

**Speech of Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković
Director General of Democracy
2nd Plenary Session of the ETINED Platform
Thursday 15 February 2018**

Dear delegates to the ETINED Platform,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Strasbourg for this 2nd Plenary Meeting of the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED).

I am particularly happy to see that so many delegations responded positively to our invitation, despite the organisational challenges linked to the postponement of this session because of the budgetary difficulties we had last year.

These difficulties are not behind us, on the contrary. The Committee of Ministers has decided that there should be no adjustment for inflation in our 2018 – 19 programme budget. On this basis alone, we will have to save 4.5 million Euros over the next two years. And in early November Turkey announced that it no longer wishes to be a

Grand Payeur and therefore reduces its annual contribution to the CoE budget, with effect as of the 2018 – 19 programme.

The difference already quantified and certain is in the order of 20 million Euros per year. And we have no information as to whether the Russian Federation will resume paying its contribution to the budget of the Council of Europe for 2018-2019.

Precisely because of this situation, we need the support of member States and their representatives to demonstrate the relevance of our work, particularly of our intergovernmental work. Your presence here is a recognition of this relevance, and we encourage you to make the case of the Council of Europe's Education programme in your capitals, with your Foreign Ministries, with your Permanent Representatives here in Strasbourg, and more widely in your countries. Nobody can do this better than you. ETINED is *your* Platform, your network. It is the political expression of the will of the Member States to fight corruption and to foster ethics, transparency and integrity in education.

The fight against corruption remains among the top priorities of the Organisation as a whole. Today nationalism and populism are on the rise in some of our member States. Populism is an emotional appeal that harnesses public grievances against the establishment, and is nurtured by the lack of confidence of citizens towards the

establishment, seen as “all corrupt”. Even the very notion of knowledge and expertise is challenged.

Therefore, we must enhance a culture of knowledge and integrity, and we must start with education. A quality education is what we all want for our children. Yet we all know that corruption in education can be found in all countries, and at all levels of education.

If we do not tackle corruption in education, we are effectively teaching children that those who get ahead are those who know how to bypass our societies’ rules and standards. How could we on that basis develop a genuine culture of democracy? Instead, we must empower the new generation, give them the means to take a stand for integrity.

ETINED’s motto, “Time for change”, requires action at different levels. There is a need to convince and motivate people who can make a difference to take action, particularly higher education sector advisors, institutional leaders and the education ministries. More concretely, national governments should develop policies for strengthening integrity and combatting education fraud; higher education leadership should promote guidelines on how to develop institutional policies fostering academic integrity; prevention should also be developed as early as possible.

Now, therefore, we need your input and feedback, coming from your national experience, on possible activities and political instruments to achieve these objectives. For each activity line that was previously

identified by ETINED, a list of deliverables is proposed which you are invited to comment on:

- a new draft recommendation on *Promoting the development of codes of ethics in the teaching profession*, drawing on your work on the ethical behaviour of all actors in education;
- a possible framework instrument to address the worrying issue of education fraud;
- a new tool to help Member States assessing the levels of academic integrity in higher education.

You will also see during this 2 day session that concrete projects have been implemented in practice in the Member States, and we encourage you to use even more this possibility offered by our Division for Cooperation and Capacity-Building.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I strongly believe that a genuine democracy cannot properly function without a culture of ethics, transparency and integrity. And education has a crucial role to play in building this very culture. You will soon hear from Professor Călin Rus how we could link it with the current work on Competences for Democratic Culture, in order to build a culture of trust, among citizens and the institutions, and also among the citizens themselves.

Thank you for your attention