chief deputy of the International Cooperation Department in the Federal Institute of the specialized education in Germany (BiBB) and Michael Wichert, member of the department for the international cooperation in the area of specialized education in the interview for ED, about the European framework of the high school specialized education and German experience in that area.

- Our country already is, and the south-east European countries will become members of the EU, so it is our mutual obligation to concentrate and integrate into the European educational framework. The projects that we work on in partnership with the host country experts are the part of that road, which means that we are not bringing the finished solutions, it is more likely that we are exchanging experience - says Mathias Walter.

- We are trying to find the common concept for all the organizations which are trying to pass their experience and help the specialized high school education reform. Yet, our partner in the country in question decides what and whether it will accept, take over or enforce. Such a decision no one can make for it. We neither want it nor should do it. It is necessary to create the readiness for the change of the approach and it is an advantage that we are working under the supervision of EU where we have had different reform models of the specialized high school education.

In year 2010 Europeans will live in a very competitive and dynamic economy which is based on knowledge, in a world which will have a wide choice, better jobs and bigger social cohesion
(Lisbon Declaration)

The range of educational-political measures is limited. By Maastricht contract (1993) it is arranged that the changes in the area of education must be enforced exclusively under the condition that the contents and educational systems of general and specialized high school education as well as the variety of cultures and language should be respected. No one should interfere with the contents of national politics, on that we have a firm agreement, for the reason that the educational politics makes the essence of partner countries independence - The advice we give must be adapted to the legal framework and the culture of the country we are cooperating with. The basic three models of the specialized high school education which one might see in Europe are British - one for the economy, another is the school model where the complete specialized high school education is performed in the school and a mixed one where there is a connection between the school and the education when the responsibility of the quality and the functionality of the outcome of the educational system is shared between the economy and the state, says Mathias Walter.

The common thing for all the educational reforms in EU countries as a reaction to the changed demands of the labor market is the constitution of the adjustable system of the permanent specialized education. Privatization, restructuring and the economy modernization created the new economy structure where we see the growing importance of the trade, traffic, financial, intellectual, personal and other services. It is inevitable that the adjustment for these changes means not only the educational reform, but also the constant prequalification and additional training of the work force, especially the unemployed and people with greater risk of becoming unemployed. - Specialized education and qualification have, at the same time, the assignment to give general knowledge and values needed for further personal development, professional progress and career development. Those are the long-lasting and complex processes, as the German experts explained.

Young people employment chances in great deal rely on the quality of the educational system and it's adaptability to technological and structural changes. The increase of chances for young people on the labor market includes the various forms of the supplementary education and training

which include the volunteering program, apprentice work and practice, and skills and knowledge innovation. It is necessary to apply the practice of career guiding and counseling at all the educational levels as well as in current and expected chances of the specific professions.

- We are constantly monitoring the way it will help to the economy and the state in its final outcome but we must not forget the individuals - young people. So, the European framework and all our efforts are striving for the aim that the high school specialized education should not be a one -



Mathias Walter

way street, more precisely that the firm boundary between the academic and the specialized education should be made less rigid in great extent so that the negotiability of the specialized education should increase and be directed to the further forms of education, as Walter explained.

- In his words, in Germany a great number of young people first get education in the specialized high schools and then continue education at the universities. The negotiability is regulated by the Statute, at first in the area of information technology. So there is a possibility to gain qualification at the level of the specialized high school

education, and then the qualified worker could continue education at the university all to the post graduate studies. The specialized education in Germany in basic consists of two areas: in the scope of the high school work and at the third level of college and technical colleges which are separate educational institutions. In that way, in Germany they broke the stereotype that the academic education has greater reputation than the specialized one.

- The best parameter of that equality is the salary which the experts of both areas have - there is no significant difference considering the path on which they achieved their qualifications - Walter explained and recommends that through the forthcoming changes the young people will be in position that at the end of their studies they should not be in a deadlock, but, in the spirit of the permanent education concept, at the beginning of the advancement in their field of work.

Southeast European farce

The possibilities of employment are the key outcome of the quality education and training. It includes future worker skills development to finish and keep the job, make progress in work, deal with changes easily, and these are precisely the demands of the International Labor Organization. In southeast European countries, it is judged that at the same time the educational system does not communicate with the economy for which we can easily say that it has no knowledge of its direction and its existence in the full meaning of that word. In that sense, the economy's impact on the quality of education is problematic, as the international organizations generally agreed on, and therefore it should be deeply analyzed. All South European countries didn't enter the process of transformation into the market oriented economy and democratic society at the same time. The privatization lead to the situation that the private sector in the region makes the average 62% of the total income. Small and medium sized enterprises are the source of the labor force employment, but the real state of the affairs are the insignificant restructuring and new investment with minimal technological changes. The activation of the economy in the educational reform, in the light of these results is harder here then in the countries where that cooperation is long-lasting and the economy is stable.

- We should first separate the problems. The economy that both exists and doesn't exist, and has no desire to participate, as well as the existence of the state structures which do not invite the economy for a cooperation. It is perfectly clear that the tradition of the specialized high school education where the economy actively participates in the creation and enforcement, promotion ... does not exist. The comparison to the countries where that relationship exists for hundreds of years clearly specifies and explains the consequences of the results gained by the analysis of the educational process where it is found unfunctional. On the other hand you have a state

European aims for 2010

- To increase the range of employment in the EU from 61% to 70%;
- To increase the number of employed women from 51% to 60%;
- To increase the employment of men and women of 55-64 years of age to 50%;
- In the year 2010 countries the members of EU should reduce the share of those who leave the education early (in relation to the year 2000) approximately for 10% or less;
- In the year 2010 the average participation of the EU in the permanent education should be at least 15% of adult working population (age of 25-64) and the country should have no less than 10% of adult working population;
- In the year 2010 the countries members of the EU should endeavor the increase the number of women among those who should graduate from mathematics, science and technology;
- To increase the number of adult, age 25-64, who will graduate from higher high school education up to the 80%;
- To increase successively the annual per capita investment in human resources;
- To realize the deal of substantial future issues of educational system and qualification;
- The development of the EU framework should enable the defining of new basic skills which will be provided for the permanent education;
- To define the means for the better mobility of students, teachers, instructors and research staff;
- To increase the level of employment, especially in the area of services.

which does not open the possibilities, offers, platforms ... does not call for the same businessmen to participate in the process actively - Mathias Walter thinks.

- That farce is a commonplace and you can find it in all countries. My ten-year experience in this area in Turkey is that officially there are some councils of employers, businessmen and workers representatives. When the decision should be made, enforced, and before that some educational



Michael Wichert

profile should be shaped, envisaged, promoted, in many countries the state organs do that regardless of that work profile demands. So it is a common practice that the demands of the work profile are heard, even enter some official documents and strategies but in the end the Minister makes a decision. The feedback of this state relation to businessmen, and to the education as well is that the professional associations, i.e. their representatives become even more uninterested in this. Namely, if their engagement is based on the fact that they sit all the time at the round table, in discussion of reaching the right solution - that in the end becomes the lost time if the result is not the

change they all opted for or at least suggested it, Michael Wichert comments.

Financing model

A wise insight in the broader picture is necessary - the state does not know it all and it is essential for it to give up some of its authority - transferring the responsibility to the ones which conduct the specialized education and those who are buying it - the work force. At the same time the state must create the general conditions to control the behavior of all the participants according to the stated rules. So the mechanisms of control are in its hands, hereby the responsibility for those results.

- The issue of financing is an excellent example of relation between the state and the specialized high school education. In Germany, the companies make a significant contribution of specialized education financing. It is perfectly clear that thus they have the right to decide in all the segments. They can do that in creating the politics, carrying out proposals, conducting the exams - in the complete process. In Germany the education costs 21 billion euros from which 73% is at the expense of the companies, and 27% at the expense of the budget.

The year 2010 is not a distant future anymore. So the moment when all the European countries will at the same time sum up the results of their educational politics and the degree of accomplishment of the stated aims is coming close. In words of Mathias Walter we learn about the fact that even in the Western Europe the educational systems are not perfect. He said that a constant process of adaptation and a constant establishment of the mutual conclusions were necessary despite the different starting points. By the year 2010, the EU planned to become the greatest economic force. At this moment it is necessary to be in constant competitive relationship. That is the reason the EU decided to set some rules in the area of the specialized education which should be the measure of adaptation for all the countries. It is an attempt to define the abilities of the future employee as well as the possibilities and ways of forming that kind of an individual.

Bojana Cebic

The state should stim



Stjepan Šafran, the president of the Croatian Chamber of Trade

In the neighboring countries and the rest of the world we can find a lot of examples of students having 60-70% of income during their study of trade, which is ensured to them by their employer and state authority. We are asking for relaxations, stimulations from the state budget, to invest that money into a student

The Croatian Chamber of Trade requested from the government and ministry in charge to design a national council for the trade schools where the social partners would get an opportunity to create the new model of trade education. With Stjepan Šafran, the president of the Croatian Chamber of Trade, we are talking about the reasons which have drastically diminished the trade education in Croatia and the options for the change of the current situation. Stjepan Šafran expects that the forming of the council will be a great step in the trade education.

- We expect for people to realize at last that we need to educate personnel for the sake of the economy, and not in order to fill in the school desk or teacher's working time. In that council we must place the representatives of the economy, chamber of trade, employers, unions, i.e. all interest parties our economy depends on. I believe that by using this kind of consensus and partnership approach we can have better results and change the trade education. That is a very complicated process, and we must start the changes in the elementary school, but we need to change the parents' heads first. Parents need to realize that it is far better to educate the child in craftsmanship in that way providing the child with safe work place and existence, than to educate him/her in other professions to leave him/her in the end at the labor market.

■ How can you motivate parents and child to think in that direction?

- First we need to make a step forward in law and models of education. To create a possibility for the one who finishes the trade school can use his/her abilities to continue the education while working, entering the school, faculty. He/she must have the secured permanent education and vertical negotiability. Then both parents and children will observe the trade education in a different way. It is extremely important to enable the permanent education. That is simply necessary, since the time when you learned some trade performing the same model for twenty years even living to retire according to that model has passed for good.

Besides that it is important for them to be sure that after finishing school they will get a job and a good salary...

- That should be a main motto and the aim of education. But the student's motivation needs to be stimulated by the state authorities. In the neighboring countries and the rest of the world we can find a lot of examples of students having 60 - 70% of income during their study of trade, which is ensured to them by their employer and state authority. We ask the specific relaxations, incentives coming from the state budget.

■ Can we expect to see students entering the trade school this autumn could rely on the fact that in three or four years they will have a safe job and a possibility of further education?

- If we start with the model we are suggesting, that will happen for sure. Designing

The school can be a good enterprise

The industrial - trade school "Vice Vlatkovića" from Zadar is a good example of school which prepared for (and welcomed) the double educational system in time, as well as its canceling! The contract with German partners guarantees the constant system of education and connection with the tradesmen and entrepreneurship.

- In fact, we are the school for both students and tradesmen and entrepreneurs, i.e. in wider terms for all the people who are functionally connected with the goals and needs of our education - Tihomir Tomčić, the headmaster of the industrial - trade school "Vice Vlatkovića", claimed when we talked about the connection of education and economy. We already had the opportunity to single out this school, being awarded twice with the title of the best trade school by the Ministry of Trade, Small and Medium - sized enterprises, but this time we were wanted to find out whether the "educational potentials" of the trade school are capable of adjusting to the new changes.

Namely, this school year we witnessed the canceling of the so called double education system where both classical high schools and the ones with the combined program for the trade occupations functioned. The schools with double system were really experimental, and the decision of entering into that kind of a system was practically left to the headmasters.

The industrial - trade school in Zadar entered the double system as one of the rare and showed very good results - especially concerning the quality connection with the tradesmen, i.e. Croatian Chamber of Trade. In few words, the possibility of real student's involvement into the concrete work was created as well as the possibility of school being a real service of management instead of "theory".

The canceling of the double system for the entire high school system didn't put the "Vice Vlatkovića" school in awkward position; on the contrary, in the autumn it started 16 work profiles, and is currently making a plan for the new program for the rest of the trades. The most of the practical education and the tradesmen practice was retained, with the names of the most of the subjects and program framework close to the former "classical" education - a peculiar compromise where the positive experience of the "experimental" age was built into. But the thing that guides this school to the EU standards as Tomčić specifies, is the contract with the German partners, GTZ factory, for the education of the teachers and program leaders, and cooperation with the tradesmen and management. In the school section along the Murvicka Street the entire office was established where from the conductor, who is on the GTZ pay list, will coordinate, for example, with the carpenters and organize the practical seminars for those who are interested.

Nenad VERTOVŠEK

ulate the students

new projects, we open new work places, but the child with good education must be employed there. I believe that in this way the children, parents and society will be pleased and we needn't give so much money in the market for the unemployed and a number of those who need prequalification. We are building the future now in prequalification, instead of guiding them towards the right occupation. Who is studying to be a clerk, must be a clerk, and who is studying the trade, must experience the feeling of the trade. He/she needs to get that under the skin. And that money needs to be invested into the student. I believe that both children and parents, since most of them are not rich enough to educate their children, would rather choose trade education and guide their child to the job which will bring salary and bread in the future.

■ **Does the chamber have a concrete proposal of measures that the state should enforce? What kind of stimulus would the tradesmen need?**

- The specific amount should be drafted at the table and then we would see. It is a fact that we should invest in new technologies. But one should be aware that in the first year and a half you are investing in the child more than you should count on the effect of his/her work. The content of education should not be reduced only to the tradesmen interest of having the

worker only for himself. We are not educating craftsmen only for the sake of the trade, but also in order to work in the interest of the entire Croatian economy.

■ **Are the tradesmen ready for that process?**

- Many of them are not ready for this. Unfortunately, the irreparable damage has been done by enforcing the so called Šušvar's system, when we cut the thread of traditionally educating students and their employment. Our workshops which have the tradition of employing students are rare, since in the past thirty years, plus these fifteen years of independence, we invested too little in order to regain that. We should reestablish that tradition, to regain the trust in each other, and reach the point where we could even create the waiting list for some factories and workshops.

■ **You are critical of the present system for its lack of practical education.**

- That model is theoretically well-based, but in practice it is completely different. Very few schools are furnished so well to be in situation to show the students all the advantages of the practical education. We could compensate that by good organization, since it is a worst feeling for a child to go to school and feel like a supernumerary. We get a hybrid case - the child has a document, but doesn't know the job, has no work and ends up in the market. More than the half of the peo-

ple today gets the job outside their field of work. Those are very young people, who could study, and that is our potential.

■ **Will the calculations and means of the CARDS program be sufficient for the quality changes?**

- That is a good help on the side, but it will neither save us nor will enforce the system. We must create means from our own economy, our own calculations, thus changing our own mentality. It is not the matter of the money as it is the matter of the crisis of our trade education mentality. We should change that, starting from parents, schools, specific employers.

■ **In what way?**

- First, we need to break the dogma of trade education, so the people would realize that it is not the classical trade education, but the modern one. The second issue is that the dogma of you being less worthy by attending the trade school should be ancient history. This year we had ten and a half thousand students, though we planned two thousand more. And we have deficit in those trades, from carpenters to mechanists; we don't have enough people, good engineers in new technologies. We have a lack of well trained teachers who could teach that technology, so you have a situation of educating the people and then the competition comes and takes them away.

The source: Novi list

RIVER SEE - Regional integration by the volunteers exchange in Southeastern Europe

UNV/UNDP RIVER SEE program aims for the construction of the regional trust and promotion of significant connections between the population and the government in the Balkans region. The main aim of this program is the contribution to the regional integration, the social cohesion and the reduction of the poverty in the Balkans by strengthening of the network through East - east exchange of volunteers, promotion of volunteerism and active citizenship, NGO's capacity building who would work on the local development and the management processes by establishing the cooperation between the civil initiatives in Southeastern Europe and elsewhere. The legal framework of volunteerism in the region will be promoted with the aim of ensuring the supportive surroundings by including the local, regional and national governments/institutions contrary to the resonant volunteer's sector.

This program represents the unique UNV/UNDP regional cooperation and it will be implemented in cooperation with the partners such as the EU/EVS, VSO UK, SEEYN, OneWorld SEE, who will provide for the guidance, technical and financial support, together with 14 partnership organizations for the imple-

mentation in seven countries/geographical areas in the Balkans which will be responsible for the implementation of the activities of volunteering management at the state/geographical region level and for relationship with the volunteers and organizations of civil society and volunteer's organizations.

UNV/UNDP RIVER SEE program goals are the development of the regional trust and establishment of the valuable contacts between the population and the governments in the Balkans region. The comprehensive aim is the contribution to the regional integration and, social elections and poverty reduction in the Balkans by i) strengthening of the network through East - east exchange of volunteers, ii) promotion of volunteerism and active citizenship, iii) capacity building for the civil/civic society by working on the local development and government processes and iv) the establishment of the cooperation between the civil initiatives in the region.

The program represents a unique UNV/UNDP regional cooperation which will be co-realized with the help of the partners such as the EU/EVS, VSO UK, SEEYN, OneWorld SEE and 14 implementation partnership organizations - Albanian Youth Council and

The Balkans Youth Link/ Mjaft (Albania), Youth Communication Center and Youth Center Livno (BiH), Volunteer Center Zagreb and Peace studies center (Croatia), Association for the Democratic initiatives of Macedonia and Center for prevention of juvenal delinquency (FYR Macedonia), Kosovo Youth Network and Kosovo action for the civil initiatives (Kosovo), Timok's club and European Movement in Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro), Association for the democratic prosperity ZID and SOS call center for women and children victims of violence (Serbia and Montenegro) - from seven countries /regions in the Balkans with the possibility of expansion to the Romania and Bulgaria, and it is planned to last for the 24 months.

IPO will be responsible for the contacts with the organizations of civil society (CSO), volunteer organizations (VIO) and volunteers and realization of the volunteer activities management at the level of countries/regions through the RIVER SEE Program Board, at the regional level. In spring - summer 2004 a survey has been conducted in the field and cooperation was realized with the members of the organizations OneWorld SEE (OWSEE) and South East Europe Youth Network (SEEYN). www.riversee.org

Employers, what is it that you need?

Serbian businessmen could soon open new factories - schools where the students would be in short time for the exorbitant price provided with the very knowledge and skills which the present educational system lack. Although this scenario appears to have blank pages, the experts are warning that there is a real danger when the children are educated for the same skill twice. For the first time it is done in regular education, the second time it happens in the factories, when the children maybe for the first time in their lives see the factory machines.

In aim of helping the employers, European Training Foundation (ETF) with the help of the Italian Fund for Cooperation started the project "The promotion of mechanisms for workers skills profile in search of employment in the Serbian economy". As a natural ally of the program CARDS 2005, the project will participate in the modernization of the specialized high school education. Namely, the issue here is the development of the methodology which will enable the Serbian companies to identify precisely the skills and knowledge which their future workers would be advisable to have. Economic Institute from Belgrade and Italian consulting house Agora 2000 will be in charge of this project implementation. Moreover, the first step in application of this project has been already made. The main aim of setting the web site www.eff.eu.int is to inform all the subjects involved into the analysis of the personnel potentials of the domestic economy: companies, Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Employers Association, various experts in the area of education, Center for Specialized and Art Education, and so on.

How to establish the bridge of connection between knowledge, specialized education and demands of economy?

Francesco Pancina, ETF program manager comfortingly says that this issue solution is not just the matter of Serbia, but many rich EU countries as well. Comparing the present situation at the market with the centralized economy from the age of self-management, Pancina points out the fact that the demands of the present market change quickly and therefore we need constant "interventions" in future employees'

Positive things

The German organization for the technical cooperation GTZ ever since 2002 supports the modernization of the specialized high school education in Serbia. In so far new profiles have been introduced into 32 schools in the field of law, economy and administration. Three years ago a business administrator has been presented, and the following year students could choose to become financial administrators, and last autumn they could choose the profile of a bank clerk. According to the following year announced plans for GTZ, the present seven-graders could already consider their options thinking whether they would like to work in field of insurance, trans shipment, wholesale or foreign trade.

European Training Foundation program should help the local companies to clearly articulate their skills and knowledge obligatory for the specific work profiles

education. "As a result of the old tradition we have the programs with theoretical content in abundance, and programs are not focused at the companies' needs", he adds. Pancina suggests the solution: first we need to observe the demands of the market, then import that into the educational system, and finally in the educational programs.

Following the CARDS footsteps

Juliano Rosciglione for the Italian consulting house Agora 2000 admits that the methodology on which this project is based is not new, but is taken from the CARDS VET program. However, contrary to the CRADS programs focused on the side of the offer (schools, Ministry of education and specialized centers), the ETF project's emphasis is on the demand, i.e. the companies' requests. "We will organize the seminars for companies' representatives training if they want to transform the analysis of the desired skills into the necessary educational profiles", Rosciglione explains in detail. Recently launched CARDS 2005 will test its methodology in three sectors (wood cutting, new technologies and tourism); while at the same time the methodology of the European training foundation will be tested in the textile industry and commerce. Besides the school modernization in these economic sectors, and those included into the CARDS 2003, the aim of this project is for the methodology to take hold in other segments of Serbian economy as well. This project will promote the capacities of the ISOR committee which was founded by the implementation of the CARDS 2003. As Rosciglione noticed, in that way their former imprecise evaluations of the defectiveness of the specialized high school education would get the scientific framework.

Fastidious workers

The slow solving of the problems in the specialized high school education brought to the fact that we still have profiles and occupations in the market that we know for sure this economy would not need. Out of the official number of 900 thousand of unemployed, young people make for the worrisome number of 48, 8%. In the evidential cards for the unemployed we for sure have the greatest number of citizens with high school. The issue here is the number of work profiles important for both the involvement into the working process and the continuation of the education. As Refik Šecibovic, the professor at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Economics noticed it is not the issue here that the students are getting the theoretical knowledge in school, but the fact that this system includes skills, personal abilities and practice. "This manner of schools financing suits only the ministry of finance

because they invest little money in this. We should make the more expensive, but better quality specialized education", Šecibovic warns adding that if you observe this situation in long period of time, Serbian educational system is very expensive.

It is however that the young people are in the ungrateful position especially those who left the specialized high schools and stepped right into the labor market, and the fault is shared both between those who are making the educational programs and those who are applying it. The part of the responsibility lies on the employers as well for the reason they still believe that the students of the practical education are "standing in the way"; instead of that they should think that the students represent a future labor force that comes there to study. Another fashion, now very typical for the young unemployed people, is that the majority of those are not at all ready to take one of the officially 600 thousand free work places. A serious problem of overappraisal of (ignorance) knowledge compared to the offered salary makes the announced arrival of the Chinese workers inevitable.

Ivana Petrovic



The Second International Educational Fair in Novi Sad

How can make it to Europe with illiterate people?

The second international educational fair "Putokazi" (eng. Signposts) was held last year in Novi Sad. During this three-day manifestation 90 exhibitors from Serbia and 10 exhibitors from Croatia, Slovenia, Malta, Greece, Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina showed up. Not only that the state and private universities, faculties, higher and high schools had their presentation in front of more than 15.000 visitors, both from Serbia and the countries from the region, but also the people and open universities, adults education agencies, foreign languages and computers schools, tourist agencies, government and non-government agencies concerned with education presented their offer at the Fair.

- In the conditions of the economy based on knowledge as the moving force, which delineates the end of the last and the beginning of this century, this fair will show a wide choice of institutions which will enable those who are striving for the new skills and European trends to achieve their goals and acquire new education for the future - Radmila Marinkovic - Neducin, PhD, the rector of the Novi Sad University said, when she opened this fair.

Provincial secretary for education and culture Zoltan Bunjik, MA, said that the Educational fair proves for the fact that Serbia had entered the into a situation characterized by pluralism and healthy competition, so that, after the period of independence we have had in this area, we can expect the period of the legal regulations.

Serbian high school students want to go to the regional countries

The benches of the regional countries faculties aroused special interest in the Educational fair. The representatives of the American college for management and technologies from Dubrovnik, who have participated at the First educational fair in 2004, said that the interest has risen four times compared to that first fair. Gea college from Piranha presented itself for the first to the Serbian public two years ago at the fair in Belgrade, although they encountered a bigger interest in Novi Sad, especially of teachers who wanted to organize presentations in schools. This educational institution offers three-year studies of management in English at the price of 3.700 euros per year with the possibility of students exchange with the rest of the European faculties of the same orientation.

Serbian high school students got interested into the studying conditions at the Slobomir P University in Slobomir and Dobby. This university offers the four-year faculty program, at the price of 2.000 euros per year, at the faculties of Management, Information Technologies, Law, Graphics and Design, and Faculty of Philology and Tax Academy as well.

In Vojvodina in 2006, Mr Bunjik announced a project of Roma minority education subvention as a special issue in the budget, and after that the project of increasing the health, physical and mental safety of the students, then the subvention of schools in minority languages at Novi Sad University, as well as the subvention of construction and upgrading of some schools, students' home in Kikinda and Academy of Arts in Novi Sad.

Besides the exhibitors offer at the fair, rich program of round tables and panel discussions as well filled performance and representation at the central fair stage this time.

- Higher education reform according to the Bologna convention has in large overtaken faculties of Novi Sad University and almost 70 - 80% of these introduced the system of ECTS, which quantitatively reflects the students' obligations -

Mirosalv Planc, PhD, a prorektor of the Novi Sad University said in the panel discussion organized for measuring the progress of the implementation of the high education reform, stating that in these processes, when the implementation to our system was helped by the Law on the high education, nothing is defined completely and we are still working out the transition period and relation to the present students.

At the panel discussion organized for the permanent education in the third millennium, we heard barely encouraging facts of the half of the Serbia population being functionally illiterate, i.e. having no specialized knowledge, and one fifth of the population has not finished the elementary school. At the same time in Vojvodina, which is populated by 700.000 people who have unfinished elementary school, we can find only three schools for adults education, and the number of participants in these schools decreases annually, so if the literacy of the adults continues in this tempo we will need at least a half of the century for that.

In the spirit of the Roma education Day, a number of discussions was organized on this topic, where we confronted with very disconcerting facts, starting from the fact that 80% of this population lives in the worst life conditions, that only 27% of these are economically active, and the fact that in this ethnical group unemployment is four times bigger than in the rest of the Serbia population.

- How serious is this state, shows the fact that in Vojvodina only 28 Roma students enrolled the first grade of secondary school, and at the same time we have more than 5.500 children in the elementary school - Danica Stefanovic, the assistant of the provincial secretary of education, said. - We made a step forward by opening an office and a council for Roma, but we would have to move further in handling this.

The last day of the Educational fair, was reserved to people with special needs, when a documentary film "The way I see you" was presented. That day the prizes have been awarded for the "Human diversity and non-discrimination" art and literary work competition for elementary and high school students from Novi Sad and we discussed the varieties of the educational systems and saw the educational programs for young people with special needs. Once again, we appealed to the public not to use the word 'invalid', which puts the invalidity in the first plan, neglecting the rest of the personality; and instead of that, we should use a term person with special needs, regarding the fact that is just one of many characteristics of a person, and not the only one.

Danica Devecerski



A confirmation at the test of maturity

At the time when the developed European countries energetically and radically changed their educational systems adjusting those to the market demands and economic needs, in the nineties the former Yugoslav republics had more or less the same school models. No one was leading for the reason we organized everything in one-sided system "framework" and that is how laws, programs and plans were shaped. The teachers lectured in an ex cathedra manner and were classroom gods, because the students could not question their authority and had to play the given role without additional questions. When the newly formed countries ventured to the transitional reforms, those winds overtook the educational field as well. Although they all had the same starting point and received the similar financial and expert help by the international projects, not all the countries could accelerate at the same force and level.

The Slovenians first build the educational house, although they had curving paths during the fourteen-year thinking about the reformation demands. At one moment they even brought their project to an end, but the foreign experts warned them they had to question some of their assumptions. The rest of the state's population did not sit on their back - those who wanted the changes to happen even with the help of expert NGOs - although they had to face the political and economic advantages and disadvantages and traditionalists' accusations which slowed down the reforms but obviously were necessary.

Owing to the fact that the high school education is posing as an important "intermediate" between the obligatory and high education, as well as the market demands and private initiative, this school level was specially scrutinized by the educational reformists from former Yugoslavian republics. The future educational system actually depends on this segment of education as well as the unemployment rate. The high school educational processes produce the greatest number of those waiting at the unemployment agency. Too much theory and little practice, a sheer repetition of elementary school learning material creates the personnel who are not so useful. In some countries in Balkans, you could witness a situation when a nurse with a diploma gets panic-stricken when she has to take patient's blood sample!

The EU experts paid special attention to a specialized high school education in last two years, because they are seriously considering an option of pupils' mobility from country to country just as the Bologna process enables the same thing for students. If that idea should be approved, then the high school diploma will have the list of subject data and acquired skills as an addition.

In most of the states in the region, a matriculation exam still did not become a ticket to enter a university. In EU they are thinking about introducing a supplementary to the degree by which we will enable a greater mobility of high school students from one educational system to another, thus increasing the possibility of employment

The institute for specialized education in EU (with centre in Thessalonica) works on that project and if they reach the national agreement, this knowledge will be transferable in EU member countries educational systems.

There is a similar movement in Serbia lead by Centre for specialized and art education of the Institute for promotion of guidance and education. The committee for public discussion has already considered a proposal that students graduating from specialized programs should have cards with supplementary information of the outcome of specialized education characteristic for a certain work profile. That is a very important thing for employers because they want to hire young, creative, expert candidates who could join the working process without additional training and extra investment. In most of the transitional countries today it is not possible because in schools and faculties no one is paying attention to the practical use of acquired knowledge.

The peak of the high school education is a matriculation, i.e. a final exam where we should establish what did really get into their heads; to what extent they could use and combine the acquired knowledge and skills. That is why we insist on different types of traditional forms of maturity exams. If we observe the former YU-republics, only Slovenia has the Matriculation law. By the regulations in 2003, a unique matriculation was transformed into the general and specialized matriculation and both are treated as a state exam that is at the same time a ticket to the university. The candidates with special needs have a right to take a specialized matriculation by the special rules, and Croatians have a similar solution too.

The escape from school

According to the official data we have, ten percent of pupils in Slovenia and Serbia do not continue their education after the elementary school. We have the similar situation in Croatia, but that percent is even bigger in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo. The prospects are not so good if we consider the decreasing number of students. According to the unofficial data, every third high school student in Serbia gives up the education before the graduation. According to the European trends, that fact is not exclusive only for the Balkans, but worries the developed countries as well. It was not long ago that the English complained of this situation and the fact that the present high school students are less educated than their parents.

They take the state exam at the same time and place, and when it comes to the university entry, we count the matriculation exam success and marks achieved in the last two years of high school. The matriculation exam consists of the common part (Slovenian, mathematics, foreign language), optional part (two subjects are taken from the list), the sixth subject at the matriculation is not obligatory, but it could be taken into consideration instead of another subject if the student gets a higher mark. The students can choose some of the matriculation topics at a higher level. The matriculation consists of a written and an oral exam.

International matriculation is different from the national one, since besides the regular six subjects, the students have to pass six more and after a successful defense, a Slovenian student can successfully apply to the foreign faculties. All the countries in the region have this matriculation and a private grammar school "Crnjanski" from Belgrade has recently acquired that right.

- We prepare for the matriculation in third and fourth year. Professors are interested in preparing the students well, because the school is successful if students are successful. I am not scared of the exam, because we start the preparations early, which gives us many opportunities for success. Your big success at the matriculation means that you have many points, which adds to your school success and those are your points for the entrance to the university. If you want to study at the faculty for which you need many points, then the pressure increases - says Sonja Žarkovic, a third grade student of a prestigious Bežigrad grammar school from Ljubljana.

The Slovenian grammar school program is organized by modules that are suitable for the students' abilities and interests emphasizing the development of skills and knowledge required for the self-education. The developed countries insist on this characteristics and that is what the transitional countries really lack. In Serbia, students achieve good results at the international tests if the theoretical knowledge is required but they have a hard time when it comes to the use of theory in practice.

In Slovenia, all high school programs enable the continuation of the education. After the three-year artisan school, a student can enroll in a supplementary program and thus achieve their right to continue the education in the specialized educational

institutions. After a few years, a person can enlist in the specialized programs for the masters of art for the middle and grand entrepreneurship, and a dual system (work while you learn) was adopted.

The experts in Croatia have agreed to standardize the final exam, the state matriculation, which questions the students' level of knowledge and achieved competence at the end of the high school education. In the school year 2008/2009 the first generation should take the exam according to the new rules, and 12 months later the students of the last year of specialized and art schools. Yet the real preparations for the state matriculation will start at the national exams this school year, when all first year students in the grammar school will take the standardized exams in Croatian, mathematics and English. As in Slovenia, the matriculation will be taken at the same time in the whole country by the equal standards for everybody. The manner of organization and exam conduction are clearly defined and improper behavior is disabled, as the authors of the reform claim.

The diploma of finished state matriculation will contain the descriptions of established students' competence and will serve as a reliable and objective sign of the students' preparation for the continuation of the education or the readiness for the efficient adjustment to the demands of the market. Those who successfully pass the last step placed at the end of the high school will prove that they have reached the levels of national standards of knowledge and competence.

The school's authorities in Serbia will have to pass the same reformation path with the precise specialized and financial help of the international institutions, as the other transitional countries already have. They would not start from the very beginning, because many things have been done already, especially in the area of the specialized high school education, but we still lack the systematical solutions. We should constitute the International School Council before we adopt the new laws that are already in a process of writing (for a second time since 2003). We chose the members of the council last summer, but we got into a deadlock when we were to choose a president, so this body, being in charge of the Serbian vision of education, could not start with the work. As Ministry of education planned, the new Educational concept should be finished at all levels by 2010.

Because of the political situation since the democratic changes in 2000 until the very day, we had three ministers of education, and that was the reason only the field of specialized high school education functioned without interruption - almost every third school had a pilot project or an experiment where we insisted on practice, skills and modern educational approach. Just from 2001 to 2003, we cancelled 40, and introduced 27 new work profiles. The first results already showed that the students like the new educational system where the practical work is treated with a special attention.

Becoming aware of the changes

The reformers are aware that in the transitional period of accelerated privatization of social and state property we should solve a dozen of questions while following the path of quality and efficient education in accordance to the European standards, requests of the modern age, but the best traditional values of local educational system as well.



- This year the second generation of students of the third level educational profile will take the final exam by the new program based on the competence and the Handbook of taking the final exam. There is a list of formal marking so that we would avoid any kind of subjectivity from the members of the committee marking the final exam, because according to that we can precisely see what the student has learned during his/her education - Mirjana Bojanic, a counselor in a Centre for Specialized and Art education of the Institute for Promotion of Guidance and Education.

The first generation of students from four-year specialized high schools where they had experimental programs will take the new matriculation test this year. Mirjana Bojanic says that the experts from the Centre will propose an exam called "specialized matriculation" to the Ministry in charge. It would consist of three parts, written test in Serbian, i.e. mother tongue, test of theoretical knowledge from the main specialized subjects and practical part of the exam.

We are not planning the changes in grammar school matriculation test. It is easier and less challenging from Slovenia and Croatia state matriculation, for example, and the final grade does not affect the final sum of points at the entry exam for the university. In Serbia, the matriculation test consists of Serbian written test, test of foreign language of mathematics and a matriculation paper work that they defend in front of a commission. All high schools organize the matriculation at their own tempo and

schedule and this exam has no significance for the entry exam to the faculty. Experts in Serbia thought about the state matriculation for a long time, but they banished the thought so the students will still have to study hard from June to July - because after the maturity test they have to take the entry test for faculties.

Unlike the former YU republics, the experts believe that the Slovenians made the greatest progress if you compare it to the nineties. They are simply the best in systematical solutions, organized institutions and have the greatest schools fairly equipped. The educational system has not changed a lot because the emphasis was on the change of content and program internal relations. In the last year or two, Croatia made a huge step forward, although it seemed like it gave the reform a lot of thought. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have a specific situation because it is still dealing with the consequences of the past. They have started the various programs of specialized education, even before Serbia, but it is hard to talk about the educational reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina if you have in mind the destroyed economy and the cantonal diversity. At the international conference in 2003, Serbia was announced as a leader in the field of specialized high school reforms. Everybody praised the present school authorities for their venturing into changes and skipping time and lost chances, but we can see now that it was not possible then and that we have to work a lot on our reform.

Olga Nikolic

(Un)fair game?

According to the assessment of the World Health Organisation, there are approximately 800.000 people with a disability in Serbia (10% of the entire population). The story about equal chances starts, however, a long time before employment and education; it virtually starts from the day the handicap is found. However, the more primitive a society is, the bigger are the problems. It is even supported by the statistical figures showing that 26% of people in Serbia do not want to receive the blood from the handicapped.

They are marginalised, isolated, they live hardly keeping body and soul together along with the alarming level of the unemployment which is in Serbia four times smaller than the European average level - says Vesna Bogdanović, the executive director of the Center for the Inclusive Society Development in Belgrade.

Our fellow townsmen who cannot see, hear and who have difficulties when move are not "poor, little, endangered hamsters" as people around them usually see them, says Goran Pavlović, the president of the Association of the Students with Handicap, but, at first place, individuals that have the same needs, only the way they are fulfilled is different. It points out the necessity for the constant fight with prejudices, and especially with the employers who have to understand that even a worker with a disability can be productive if his working space is suitably equipped and supplied with appropriate working tools.

Despite the fact that persons with a dis-

DISASTROUS EDUCATION

Suad Zahirović says that, in BiH, they do not even know the precise number of the population and with help of the World Health Organization, they estimate that there are about 350.000 persons with a disability. Official unemployment rate in BiH is 44% and about 95% persons with a handicap are unemployed. Educational structure of the population under the age 30 is devastating, while the older generation acquired their education before the outbreak of the war.

ability do not want to be passive recipients of the public welfare but the users of the right for work, Vesna Bogdanović warns that the present situation is not satisfactory.

On the list of the National Employment Bureau there are 25.744 persons with limited working abilities. No matter the number, it is known that a third lives in Belgrade. Not more than 284 persons were lucky enough to get a job in the period from January to September in 2005, which is only 13%. Thanks to the various

programs of this bureau only 109 of them managed to maintain regular monthly incomes, and only 1% of our fellow townsmen with a mental handicap have encountered the possibility to work something.

The truth is that the problem is further complicated by the educational level so the knowledge distribution, says Bogdanović, looks this way: Almost 9.500 of the potential worker have the elementary specialist training, 2.000 of them have intermediate specialist training, and only 95 of them have university level specialist training. She, however, reminds that in case of an acquired disability,

UNWANTED

Firms that in 1990 in Serbia employed persons with a handicap numbered 11.000 employees, and today not more than 4.000. There were 28 such firms then, and now there are 80 of them.

other potentials can be used by means of retraining programs and gives examples of nurses and even surgeons that work sitting in the wheel chair.

Talking about protective workshops, so-called DESs, as the remnants of the traditional medical model which classifies persons with a disability into a group of supported, passive members of the society, Vesna Bogdanović intercedes in favor of their restructuring.

"We know neither the precise number of these workshops, nor to whom they belong, to the state or to a private owner. Persons with damaged hearing or with a mental handicap who work in factories or in manufacturing sector face enormous discrimination, for those sections are managed by persons without a disability so, consequently without an understanding for special needs", says our interviewee and emphasizes that it remains unclear whether their salary is determined by their disability or by the work they perform. If we exclude the first reason as a humiliating one, then, the following question is imposed: Why do not they do their jobs on usual places, in factories, enterprises, but in some "protective" workshops. Bogdanović emphasizes that a job means more than salary to our fellow townsmen; it gives them the feeling of independence and equality in this society.

There are positive examples, but they only bring hope. There are three enterprises and two protective workshops that employ disabled persons. "Zastava Impro", where manually used and specialized tools and light cargo sidecars are produced, employs 70 people, 40 invalids among them. There are 146 workers in the state

firm "Šumadija des" and it operates like the firms that employ working people. Tax deduction and exemption from value added tax would mean a lot to them.

"GrafoPromet", the firm that belongs to the printing sector and sales stationery, with help of 24 workers, twelve of them with muscular dystrophy, also manages to pay all taxes to the detriment of the salaries.

It is interesting that the representatives of these firms, situated in town Kragujevac, think that persons with a disability should be financed from the budget as well as from the funds for improvement of the working conditions, and that the social program should be created on the voluntary basis.

What are the chances in a race for a job, but with almost inevitable discrimination which is impossible to expel from the conscience of the people without a handicap, is presented by the example of a woman who despite diploma from the Faculty of the Economics, active knowledge of foreign languages and good knowledge of computers has been waiting for a job for 16 years!! Last year, in Zajecar, an entrepreneur got 100.000 dinars from the National Employment Bureau on condition that he would employ a person with a handicap as a computer operator and be paying him off his salary for two years.

Voluntarily - poor effect

According to official regulations, employer is obliged to provide specialized working conditions for the invalids and that includes adaptation of the work place and a specialized kind of sanitary facilities, but it is all on the voluntary basis.

"No problem, but, nevertheless, let the operator sit at home", concluded the boss.

By the last changes in the Labour Law, persons with a disability looking for a job became equal to all other workers. The stimulation measures are also reduced for the employers (Two years ago the National Employment Bureau, in corporation with the Ministry of Finance, used to give 72.000 dinars to the interested employers). Those who are ready to start a private business can get a credit of 140.000 dinars, but in case something goes wrong, they cannot apply for any kind of help in two-year period.

Nevertheless, in the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, they promise the affirmative approach to the persons with a disability. Their integration into the wider social community cannot happen over the night, but now there is a Draft Law on Employment and Professional Rehabilitation of the persons with a disability. It plans a different typol-

MYSTERY

If it is estimated that there are 800.000 handicapped persons in Serbia, and there are only 25 744 of them registered on the Labour Market, there is a question what happens with the rest of them. Do they, as Goran Pavlović says, live locked in their houses, going out only in the night or maybe not even then? They are 50, but they do not have the ID because they do not need it.

ogy of the persons with a handicap, a certain quota of such persons to whom employers are obliged to offer a job, and in a six-month period a special Employment Fund will be founded.

Vera Pešut, the manager of the Group for the Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of the Persons with a Disability in this Ministry, says that according to this Law, every time an employer hires 25-50 working people, he or she will be obliged to employ a person with a disability. She believes that remarginalisation of our fellow townsmen is out of question, but it is quite certain that they will have to wait a bit more for an adapted work place.

The remaining question is whether, besides this Law, the Law on Prevention of Discrimination which is about to be passed will manage to change people's conscience and affirm diversity accompanied by equal possibilities.

Such hope exists in Republic of Srpska, as well, where the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Support of the Employment of Persons with a Disability was passed a year before while in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina a similar legislation is in procedure.

"Because of the changes within the tax system and within authority in power of the institutions for fixing the tax and all other kinds of deductions, and within the institution which would employ disabled persons, the Law has not showed expected results", says Suad Zahirović, executive director of the information center for persons with a disability called "Lotos" and points out to the two things that can bring the situation to a change. There is the Law on the Acquisition Policy that implies that 20% of the work places via public acquisition should be given up to the firms that employ persons with a disability, as well as the firms for the development of a single system of tax deductions and stimulations, that would be applied to the whole territory of BiH.

Zahirović reminds about the changed structure of needs within certain professions in business, in comparison to the pre-war period. The companies care for profit, and the employees are expected to carry out various tasks their qualification does not even include, so there are less and less possibilities for persons with a handicap to work. Nevertheless, the program is supported by the Employment Bureau from the different levels of authority, expenses of salaries and retraining programs are covered.

Devastating reports of ethnic discrimination

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina gave the annual report in which, among many things, devastating facts about ethnic discrimination in this country are mentioned, especially in the sector of Labour Legislation. This assessment is, as well, confirmed by other organisations dealing with protection of basic human rights and freedom.

The relationship among nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still under the burden of the ruling parties' intention to preserve ethnic homogeneity. That is the reason why the multi-ethnic face of Bosnia and Herzegovina renews so slowly, which is confirmed by some basic comparisons, says the president of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srdan Dizdarević.

The consequence is prolonged, widely spread discrimination on national basis, which virtually disables employment, adequate education, appropriate health care for the population belonging to the minor nation in a certain area."

The harshest violations of human rights, which are shown in the analysis of the Helsinki Committee, as well as in the analysis of other institutions dealing with protection of basic human rights and freedom, take place in Labor sector. Unemployment is the key problem, however it is more and more often confirmed that nationality is the criterion for getting a job:

"Discrimination in the Labour sector does not depend only on private employers, but on the public sector as well, which should be marked by a different approach, and which should be led by the intentions according to which the pre-war national structure is to be reflected in the public services, in the services of Municipalities, Cantons and in the remaining segment of the public sector.

The most unjust are still entities' Labour Laws which, among all, promise return to work. However, we have still seen nothing of it, warns the ombudsperson of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vitomir Popović.

Since both Republic of Srpska and the federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed laws that guaranteed people's return to work, that is, in case that return is not possible, they should obtain the status of workers based on waiting

and in that way they gain other rights which are implied by the current legislations. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of thousands of such demands both in Republic of Srpska and in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of many who hoped to return to their old work place says:

"Hard life. I know my handcraft quite well, but what is the use of it when they do not want us. I cannot find a full-time job. I am a qualified mechanic by profession. Nothing is going to come out of these talks of returning to work."

However, even those who are employed in Bosnia and Herzegovina suffer the violations of human rights, according to Nada Grahovac, ombudsperson of Republic of Srpska:

"People work without being paid, without health insurance, without continuous length of service, without taxes being paid, without yearly vacations, in a word - without any rights guaranteed by the employment regulations. It is obvious that some strategic and operative positive moves have to be made in this field as soon as possible."

National minorities are also an example of violation of human rights in the field of employment, emphasizes Srdan Dizdarević, taking for an example the most numerous minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Roma:

"The information that only 1.5% of active Roma population work on contract compared to 50% of them having been employed before the war is in itself very indicative of their position. Even the only Roma who had worked in civil service got fired. Thus, human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina are in correlation with national identity and the fact that the minorities are in so hard a position confirms this assumption.

In our polls, also, the citizens pointed out that employment is the field where human rights are most often violated: "Human rights are violated by the very fact that people are unemployed."

"Mostly the rights of workers. Workers have nothing, no rights at all."

"Those people who have some power in society are in position to use their rights to some extent. And those who may have a lower social status are deprived of using their rights."

www.slobodnaevropa.org.

Many disabled children discriminated

ZAGREB - there are 11.020 children with special needs in Croatia, and many of them have no opportunity of regular education because the school buildings are not properly adapted or simply because of the attitudes of the teaching and managing staff.

That is why the Croatian Union of Associations of persons with a physical disability in cooperation with Ministry of Education initiated monitoring of the present situation in all 2.229 primary schools in

order to find out what should be improved and how. Preliminary findings show that of 835 schools who have sent their answers so far, only 15 of them are fully adapted for children with motoric impairments.

"We are going to find out what the conditions are like and we are going to make a quality network of appropriate school that will be able to give children the opportunity to have normal education - said the Minister Dragan Primorac.

Unwanted Guests

If we consider education as a driving force of a society, than the fact that the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite fear of losing the intellectual elite, does everything to prevent inflow of young and ambitious people from Serbia and Montenegro who want to gain knowledge in it and use that knowledge and experience within its boundaries, strikes us as surprising. While most seminars, forums, round tables, etc. all over Bosnia and Herzegovina deal with reform of higher education, with particular stress on improving the conditions of studying in order to prevent emigration of young intellectuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the number of those who would gladly leave rises. Despite continuing efforts to innovate the methods of teaching, to offer students accessibility to faculties other than their own, to validate their diplomas, to make it possible for them to complete one-year training period in economic sectors and different institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Employment Bureau, which would offer them practical experience, etc, surveys show that the methods used so far have not led to desired results.

The polls of the United Nations Development Program conducted in June 2005 show that more than a half of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, wants to leave the country, among those the number of young people is the highest. Namely, 70,2% of the interviewees are young people age 18 to 35, while 25,3% are those older than 50. As nothing in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be done without well known divisions among three ethnic groups, the poll included all three constitutive nations. Among these, the Serbs showed the greatest desire to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina (60,5%), Bosnian Muslims come after them with 48, 7% and Croatians with 40,8%.

It is clear that the main reason for this state of affairs is the poor economic situation in the country, it is also clear that everyone who has the chance will leave Bosnia and Herzegovina. And while we have young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina who are fed up with daily promises of brighter future made by politicians on one side, we also have a large number of students from Serbia and Montenegro who have a strong desire to complete their studies in this country on the other. However, high scholarships which are set by many faculties of the University of Sarajevo for students from Serbia and Montenegro force young people to give up on their studies before completion.

Set scholarships for full - time studies for one academic year (2005/2006) for Bosnian students from Serbia and Montenegro at the faculties of the University of Sarajevo were as follows: School of Dental Medicine 6,000 KM, Medical School 4,000 KM, School of Electrical Engineering 2,400 KM, School of Economics 2,000 to 2,500 KM, Law School, School of Veterinary Medicine and

Students from Serbia and Montenegro are not welcomed in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Pharmacy 2,000 KM. Since the required scholarships are set by administrative committees of the faculties, some of them decided to raise the scholarships by 100%.

Many analysts dealing with this, in the previous couple of years relevant problem, consider high scholarships as a form of discrimination. They find support for this argument not simply in the fact that the foreign citizens have to pay scholarships, since it is common in most European countries, but in the fact that students from Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of their ethnical identity, do not pay any scholarships in Serbia and Montenegro in case they decide to continue their academic career there. If we bear in mind the problem of getting places in students' dormitories, the fact that most students from Serbia and Montenegro return home comes as no surprise.

What is the catch? As the constitutive nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot reconcile their opinions, whatever the issue be,

only the universities in Republic of Srpska have had understanding for the thriving of the students to be given their rights which has lasted for years. Or, maybe, the institutions in power in Republic of Srpska understood long before those in the Federation that the country will not prosper on students' scholarships if that measure reduces the number of those who want to get education.

All these problems result from an agreement on cooperation among universities not being signed between the states of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro. From the Embassy of Serbia and Montenegro they warn that the draft of this document was sent to the responsible institutions a year and a half ago, and that they have not received the answer yet. On the other side, the state Ministry of Civilian Affairs claims that the text of the mentioned agreement has not reached them and that this issue is going to be dealt with at the meeting of the inter-state council of the two countries.

Fortunately for students and those who have been fighting for their rights a decision has been made recently by which the highest scholarship for students from Serbia and Montenegro has been limited to 3,000 KM, which is far less than the required scholarship of the School of Dental Medicine of

The group of higher education institutions

1. The group of social sciences
The first enrollment into a new school year
2. The group of faculties for teachers, Humanities, Biotechnical Sciences and Academies of Art,
The first enrollment into a new school year
3. The group of Technical Sciences
The first enrollment into a new school year
4. The group of medical sciences
The first enrollment into a new school year

The highest scholarships

- 1,000 KM
- 1,200 KM
- 1,800 KM
- 3,000 KM

and as the laws differ from one entity to another, from one canton to another, so do their attitudes towards studying of their fellow countrymen from neighboring countries. While Serbs from the neighborhood are welcomed at the universities in Republic of Srpska and Croatians at the University of Mostar, Bosnians from Serbia and Montenegro have to pay very high scholarships in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the Administrative Committee of the Law School of the University of Sarajevo reached and made public their decision owing to which the full-time students from Serbia and Montenegro have to pay scholarships as high as 2,000 KM, and part-time students 2,900 KM, the students started getting offers from Pale to continue their studies for free at the universities of Republic of Srpska. It turned out that, apart from the Association of Bosnians from Sandzak which has been fighting from the beginning for the right of Bosnian students from Serbia and Montenegro to have the same status that Serbs have in Republic of Srpska and Croatians at the University of Mostar,

6,000 KM. Namely, at the meeting of the Government of canton of Sarajevo held on 18 October 2005 the 'Decision of changes and amendment to the decision of agreement of the University of Sarajevo on the amount of participation in the price of studying at the faculties of the University of Sarajevo' was made. According to it, the scholarships for the students from former Yugoslavia are to be determined by the faculty according to the profile and curriculum of studies, but they cannot be higher than the set price for the parallel teaching process as given in the table.

The students from Serbia and Montenegro who study at the universities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are left with hope that they will also get a proper education for the overall costs of studying, and Bosnia and Herzegovina with hope that, with Bologna declaration being applied, it will get skilled staff who will not have ambitions of leaving the country in search of better future.

Merisa Suljević

World Linguistic Legacy under a Magnifying Glass

Alarming reports, provided by UNESCO, show that today there are approximately 6 000 different languages in the world, but the speed of their extinction is, at the very least, catastrophic. The languages of many nations are virtually about to be exterminated. Reduction of the number of languages, linguistic changes, attrition, and linguistic genocide - linguicide, have led to the situation in which many languages, even 50% of them, are slowly but rapidly dying out, while certain languages are marked by the fact that they are spoken only by a very small group of people, belonging mostly to the older generation, which it still uses.

At the moment, there are about 2.400 languages on the list of the "endangered languages", and the reports present the fact that at least about ten languages "disappear" every year.

"If these languages are completely withdrawn from use, the whole cultures will be lost along with them. By their disappearance we will lose for good the chance to examine the boundaries and the possibilities of man's linguistic system and the modes they use to influence human brain", is how Robert Dickson, an Australian linguist, explains the problem.

The biggest language "killers" are the English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Swahili, Chinese and Indonesian-Malaysian languages. Even 45% of the world population can speak at least one of five world languages: The English, Spanish, Russian, Hindu and Chinese (Mandarin). About 95% of the world population speak only a hundred world languages, while all others, and there are thousands of them, are used by not more than 5% of the population

"Language imperialism" or "murder of a language" is a term that explains frequent phenomenon that one language, once main and first language is pushed out by a socially more prestigious language. Bilingual people, that used to use two languages (the traditional one and the social one), very often, in time, forget their language and become bound to the imposed one. This process is known as "glottophagie" Linguistic conflicts most often occur in peaceful times, as a consequence of migrations, socialization and

In huge ecological race which is in progress so that the endangered environment on the Earth can be protected and saved, a fact that is very often neglected is that there are many other things that are in danger of extinction. A great number of languages, as well, belongs to that group. In modern world, the protection of the world language legacy not only as a reflection of the multilinguality of people, but as a cultural diversity which results from it, is very important as well

assimilations, which are the main factors that lead to the extinction of great number of world languages. The death of a language is not that much rapid, on the contrary, it needs certain time - period of several generations.

"Language is a matter of identity. In that sense, a question of essential value should be posed: How much a language is significant to a nation, to its culture, and whether people even want to preserve what is traditional. Established balance between different languages presents the essential importance in the process of preserving cultural diversity. The only way to help the great number of people to save their language implies giving support in that process. No language must be regarded as a dominant one, or, on the other hand, an inferior one. Each is, in its own way, unique", says Stephan Vurm from Australian National University, the editor of UNESCO's 'The Atlas of Endangered Languages', published in 1996.

And while on one side there are the followers of the idea of preserving the languages at any price, some linguists support the thesis that linguistic purity is nothing else but a myth that leads to the stagnation of certain nations. This myth, need for protection of the language, illustrates illogical fear of change, of borrowing the words from another languages. Is it possible to protect (or save) a language when the individuals who used to speak it do not want to use it anymore? Language policy may be implemented only if it is in accordance with a way a certain society develops. It seldom happens that a language or a language reform is implemented among people against their own will. Namely, it is not about language itself, but about the significance it has for

its users. A language dies out not only because another language overdominates, but also - which is the most important - because people themselves decide to neglect it, not to hand it down to their descendants. The term "language war" is quite an appropriate metaphor, but it is not languages that clash but people. They are those that decide to fit in the streams of modern world which believes that a language which is not present on the Internet and in modern business communication does not exist any more.

This group of linguists thinks that it is sad when a language extinguishes, but at the same time, they support the thesis that languages are not museum exhibits. They belong to people that speak them, and those people constantly change and adapt themselves to the needs of modern life, for a primary function of a language to serve people not vice versa. Evolution of the language forms and the relationship among them is an irreversible process, and while some languages are dying out, some others are emerging.

Since the fall of the Berlin wall and disintegration of Yugoslavia new countries have been formed, and new languages, as well - the Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian, which until recently had been considered as a single - Serbo-Croatian - language. The speakers of these languages confirm their own identities emphasizing the differences among their languages, the differences that boil down to a few words only. On the other hand, there is the example of decoupling of Czechoslovakia into Check Republic and Slovakia, but unlike the languages of the present countries of the former Yugoslavia, their languages undergo more obvious changes.

Gordana Fiket

Kosovo NGO support is still in progress

According to the experiences of successfully held seminars with NGO Svetla buducnost (Bright Future) from Kosovo, female trainers of the team TRI went on working on the support programme of this non-governmental organization with financial support of NGO Kvina Til Kvina. During the period between January 28 and January 29 in 2006, the female trainers of the team TRI held in Kosovska Mitrovica a seminar whose subject was "Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights". The main objectives of the seminar were:

"To understand the terms gender and sex and how to learn gender roles

"To understand the concept of the stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination against women

"To understand the significance of the term gender in the context of human/women's rights

Another training under the project called "Women's club" is agreed for the period between March 17 and March 19. Expected subject of this seminar is: "Disability as an Issue of Human Rights".

The scope of this project called "Strengthening the Capacity of the Organizations of People with Disabilities in Vojvodina", implemented by the Resource Center for the People with Disabilities of the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization in Novi Sad, is entered by the program of building the capacity of the representative body within the organizations of persons with disabilities. In the period between January 27 and January 28 in 2006, a member of the team TRI held in Novi Sad a seminar on the subject "Disability as an Issue of Human Rights".

Contributions to Pedagogical - Adult-Education Praxis at the University

Representation of the book 'Contributions to Pedagogical - Adult-Education Praxis at the University', edited by PhD Zalkida Hadzibegović from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the University of Sarajevo, is a motive to discuss positive aspects of participating in a program of vocational training of MAs, available at a few institutions for higher education on the Balkans. The aim of this publication is to help young teaching staff who did not have Pedagogy or Methodology of teaching to become acquainted with ways and methods of teaching, as well as with the way they should treat students. The book deals with different topics, such as: The Reform of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Bologna (PhD Mirjana Mavrak); Let Us Teach Successful Intelligence (MA Amir Pusina); The Process of Motivation (PhD Lamija Tanović); Methodology of Teaching: Different Ways of Teaching Adults and Creative Work of Students and Pupils (PhD Hasim Muminović), and many others. The book 'Contributions to Pedagogical - Adult-Education Praxis at the University' was sponsored by the American Government and American Council and it is going to be distributed to young teaching staff at all the universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to all the participants in regional JFDP programs.

PhD Zalkida Hadzibegović says that her editing of 'Contributions to Pedagogical - Adult-Education Praxis at the University' had to do with the vocational training she had through Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP). During her one-year stay at the University of Nevada Reno (academic year of 2003/2004) PhD Hadzibegović had very positive and affirmative experiences which she wanted to share with her colleagues in this way and thus give rise to other similar activities with common aim to improve methods of teaching at the university, which is at the same time one of the main objectives of JFDP program.

There are numerous possibilities that a program of vocational training such as JFDP can offer. PhD Hadzibegović already uses some of them at her, as well as at other universities. With the help of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and the Association of Physicists she carried out a part of this program in the field of Physics, more specifically Environmental Physics, through a summer and a winter school working with talented secondary school students. She also organized workshop 'Successful Part Teaching



PhD Zalkida Hadzibegović at the University of Nevada, March 2004, on an international gathering on the occasion of the International Women's Day

Fellows Have in Teaching at University' for teaching fellows and young teaching staff, in which 45 teaching fellows from the University of Sarajevo took part. She also plans to organize a one-year workshop for teaching fellows in Bihac, Mostar and Tuzla.

Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP) is a program for granting scholarships to university teaching staff with an aim to develop the methodology of teaching through international exchange and education under guidance from American Councils for International Education financed by the American Government, Department of Education and Culture. The objective of this program is to offer vocational training to university teaching staff in different fields, such as: American Studies, Administration, Environmental Studies, International Affairs, Journalism, Psychology, Philosophy, Political Science, Economy, and many others. All the teaching fellows and lecturers currently teaching at one of the universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, Georgia, Russia, Moldova, Kazakhstan and some other countries are eligible for this program. Through this program students are expected

to work at American universities on further development of their own knowledge in the field of Methodology of teaching, theoretical aspects of the fields they had specialized in and to participate in creating new courses and teaching materials for their home universities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina JFDP program has been carried out since 2003 and 7 teaching fellows and lecturers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the University of Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka and Tuzla have already taken part in a one-year program. This program supports projects which participants wish to carry out in cooperation with home institutions and organizations. Five new participants from the University of Bosnia and Herzegovina are currently taking part in the program receiving advanced teacher training in their own fields.

PhD Zalkida Hadzibegović believes that completing such a program as JFDP presents an extraordinary opportunity for cooperating with colleagues at American universities, as well as for cooperation among colleagues in the region who have completed the same program, which is already coming into life through regional conferences.

Andjelka Dobrilović

JÁN FIGEL' Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism

Supporting the creation of a knowledge economy in the Western Balkans: the Lisbon Strategy and European instruments

Conference of the European Ministers of Education
"Strengthening Education in Europe"

Vienna, 17 March 2006

Dear colleagues, Ministers,

My colleague Benita Ferrero-Waldner has explained in her speech why education, training and research are cornerstones of both the enlargement policy and the external relations policy of the European Union.

Today's event is another small but important step along the road which, we hope, will take your countries into the EU family. As Ministers responsible for education and training, you bear important responsibilities to make it happen. Teachers, students and educational establishments can and should integrate with the wider European knowledge community before formal membership of the EU. Human networks are a precondition of political and economic integration.

Furthermore, education and training policies are coming more and more to the centre of EU decision making. Why? They are crucial to social and economic development and help build solid institutions - issues of great importance at EU level and, I imagine, of even more crucial importance to you in this stage of your national development.

In the next few minutes, I would like to outline how we cooperate on education and training at the EU level and how, I feel, this can be of interest and practical support to you.

Achieving objectives is a shared responsibility

I should start with the Lisbon strategy. European Heads of state and Government came

together in March 2000 to set out a set of shared objectives for our future.

They spelled out what we need to achieve in a range of policy domains if we are to have the kind of fast economic growth, open labour market and socially cohesive societies that we want.

In today's world, Europe can succeed only if it can harness its knowledge. And in this context, education and training issues are paramount.

The Education & Training 2010 work programme is our main instrument for political cooperation and for implementing these goals within the Lisbon agenda.

We have agreed to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training systems and to improve access to these systems and their openness to the wider world.

In addition, we have also agreed a set of tools that help Member States implement their reforms. For example, a peer-learning programme allows Member States to exchange best practices and make tangible progress.

Finally, we have indicators, benchmarks, and specific reporting mechanisms to monitor performance.

The whole system rests on one assumption: success and credibility of our venture at European level depends on how Member States translate the agreed commitments into practice.

Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Turkey are already participating in Education & Training 2010. Latest national reports show that their national policy developments already take into account many aspects of the Lisbon strategy. This is good news.

For example, Croatia, Romania and Turkey have developed national qualification frameworks, proof of practical progress towards the establishment of lifelong- learning systems.

Generally speaking, however, participation in lifelong learning is still very low in the Western Balkan countries and is one of the issues which deserves your further attention and our further European support.

Bologna Process and higher education reforms

You will recall the report on progress in quality assurance, two-cycle degree system, and recognition which was prepared for the Bergen Conference last year.

It showed very encouraging signs from the Western Balkans. Progress, for example, in creating the two cycles, in quality assurance systems and particularly in recognition of qualifications, where most countries have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Albania and Montenegro are doing very well in terms of implementing ECTS.

You can draw on the input provided by the Bologna process, but your reform effort has to go beyond curricular reforms. Looking forward, I suggest you address issues such as funding, governance, links with business -issues which we have been discussing a lot within the Union of late.

National authorities should make sure that the legal framework gives universities the degree of autonomy and accountability they need to function best. This cannot be done so long as universities are legally split into their constituent faculties.

National authorities should also develop diversified models of funding - including private support. Higher education institutions, on the other hand, need to develop a sense of institutional unity and identity as a prerequisite for tackling their challenges. For example, by developing more professional forms of internal governance.

The European Union, both collectively and, I am sure, through individual Member States, can and will assist you in any way possible; however, both the challenge and the ultimate success belong to you and to your people.

Tools for policy implementation

So much for the policy exchange framework. There is also a framework for EU funding in support of the shared objectives and their implementation.

You are already active in this framework. Cooperation with Western Balkan countries in education and research has been significant in recent years, with a substantial Commission contribution provided under several programmes.

Tempus and Erasmus Mundus

The Tempus programme is perhaps the cornerstone of this cooperation .

Tempus has a long history of assisting Partner Countries to reform and strengthen their higher-education systems and to build institutional infrastructure. It also facilitates dialogue between institutions and people, notably by supporting exchanges of best practices and mobility. All in all, between 2000 and 2006, Tempus III will have committed about €110 million on more than 300 projects and 550 individual mobility grants in the Western Balkans.

We are committed to extending Tempus beyond 2006 with a focus on institution - based university cooperation and mobility.

As to the Erasmus Mundus programme, the European Commission has made available a total of 17 scholarships to students and scholars from the Western Balkans so far.

Participation of universities from the Western Balkans in the Erasmus actions to promote institutional cooperation has been relatively weak. Your universities should be more active to raise awareness about the opportunities offered by this programme.

Youth

As far as non-formal education is concerned, the YOUTH Programme promotes intercultural dialogue, tolerance and social inclusion among young people. The programme also strengthens the work of youth NGOs at international level and aims to develop civil society.

I hope you share my high estimation of the value of these actions. I cannot overestimate how much they can help social and political development. Every Euro spent to spread the ideas of civic participation and the value of a united Europe to civil society -and especially to young people - brings a huge return. Perhaps this return is not immediately visible, but if we are serious about our process of integration in the long-term, it is invaluable.

Organisations and young people from the Western Balkans are already participating in most of the activities supported through the YOUTH programme since its start in 2000. They do so with the support of the SALTO Resource Centre for South East Europe, which is funded by the European Commission and based in Ljubljana.

Between 2003 and 2004, 246 projects were funded, involving around 2,200 participants from the region and 2,800 participants from the European Union. This represents an annual increase of over 100% with respect to the preceding three years.

This is my outline of the situation so far. Now I would like to turn to what lies ahead in the next months and years.

The Commission is working on a new set of orientations for the cooperation with the Western Balkans for the period 2006-2010.

Although this is still work in progress and questions remain about how exactly this will be done, we are determined to provide continued support and opportunities for the mobility of students, teachers, and young people.

Our recent Communication "The Western Balkans on the road to the EU: Consolidating stability and raising prosperity" suggests practical steps over the period 2007-2013.

Increasing mobility

In the framework of preparing the new financial instrument-the instrument for pre- accession which will start in 2007-the Commission is currently reviewing its actions under Tempus and Erasmus Mundus, with a view to increasing the opportunities for mobility of undergraduate and graduate students.

For the mid-term period starting in 2007, the Commission is committed to proposing a new scholarship scheme for undergraduate students.

The details are currently being examined. However, as early as 2006, the Commission is willing to implement measures that will increase co-operation and mobility. As a first step, a special Western-Balkan "window" will be made available in 2006 within Erasmus Mundus. This will allow up to 100 students from the region to take postgraduate studies in the EU.

Also as from this year, youth organisations based in South East Europe are not only partners in EU projects, but they can become project coordinators, directly submitting pilot projects under the framework of the Youth Programme.

16 projects have been selected so far, which will involve around 176 participants from the region and 216 participants from the European Union, EEA, and Candidate countries.

In this regard, a number of practical hurdles have been identified: mobility obstacles, such as visa, residence permit and difficulties with bank transfers. Cooperation with relevant stakeholders and decision makers is needed to overcome these barriers; we would be grateful for any support the Ministers might be able to provide.

Civil Society Dialogue with Western Balkan countries and Turkey

The Commission has furthermore proposed to extend to all Western Balkan countries the civil society dialogue which was recently launched with the candidate countries.

This is part of our efforts to improve mutual knowledge, understanding and intercultural dialogue between our societies, and to prepare future enlargement.

Programmes such as Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and Youth, or the integrated lifelong learning programme have a strong potential to contribute to this dialogue.

In addition, the Commission considers it particularly important to promote dialogue between Western Balkan societies themselves. A special effort should be made to encourage civil-society development in each country and a culture of civil-society consultation.

I believe education ministers have special responsibility to carry this initiative forward.

Internal or external programmes?

Before finishing, one issue I would like to bring to the table is whether the participation in internal EU programmes or external programmes aimed at countries outside the Union.

Many of the countries represented around this table have expressed interest in participating in our internal Integrated Lifelong Learning programme. I need to make it clear: joining our internal programmes means foregoing access to our external ones.

I would like to sound both words of encouragement and of caution on this issue.

Encouragement, because the Commission is ready to assist those who intend to join to strengthen their administrative capacity and to prepare for a transfer of management responsibilities from the Commission to national agencies.

Caution, because joining our internal programmes is a long and difficult process. Our internal programmes are designed around the needs of Member States. They promote projects in which institutions, organisations and enterprises from several countries work together in specific areas. They address issues of European inter-

est and create an added value for the European Union as such. It is difficult to cover the specific needs of new participating countries under such programmes.

In contrast, our external programmes are designed to support the development of education and training systems in partner countries.

They are tailored to support structural reforms. So, in many ways, they are more likely to meet the needs of countries that are at different stages on the road towards membership.

I am sure that an exchange of views on the pros and cons of these options will be interesting to both sides. You have to answer for yourselves the question: which sort of participation is right for your country? Either way, we will help you.

Conclusion

Almost three years have passed since the Thessaloniki summit; since then, a lot has been done to stabilise the Western Balkans and to bring the region closer to the Union.

Cooperation in education, training and youth policies has played no small part in this. I have pointed out the support the EU can provide in these domains, and I can assure you that we will not waver in our commitment in the future.

However - if I may turn directly to you, the Ministers of the Western Balkan countries - it is clearly for you and no one else to decide how best to modernise your education systems and how to bring them towards the European standard.

Learning touches people directly. There is nothing like a school, a university, a workshop or a common project prepared by young people to bring people together, to share views and beliefs, to create a sense of belonging together.

This is why I think the policies I am responsible for can help make integration happen faster and better, not just between politicians and decision makers but between citizens as well. ■