

**Implementation of the ERI SEE Work
Programme 2016
ACTIVITY REPORT**

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CONTEXT AND SUMMARY OF THE ERI SEE ACTIVITIES

To briefly sum up the idea and origin of the ERI SEE, it is worth repeating that the Ministers responsible for Education and Higher Education in the Memorandum of Understanding on the Role and Organization of ERI SEE (MoU) signed in June 2010 reiterated the importance of education as a key priority for the South Eastern Europe region for finding innovative ways to back the economic growth, sustainable development, competitiveness and for safeguarding equitable and inclusive societies.

Through the ERI SEE mission statement the ERI SEE member countries recognised that education and training are crucial in promoting knowledge based, competitive and socially cohesive societies in Europe, and play important role in responding to the changes and challenges of globalisation. They are therefore a key to sustainable development and prosperity, in particular in South Eastern Europe.

Through its activities the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) has been supporting sustainable education reforms through regional cooperation and themes jointly defined by the region as priorities (resonating to a large extent with the commitments and goals expressed by the SEE 2020) - taking into account both country-specific needs and demands in education reforms, as well as European trends and developments. In addition, ERI SEE has been recognized as the Regional Dimension Coordinator for Dimension D – Education and Competences, within the SEE 2020 Strategy, as of 2013. As such, ERI SEE has been contributing to the achievement of the goals defined within the Strategy, implementation of which is monitored and coordinated by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

In 2015 the activities regarding the full establishment of the ERI SEE Secretariat with the legal status started – the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the other members of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe on the seat of the Secretariat of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (hereinafter: the Agreement) was signed by all the participating countries, ratification procedure was initiated by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development as the host country, and the Vacancy for the position of the Director of the Secretariat was announced.

However, in 2016, the establishment of the ERI SEE Secretariat as the independent legal body, with the status of the international organisation, pending the ratification of the Agreement, was interrupted by the early elections. Even though the Law on the ratification of the Agreement was passed by the Government and Parliamentary adoption procedure was initiated, the Agreement being listed as the document in proceeding, the dismissal of the Parliament and the consequent appointment of the new Members of the Parliament caused the ratification procedure to be cancelled, with the need to started it anew, repeating all the necessary steps from the beginning.

The procedure was re-initiated in September 2016, when the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development collected the opinions of other relevant state bodies, and submitted the Agreement to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which adopted it under the urgent procedure and submitted the Agreement to the Parliament on the 30th September. By the end of 2016 the Agreement was not listed as one of the topics for the agenda and the process is to continue in 2017.

Therefore, in 2016, ERI SEE Secretariat has not managed to surmount two crucial problems hindering its growth and sustainability – the completion of the formal establishment procedure, which is connected to the second problem - the absence of additional funding. The findings of the study "[The political economy of donor intervention in Western Balkans and Turkey: mapping and potential for stronger synergies](#)" (2014) commissioned by the DG ELARG, show that ERI SEE is in the group of the less supported regional initiatives

and Dimension Coordinators of SEE 2020 in terms of both available financial resources and number of staff financed through the available budget.

Progress in 2016, however, is seen in the fact that all the member countries contributed financially to the amount defined in the Memorandum of Understanding, Brdo, 2010, and that the most sustainable and reliable donor, KulturKontakt Austria, increased its originally planned donation throughout the year. However, in order for ERI SEE to be fully functioning, additional efforts need to be made in this respect – both in the legal status of the Secretariat, as well as in securing additional funding (via other donors or funding schemes on a project-related basis). Additionally, RCC financed 2 ERI SEE Events (the Governing Board Meeting and the SEEVET Net meeting).

In assuming its role as the reliable regional organisation in education and training, ERI SEE Secretariat has been cooperating on a daily basis with the Centre for Education Policy (CEP) acting as the ERI SEE Interim Secretariat. The handover and screening inception meetings were organized, and throughout 2016 CEP was providing its constant support and counselling in the implementation of all ERI SEE activities (financial management, organisational, operational and content-related support).

Cooperation with the Governing Board members and Director was established and formalized first during the 21st Governing Board meeting of 21 September 2016, where the update of the activities and legal acts, as well as the initial guidelines on the further development and steps of ERI SEE, were agreed. As indicated in the ERI SEE statutory documents, the ERI SEE Governing Board members are appointed by the respective Ministries responsible for Education and Higher Education. The ERI SEE Governing Board is responsible for setting strategic direction and cooperation priorities of the ERI SEE, and coordination of the national participation in the implementation of the ERI SEE Work Programme.

In its activities in 2016, ERI SEE continued to develop and enhance collaboration with other international organisations/agencies to ensure synergies and coordination between numerous regional activities and projects in education. In particular, in 2016 cooperation with KulturKontakt Austria, European Training Foundation, Regional Cooperation Council has been deepened, as well as GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH).

The activities in 2016 were implemented according to the Work programme 2015 – 2016, adjusted according to current and relevant circumstance, and included:

- **Establishment of the ERI SEE Secretariat**
 - Signing of the Agreement by all the participating countries
 - Announcement of the Vacancy and implementation of the procedure for the selection of the Director, and other related activities (legal and financial consultations and documents)
 - Ensuring operational conditions and implementation of the inception phase
 - Cooperation with the Governing Board
 - 21st Governing Board meeting (September 2016, Belgrade)
 - Ratification procedure related activities
 - Networking and information sharing with other relevant actors
 - Preparation of necessary legal documents

- Programming for 2017 – 2019 (Development of the proposal for the Work Programme for 2017 – 2019)
- **SEEVET Net cooperation**
 - SEEVET-Net meeting/seminar: *Identification of Priorities for a Potential Future Joint Regional Project in the Field of Work-based Learning* (September 2016, Belgrade)
 - Establishment of contacts and cooperation with the regional Chambers of Commerce and Western Balkans Chambers Investment Forum
 - SEEVET-Net and Social Partners meeting: *Promotion of Work-based Learning and Development of Joint Occupational Standards* (November 2016, Belgrade)
- **Cooperation in the field of academic recognition of qualifications**
 - Submission of the project proposal in the field of academic recognition of qualifications (February 2016)
 - Seminar: *Quality Assured Fast-track Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications* (QUASAR) (December 2016, Belgrade)
- **Cooperation in the field of professional recognition of qualifications**
 - Partnering in the training of the CEFTA-ERI SEE – RCC Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (November 2016, Zagreb)
 - Partnering in the meeting of the CEFTA – ERI SEE – RCC Joint Working Group on Recognition of Professional Qualifications (December 2016, Tirana)
- **Teacher Training related activities**
 - Workshop on Teacher Education and Training (January 2015)
 - Consultation process and finalization of the Regional Program on Teacher Education and Training
 - Communicating with the relevant actors (Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training, Institute for the Advancement of Education Serbia, ETF)
- **Increasing visibility of ERI SEE**
 - Presenting the ERI SEE at the conferences/meetings in the region
 - Conference on Building a Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based Learning, May 2016, Vienna
 - 8th meeting of the SEE 2020 Coordination Board, May 2016, Vienna;
 - 9th meeting of the SEE 2020 Coordination Board, October 2016, Athens;

- Ministerial meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training, June 2016, Sarajevo;
 - Kick-off meeting of Employment and Social Affairs (ESAP) Project, June 2016, Sarajevo
 - 4th International Stakeholder Conference of EUSDR PA 9, October 2016, Vienna
 - ETF QA in VET Forum, November 2016, Vienna
 - Round Table on VET in SEE Cooperation Process Countries, December 2016, Zagreb
 - South-East European Cooperation Process Ministerial Meeting SME Competitiveness and Growth, December 2016, Zagreb
- ERI SEE contribution to the publication - Implementation Report of EUSDR priority area – PA 9 “Investing in People and Skills”
 - Update of the web page
 - Participation at the education-related events (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and GIZ’s conference on VET, Centre for Education Policy Conference on drop-outs)

More specifically, regarding the establishment of the ERI SEE Secretariat, the activities undertaken included the implementation of the vacancy for the position of the Director, and the whole selection procedure in intense cooperation between the Interim Secretariat – Centre for Education Policy, who was running the process administratively, and Governing Board Members.

The procedure was finalized in March 2016; and the Director assumed its position as of 1 May 2016.

The next activities included the organization of working conditions and introductory and handover meetings between the Centre of Education Policy and the newly-appointed Director; and networking meetings and information sharing/screening with other relevant actors, mainly in Serbia as the host country (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development – different sectors and officials; Delegation of the European Union, Institute for Advancement of Education, Agency for the Evaluation of Education, Tempus+ foundation, GIZ, Government Office for the Poverty Reduction and Inclusion, TAIEX Office...) but also with a couple of institutions in the region.

The communication regarding the formal procedure of legal establishment of ERI SEE Secretariat as the legal entity was intensified, including constant communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and meetings and communication with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development; which resulted in the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopting the Law on the ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the other members of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe on the seat of the Secretariat of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe, and listing the Law in the Parliamentary procedure.

At the same time, with the establishment and initial introductory activities, ERI SEE was presented at various regional events (listed above).

In addition, the activities with the South Eastern Europe Vocational Education and Training Network were undertaken. The first working meeting, *Identification of Priorities for a Potential Future Joint Regional Project in the Field of Work-based Learning*, was organized in September 2016, which was followed-up by a workshop in December, *Promotion of Work-based Learning and Development of Joint Occupational Standards*, dealing with the development of a joint regional project and including the representatives of the regional Chambers of Commerce. The project idea was conceived among all the partners in the process.

Additionally, ERI SEE together with RCC also organized a seminar on the recognition of higher education qualifications, *Quality Assured Fast-track Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications (QUASAR)*, aiming to update of the project proposal on developing and implementing quality assurance standards for higher education institutions and study programmes, development of the procedures for the regional recognition of higher education qualifications and establishment of the Register of the accredited institutions and programmes following and meeting the agreed quality standards.

ERI SEE is also a partner in the RCC-driven activities regarding the work of CEFTA-ERI SEE – RCC Joint Working Group, and dealing with mutual recognition of professional qualification with the purpose of employment in the priority areas defined within the region. These activities included participation in a training in Zagreb, and participation at the meeting in Tirana. The ERI SEE had more of a supportive and observing role, rather than carrying content-related and organisational activities.

ERI SEE was also presented at various regional events throughout the second half of 2016.

Thematic areas of the 2015/2016 Work Programme and the status/description of activities

Quality Education For All – ensuring equitable access, full participation and high completion

ERI SEE has continuously addressed the issues of equitable access, participation and completion in quality education in the past by organising annual regional conferences which addressed issues of equity and quality across different levels of education systems.

Activities

In 2016, the ERI SEE priorities were revised for the preparation of the new programming cycle. In this revision process, the priority area of Quality Education for All was modified, and focusing more on the issue of Quality Education and Quality Assurance standards, in line with the current national and European trends. Quality assurance is a subject yet to be developed in ERI SEE activities – regarding general education and higher education (within the project proposal Quality Assured Fast-track Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications (QUASAR)). Planned activities are described in the ERI SEE Work Programme for 2017 – 2019.

For that reason, initial meetings were organized with the body in the host country in charge of the external assessment of education (Institute for the evaluation of education), and ERI SEE participated in the workshop organized by the ETF, connecting the regional representatives of bodies in charge of quality assurance in VET.

Equitable access, full participation and high completion are going to be dealt with within the subject of Teacher trainings, as planned and described in the ERI SEE Work Programme for 2017 – 2019.

Removing obstacles to Recognition of Qualifications

The SEE 2020 Strategy aims to promote employment creation, the workforce mobility and to ensure that education better meets economic and labour market needs. Development of standardised frameworks of qualifications is one of the tools to achieve this aim and it builds directly on the work of the ERI SEE cluster on National Qualifications Frameworks led by Croatia for the past four years. On one hand, it is important to note that the work on development of the National Qualifications Frameworks is one part of tackling the obstacles to recognition of qualifications. On the other hand, the work on the development of National Qualifications Frameworks and removing obstacles to recognition in SEE region also contributes to the strengthening of connections between the education and labour market by creating transparency of awarded degrees and learning outcomes, as well as enhancing equity in education systems by providing clear and flexible learning paths across education levels and types of education.

Activities

In September 2015 ERI SEE organized a seminar on this theme in Zagreb. The regional seminar was organised by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia, and provided the possibility to discuss the Erasmus+ project proposal by using the existing 'Bologna Follow-up Group Terms of Reference of

the Regional SEE Working Group on Recognition of Qualifications' as a base for elaborating a project proposal. Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia lead this process and coordinated the preparation of the content of project proposal while ERI SEE Secretariat handled administrative issues of preparing a project proposal.

In 2016 the project proposal was submitted by the University of Split under the Erasmus+ funding scheme, but was not approved for funding due to the eligibility criteria which were not fully met.

Additionally, in December 2016, with the view of updating the above-mentioned project proposal to prepare it for submission in 2017, as well as ensure the active participation of additional partners which contribute to the quality and relevance of the project, the workshop on Removing Obstacles to Recognition of Qualifications was organised in Belgrade. The project proposal emphasizes the quality assurance aspect of the fast-track recognition procedure, and clearly defines roles and responsibilities of partners.

3.3. Education, Economy and the Labour Market

As identified by the Ministers responsible for Education in their MoU document from June 2010, close cooperation between the economic, education and labour market sectors is a central prerequisite for the successful integration in a European area of education systems and labour markets and in line with joint efforts for making Europe the most competitive knowledge based economy, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

In accordance with the work of ERI SEE towards building the National Qualifications Frameworks and removing obstacles to recognition of qualifications, and in light of the multi-dimensional approach required to achieve the recognition of professional qualifications and the movement of labour, the work of three SEE 2020 Dimension Coordinators relevant for this issue – Central European Free Trade Agreement Structures (CEFTA), ERI SEE, and the Social Agenda Working Group (SAWG), was interlinked into the Joint Working Group, which operates under the auspices of the RCC.

Activities

In 2016, the training of the CEFTA - ERI SEE – RCC Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications was organized in Zagreb, bringing together the representatives from the ministries of education, ministries of labour and ministers of trade from the region. The training was followed up by a meeting in Tirana, detailing the areas of future activities, their scope, timeline and next steps to be undertaken. The work of the WGRPQ is substantiated by the study commissioned by RCC in 2016 which analyses and compares the legal framework that has been existing so far in the region and that enables or prevents the recognition of the professional qualifications in the given areas, and, as a consequence, hinder labour mobility.

Strengthening Vocational Education and Training Systems

VET has been defined as an important factor for economic and social development at EU, regional and national levels. In order to contribute to strengthening and modernization of VET in the region, ERI SEE has been supporting the development of mutual policy learning practices through enhanced institutional cooperation in Vocational Education and Training in South East Europe under the framework of the network of VET centres in the region – the SEEVET-Net for the last 8 years. The cooperation was formalized in 2011 through signing of Cooperation Agreement between VET Centres in South East Europe. The topic identified throughout the joint activities as a priority was work-based learning and its various aspects, and activities organized were aiming at developing that aspect of VET.

Activities

In September 2016, a working meeting of the SEE VET Net was held with the purpose of identifying a theme, priority, of joint interest for the region around which a project proposal should be developed. The agreed theme was the promotion of work-based learning and joint occupational standards that would enhance the cooperation between the business sector and education sector, improve the quality of the work-based learning and result in greater employability and matching of skills demand and supply. During the working meeting, the main theme, framework, activities and goals for the future project proposal were defined.

The working meeting was followed by a workshop in December 2016, during which the project idea was elaborated with a more concrete analysis of needs, sectors, existing practices and challenges. The workshop gathered the representatives of the education centre (VET agencies), ministries, and Chambers of commerce (within the framework of the Chambers Investment Forum). The participants agreed to focus the future activities on the sectors of Tourism and catering, Food processing, Transport and Logistics, and Construction industry.

The working meeting and workshop were organized by the financial and content-related support of the RCC and KulturKontakt Austria.

Additionally, synergies with the GIZ, as one of the international organizations active in Serbia in the area of VET were established. GIZ co-financed the SEEVET-Net working meeting, and included the SEEVET Net members as well as the ERI SEE representative, in the work of its international event, conference presenting the results of the GIZ project dealing with the Work-based learning in Serbia.

Ensuring Quality Education through Teacher Training

The SEE 2020 Strategy recognises the importance of ensuring provision of quality education in the region. One of the conditions for ensuring quality education is enhancing the quality of teacher training. Strengthening the quality of teachers has been a continuous focus of education policies in the region. Several initiatives aimed at developing standards for teacher competences, systems of career advancement and systems for teacher support and assessment have been launched and implemented. ERI SEE plans to extend its activities in this field in the forthcoming period, and achieve synergies with these initiatives, in line with its human and financial capacities.

Activities

ERI SEE was supporting the development of a Cluster of Knowledge on Teacher Training since 2013 led by Montenegro.

Building upon the previous activities of the Cluster of Knowledge on Teacher Training and taking into account the work under the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training and with the support of RCC, ERI SEE initiated the development of the draft Regional programme on Teacher Education and Training in 2014. The draft regional programme was presented at the regional consultation workshop held in Tirana in January 2015, gathering national delegations of the countries in the region, independent experts and regional and international partners active in this field. The final version of the Regional Programme was developed in 2015 by an external expert and as such submitted to the Governing Board in April 2015.

In 2015, the regional Workshop on Teacher Education and Training was organized in January, and in 2016, ERI SEE participated in the 5th Ministerial Meeting organized by the Western Balkans Platform on Education

and Training dealing with the subject of Quality of teachers. Unfortunately, due to the limited financial and human resources, the original activities planned under this topic, in the form of organizing a regional teachers' association giving input on the teacher training needs were postponed.

Further work is expected in 2017 onwards, described in the ERI SEE Work Programme 2017 – 2019, relying on the cooperation with ETF and using the on-line methods of cooperation.

Policy development and monitoring for quality and equity in education - strengthening evidence based policy making in education in Western Balkans

ERI SEE countries face a considerable challenge of significant lack of systematic data on various aspects of education. Although a number of projects/initiatives focusing on building robust data bases about education have been started in the ERI SEE countries (SEE 2020 monitoring, IPA monitoring, Bologna process, ETF FRAME Skills for Future Initiative, the Torino process, Bruges review, Small Business Act assessment etc.), almost all of them are facing significant problems in setting and/or filling up.

There is a need for an integrated approach for monitoring on the progresses in education at regional level and for regionally harmonised data submission requirements (e.g. compatible methodologies and indicators used in the region for different monitoring exercises). Such approach will contribute to availability, comparability and overall quality of the data. Apart from the challenges in data collection, data analysis, or rather the supply of evidence for policy making tends to be fragmented in small research projects, focusing on specific problems or at one education stage at the time.

Activities

ERI SEE prepared a concept note for IPA multibeneficiary funding in 2016, relying on the project proposal prepared in previous years by the Interim ERI SEE Secretariat and with the support of KKA in the field of Evidence Based Policy Making. However, in the inter-sectoral consultations within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, due to limited funding and previously defined priorities, and lack of time to coordinate necessary activities within the region, the concept note was not shortlisted for the next phase of the approval process. At the same time, OECD was granted a project for the purpose of developing a Competitiveness Outlook of SEE region, under which trainings for the officials working in national statistics offices are planned. Given the limited funds from IPA schemes on the one hand and already existing projects dealing with the collection of data and evidence based policy making, and having in mind the already tight financial and human resources of ERI SEE, the update of the ERI SEE priorities was made in 2016 in cooperation with the Governing Board and the theme of evidence-based policy making was postponed for other periods.

ERI SEE – bringing synergies to different processes

Open Method of Coordination (EC)

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) represents an EU mechanism in “soft” legislation. The themes defined as priorities at the EU level are of essential importance for further reform processes of the SEE countries in the field of education and are in accordance with the SEE 2020 objectives. For the period of 2016 – 2018 , there are four sector-focused working groups agreed at the EU level: Schools (with focus on Early School Leaving and the Teaching Profession); Higher Education; Vocational Education and Training, including apprenticeships and work-based learning; Adult Learning, including reducing the number of low-

skilled adults; and two issue-focused working groups: Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education and Digital skills and competences.

The fact that all the ERI SEE countries participate in the work of the OMC Education and Training Working groups, opens a vast arena for further regional cooperation.

ERI SEE as the regional platform for cooperation in the field of education and training can be used as an effective mechanism for sharing the results of OMC working groups in education to other SEE ministries and relevant institutions. Sharing the results, information, practices of the OMC working groups to all SEE ministries and relevant institutions, as well as exchanging views, ideas and practices provides the opportunity for mutual learning, finding solutions and attitudes more adapt to the regional specificities and creation of a regionally-based education goals as well as increase synergies towards education reforms in line with EU standards and best practices.

Activities

ERI SEE explored the possibility of using the TAIEX funding instrument for future OMC activities which are planned to be joined with the ERI SEE activities regarding quality assurance, teacher trainings and digital competences. TAIEX funding instrument can be used for the organization of seminars and workshops, with the participation of the experts from the EU Member States, and with the participation of maximum 3 representatives from each country. Additionally, EU Member States experts can be used for the expert services (creation of legal documents important for the EU accession and so on.)

ETF - Continuing professional development for teachers and trainers in VET in the SEET region

Continuous professional development (CPD) has a high policy priority for the European Commission, in respect to EU member states and European partners and has been identified by the European Commission as one of the core strategies for improvement of the performance of education and training systems. Also, ETF's FRAME project revealed that professional development of teachers is a priority across the SEET region. Bearing that in mind, ETF launched an action with the aim to support CPD for teachers and trainers in VET by improving quality and demand-orientation, improving stakeholder co-operation and capabilities, supporting policy development and implementation and developing and implementing practical and innovative tools. This action will cover Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

Part of the ETF activities within this action are dedicated to the mapping of demand and provision of CPD for VET teachers and trainers by carrying out desk research, interviews with stakeholders and a survey of teachers and trainers to identify gaps and inform policy development for better matching supply and demand.

Activities

In 2016, ETF in cooperation with the Institute for the advancement of education in Serbia, worked on the questionnaire for the collection of data regarding the needs for CPDs. Apart from the questionnaire, the creation of a national data base and platform for cooperation is envisaged.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

ERI SEE will explore possibilities of future expansion of this project to the whole region and to cover general education as well.

Coordination and Monitoring of the SEE 2020 Strategy: Dimension D. Education and Competences

Coordination of the SEE 2020 Strategy: Dimension D. Education and Competences

In the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy, education is seen as a powerful tool to address the issue of growth and competitiveness as the main objectives of the strategy. At the 17th ERI SEE Governing Board meeting held in Sarajevo, in March 2013, ERI SEE has been appointed as the coordinator of the dimension D. Education and Competences of the SEE 2020 Strategy that focuses on strengthening capacities in the region in various areas contributing directly to achievement of the target of smart growth pillar to add 300 000 highly qualified people in the workforce. The dimension aims to improve the regional knowledge and skills base and sets specific objectives in two main domains: (1) reduction of early leavers from education and training and (2) increased educational attainment in tertiary education.

In implementation of the key strategy actions under this dimension, ERI SEE as a regional platform for cooperation in the field of education and training remained dedicated to facilitation of the regional collaboration, promotion of peer-learning and focused support to the networking of national institutions in education and training.

Activities

ERI SEE Secretariat contributed to the coordination of the implementation of the overall SEE 2020 Strategy by taking part in the meetings of the Coordination Board of the SEE 2020 Strategy organized by the RCC Secretariat, in May and November 2016, and provided additional input for the RCC programming document 2016 – 2018.

Monitoring of the SEE 2020 Strategy: Dimension D. Education and Competences

The monitoring framework developed by the OECD in cooperation with RCC, regional organisations and Ministries responsible for each of the dimensions includes set of quantitative and qualitative indicators developed to assess policies used to implement the SEE2020 strategy and impact/outcome indicators that will enable tracking of progress, not only related to the headline targets of the Strategy.

The quantitative indicators are collected annually, while the qualitative indicators are collected bi-annually. Therefore, the ERI SEE Ministries of Education will be expected to collect the quantitative indicators every year and to carry out the self-assessment every two years. As of 2015, the coordination of the monitoring tasks is done by the RCC.

Activities

In 2016 the role of the regional dimension coordinators in the monitoring of the implementation of the SEE 2020 was limited to a consultative role and RCC took the lead in the related activities, and communicated directly with ministries and statistics offices in the region. ERI SEE and RCC in 2015, as a preparation for this

new approach, organized a workshop for the representatives of ministries and statistics units to present the new procedures and enable easier collection of the data.

6. Increasing visibility of ERI SEE in light of the establishing the ERI SEE Secretariat

Apart from networking activities related to the coordination and monitoring of the education dimension of the SEE 2020 Strategy, the work of ERI SEE was presented at different meetings and other events of the ERI SEE institutional partners.

In 2016 the ERI SEE Secretariat with the support of the RCC organized the regular meetings of the ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body. Regular updates on ERI SEE activities through the network of national contact points and with the members of the Governing Board and Consultative Body continued.

With respect to the institutional transformation process under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia and the Governing Board members, CEP provided a detailed hand over to the ERI SEE Director.

The ERI SEE Director undertook initial meetings with the line ministries and cooperation bodies such as Delegation of the EU and national agencies or regional organizations in charge of various aspects of education and training in the host country. In addition, the Director participated at regional events, presenting the ERI SEE Secretariat and its activities, such as Conference on Building a Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based Learning, 8th and 9th meeting of the SEE 2020 Coordination Board, Ministerial meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training, Kick-off meeting of Employment and Social Affairs (ESAP) Project, 4th International Stakeholder Conference of EUSDR PA 9, ETF QA in VET Forum, Round Table on VET in SEE Cooperation Process Countries, and South-East European Cooperation Process Ministerial Meeting SME Competitiveness and Growth.

In addition, the ERI SEE started building its data basis of relevant contacts – government and non-government bodies, civil sector, relevant working groups, associations... – in the region for all the future needs and ensured the update of the erisee.org website.

