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Partnerships for Educational Renewal

Council of Europe education activities in South-East Europe

Report prepared for UNESCO conference on
Strengthening Co-operation in South-East Europe

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this document is to present the activities carried out in South-East Europe by the Council of Europe's Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education.

In undertaking these activities, the Council of Europe is fulfilling its mission in the field of education, which is to nurture a democratic culture throughout Europe, to support the development of education policies and reforms through pan-European standards, policy recommendations and concepts of good practices, and to assist and advise member states with particular needs in achieving both these goals.

In South-East Europe the Council of Europe plays a particular political role. In December 1999, a pioneering informal conference of Ministers of Education from South-East Europe was held in Strasbourg under the aegis of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education. The Ministers adopted the Declaration, which appears in Appendix I to this document.

The second informal conference of Ministers of Education of South-East Europe took place on 19-20 November 2001 in Strasbourg (see Appendix II). The aim of this Conference was to take the work launched by the policy declaration of the first informal Conference of Ministers a step further. The programme focused upon the following three major themes: progress and obstacles encountered during the implementation of education reforms in the region; the brain drain and the development of educational strategies to counter the phenomenon; future orientations for educational co-operation in the region based on a report of the work undertaken by international organisations active in the region.

The Council of Europe's role in South-East Europe is also operational, thus contributing practically and financially to educational reform, democratisation and stability in the region.

The majority of the activities outlined in this document concern bilateral assistance provided to individual member countries in the Education Directorate's main areas of work: structural changes in education legislation and policy; and educational standards and methods: education for democratic citizenship, history and languages.

In addition, the Education Directorate seeks to foster regional co-operation and carries out regional activities, primarily within the framework of the Stability Pact and its Task Force on education and youth, the "Enhanced Graz Process". It has been actively participating in and contributing to the (Enhanced) Graz Process ever since Austria launched it in 1998 to promote democratic and peaceful development in South-East Europe through improved support and co-ordination of educational projects in the region.

The Education Directorate co-ordinates two out of six of the Task Force working groups, those on education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity, and on history and history teaching¹. The working groups co-ordinate and promote co-operation between international institutions and experts and/or initiatives from the region, develop action plans, evaluate projects and help in the development of

¹ In addition the Council of Europe's Directorate on Youth and Sport also co-ordinates the working group on young people.

projects (e.g. by grassroots initiatives) and in fundraising. The Education Directorate also conducts a number of “quickstart projects” funded by the Stability Pact.

The Directorate is currently developing a Strategic Action Plan in order to provide a concrete framework for bilateral and regional co-operation in SEE. This effort will also serve to effectively prioritise the CoE’s work and identify projects and partners for joint action.

The activities are presented in relation to the main directions of the Directorate’s work.

I. STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN EDUCATION LEGISLATION AND POLICY

A. Partnerships for Educational Renewal

1. *Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia)*

On 27 November 2001, a meeting of the Serbian Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Serbian universities, NGOs active in the higher education sector and foreign partners, including the Council of Europe and the EUA-European University Association – was held in Belgrade to consider overall plans for higher education reform and possible contributions by the foreign partners. At this meeting, the Ministry of Education presented a draft plan for higher education reform, which will be the basis for these efforts. A further contact meeting is likely to be held in spring 2002, in parallel to activities arranged to help implement the reforms.

2. *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

a. *National Conference of Education Ministers*

The CoE was instrumental, with OHR, in the formal establishment of this state-level body in 1999, and both organisations serve as international co-chairs of the monthly meetings (in practice the two Entity ministers chair in alternation). A milestone was the agreement reached in May 2000 and signed by the Minister and Deputy Minister of Education in the Federation and the Minister of Education in the Republika Srpska. This included immediate measures against segregation and offensive material in textbooks. It also included commitments to long-term education development towards European standards on a course of integration and equal opportunities. The Council of Europe continues to support this process through a range of activities, generally carried out in co-operation with other partners – notably in higher education, human rights and citizenship education, and teacher training.

b. *Development of new framework legislation for education in BiH*

A new project to establish a legal framework for education was launched in January 2002 following a written request by the OHR's Senior Deputy High Representative asking the CoE for assistance in elaborating new framework legislation for education in BiH.

The project is politically very important and is directly related to specific accession commitments made by Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Council of Europe, in particular to adopt and implement a “**law on schools in conformity with CoE standards within two years after its accession**”².

A two-tiered approach has been agreed upon between the CoE and the OHR for the upcoming 6 months (to be completed by June 2002):

- 1) a text setting out minimum standards in education, soundly based on European norms and commitments to which BiH has agreed to abide to, and the rights of citizens embedded in the constitutional law and jurisprudence of the country. This text should be adopted at the highest practicable level (State or

² Parliamentary Assembly Opinion No. 234 on BiH's application for membership of the CoE, paragraph 15.iv.d.

Entity), or failing that imposed by the High Representative using his powers under the Dayton Agreement as interpreted by the Peace Implementation Council;

2) a model law or set of guidelines implementing these standards covering all the most important areas of educational policy and administration, as a basis or checklist for legislation by the competent bodies (Entities or Federation cantons).

c. *The Post-Accession Programme*

The Post-Accession Programme will contain a significant education element in which the CoE will contribute to renewal of higher-education legislation and a review of legislation at all levels of government.

3. *The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo)*

Higher and general education reforms

The educational reform process in Kosovo is being supported through the development of education legislation for Kosovo of the highest European standards. This work was carried out in the context of two World Bank-sponsored contracts with UNMIK: the first project, which focuses on higher education and institutional reform of the University of Pristina, was signed in June 2000 and is expected to run for two years. The second project, aimed at developing general education legislation, was signed in April 2001 with UNMIK and will finish in July 2002.

Results of the higher education project include a revised statute for the University of Pristina and a draft higher education Regulation (law) for Kosovo. This legislation was developed over a 15-month period and all relevant stakeholders in education, including major political parties, have had an opportunity to provide input to the law. In the case of the draft higher education regulation, the most important stakeholder has been the University of Pristina and in particular the Statutes Commission of the University of Pristina. The legislation complies with recognised European standards, for example in degree structures (Bologna Declaration), international recognition of qualifications (Lisbon Convention) and fair access to higher education (Recommendation No. R (98) 3). Human rights are also an underlying theme, including access to higher education for minority groups within a single, unified system in Kosovo.

Other developments have also taken place within the framework of this project. Centralised management and administration systems have been put in place for the University of Pristina and a series of training programmes for university leaders began this spring; these programmes were carried out by the Council of Europe partners in the higher education project, the European University Association (EUA) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). In co-operation with the Council of Europe, these two organisations, along with a variety of individual institutions, have also continued their efforts to reinforce international support to the University of Pristina through the Academic Task Force of the Pristina Working Group, which has played an important role in defining priorities for higher education reform in Kosovo.

Work on the general education law began in April. The intensive consultation process included working extensively with UNMIK's Department of Education and Science. Teacher unions, parents, special needs groups, teacher trainers, school directors and municipal authorities were consulted throughout Kosovo. Lead

agencies nominated by UNMIK to deal with specific issues in education were also consulted in a regular basis; the law thus underpins a wider reform process.

Both the draft higher and general education regulations were officially submitted to UNMIK by the Council of Europe on 12 October 2001. It is hoped that they will be promulgated by the SRSG in early 2002.

4. *“The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”*

In 1997, the Council of Europe advised the government on higher education legislation, and particularly the regulation and recognition of private higher education - an issue which directly affects the substantial Albanian-speaking population and raises important legal and constitutional questions. Follow up to this work in the context of implementation of new legislation and the Framework Agreement of August 2001 is now possible through further advisory missions and discussions with a wide circle of stakeholders if a specific request to this effect is received.

B. Higher Education:

1. *Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*

In 2001, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia acceded to the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention – ETS No. 165) under Article XI.3 of this Convention.

2. *Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – Montenegro*

Initial contacts with those responsible for higher education in Montenegro were made in 2000. A seminar on higher education policies was held in September in co-operation with the University of Montenegro, the CRE and the German Rectors' Conference. Advice was given on draft higher education legislation towards the end of 2000. Representatives of the University of Montenegro participated in the conference on European Higher Education Policies and Reform, held in Beograd on 12 – 13 March 2001 (see under Serbia below).

3. *Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – Serbia*

A large scale conference on higher education policies and reform in Europe was held in Belgrade on 12 – 13 March 2001, co-organized by the Council of Europe, the EAU – Association of European Universities, the Serbian Ministry of Education and the Advanced Academic Education Network (AAEN). The seminar gathered some 800 participants from all five Serbian universities, from the Ministry of Education and from the University of Montenegro. It addressed European developments on key policy issues like university autonomy, student participation, recognition of qualifications, higher education management and quality assessment and assisted with the first steps of Serbian rapprochement to the Bologna Process of higher education reform in Europe.

C. Educational policies

A conference on “Perspectives of educational reforms in Serbia: objectives and strategies” was held in Belgrade from 2 – 4 June 2001.

The conference was attended by more than six hundred participants: teachers, educational authorities at district level, and representatives from teacher-training and pedagogical research institutes.

The conference considered the following issues, also with the contribution of European experts, OECD and UNICEF: structures and management of the educational system, evaluation and quality assessment in education, role and training of teachers in a renewed education system. It provided an important basis for the first educational reform legislation in preparation for Autumn 2001.

An interagency follow-up meeting on the reform of secondary education in Serbia was convened by the Serbian Ministry of Education from 16 to 18 January 2002 with the participation of Council of Europe experts.

II. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND METHODS

A. Education for Democratic Citizenship

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina

a. Brcko teacher training in human rights education

As a contribution to a two-year programme of educational development in the Brcko district, which the Council of Europe has been instrumental in establishing, four in-service and initial teacher-training seminars in human rights and citizenship education were held in Brcko in 2001 and one has been held in 2002. They built upon work already accomplished in the district through a series of 4 teacher-training seminars in 2000. Teachers of all school subjects working both in primary and secondary education were involved in this programme.

b. Human rights education curriculum

To assist in the implementation of a comprehensive agreement on education reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed by the Minister and Deputy Minister of Education in the Federation and Minister of Education in the Republika Srpska in May 2000, the Council of Europe provided support in the development of a new curriculum in human rights and citizenship education, which replaced the subject "national defence" in all school curricula from September 2001.

In co-operation with Civitas/Center for Civic Education and UNESCO, Council of Europe experts have assisted in the content development of this new subject curriculum and the materials and manuals for teachers and students. Approximately 300 teachers around the country who will be teaching the new subject in secondary schools received one week of (re)training in July 2001. Further substantial training would be highly beneficial.

c. A new project

As a follow-up to these two initiatives, a new teacher-training project is being set up in 2002 thanks to voluntary contributions from the UK.

2. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia)

The reform strategy of the Ministry of Education in Serbia focuses on three main areas – democratisation, decentralisation and quality of the education system. The introduction of EDC/HRE into the formal curriculum represents an important part of the democratisation efforts. The Ministry has requested assistance from the EDC/HRE division on this. The central issues are the curriculum (EDC/HRE as a specific subject and with a cross-curricular approach); democratic school environment and system; partnerships between schools, communities, local authorities.

A joint Council of Europe/UNESCO exploratory mission on EDC development in Serbia took place in July 2001. In December 2001, an EDC seminar was held in Belgrade, co-organised by the Education Ministry, the Council of Europe and

UNESCO. The seminar provided for a consultation platform on the ministry's EDC/HRE reform strategy. Further activities will take place in 2002

3. *Croatia*

The Council of Europe has played a leading role in guiding the development and implementation of the National Programme of Human Rights Education in Croatia. From 23 to 26 May, the Ministry of Education will organise a major conference, which will discuss, *inter alia*, the results of the stocktaking research on EDC policies in SEE.

B. History teaching and learning

In the framework of the Enhanced Graz Process, the Council of Europe held a series of national teacher-training seminars in 2001 with EUROCLIO:

- a first seminar on "Active learning methods and enquiry-based learning for history educators" was held in Tirana, Albania, from 21 to 22 February , followed by a second in Belgrade, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, from 5 to 7 March;

- a teacher-training seminar on "New approaches in teaching history in secondary schools" was held in Iasi, Romania, from 12 to 14 November to which five Moldovan teachers were invited by the Romanian authorities.

Plans are currently under way to organise seminars on history education in co-operation with the *Association francophone d'éducation comparée*, the first of which should take place in Sarajevo in June 2002.

C. Languages policies

1. *Kosovo*

At the request of UNMIK, a report on language policies was completed by the Language Policy Division. The report "Language education policy options in Kosovo" sets out different short- and long-term options for language education policy development and their implications for decision-making in language education policy.

2. *Serbia*

At the request of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, a seminar on the use of the Common European Framework for curriculum development, textbook writing, teacher training, scales and assessment of language skills was held in Belgrade in December 2001. The European Language Portfolio was also presented to the different categories of participants. A number of participants from the Republic of Montenegro also attended. .

D. Teacher training

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Kosovo, Serbia

In the framework of the Council of Europe in-service training programme for educational staff, a number of scholarships have been made available to enable teacher trainers from Kosovo and Serbia to take part in teacher training seminars in the framework of the programme for in-service training of educational staff.

III. REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

A. Education for Democratic Citizenship

The regional activities on education for democratic citizenship are placed within the framework of the Stability Pact Task Force on education and youth where the Council of Europe has two roles.

1. Co-ordination of the working group on education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity

The working group comprises independent and governmental experts from SEE countries and representatives of NGOs and international organisations (Council of Europe, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP, OSI, Save the Children, CIVITAS, European Youth Forum). The objectives of the four meetings held so far have been to develop shared strategies and priorities for the development and support of education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity in the region.

The working group also monitored the eleven EDC/management of diversity "quickstart projects", which were funded by the Stability Pact. To strengthen and enlarge its network, the working group organised a seminar on "EDC/diversity: project and policy development" in Sarajevo on 6-7 May 2001.

In 2001, the Working Group concentrated on the formulation of priorities of EDC in SEE at their third meeting, held in Timisoara, Romania on 17-18 March 2001. These were followed by a list of proposals that were prepared at the seminar on "EDC/diversity: project and policy development", in Sarajevo on 6-7 May 2001.

At both meetings there was general agreement on the importance of EDC for SEE and on the need for continued support of EDC, because it could make a significant contribution to the stability of the region. The Sarajevo seminar provided a broad consultation platform concerning the future priorities of EDC and the management of diversity in SEE:

- Strengthening EDC and the management of diversity in SEE calls for measures to be taken at both levels of policies and practices.
- Priority should be given to increasing the coherence on the one hand between policies and practices, and, on the other hand, between EDC learning strategies and the existence of a democratic school system and learning environment.
- Special attention needs to be paid to the fulfilment of EDC principles by ensuring the access of disadvantaged groups to EDC and the management of diversity.

EDC development activities should focus on:

- Establishing dialogue mechanisms between policy makers and practitioners, as well as between all actors involved in EDC activities in order to develop synergies, shared ownership and responsibility;
- Training different target groups, such as: curriculum developers, teachers, students, media, etc., on EDC concepts, methodologies and practices. Activities aiming at empowering educational authorities on EDC policies should also be implemented;
- Establishing an EDC specific mechanism for collecting, exchanging and disseminating information, including good practices. This mechanism would

also be a tool for partnership development, monitoring and evaluation and would make use of new information technologies, where appropriate;

- Continuing support to educational research, promoting needs assessment activities and elaborating general guidelines for EDC in SEE with room for adaptation to local contexts;
- Strengthening co-operation and co-ordination between the international institutions and NGOs involved in EDC in SEE. Such a co-operation, initiated in the framework of the Graz Process and developed within the Working Group on EDC/Diversity should continue.

On this content basis, and given the interest indicated by donor countries during Autumn 2001, the Task Force "education and youth" launched in January 2002 (deadline : 15 February) a new call for project proposals on EDC / MoD to be funded via the Stability Pact.

The working group held its fourth meeting in Ljubljana on 22-23 February 2002. Its objectives were to establish and/or tighten contacts with new partners, discuss the three major reports of the working group (see below), draw conclusions for the further development of the working group's activities, and to screen 31 projects submitted within the above-mentioned call for proposals.

The working group was presented with the results of the three key reports prepared in 2001 : the stocktaking research on EDC policies in Southeast Europe; Denied the future ? on educational rights of Roma / Gypsy children; the monitoring report of the EDC / MoD quickstart projects. It held an in-depth discussion on the implications of the reports and drew conclusions for priorities and strategies for developing EDC and MoD in SEE. It emphasised in particular the need to work more towards country-based recommendations in complementarity with regional cooperation efforts. It also emphasised the importance of quality assessment mechanisms and the evaluation and monitoring of practices as a means to bridge the gap between policy intentions and actual implementation measures

2. *Project implementation*

Two of the eleven "quickstart projects" on education and management of diversity were implemented by the Council of Europe thanks to the financial support of Austria and Switzerland:

- stocktaking research on EDC policies in SEE;
- twinning of sites of citizenship in South-East Europe

These two projects are closely related to the priorities of the Council of Europe EDC activities in 2001-2004, i.e. policy development, networking and awareness-raising.

a. *Stocktaking research*

The objective of this activity was to collect information (qualitative research) about and compare existing policy provisions on EDC and the management of diversity in ten countries in South-East Europe. It will also contribute to the OECD-led national reviews of SEE educational policies. Experts from the region prepared country reports taking into account to what extent EDC policies are explicit or implicit within general education policies and investigating how educational policies allow the development and promotion of EDC/management of diversity practices. They also

examined the implementation measures and viewpoints from practitioners about the policies. A regional report identified common and different trends emerging from the country reports and presented recommendations on future policy development on EDC. The first meeting of the stocktaking research group took place on 19-20 February 2001; the second in Sarajevo on 4-5 May; the third in Budapest on 1-2 September 2001. Final national reports and the regional report were finished at the end of 2001. The results of the stocktaking research were presented at the first CoE seminar on EDC policies in December 2001.

The stocktaking research in South-East Europe provides the model for an all-European study on EDC policies currently being prepared by the Council of Europe

b. Twinning of sites of citizenship

Sites of citizenship are initiatives rooted in civil society, in schools, communities, youth and cultural centres and NGOs. The objectives of twinning sites of citizenship are to create new opportunities for EDC grassroots initiatives, to improve SEE co-operation through an exchange of experiences and information between initiatives; to develop regional projects and to contribute to assessing the impact of grassroots initiatives on systemic change.

A Sites-Twinning Monitoring Group was set up and held its first meeting on 5–6 February 2001. The group accompanied the project throughout its duration.

The twinning scheme was set up as a pilot project, geared to fostering dialogue and networking. This includes the exchange of practices during the three training workshops on sites twinning and reciprocal bilateral exchanges.

The active involvement of actors at all levels of site activities (representatives of Ministries of Education / EDC co-ordinators, site co-ordinators, site actors) ensures effective implementation and support of this pilot project. Sites from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Kosovo (FRY), Moldova, Montenegro (FRY), Romania, Serbia (FRY) and Slovenia participated in the twinning scheme.

The first training workshop was organised from 15-17 June 2001 in Borowets, Bulgaria. The project design for twinning sites of citizenship in SEE was prepared and agreed upon and the twinning pairs were set up.

During the summer informal meetings were organised in the form of summer camps. The second training workshop took place from 4-7 October 2001 in Varazdin, Croatia, and concentrated on the bilateral exchanges, which were carried out between October 2001 and January 2002. The third training workshop took place from 25-27 January 2002 at the European Youth Centre in Budapest. It focused on the evaluation of the pilot project –ongoing evaluation is an integral part of all the phases of the project - and on the follow-up to the twinning scheme. An overall evaluation report is being finalised.

B. History teaching and learning

The regional activities in this area concentrate on history and history teaching and fall within the framework of the Stability Pact Task Force on education and youth where the Council of Europe plays two roles.

1. Co-ordination of the working groups on history and history teaching

The Working Group has met twice (Strasbourg, December 1999 and Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, December 2000) to discuss the implementation of the quickstart projects within the Programme of Activities. Participants took part from the project-implementing bodies as well as participants from the region. In addition, two meetings of project implementers took place in Strasbourg (August 2000 and 2001) to review the state of implementation and their future activities. The next meeting of an extended Working Group was held in Sarajevo in December 2001.

The aims of the Sarajevo meeting were to:

- discuss the experiences and results of the quickstart projects;
- review the problems and advantages of the Stability Pact;
- look at the question of evaluation.

2. Project implementation

a. Comparative Study on the Initial Training of History Teachers

The Comparative Study on the Initial Training of History Teachers was prepared by the University of Vienna and two meetings (Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, May, and Podgorica, Montenegro, September 2001) were held to discuss the replies to the questionnaire. The study was received by the Council of Europe in mid-December. It contains a list of recommendations on the initial training of history teachers and will lead to a series of seminars in the region on topics that have been identified in the study.

b. Teacher-training seminars

The Council of Europe has also undertaken a series of regional teacher-training seminars in co-operation with EUROCLIO. The themes of the seminars were identified at the Conference on "The initial and in-service training of history teachers in South-East Europe" (Athens, September 2000). The Council of Europe, along with the Office of the High Representative and in co-operation with UNESCO, held a seminar on "New approaches to history teaching in secondary schools" in Sarajevo in December 2001.

Three regional seminars were held in 2001:

- "Teaching sensitive and controversial issues, multiperspectivity" (Ohrid, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", 6-8 May 2001);
- "Teaching the beginning of World War II" (Bled, Slovenia, 18-20 October 2001);
- "The challenges facing history teachers in the 21st century in a regional context" (Budapest, 8-10 November 2001).

C. Higher Education

Within the framework of the project on European Studies for Democratic Citizenship, a European Studies Open Academic Network for South-East Europe has been set up in Sofia, Bulgaria.

APPENDIX I

Declaration adopted at the Informal Conference of the Ministers of Education of South-East Europe

(Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2-3 December 1999)

The Ministers of Education of South-East Europe³, meeting in Strasbourg on 2 and 3 December 1999,

? **Aware** that co-operation in the field of education is the educational counterpart of the Council of Europe's political and legal activities to promote human rights, the rule of law and peaceful co-operation between European states;

? **Convinced** that education and educational co-operation have a fundamental role to play in the development of tolerance, mutual understanding and a common awareness both within and between the member States in the European context;

? **Reiterating** their belief that an education system based on common values and principles is a prerequisite for sustainable economic development and one of the cornerstones of social cohesion and democratic security;

? **Recalling** that the "Budapest Declaration for a Greater Europe without Dividing Lines", adopted at the 104th session of the Committee of Ministers on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Organisation, reaffirms in particular the primacy of the human person as achieved by the development of a new educational approach to democratic citizenship based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens;

? **Recalling** that on the occasion of the 19th session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education (Kristiansand, Norway, 22-24 June 1997), the Ministers had highlighted the specific contribution of the Council of Europe in the context of European co-operation on education deriving from the pan-European nature of the Organisation and its long-standing commitment to human rights, fundamental freedoms and pluralistic democracy;

? **Recalling** that in this same context, the European Ministers had expressed their solidarity with the countries of South-East Europe and their desire for priority activities to be developed to meet the challenges they had to face;

? **Having regard** to the establishment of a Stability Pact for South East Europe, and in particular the areas covered by Working Table 1 on democratisation and human rights which fall within the remit and the fields of activity of the Council of Europe, especially those relating to education, youth and sport;

? **Having held** a broad exchange of views on the work of the "Enhanced Graz Process" the conclusions and the Action Plan adopted at the Conference on "Educational Co-operation for Peace, Stability and Democracy" held in Sofia (12-14

³ The following attended:

- the Ministers of Education of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Romania, Slovenia, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Turkey;
- the Ministry of Education of Austria, who initiated the "Graz Process";
- the Minister of Education of Hungary, in his capacity as co-chairman of Working Table 1 of the Stability Pact.

November 1999), which have created a broad and practical framework for education activities to meet the needs of the region's States;

? **Emphasising** the specific role that the Council of Europe must play in the region in the context of its work programme and its contribution to the Stability Pact, in order to implement forward-looking education policies to promote European democratic construction based upon the fundamental values of the Organisation;

? **Welcoming** the fact that for some years already the South-East European States have been full partners in the programmes implemented by the Education Committee and the Higher Education and Research Committee, as well as in the programmes concerning youth and sport;

? **Welcoming** the fact that various activities responding to the needs of countries in the region are implemented under the auspices of the Cultural Convention and other relevant Council of Europe programmes;

? **Recommend to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:**

- that a differentiated and flexible regional approach to educational development be implemented, drawing on the co-operation and interaction of the various parties involved; this co-ordination is necessary not only to maximise available resources but also to create the conditions for rapid and effective work in the field;

- that the Council of Europe take practical steps to continue the high-level dialogue between those responsible for education policies in the region, whilst also facilitating communication with their counterparts throughout Europe. This dialogue would promote the exchange of information and experience, and the development of tangible, practical links at all levels of education systems with a view to increased co-ordination: in this connection informal conferences such as this one could be held again when it is felt necessary;

- that Council of Europe activities should focus on the following aspects of ongoing or planned reforms to the education systems of South-East Europe:

i. legislative and structural reforms linked to the organisation, infrastructure, and functioning of the education system, including: the evaluation of the impact of education policies, particularly those relating to cultural diversity and the needs of minority groups; institutional management; the improvement of quality and efficiency; the setting of educational standards; the role of universities as resource centres; the development of new information technologies in the spirit of the values endorsed by the Organisation;

ii. practical activities in the thematic areas in which the Council of Europe has long-standing and recognised expertise, namely: education for democratic citizenship, history teaching (including sensitive issues and periods of conflict), and the development of language teaching;

iii. the acquisition by young people, by means of appropriate training (in particularly vocational and further training including special activities for rural areas) of the necessary skills to contribute to all processes of social reconstruction;

iv. the implementation of programmes to promote the mobility of pupils, students, teachers and education system administrators, as well as initial and in-service training for teaching staff.

- that, as part of the Stability Pact and the “Enhanced Graz Process”, the Council of Europe should continue and reinforce its activities by seeking new partners and appropriate forms of interaction;

? **Strongly urge** the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to take measures to ensure that the financial and human resources commensurate with the urgency of the situation and the political role it has to fulfil in the region are made available;

? **Appeal** also to donor countries within the Stability Pact to take due account of the priorities established under the Graz process as to aid their realisation;

? **Express the desire** that the invaluable role of the “Enhanced Graz Process” as a unifying force, a catalyst for the implementation of educational activities, and a forum for co-ordination of the Action Plan and for the systematic exchange of information will be reinforced;

Invite the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, at their 20th session to be held in Cracow, Poland (October 2000), to assess the results of the activities already under way or launched between now and then in South-East Europe, and take them into account when drawing up its future medium-term programme;

? **Emphasise** that the aforementioned activities must be implemented to encourage communication and interaction between the region’s countries, and also with a view to promoting dialogue and practical co-operation between the countries of the region and other European countries in a spirit of solidarity and mutual understanding.

? **Thank** the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina for their proposal to hold in Sarajevo the next Informal Conference of Ministers of Education from South-East Europe.

APPENDIX II

Declaration adopted at the 2nd Informal Conference of Ministers of Education from South-East Europe

(Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 19 and 20 November 2001)

The Ministers of Education from South-East Europe, meeting in Strasbourg on 19 and 20 November 2001,

Welcome the fact that this second conference has been organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with Unesco, the OECD and the Stability Pact (Enhanced Graz Process);

Recall the declaration which they adopted in Strasbourg at their first meeting in December 1999, in which the Council of Europe was instructed to “take practical steps to continue the high-level dialogue between those responsible for education policies in the region, whilst also facilitating communication with their counterparts throughout Europe”;

Recall the declaration adopted at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in Cracow, October 2000, in relation to their main theme, in which they underlined “the role of education in strengthening the stability of South-East Europe”;

Reiterate their support for the progress made under the Enhanced Graz Process in its role as originator and catalyst for the implementation of educational reforms in South-East Europe and for the Council of Europe’s active participation in the process;

Recall the resolution adopted by the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in Cracow, 2000, on the activity programme for 2001-03, in which they recommended that the Education Committee and the Higher Education and Research Committee of the Council for Cultural Co-operation respond to “specific needs and problems of particular countries or regions through well-targeted advice and support activities for the renewal of educational structures and contents”;

Have taken note of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly, especially the recommendation on higher education in South-East Europe;

Express their satisfaction with the measures taken by the Council of Europe in the region in response to the priorities established at the first informal conference, particularly in the fields of legislative and structural reforms, education for democratic citizenship, history teaching and higher education;

Have noted and discussed the initial conclusions of the thematic reviews on educational reforms which the OECD has conducted within the framework of the Graz Process;

Conclude that it is important, when preparing national policies on reforms, to recognise:

that while certain problems and issues are common to the entire region of South-East Europe, it is essential that the solutions and policies to be implemented be identified in the context of individual countries;

that there are benefits not only in the existence of co-operation with international organisations but also in multilateral and bilateral co-operation between the countries of the region;

that this co-operation, which is of inestimable value, is founded chiefly on the exchange of good practices, the sharing and cultivation of European expertise and the indispensable role of careful co-ordination with the Ministers of Education in the countries concerned;

that while at the start of the process of transition to democracy there was talk of rapid all-embracing reform, the education systems of South-East Europe, in common with those of all member states, should now be considered as in a state of ongoing development and adjustment;

that all educational reforms require input from the teaching profession and that it is important to pay particular attention to teachers' status, basic and continuing training and professional standards;

that account should be taken of the innovative potential of information technologies and of improvements to the relationship between research and practice;

Have taken note with interest of the OECD studies on the brain drain;

Consider that the brain drain, which affects the countries of the region in varying degrees, cannot be halted, but that it needs to be slowed and if possible brought under control;

Believe that one prerequisite for tackling the brain drain is to ensure political and economic stability in the countries of the region as a factor for development, growth and career prospects;

Acknowledge that it is equally important to develop a revitalised, quality education system which is firmly grounded in democratic values;

Suggest a number of practical measures, such as:

seeking to generate viable projects for the future in the countries of origin as a means of enticing skilled young emigrants to return;

investigating the mobility of young people, identifying which branches of study are of most use to the country of origin and promoting that mobility in the hope that emigrants will later return;

favouring those branches of study which are most likely to stimulate employment and encourage new businesses;

continuing efforts to have qualifications more widely recognised, particularly in the context of the Council of Europe/Unesco Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165);

strengthening ties between the research sector and companies established in countries of the region;

building bridges between universities and industry and encouraging osmosis between science and business;

encouraging the organisation of regional summer schools offering accredited courses;

developing regional co-operation by strengthening education research and expertise across the region and making allowance for the need for a certain degree of compatibility,

Recommend that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

continue to develop the implementation of co-operation measures in the region in line with and in response to the priorities established at the first informal conference, particularly in the fields of legislative and structural reforms, history teaching, education for democratic citizenship and language teaching;

strengthen co-operation and higher education reforms with a view to full participation by the countries of the region in the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process);

further strengthen the synergy between the work of the Council of Europe and that of other international organisations, and Unesco in particular;

give particular consideration, in the years ahead, to the training and status of teachers, to support for the implementation of general education reforms covering pre-school and primary education, vocational training and adult education, to diversification in higher education and to equitable access to quality education;

continue fully to exercise its role as a political forum, promoting dialogue and co-operation in the region, which is recognised as an essential part of the European continent;

show particular support for bilateral and multilateral co-operation measures which have been set up between the countries of the region, and above all for the activities of the Educational Co-operation Network (SEE-ECN);

assemble budgetary and human resources with which to implement measures which take account not only of the needs of the region as a whole but also of the specific concerns of the countries of which it is composed;

consider declaring one of the forthcoming years the European Year of Education;

Express their satisfaction that education and youth are recognised as priorities of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe;

Hope that the Enhanced Graz Process will continue to play its role and emphasise the need for greater co-ordination of measures introduced as part of the process, especially by means of:

increased participation by the competent authorities, decision-makers and experts from the region in defining medium to long-term strategies;

support for educational networks with the aim of strengthening regional co-operation now and in the future;

efforts to bring education and youth issues before the international community in order to stress their role in safeguarding peace, democracy and stability in the region.