



Task Force Fostering &  
Building Human Capital  
of the Regional Cooperation Council

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



## Enhancing the Contribution of ERI SEE in Building SEE Knowledge Societies: Desirabilities, Imperatives and Development Perspectives for 2010 and beyond

### 1<sup>st</sup> Working Group Meeting

7 – 8 October 2009, Sarajevo  
Venue: RCC Secretariat, Conference Room Athens

### Agenda

*Since its establishment in 2004 by a joint initiative of SEE Ministers of Education and the former Task Force Education & Youth, the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) has developed into an acknowledged actor supporting sustainable education reforms through regional cooperation and a significant facilitator of information transfer between the EU and the SEE region.*

*In the light of a changed educational cooperation landscape in South Eastern Europe and on-going efforts in increasing regional ownership in the framework of the Regional Cooperation Council, it became evident that possible adjustments of the legal, organisational and thematic scope of ERI SEE need to be addressed.*

*Following the recent meeting of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body held on 23 June 2009 in Zagreb, a proposal for the establishment of a Working Group has been adopted by the Governing Board. Its tasks include to analyse the current status of the ERI SEE Agency and to elaborate possible modalities for its future organizational and legal restructuring. The Working Group shall also elaborate possible future priority areas and instruments of cooperation as well as review the interest for sustaining the concept of a rotating seat of the ERI SEE Secretariat in the region. Outcomes of Working Group considerations should provide a basis for discussion for the next ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body Meeting planned for 16 – 17 November 2009.*

*As for the composition of the Working Group, MoU signatory Ministries representing the ERI SEE Governing Board as well as the ERI SEE Consultative Body have been invited to nominate one high-level representative each as member of the Working Group.*



### Wednesday, 7 October 2009

09:00 – 09:10      **Welcome by the Host**

*Delivered by Ms. Mimika Loshi, Building Human Capital and Parliamentary Cooperation Unit, RCC*

09:10 – 09:30      **Introduction and Opening Remarks**

*Delivered by [N.N. / the Chair and the Co-Chairs of the ERI SEE Governing Board].*

*Opening Remarks are followed by a Tour de Table with a brief introduction of Working Group members.*

09:30 – 10:30      **Development perspectives on a content level**

*Moderated by the Chairs.*

*In times of current economic crises regional cooperation in developing human capital in SEE is more important than ever and calls for stronger regional partnerships, innovative networking and close cooperation with the RCC. In this context common regional activities and projects aimed at contributing to sustainable economic development and social cohesion, have to be jointly identified and the continuation of the high-level expert panel initiated by the RCC to be further supported.*

*Furthermore, implications of developments at EU level as regards the role of education and training in a renewed Lisbon Strategy need to be considered and discussed.*

*Low participation figures in its activities and in regular Board meetings suggest that there is a need for readjusting ERI SEEs programme, instruments and communication channels. This needs to be thoroughly considered, also in the context of increasingly scarce funds in donor countries.*

*Possible discussion points:*

*What should be the contribution of ERI SEE within these overall objectives at SEE and EU level? Which particular objectives could be highlighted? What should be ERI SEE's place in relation to the work of the Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital on strategic-political level? Could its role be further strengthened? How to secure an efficient, interlocking programming of ERI SEE priorities and activities with action plans and other priorities identified on the level of the TF and the RCC? On the other hand, how could the interface between regional activities and national development processes be further strengthened?*

*Which topics/working areas are relevant for the region in the future and how can the region's contribution regarding the ERI SEE programme be fostered? How should links be ensured between the new strategic frameworks for cooperation on regional level and work in national policy areas? Where can ERI SEE provide an added value to national reforms?*

*Participants will be invited to contribute to an open debate, providing comments and presenting their proposals for future working areas and ideas on innovative and efficient instruments und structures of cooperation.*



- 10:30 – 11:00      **Coffee Break**
- 11:00 – 12:30      **Development perspectives on a content level (cont.)**
- 12:30 – 14:30      **Lunch at Hotel Holiday Inn (National restaurant located on the mezzanine floor)**
- 14:30 – 16:00      **Development perspectives on an organizational level**

*Based on the preceding elaborations and moderated by the Chairs, the discussion will focus on the current legal status of the ERI SEE agency and on possible modalities for its future organizational and legal restructuring including the principle of its rotating seat.*

*The Republic of Croatia has hosted the seat of the ERI SEE Secretariat since 2004 and since the role of Croatia as a host country has gone beyond the originally foreseen three-year period, the on-going discussion on ERI SEE perspectives needs to include a discussion on the possible interest of other ERI SEE Members to host the ERI SEE Secretariat also.*

*The RCC Legal Advisor will be invited to provide an updated overview of possible models, necessary steps towards and consequences of an institutional re-launch of the ERI SEE Agency.*

*Participants will be invited to contribute to an open debate, providing comments and presenting their proposals.*

*Possible discussion points:*

- *Is the current legal status of the ERI SEE Agency adequate for its future development or should other possibilities, such as the establishment of an international organisation, be taken into consideration?*
- *Which options are available? Establishment as an international organisation? Continuation as National Agency? International NGO? Institutional integration of ERI SEE into the RCC? Network without legal personality and periodically rotating Chairmanship-in-Office responsible for coordination/implementation of activities?*
- *What are the implications, such as for the membership or with regard to the ratification procedure? What are attached benefits / disadvantages?*
- *Which financial consequences do we face? Costs of different legal statuses? Accessibility of donor funding and EU programmes (i.e. financial support for ERI SEE through Multi-Beneficiary IPA)?*
- *Is the region interested in maintaining the principle of the rotating seat and hosting the Agency? What implications do different legal setups have on the principle of a rotating seat?*

- 16:00 – 16:30      **Coffee Break**
- 16:30 – 18:00      **Development perspectives on an organizational level (cont.)**
- 20:00                **Dinner**  
Restaurant Vinoteka, Skenderija 12  
Meeting Point at the entrance of Hotel Holiday Inn, at 19:30



**Thursday, 8 October 2009**

09:00 – 10:30      **Setting Priorities for Development**

*Based on the preceding elaborations and moderated by the Chairs, participants will be invited to elaborate a synopsis of previous discussion points in view of a clear prioritization.*

10:30 – 11:00      **Coffee Break**

11:00 – 12:00      **Development perspectives on a political level**

*In the overall process of reviewing ERI SEE's organizational structure and future priorities in the context of how ownership over the ERI SEE can be ensured, an eventual renewal respectively adjustment of the current political mandate of ERI SEE in light of the changed cooperation landscape in South Eastern Europe needs to be envisaged. A possible opportunity might be on the occasion of the forthcoming 23rd Session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, taking place in Brdo, Slovenia, 4-5 June 2010.*

*Moderated by the Chairs, participants will be invited to contribute to an open debate, providing comments and presenting their proposals for increasing the regional ownership in ERI SEE.*

12:00 – 12:30      **Summary and Outlook**

*Delivered by [N.N. / the Chair and the Co-Chairs of the ERI SEE Governing Board].*

12:30 – 14:00      **Lunch at Hotel Holiday Inn (National restaurant located on the mezzanine floor)**