

**Recommendations of the Regional Work Meeting  
„Regional Cooperation and Sustainability in Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in South Eastern Europe“**

held in Fruška Gora, Serbia, from October 28–30, 2005



The participants of this work meeting want to remind policy and decision makers on international and national level, donors and practitioners of the paramount importance of continuous Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE) in the new democracies of South Eastern Europe (SEE).

Democratic citizenship has to be learned in a life-long process. This is pointed out in many international and national policies, political statements and recommendations, of which the most important international ones are

- Recommendation Rec (2002) 12 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on Education for Democratic Citizenship, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 October 2002 at the 812<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Minister's Deputies;
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministers of Education and Higher Education of SEE, signed in Cyprus at the Seventh Conference of European Ministers of Education on 27–28 June 2003;
- International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001–2010), United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (HRE) (1995–2004) and the succeeding World Program (since 2005), United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014).

*We recall* that these international frameworks remain empty shells if we do not continue to bridge the gap between policy and practice in the long term. Numerous activities in SEE are contributing to the common aims of these policies and need support from all levels.

*We suggest* that, beyond existing examples of good practice, more systematic regional cooperation in SEE can contribute to the enhancement of EDC and HRE in formal, informal and non-formal education and can help to achieve sustainability of such work.

*We submit* hereafter a catalogue of concrete suggestions and recommendations for regional cooperation in SEE that were elaborated in a joint effort at the work meeting in Fruška Gora on 28–30 October 2005.

*We call* all stakeholders at international, regional, national and local level to endorse and practically support the realisation and implementation of these recommendations.

## **Catalogue of Recommendations**

(The order of recommendations does not reflect priorities)

### **ERI SEE Agenda**

The European Reform Initiative for South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) was launched in 2002 by the Task Force Education and Youth/Enhanced Graz Process in order to establish a regional platform for cooperation in the education area. The Ministers of Education and Higher Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003, including an action plan where priority areas for education development and reform are identified. Priority number 6 is "Promotion of education for democratic citizenship in both formal and non-formal education programmes".

We *recommend* to the Governing Board and the Consultative Body of ERI SEE:

- to put EDC and HRE on the ERI SEE agenda;
- to establish a task force for EDC and HRE.

### **Assistance with Expertise**

The Council of Europe (CoE) has decided to prolong its EDC and HRE project until 2009.

We *recommend* to the Council of Europe:

- to provide specific expertise for EDC and HRE to SEE and assist in the exchange of expertise in this region;
- to extend the joint program on HRE, that is currently operational in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, to other countries of the SEE region;
- to utilise the expertise of the two NGOs Civitas@BiH and D@dalos Sarajevo for organising a transatlantic conference on EDC planned for 2006.

### **Common Quality Standards**

Countless initiatives, programs and projects are being carried through in SEE in the area of EDC and HRE. There is a great wealth of capacity and resources that are used in many cross-border projects for this region. However, this kind of cooperation is mostly reduced to non-formal education.

We *recommend* to all stakeholders:

- to develop common quality standards for trainers and training schemes with the aim of their mutual recognition in formal and non-formal education.

### **Coordination of Assessment and Research**

There are several initiatives of governmental and non-governmental bodies that have the aim of assessing and evaluating the processes and outcomes of EDC and HRE on all levels. As in all educational areas these research activities are of great importance for the process of improving the quality of the concrete activities and programmes. However, the lack of common assessment standards on national and international level makes systematic longitudinal and cross section comparisons impossible.

We *recommend* to all stakeholders:

- to develop common assessment standards for EDC and HRE in general to allow systematic comparisons of evaluation and assessment findings.
- to implement a regional team of researchers with the following tasks: development of evaluation standards, coordination of research activities, data collection and moni-

toring, support of practitioners and policy makers by clarifying findings and formulating recommendations.

### **Center for Communication, Documentation and Information**

There are many activities going on in the field of EDC and HRE in South Eastern Europe but we observe a lack of quality communication between the different actors both in vertical (state level, NGOs, practitioners) and horizontal direction (e.g. between governmental bodies of different countries or between NGOs throughout the region). Relevant documents are not systematically collected and made available to the interested target groups. The lack of coordinated flow of information can lead to overlapping or even colliding activities and thus to a waste of resources.

*We recommend* to all stakeholders

- to establish an independent regional Communication, Information and Documentation Center for EDC and HRE which coordinates and facilitates the communication between the existing networks, international organizations, governmental bodies and NGOs.

### **Counterpart Relationships**

In the area of teacher training, the need to start counterpart relationships between the state institutions in SEE, and, more specifically, between responsible departments for teacher training in EDC, was expressed.

*We recommend* to the SEE Education Cooperation Network ([www.edu-coop.net](http://www.edu-coop.net)):

- to provide information and contact information of this nature on their web-site.

### **Follow-up**

The participants of the Regional Work Meeting on Regional Cooperation and Sustainability in EDC and HRE have jointly elaborated this catalogue of recommendations addressed to different actors. However, these recommendations need to be translated into a more concrete action plan in order to allow their realisation.

*We recommend* to the Swiss authorities that have funded this work meeting:

- to provide funding for a follow-up meeting in order to develop an action plan and elaborate further recommendations from the wealth of ideas that were not included into this catalogue;
- to provide assistance through consultancy work done preferably by Dr. Marino Ostini from the State Secretariat of Education and Science Bern.
- to support the spreading of these recommendations among other potential donors and to stress the need for collaboration in funding this continuing work.

### **Mobility within SEE**

Cooperation in EDC and HRE can only happen if people meet. The obstacles for regional meetings are increasingly high, particularly concerning procedures and costs for visa provisions.

*We recommend* to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Embassies of the countries of SEE:

- to consider faster and easier visa procedures for participants of gatherings related to education, specifically to EDC and HRE.