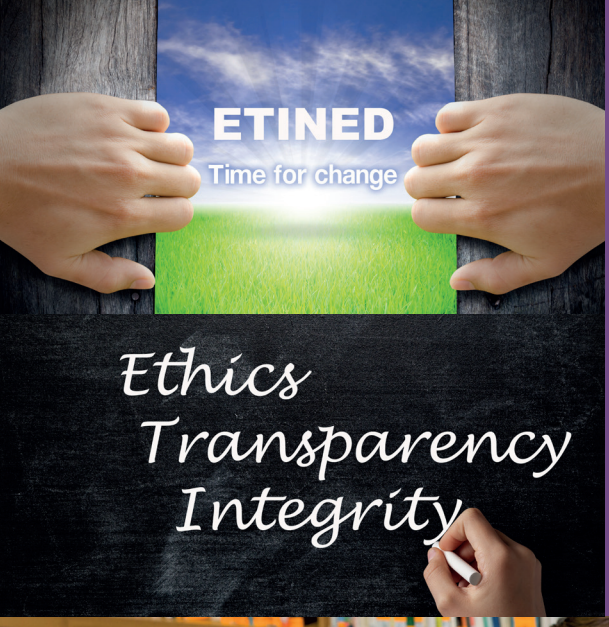

ETINED
Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education

Volume 5
South-East European Project on Policies for Academic Integrity

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ETINED
Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education

Volume 5 – South-East European Project on Policies for Academic Integrity

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Abbreviations

AIMM	Academic Integrity Maturity Model
AZVO	Agency for Science and Higher Education (*Agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje)*
BOS	Bristol Online Surveys
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CPD	Continuing professional development
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
EAIP	Exemplary Academic Integrity Project
ENAI	European Network for Academic Integrity
ETINED	Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
HEI	Higher education institutions
IPPHEAE	Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education Across Europe
SEEPPAI	South-East European Project on Policies for Academic Integrity
TI	Transparency International

ISO country codes

AL	Albania
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
HR	Croatia
ME	Montenegro
MK	"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
RS	Serbia

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Executive summary

Background

Research was conducted between September 2016 and March 2017 to explore policies and procedures for academic integrity in higher education institutions in six countries in South-Eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". The research was commissioned by the Council of Europe as part of the Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED) and associated initiatives.

The terms of reference for this study, the South-East European Project on Policies for Academic Integrity (SEEPPAI), included the following objectives and focus:

Objectives:

- to identify and analyse policies and practices used in South-East Europe regarding plagiarism and academic integrity in general;
- to identify gaps and challenges but also good examples and success stories that could be shared among states parties to the European Cultural Convention;
- based on the identified good examples, to outline preliminary guidelines which could serve as a basis for promoting capacity building in higher education institutions and/or peer-learning on plagiarism.

The study focused on:

- analysis of replies to specific questionnaires addressed to staff and students in higher education institutions;
- review, analysis and synthesis of existing documentation of lessons learned regarding factors of success or failure of the policies put in place by the universities to foster academic integrity;
- presentation of concrete approaches taken by universities to address the challenge;
- recommendations for action based on examples of good practice regarding ways to bridge identified gaps.

An earlier study of 27 EU member states conducted in 2010-13 by some members of the SEEPPAI team, Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education Across Europe (IPPHEAE), provided the starting point and initial resources for the new study.

Visits were made to a range of different higher education institutions (HEIs) in each of the six countries, which provided opportunities for team members to make presentations, hold discussions and run workshops with a broad range of stakeholders regarding this and previous research and regarding policies for academic integrity in higher education.

Evidence was collected by means of: online questionnaires completed by higher education students, teachers and senior managers; interviews; focus groups; and analysis of documentary sources. The full report provides details of the research findings and makes a number of observations and recommendations appropriate to each country in the study.

Summary of findings

As a general rule, education ministries and accreditation and quality agencies in the region do not provide strong guidance or oversight for policies relating to academic integrity. Although there is some evidence that development of procedures for doctoral studies and supervisory duties are being prioritised, there is very little evidence of rigour in policies for managing academic misconduct at bachelor and taught master's levels.

Although student responses were more negative than teacher responses to questions on pedagogy, the predominant higher educational culture that emerged from the survey in the region appears to be a didactical approach to teaching and learning, with critical thinking and innovation not encouraged in many faculties and institutions. However, clear exceptions to this rule were identified in some faculties and occasionally these applied at the institutional level.

Although there was a strong response indicating that policies for addressing aspects of academic integrity exist, normally at department or faculty level, it was less clear how consistently these policies are implemented and communicated, and therefore how effective they are for serving as a deterrent to academic misconduct.

Different forms of academic misconduct were identified as being prevalent across the region, and responses suggest that incidents were often not taken as seriously as the gravity of the offences should demand: examination cheating was often exacerbated by inadequate invigilation; ghost-writing was reported to be very common, with companies advertising affordable services on campus; evidence of students paying bribes to lecturers in return for favourable grades emerged independently several times in student focus groups; and plagiarism was often ignored and not seen as a serious problem.

In common with what was found in many other countries in Europe, collusion and sharing of assessed student work that was intended to be individual appears to be seen as acceptable practice in the region. Responses suggest that this is perceived

as a legitimate way for students to support peers, learn from each other and develop knowledge and skills.

When asked about evidence of preventative measures, most respondents interpreted this in a punitive way – referring to software for detection of plagiarism or penalties for integrity breaches – rather than considering educational initiatives to encourage integrity.

Several examples of effective practice were identified across the region. Some South-East European institutions had developed strong ties with universities elsewhere in the world and had adopted codes of practice and ethics in common with their international partners. A strong awareness of the need for academic integrity and effective pedagogical practices was apparent across one small institution and in one faculty within a larger institution visited in the region. It would be useful if these successes could be shared with other institutions and if lessons learned could be built upon across countries and institutions.

It became clear that it was relatively common for training to be provided for students in academic writing on use of sources and ethical practices, but almost all respondents agreed that there should be much more information and education for both students and teachers about all aspects of academic integrity. This was confirmed by questions in the survey exploring the concept of plagiarism, which showed that many students – and a few of the participating teachers – demonstrated a lack of understanding of how to make use of academic sources.

On the positive side, many of the academic participants in the research from the six countries showed a keen interest in this study, and some were themselves engaged in international research to enhance educational practices and ethical approaches to research.

Summary of recommendations

National governments, education ministries, and accreditation and quality agencies should proactively provide oversight for and guidance in strengthening policies and procedures for academic integrity in HEIs as a crucial component of quality assurance for both public and private HEIs. Research into and development of policies and systems for academic integrity should be encouraged, ideally through the provision of small-grant funding.

Given the evidence from this research regarding the prevalence of contract cheating and ghost-writing, it is recommended that national governments consider introducing legislation to make contract cheating illegal, as a means of deterring students from using such services and sending a strong message to companies and individuals who support this very serious form of cheating.

National governments should consider engaging with (text matching/similarity checking) software companies to negotiate an affordable nationwide license for use across the higher education (HE) sector.

Education ministries in the region should facilitate communication between institutions within the country and across national borders in order to learn from positive experiences and share ideas that have proved effective in countering corruption and academic malpractice.

To address the disparity in policies and practices across different faculties in HEIs, institutional leaders should initiate an internal review of local policies and practices to co-ordinate the development and implementation of common institutional strategy, policies and systems, and guidelines for encouraging and upholding academic integrity.

Supervision and oversight arrangements for formal examinations should be strengthened as a means to discourage cheating. Training should be provided for academic staff, thesis supervisors and invigilators to improve academic integrity and professional educational skills. Potentially, institutions in a single area could organise joint seminars and workshops.

Each institution should take responsibility to ensure that students at all levels are suitably guided and progressively educated on matters of honesty and integrity, academic writing and appropriate use of academic sources.

Where software tools are acquired for aiding the detection of plagiarism and collusion between students, the institution needs to develop clear policies on how the tools should be deployed and guidelines for the interpretation and use of the outputs.

The institution should take all possible measures to deter cheating in whatever form, including essay mills/contract cheating/ghost-writing, plagiarism and exam cheating.

Regarding pedagogical practices, the institution should discourage rote learning by aspiring to provide up-to-date learning experiences at all levels of study, where critical thinking is valued and teaching, learning and assessment are rewarding and inspirational.

The institution should mobilise representatives of the student community as valued partners in the challenge to reduce all forms of student cheating.

The institution should consider establishing procedures to allow the reporting of cases of academic misconduct ("whistle-blowing"), particularly by students.

Academic staff must take responsibility for their own conduct as role models for the next generation of professionals. They should commit to integrity: fairness, consistency, honesty and transparency in both their professional and private lives.

Academic staff should ensure that all students they are teaching or supervising are aware of the value and importance of learning and scholarship, and are motivated to maximise their attainment fairly and honestly.

Continuing professional development (CPD) should be a requirement for all academic staff, in order to keep up to date with their subject, educational developments, pedagogical practices and institutional policies.

Academic staff should ensure that all suspected cases of academic misconduct are handled in line with institutional policies and procedures that ensure transparency, fairness and consistency for all students.

Concluding remarks

Although there are clear challenges to higher education in this region, which encompass cultural, financial and organisational dimensions, the research participants provided sound evidence of an appreciation of what needs to be achieved and the will to undertake the necessary reforms.

The AIMM (Academic Integrity Maturity Model) metrics, calculated using survey responses from students, teachers, senior managers and national representatives, indicate that despite all the challenges identified, these six countries are broadly comparable with countries within the 27 EU member states surveyed under the IPPHEAE project in terms of the maturity of policies for academic integrity in HEIs (see Appendices 1 and 2).

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Background

Academic integrity is central to maintaining standards and quality of education at all levels. Recent studies in Europe and elsewhere in the world have demonstrated that more needs to be done globally to address threats to educational integrity from different forms of fraud, corruption and malpractice in higher education (IPPHEAE project reports; Lancaster and Clarke 2016; Glendinning 2016; Bretag and Mahmud 2014; Daniel 2016; QAA 2016).

In recognition of this situation, in 2015 the Council of Europe established the Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED). One of the initiatives of ETINED is to extend to other regions in Europe the EU-funded research conducted in 27 EU countries during the IPPHEAE project in 2010-13.

The SEEPPAI is the first of these new regional studies. The six countries included in this study are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Key members of the team undertaking the new study were involved in the original IPPHEAE research (Dr Irene Glendinning of Coventry University, UK; Dr Tomáš Foltýnek and Ms Dita Dlabolová of Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic).

It is notable that five of the countries in the new study were part of the former Yugoslavia and therefore can be considered to have a common historical basis. However, Albania has a very different historical background to the other countries in the study, having been under a "tyrannical" communist regime allied with China, with limited contact with the other countries in the region and lacking western European influence from the early 1950s until 1992 (Lambert 2016).

1.2. Previous research

The methodology adopted for the IPPHEAE project formed the basis of this new research. The previous project and subsequent related research included a mixed methods survey that generated over 5 000 survey responses from HEIs in 27 EU countries (excluding Croatia, which was not an EU member during the data collection period). The research explored policies nationally and institutionally for deterring and detecting academic dishonesty, focusing on bachelor and master's levels rather than doctoral studies and research. The findings revealed some examples of effective practice, but also showed that there are inconsistencies in how policies are implemented, both within and between institutions, in every EU country studied (IPPHEAE results).

The analysis demonstrated policy weaknesses in many of the participating institutions. Where policies were in place, there was often a lack of understanding and little transparency. It was recommended by the majority of participants that the provision of more information and training regarding policies and penalties to both students and academic teachers would raise awareness and help to develop scholarship and encourage a culture of academic integrity (Glendinning 2013).

Although the IPPHEAE project was initially concerned with plagiarism at bachelor and master's levels, the scope of the final study became rather broader: it made sense to consider other forms of academic dishonesty together with plagiarism; in some countries and institutions, policies and actions were focused on doctoral studies and research level rather than expecting students to understand the issue of academic integrity and develop scholarly skills earlier in their education; in HEIs where the predominant form of assessment was by formal examination, the major threat to integrity was examination cheating, increasingly using communications technology. All such elements are central to investigations in the new study.

More recent developments in this field have exposed contract cheating as a growing lucrative commercial sector supplying custom-made assignments and essays to order for students (Clarke and Lancaster 2006; Lancaster and Clarke 2016; Bertram-Gallant 2016; QAA 2016). This represents a vast industry which potentially could

affect every HEI in every country, and is a global, rapidly expanding and extremely serious form of student cheating. Contract cheating is very difficult to detect and will be even harder to eradicate. Although this was reported in the earlier research results as a problem in some EU countries, the threats to educational integrity from contract cheating have grown substantially since that time. It is important to explore in this new research the extent to which the South-East European countries in the new study have been impacted by this phenomenon and how they are responding.

In parallel with the Council of Europe's work in establishing ETINED, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP UNESCO) has created the ETICO[1] resource platform and provided training and support for countering the wide range of types of corruption in education. In conjunction with other bodies, including the USA-based Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), several seminars and initiatives have been commissioned to raise awareness of threats and solutions internationally. The culmination of the recent activities was the publication in 2016 of an advisory report by Sir John Daniel, which sets out a series of recommendations regarding the key role which quality assurance and accreditation agencies could play in helping to monitor and enforce measures for improving integrity and addressing corruption globally. This report is very relevant to the South-East Europe study.

Other earlier relevant research concerning the six countries individually provided an important starting point and helped to direct the new research. Some of the most impactful studies in recent years have come from comparative statistics on corruption created by Transparency International (TI) (TI 2013, 2015). The TI Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) scores and rankings in 2015 for the six countries under study are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Transparency International CPI 2015 for the six countries[2]

Country	Score	Ranking
Croatia (HR)	51%	50
Montenegro (ME)	44%	61
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (MK)	42%	66
Serbia (RS)	40%	71
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)	38%	76
Albania (AL)	36%	88

Key: 100% = "very clean", 0% = "highly corrupt"; 168 counties were scored and ranked.

These scores provide evidence of a general ethos of endemic nepotism, bribery, corruption and dishonesty in public life in these countries, but to varying degrees across the region. It will be interesting to compare these scores and rankings with the findings of the SEEPPAI study on academic integrity in higher education. Two

1. http://etico.iiep.unesco.org/en.
2. Corruption Perceptions Index 2015 available at www.transparency.org/cpi2015/#results-table.

quotes from the more recent TI report highlight problems in South-East Europe, including the countries that are the subject of SEEPPAI:

> Also very worrying is the marked deterioration in countries like Hungary, FYR of Macedonia, Spain and Turkey. These are places where there was once hope for positive change. Now we're seeing corruption grow, while civil society space and democracy shrinks. (TI 2015: 13).
>
> Corruption remains a huge challenge across the region, often going hand in hand with repression. In low-scorers Hungary, Poland and Turkey (which has plummeted in recent years along with Spain) politicians and their cronies are increasingly hijacking state institutions to shore up power, a worrying trend also affecting the Balkans. (TI 2015: 13).

Although not as recent, TI's 2013 global report on corruption in education is of specific relevance to SEEPPAI. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina scored well below the global average on "percentage of people who paid a bribe in education", it ranked second highest with a score of almost 4 on "perceptions of corruption in education" (TI 2013: 8). Perceptions of corruption in education are measured on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 equals "not at all" and 5 equals "very"; by way of comparison, the United Kingdom scored around 2.5, and the global average was 3.

Several specific studies have been conducted recently on aspects of corruption in education in the Balkan region, including:

- a study considering the role of the media in highlighting corrupt practices in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (Hajrullai 2015);
- a study involving a survey conducted by the Anti-Corruption Student Network in South-East Europe, which explored bribery and corruption in education and developed a toolkit for students in Macedonian (ACSN SEE 2015); the toolkit provides guidelines for students conducting research on these topics and defined the areas of corruption in need of study as:
  - cheating
  - selling of textbooks
  - bribery
  - enrolment process
  - dorm enrolment
  - student mobility
  - financial flows;
- a publication from 2016 focusing on a specific institution in Skopje, but with a slightly broader perspective, which was openly available in English; the author categorised corrupt practices in education as:
  - flagrant illegal acts of bribery and fraud (for example, public procurement fraud);
  - practices that provide an inflow of insignificant funds for individuals who do not receive their monthly fees on time or who receive small fees;
  - corrupt practices for performing activities under more difficult circumstances (for example, receiving a degree without first passing all the exams);

  - practices related to cultural beliefs (for example, the prevailing view that it is justified to give a present in return for a favour);
  - the corrupt practices that take place due to incompetence or ignorance (for example, wrongly allocated funds) (Zhivkovikj 2016: 17);
- a collaborative international research project, "Enhancement of HE research potential contributing to further growth of the West Balkans region" (Re@WBC Project), funded through Erasmus+, which focuses on doctoral supervision and research and aims to enhance the skills of the research community in line with EU standards;

Plagiarism by high-profile people has been a regular feature in regional media. Further details are presented in section 5.2 below.

1.3. Scope

As the studies discussed above demonstrate, research into corruption, even when confined to higher education, is still a very broad topic. There are many dimensions that could have been included in this study, but time and budget constraints required limits to be set.

The scope of the SEEPPAI study was largely determined in the terms of reference provided by the Council of Europe. The research concerns:

- six countries in South-East Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia";
- the higher education sector in these countries;
- strategies and policies for academic integrity and quality assurance in student assessment at all levels of education, nationally and within higher education institutions;
- specific inclusion of policies for plagiarism, examination cheating, contract cheating and ghost-writing;
- how well the policies are operating in practice;
- perceptions of different stakeholders within higher education: students, teachers, senior management, representatives;
- generating evidence of effective practice and areas in need of reform.

The research does not include all aspects within the broader definition of corruption, such as bogus degrees/degree mills, bribery in admissions, student accommodation or nepotism.

Chapter 2

Objectives and methodology

2.1. Objectives

In the terms of reference for this study provided by the Council of Europe, the stated objectives were:

- to identify and analyse policies and practices used in South-East Europe regarding plagiarism and academic integrity in general;
- to identify gaps and challenges but also good examples and success stories that could be shared among contracting states to the European Cultural Convention;
- based on the identified good examples, to outline preliminary guidelines which could serve as a basis for promoting capacity building in higher education institutions and/or peer-learning on plagiarism.

The study focused on:

- analysis of replies to specific questionnaires addressed to higher education institutions, staff and students;
- review, analysis and synthesis of existing documentation of lessons learned regarding factors of success or failure of the policies put in place by the universities to foster academic integrity;
- presentation of concrete approaches taken by universities to address the challenge;
- recommendations for action based on examples of good practice regarding ways to bridge identified gaps.

As stated earlier, the IPPHEAE project, which focused on EU countries, provided the inspiration for this new study, and the approach taken for SEEPPAI was based on the earlier project.

2.2. Methodology

The terms of reference specified that a survey should be conducted in order to understand strategies, policies and practices imposed nationally and within HEIs in the six countries under study. In order to determine not only what policies were in place, but how transparent they were and whether they were operating as intended, it was essential to capture perceptions of different stakeholders, both nationally and within institutions.

The survey tools developed for the IPPHEAE project provided a suitable starting point. These consisted of: separate online questionnaires for students, academic teachers and senior higher education managers; a set of questions for conducting semi-structured interviews, useful both at national and institutional levels; and prompts for conducting student focus groups. The IPPHEAE questionnaires were made available in 14 different languages.

For this new study, a thorough review was conducted of all the questions used in the IPPHEAE questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. Modifications were made in light of the experience of the IPPHEAE survey and its analysis, recent developments and the nature of the new study. The revised questionnaires (in English) were uploaded to the secure Bristol Online Surveys (BOS) platform. Copies of the questions for the students and teachers were then translated into languages relevant to each of the study countries, and Latin and Cyrillic alphabet versions were provided as necessary. Each language version was uploaded to the survey platform as a separate version. In total, eight different language versions were available online for students and the same number for teachers. The decision was taken to provide the senior management questionnaire, the interview questions and the focus group prompts only in English. In the case of senior managers, the expectation was that most would be able to respond in English or seek help from a local translator. For delivery of interviews and focus groups, local translators were made available as necessary.

The main additions to the questionnaires compared to the IPPHEAE survey were questions specifically on examination cheating and contract cheating. A question

on gender was added to the personal details section. Some questions that had not generated useful data for IPPHEAE were either reformatted or removed.

For ease of analysis of the responses in different languages, and also considering the expected volume of data, many of the questions were presented as Likert scale questions or sets of radio button options. This decision minimised the textual content and therefore reduced the need to translate answers. To allow triangulation of responses across different types of participants, where relevant the same or equivalent questions were included in the questionnaires for students, teachers and managers.

A few open questions were included in each questionnaire, specifically asking for additional information and suggestions and checking the respondent's understanding of the terminology. The open questions from students' and teachers' questionnaires were translated before being analysed thematically.

The detailed research plan was granted ethical approval after due consideration under Coventry University's research ethics procedures, before the data collection could begin.

Unfortunately, the short timescale of the project did not allow for pilot runs of the questionnaires. However, the different language versions of the questionnaires were sent for proof-reading and were checked for clarity and consistency before they were formally opened. Since similar questionnaires were used for the IPPHEAE study, the IPPHEAE survey can be seen as a pilot for this study. Links to the online questionnaires were made available to participants via the project website and were also sent by e-mail together with information about the project, tailored to the different participating groups.

The first pages of the questionnaires contained information on the project and on "informed consent". Participants in focus groups and interviews were asked to sign a paper copy of the informed consent form and to give permission for audio recording.

Contact people in HEIs in each of the six countries were identified through lists of Erasmus+ partner institutions, previous research contacts, by checking institutional websites and through intermediaries, including Council of Europe members and ETINED participants. Potential participants were contacted via e-mail and given information about the project. The approach taken by the team to generate interest in the research was to request visits to HEIs in the study countries with the offer of academic integrity workshops for students and academic teaching staff.

The online questionnaires were used for gathering mostly quantitative data, and other methods were used to capture largely qualitative data, generally during the visits to each of the countries. These methods included structured interviews with senior management at faculty or university level, student focus groups, informal discussion meetings and workshops with staff and students. All interviews and focus groups were transcribed, analysed and compared with quantitative data, and relevant findings were included in this report.

Having established contacts in each country with people who saw the project as relevant and were interested in supporting the research, it proved possible to "snowball" requests from these primary contacts to other institutions to request participation in the research.

Before analysing the questionnaire data, all the coded responses were downloaded from the BOS platform as Excel worksheets. A data cleansing operation was required for the student and teacher data in order to anonymise and reorganise the two groups of eight language sets into two groups of six country datasets (for example, some participants from Montenegro had responded to the Serbian-language questionnaire).

Each coded or numeric question was analysed using statistical tools and graphical representations available within Excel, country-by-country and collectively as appropriate. Text-based answers were translated into English before being analysed, using thematic analysis. The audio files from interviews and student focus groups were transcribed and subjected to textual analysis to extract meaningful quotations on a range of key topics that emerged from the four levels of the survey.

The results from the four levels of data collected were applied to the Academic Integrity Maturity Model (AIMM) to generate a "maturity" score for each country, which was used to compare results with those generated by the IPPHEAE project for the EU countries studied earlier.

2.3. Limitations

Several factors regarding the data collection must be taken into account before interpreting the results:

- a minority of HEIs in each country responded to the survey;
- within institutions that did participate, not all faculties were involved;
- to generate interest in the research in the countries under study, members of the project team made contact with researchers with whom they or colleagues had worked before, asking them to act as intermediaries;
- participation was entirely voluntary.

The above points confirm that the results can provide a useful sample to indicate the situation in these countries, but they cannot be considered to be representative of all HEIs across this region. From experience of the earlier research, based on the voluntary nature of participation it is likely that respondents, most of whom took considerable time to complete a lengthy contribution, were more likely to be interested in the subject of the research than those who chose not to participate. The results may tend to show a positive bias because institutions with stronger policies for academic integrity were more likely to participate than those with ineffective policies. However, it may also be the case that people who felt strongly about the research topic and how their institution/country was responding (positively or negatively) were more likely to participate in the survey.

Chapter 3

Review of policies and practices concerning plagiarism and academic integrity in universities

3.1. Data collection

In order to get as many responses as possible, the project team asked their contacts to participate in the survey. Some of these people invited associates from other institutions. Besides personal contacts, e-mails were also sent to all vice-deans for education and vice-deans for international affairs of all faculties of all universities in the region. These contact details were collected from publicly available resources (typically, institutional web pages). Although the project team contacted all institutions in the region, only a few of them responded and even fewer agreed to participate in the project.

Several HEIs in the study region expressed interest in the research and very generously hosted and supported visits by SEEPPAI team members. More than 50 HEIs participated in the study, and visits were arranged to 17 HEIs. Table 2 provides a summary of the number of questionnaire responses. Responses from institutions outside the study area were not included in the analysis.

Table 2: Summary of questionnaire responses in different languages

Participant	Language	Alphabet	AL	BA	HR	ME	RS	MK	Other country	Total
Teacher	Albanian	Latin	27			1				28
Student	Albanian	Latin	54					1		55
Teacher	Bosnian	Cyrillic		21						21
Student	Bosnian	Cyrillic		63					2	65
Teacher	Croatian	Latin			78					78
Student	Croatian	Latin			171				1	172
Teacher	Macedonian	Cyrillic						8		8
Student	Macedonian	Cyrillic						17		17
Teacher	Montenegrin	Latin				4				4
Student	Montenegrin	Latin				1				1
Teacher	Serbian	Cyrillic					18			18
Student	Serbian	Cyrillic				1	13			14
Teacher	Serbian	Latin		3		1	79			83
Student	Serbian	Latin				9	122		1	132
Teacher	English	Latin	3	3	3	3	2	1		15
Student	English	Latin	2	1			1			4
Managers	English	Latin	1	4	4	0	5	1		15
Total questionnaire responses			**87**	**95**	**256**	**20**	**240**	**28**	**4**	**730**
			AL	**BA**	**HR**	**ME**	**RS**	**MK**	**Other**	**Total**
Total responses from teachers			30	27	81	9	99	9	0	255
Total responses from students			56	64	171	11	136	18	4	460
Total responses from managers			1	4	4	0	5	1	0	15

Table 3 details the activities that took place during the visits to each of the six countries during October and November 2016. Taking into account the number of participants in questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and workshops, the team estimates that well in excess of 1 000 participants were involved in the research.

Table 3: Summary of visits and activities, October-November 2016

Type of activity	AL	BA	HR	ME	RS	MK	TOTAL
Institutions/campuses visited	3	3	6	2	2	1	17
Student focus groups	3	3	3	1	2	1	13
Senior staff interviews	3	2	5	1	2	2	15
Staff group discussions	3	0	0	2	1	1	7
Student workshops	4	1	0	1	0	1	6
Staff workshops	3	0	3	1	1	1	9
National interviews	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
TOTALS	**19**	**10**	**17**	**8**	**8**	**8**	**69**

Many attempts were made to engage national-level participation during the visits to the region and by e-mail and telephone, but this proved to be very challenging.

Initially, at least two contacts in every country – identified using information provided by institutions and the Council of Europe – were invited by e-mail to participate in the research, but very few responses were received. The next phase involved telephoning a number of possible contacts. Despite continuing efforts involving telephone calls and e-mails, there were still disappointingly few responses.

3.2. National perspectives on higher education in South-East Europe

In the region being studied, there seems to be a strong culture of academic autonomy in higher education, with an impact on quality assurance. In particular, there is a lack of double marking, moderation and oversight of assessment and grading, which has implications for the opportunities to monitor cases of cheating and how they are handled. However, some institutions were found where this autonomy does not apply, particularly those institutions aligned with partners outside the region.

When asked about the predominant culture for teaching, learning and assessment, senior managers provided a range of different responses, which suggested that in their institutions students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking and are given various types of practical and challenging assessment. However, responses from students (in focus groups and from responses to open questions in the questionnaire) gave the impression of a culture which largely relies on rote learning and is assessed mainly through formal examinations. Many student respondents made the point that their own views were not valued; for their assessments, they were normally expected to memorise and reproduce the notes they had been given by their tutor.

Examples from student focus groups:

- expressed by a PhD student with experience in teaching: "they [teachers] are too lazy to devise good exams where students cannot cheat, ... with some kind of examples, practical, oral exams or something like that. ... [Teachers] just repeat the same questions year after year ... and then ask 'oh, why do they cheat?'";
- "it's a problem of teachers and the educational system not making us think. Instead, we are just learning facts and just saying what has already been written".

Particular methods of teaching, learning and assessment have a strong influence on the capacity and opportunities for academic misconduct. In a didactical educational culture, copying without acknowledgement (and therefore plagiarism) is the norm rather than being seen as unacceptable. However, several institutions in the region were identified where at least one faculty was distinctive in terms of pedagogy. These examples of good practice will be discussed later.

Almost all managers from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia who responded to the questionnaire disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that "national quality and standards agencies monitor plagiarism and academic dishonesty in HEIs", with some agreement by managers from Croatia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". In response to the same question, 29% of teachers disagreed, 40% were not sure and just 18% agreed, with a rather higher rate of agreement in Albania

(35%) and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (44%). This suggests that responsibility for monitoring may be under the remit of quality agencies in some countries, but no further evidence was found of this.

3.3. Policies related to academic integrity at national and institutional level

It became apparent during interviews that some national rules affecting quality and academic integrity in higher education are being introduced in parts of the region under study.

In Albania, new regulations have been made available on copyright, although these are not specific to education. According to one senior manager, the people responsible for drafting the legislation are not familiar with the problems regarding student cheating currently being faced by higher education institutions (Interview AL01). Other interview respondents said that they were unclear as to the extent to which these had been implemented and were not aware of any impact so far.

In "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", the "Ministry operates a plagiarism control system [that is] mandatory" (Interview MK03) for master's and doctoral level theses, but so far there is no provision for students at bachelor level.

When deans, vice-deans or teachers at HEIs were asked about policies concerning plagiarism and academic integrity, typically they mentioned the following:

- code of ethics;
- ethics committee;
- national standards for accreditation (in some countries).

Codes of ethics can be set either at faculty or university level. However, the existence of a university-level code of ethics does not exclude the existence of regulations on ethics for faculty, which are usually more specific and oriented towards particular fields of study. In some countries (such as Croatia), there are national recommendations on the content of codes of ethics prescribed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO).

In all countries in the study where faculty members said that they had high autonomy, policies on academic integrity differed by faculty. In some institutions, the policies are not defined at all. In some institutions the policies are defined, but not really followed. In addition, management's awareness of academic integrity issues differs between institutions.

In one example, faculty managers are convinced that student cheating is uncommon and that when it happens, it is discovered and students are punished by the teacher. Such responses suggest effective control at faculty level. However, students from the same institution provided a completely different view: they described various types of cheating that occur, including contract cheating. They also stated that teachers did not care about such conduct and that cheating is part of their culture.

In contrast, there were a few institutions where management said that they were convinced of the need for a proactive approach to academic integrity. They described regular training of both students and staff conducted at the beginning of each academic year.

Academic regulations usually include clauses on disciplinary violations, describing which disciplinary procedures to follow when a case is reported by a teacher. A common procedure for institutions in the region is that less serious cases are resolved by the teacher who best understands the case. A typical penalty would be for the student to rewrite an assignment or be awarded a lower mark. Survey responses suggested that some teachers are quite reluctant to report cases in order to avoid complex and time-consuming processes. Where only serious cases are reported to the disciplinary committee, it is still up to the teacher to decide whether the case is serious enough and whether or not to take any action. Leaving such decisions to the discretion of individual teachers could lead to discrepancies and lack of consistency. However, it emerged that in a few institutions teachers are obliged to formally report even the least severe cases.

At the institutions visited by the project team during this study, a commonly reported model was that the disciplinary committee at faculty level meets at most once per semester to hear a small number of reported cases. It is quite common for no cases to be reported, which means that the disciplinary committee may not meet for a long time. The penalties can be serious, including expulsion from the university. At one university in Serbia, expelled students are blacklisted and cannot re-enrol, even with another faculty. At other universities, it was stated that expelled students are allowed to re-enrol and complete their studies.

In Croatia, within the AZVO there is the Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education (CESHE),[3] which has adopted and published an ethical code for science and higher education. The institutional codes of conduct come from this "central" ethical code.

Some universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania adopted their ethical rules from western universities (for example, from their double-degree partners) and therefore have a different approach to academic integrity compared to other institutions in the region. The ethics committee of one of the faculties in Croatia monitors examples of good practice by European universities (for example, the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom) and is trying to apply them in practice.

One example of an institution taking academic integrity very seriously is a particular faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina (referred to later in this report as Faculty of University B). They endeavour to prevent academic misconduct, have all processes described in detail and try to handle cases of misconduct as fairly as possible. They did not want to wait for national accreditation standards, so they asked for Austrian, European and United States accreditation. They also have many double award degree programmes. including with the United Kingdom and Finland. As a result, their quality assurance strategy meets international standards and includes academic

3. See www.azvo.hr/en/ethics-committee-in-science-and-higher-education.

integrity policies. Everything is in writing, all procedures are clear, and they revise their policies every year.

In contrast, suggestions made during some student focus groups implied that cheating is common and goes unchallenged in private universities in their country:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: "The situation is really bad in private faculties. There is a common joke, that you go to town X to eat *čevapi*[4] and you come back with a diploma."
- Croatia (in answer to the question "Is there anything else that you think might be useful for us and our research?"): " … and also go to the private universities. There, plagiarism is huge."

All the questionnaires asked whether the respondents' institutions have policies for dealing with plagiarism, academic dishonesty, examination cheating and ghost-written work. The positive responses for all six countries summarised in Table 4 indicate that most participants believe there are policies and procedures in place, although less certainty was evident among teacher and student respondents. The differences in these responses possibly indicate poor communication inside institutions about the policies, or could suggest that policies are not being followed.

Table 4: Agreement of respondents that policies and procedures exist for dealing with cheating

Agreed or strongly agreed that "my institution has policies and procedures for dealing with different forms of cheating"	teachers	students	managers
Plagiarism	51%	60%	73%
Academic dishonesty	55%	59%	94%
Examination cheating	75%	71%	94%
Ghost-writing	51%	45%	73%

However, several responses to an open question about what can be done to reduce academic misconduct indicated that existing procedures were not being followed in their institution. More than 28% of the open responses (from students, teachers and managers combined) called for more effective procedures and stricter, more consistently applied penalties, as a way of deterring various forms of cheating. Combining the findings discussed here implies that even where policies are in place, they are often not being applied as intended and are not creating sufficient threat to students to discourage cheating.

The focus groups also elicited mixed student responses to the issue of exam cheating. In some focus groups, these questions met with merriment; the first response of some students was to laugh. When students in many of the focus groups were asked individually to rate how common they believed examination cheating to be on a scale between 0 ("never") and 10 ("very common"), the average results converged around 7. Very frank observations were shared by students in many cases.

4. A grilled dish of a type of skinless sausage found traditionally in the countries of South-East Europe.

The implication here was that exam cheating was common in many areas or could even be considered as the norm. Students across the focus groups seemed to be largely in agreement that they regularly observed examination cheating taking place.

There was also a suggestion that students treated examination cheating like a game, their aim being to cheat successfully and thus outwit the invigilators. There were also claims that obvious cheating was ignored in some cases, with invigilation proving to be very casual, or with the staff present seeming to ignore obvious cheating.

One example from a student focus group is illustrative here of the wider cultural issues that result in exam cheating: "Some teachers are just lenient and some really don't care. We have teachers who don't even read the exam scripts. One teacher slept during the exam!"

On the positive side, it is clear that some institutions are looking at measures designed to reduce exam cheating. Examples collected during the SEEPPAI research include the use of cameras to observe and record the conduct of candidates, and the introduction of signal jamming equipment to prevent mobile telephone communications.

Contract cheating also provoked lively discussion in student focus groups, although students were not always willing to discuss this issue. Students identified widespread knowledge of services advertising to write assignments for them. Views on whether many students used these services differed, as did opinions on how affordable the pricing of these services was. There was also the suggestion that many classes included a student who would write assignments for other members of the class, although this issue was not consistently explored across the focus groups.

Examples from focus groups:

- "It's very common." [multiple times, students laugh and agree] "There are Facebook groups where you can hire someone. There are numbers in the bathroom stalls for writing seminar papers and… . My friend paid two times."
- "I have an example of ghost-writing. I have some friends who are at ... faculty, and there is a Facebook group for students of this faculty. Someone there asked: 'How much does it cost for someone to write all my assignments for me?' And they were bidding against each other! Someone said 35 euros, another 30 and then another 25 – and the last one got it. It was like an auction, offering the lowest price! In fact, every assignment has its own price. The price also depends on the subject and the difficulty of the subject."

Some students and teachers mentioned that using a ghost-writer was considered to be similar to plagiarism and that if caught, the penalties would be no more serious.

3.4. Student and teacher perceptions of plagiarism scenarios

One key part of the survey for the IPPHEAE project was designed to establish how well respondents understood the concept of plagiarism, and to capture their views on whether different forms of plagiarism should be penalised. These questions were also included in the SEEPPAI survey, which allows comparisons to be made between results for the new study and those from EU countries.

Students and teachers were given six scenario variations and had to judge the severity of plagiarism in each case. The basic scenario used for the six variations was: "Assuming that 40% of a student's submission is from other sources and is copied into the student's work as described in (A-F) below, indicate your judgement on plagiarism by ticking one of the boxes". The particular cases were:

A. word-for-word, no quotations;

B. word-for-word, no quotations, has correct references but no in-text citations;

C. word-for-word, no quotations, but has correct references and in-text citations;

D. some words changed, no quotations, references or in-text citations;

E. some words changed, no quotations, has correct references but no in-text citations;

F. some words changed, no quotations, but has correct references and in-text citations.

Scenarios A and D are presented for comparison in Figures 1 and 2 because they are of equivalent severity, both cases of serious plagiarism, and therefore should produce the same responses.

Figure 1: Students' perception of plagiarism in different European countries: scenario A

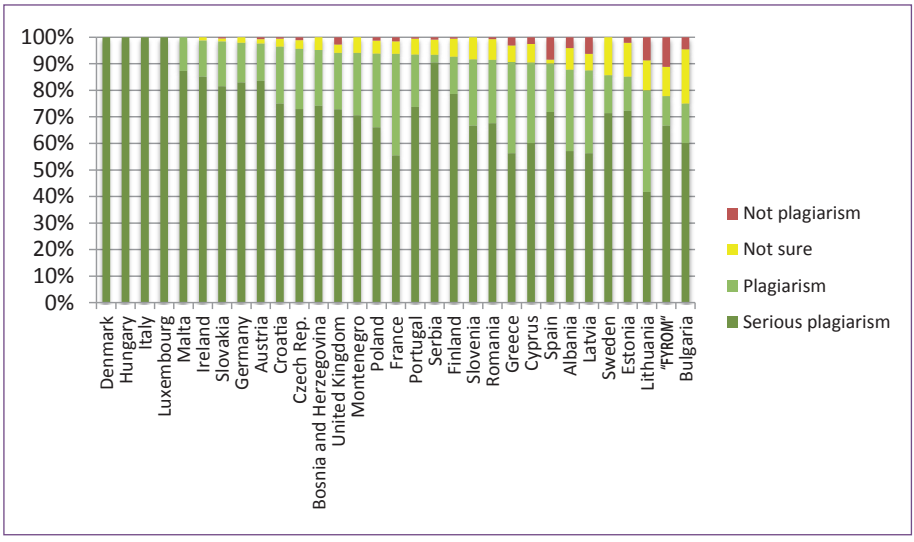
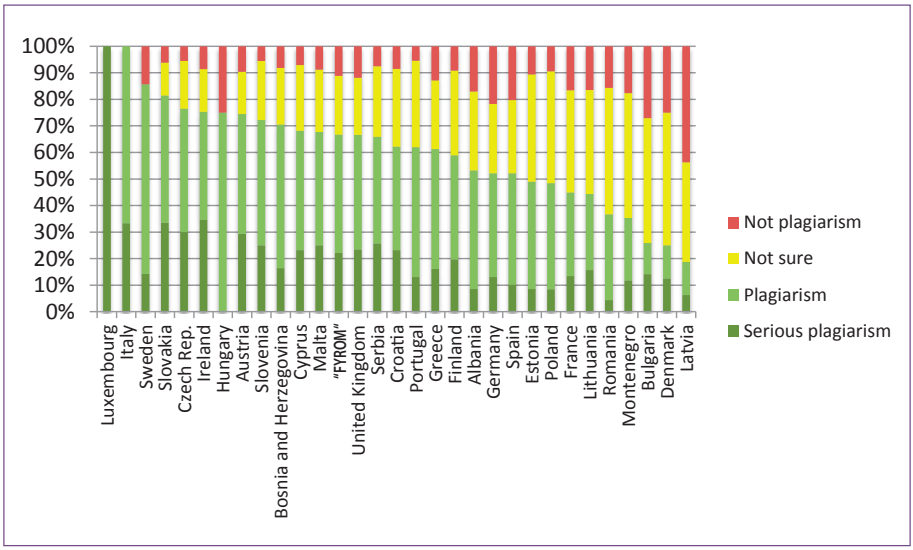


Figure 1 shows student responses to scenario A, where 40% of the student's submission is copied word-for-word without the use of quotations. As the chart indicates, the student responses to scenario A are in line with the EU average. The highest level of agreement that scenario A is an example of serious plagiarism or plagiarism was in Croatia, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and then Serbia and Albania. "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" lies almost at the lowest agreement end of the EU country scale. The results lie within the range of European countries as a whole. This shows that the perceptions of the SEEPPAI sample of students do not differ significantly from results for other EU countries.

Figure 2: Students' perception of plagiarism in different European countries: scenario D



Previous research has shown that most of the students from almost all European countries surveyed considered scenario D as less serious than scenario A. Figure 2 adds the results from South-East Europe to those of the IPPHEAE countries, and these results fall within the range recorded by the IPPHEAE countries. This means that it is not possible to observe any substantial difference between the countries in SEEPPAI study and Europe in general.

Within the SEEPPAI countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina saw the highest percentage of students understanding that 40% copying with words changed still represented serious plagiarism or plagiarism. The country order was followed by "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Serbia, Croatia, Albania. Montenegro appeared near the lower end of the European country rankings.

The results depicted in Figure 2 show that despite claims of having had training in academic writing, 39.38% of students in the new study had a poor grasp of source use and referencing, compared to 38.58% of students across the 27 EU countries in the original study.

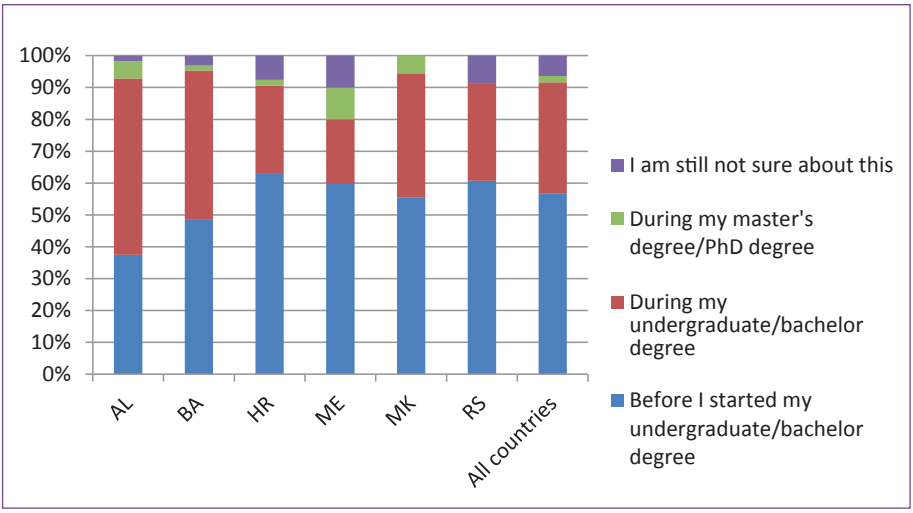
Responses from teachers to the same questions revealed a slightly more positive pattern in understanding, but still raise concerns. A poor understanding was apparent in a total of 11.62% of teacher respondents in the new study, compared to 17.32% of the teachers in the IPPHEAE study.

These results provide evidence that many of the students and some of the teachers in European countries have a mistaken belief that changing a few words in a copied text removes the need to acknowledge the source.

3.5. Evidence from teachers and students on skills, knowledge and training

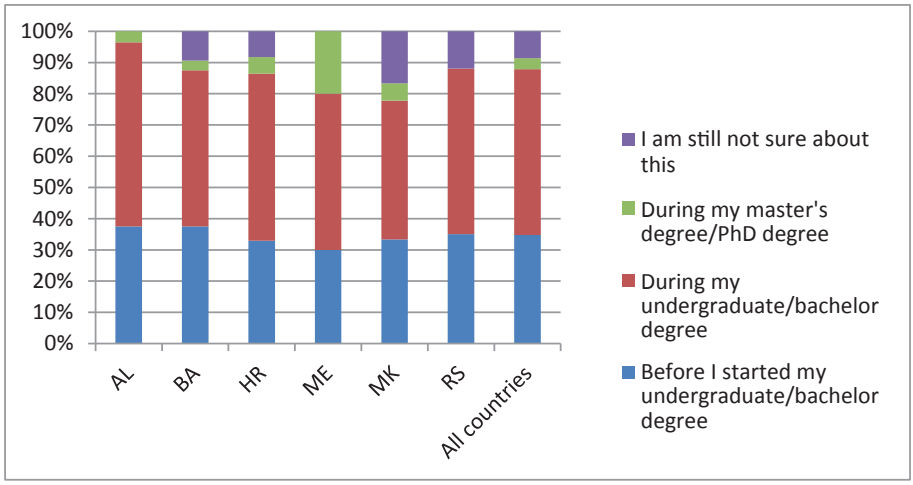
According to the online questionnaire with student responses from all six countries, there was no major difference regarding when students become aware of plagiarism (Figure 3). In general, 57% of students across all six countries agreed with the statement that "I became aware of plagiarism before I started my undergraduate/bachelor degree" (the total is lowest in Albania with 37%, highest in Croatia with 63%). Other students become aware of this during their undergraduate/bachelor studies. These two options together comprise 91% of the responses. Less than 10% of students said that they were "still not sure about this".

Figure 3: When students became aware of plagiarism



Less than 40% of student respondents across the six countries learned how to cite and reference before they started their undergraduate/bachelor degree (Figure 4), and 53% of student respondents learned this during the undergraduate/bachelor studies, with a similar response for the six countries. No students in Albania and Montenegro said they were not sure about this, which is quite remarkable, because in both countries there was at least one student who was still not sure about plagiarism. In total, 8% of student respondents said they were still not sure about citing and referencing.

Figure 4: When students learned how to cite and reference



A similar pattern of responses on knowledge about plagiarism and knowing how to cite and reference was observed in the student focus groups. Students were familiar with such terms as "plagiarism", "auto-plagiarism" or "ghost-writing" and they were referring to experience in high school.

Some student focus group participants were well informed about aspects of academic integrity and said that their teachers strongly encouraged academic integrity and good practice for academic writing. However, the same students said that they had friends (with different teachers) who did not know how to cite properly or how to work with academic source material.

Examples from student focus groups:

- "I know people who copied from another student, but I don't think that it is because they wanted to steal somebody's ideas; they really just don't understand the importance of respecting copyright and related things."
- "We had a group assignment. One girl was supposed to write an introduction to the seminar, and she literally copied the whole introduction [from a book]. I told her: 'Do you understand that you cannot copy the whole book?' I think she didn't mean to copy it, but she just didn't understand what she had done. She copied someone else's work, and I was telling her: 'You have to [cite it properly]'."

Students were asked "How did you become aware of the seriousness and consequences of plagiarism?" and "How did you become aware of the seriousness and consequences of other forms of academic dishonesty (cheating)?" In order to analyse the many different responses, the options were thematically grouped into: "written materials" (including: website; course booklet or student guide or handbook; leaflet or guidance notes; posters), "school education" (workshop/class/lecture; teacher or supervisor; information during introductory lectures), "people outside

official education" (social media; friends and family; other students), "anti-plagiarism software", and the last option was "I am not aware of any information about this". The last option was chosen by 9% of students from all countries when they were asked about plagiarism and 13% of students in general from all countries when they were asked about other forms of academic dishonesty. Only Montenegro had very different results: 30% of students were not aware of any information about plagiarism and 60% did not know about academic dishonesty (the high ratios from Montenegro have only a slight influence on the "all countries" totals, due to the low number of responses).

Figure 5: How students became aware of the seriousness and consequences of plagiarism

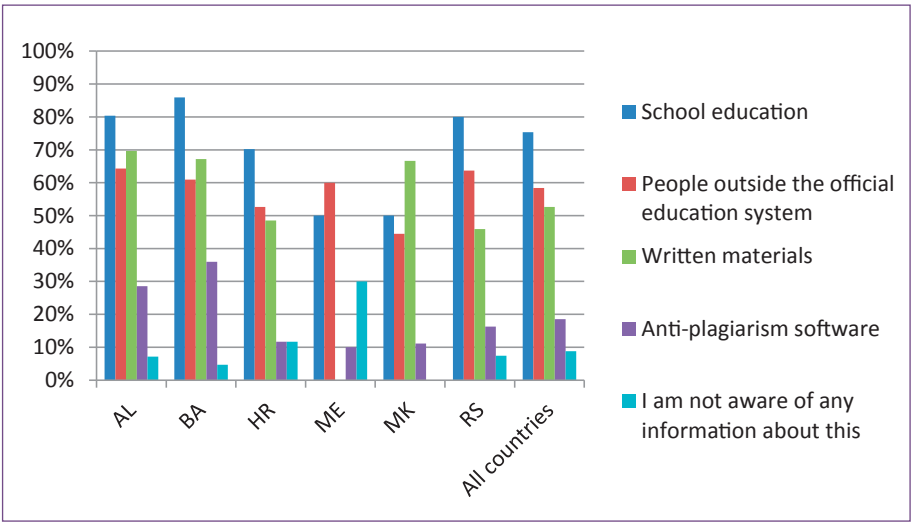
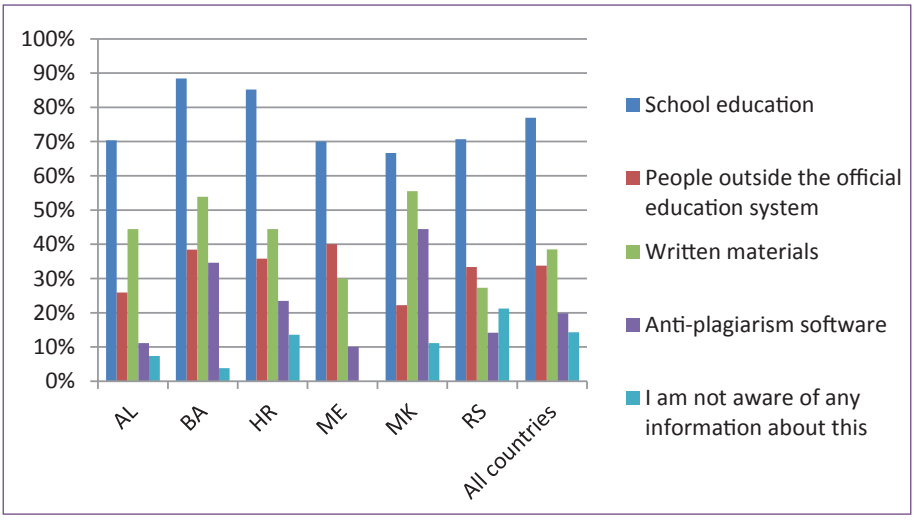


Figure 6: How students became aware of the seriousness and consequences of academic dishonesty



Figures 5 and 6 show how the surveyed students responded to the questions regarding how they became aware of the seriousness and consequences of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. The main sources of information selected for plagiarism were "school education", "people outside the official education system" and "written materials". The same sources were selected for academic dishonesty, but with slightly more emphasis on "school education".

The results shown in Figures 7 and 8 are responses from teachers giving their views on where students learn and understand about plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Teachers consider "school education" to be the main source of information – almost 90% for plagiarism and 80% for academic dishonesty. Around 40% of teachers chose "written materials" and approximately 35% chose "people outside the official education system".

Figure 7: Teachers' perspective of how students become aware of the seriousness and consequences of plagiarism

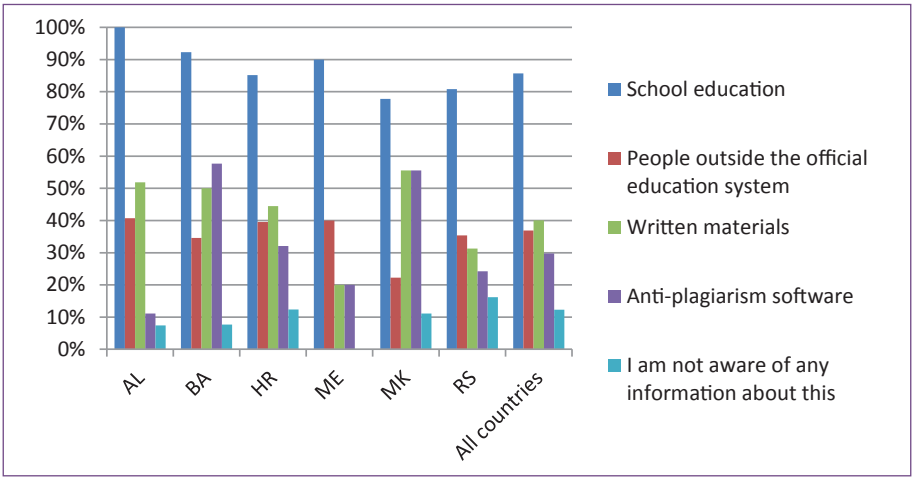
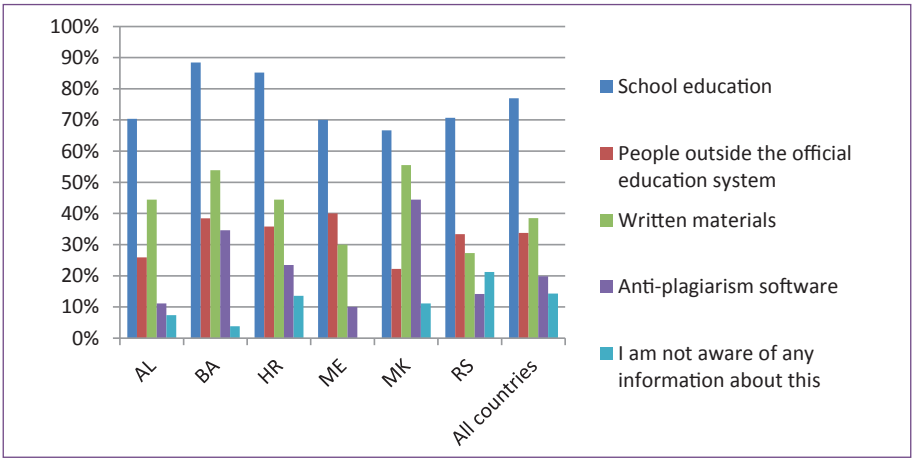


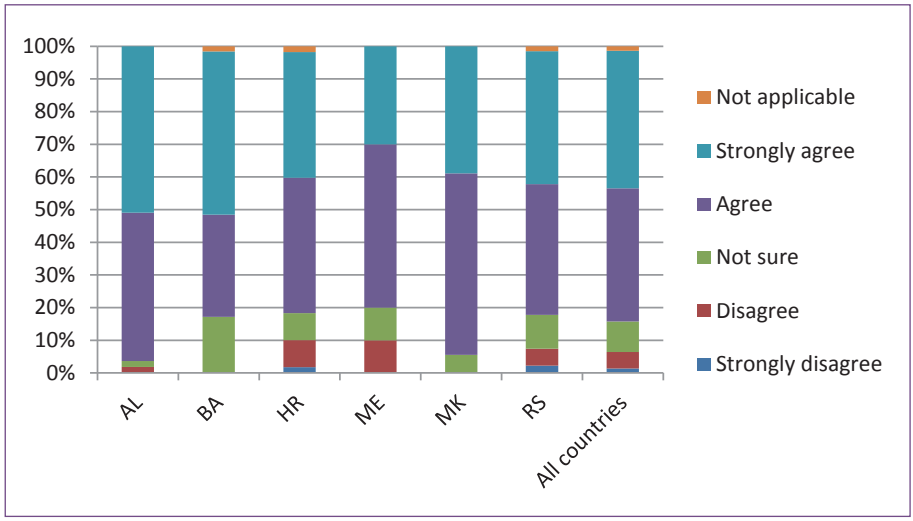
Figure 8: Teachers' perspective of how students become aware of the seriousness and consequences of academic dishonesty



A comparison of students' and teachers' responses in Figures 5-8 reveals that some teachers may not be aware of all the channels through which students learn about important concepts, specifically: social media, friends and family and other students.

Students in focus groups agreed that there should be more education on this topic at university and that they would welcome more training. The same thing is apparent in the online questionnaires, as shown in Figure 9. A total of 82.93% of students across the six countries agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I would like to have more training on avoidance of plagiarism and academic dishonesty".

Figure 9: Students' perspective on wanting to receive more training in academic integrity



Teachers' questionnaire responses also showed strong agreement (87.2%) regarding more training for students. A great majority of teacher respondents (80.32%) also agreed that there should be more training for teachers on the same subject.

Evidence of further support for training came in responses to the open question: "Please provide suggestions for reducing student cheating". Thematic analysis of well over 600 suggestions from students, teachers and managers revealed that more than 40% of the suggestions related to the provision of more education, information and training to students and/or teachers.

Chapter 4

Examples of good practice

4.1. Good practice across the South-East European region

During the team's visits to the region, several positive examples of activities and policies were identified and were considered notable as good practice. Other faculties, institutions and teachers may benefit from these examples by using them to improve their own practice or to inspire ideas for further innovations. In the details given below, anonymity has been maintained unless an institution has specifically agreed to be identified.

4.2. Faculty of University A, Croatia

This faculty appears to have developed effective policies due to the effort of a small team of enthusiastic people. Particular mention is given to the members of the ethics committee proposed by the dean of the faculty, as well as to the Faculty Council. The faculty has adopted regulations related to ethics in line with University A's code of ethics as well as other important guidelines for the work of the ethics committee. The ethics committee follows the best practices of European universities (for example, the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom) with the aim of

implementing some of them (for example, having students sign a statement before exams). Although the teachers are not obliged to report cases of misconduct, some of them do. Much of the effort within the faculty has gone into relationship building, in order to raise the overall levels of awareness of ethical issues.

Some specific examples noted include:

- a special webpage devoted to ethical issues;
- ethics within the faculty has its own mascot and e-mail address;
- staff members meet once per year to discuss their approach to cases, and information for staff is available on the faculty webpages;
- workshops for students organised every year as well as promotional material for freshman students;
- the ethics committee meets several times during the academic year, depending on the number of applications and the number of other activities related to the promotion of ethics in the faculty.

4.3. Faculty of University B, Bosnia and Herzegovina

This faculty (like the rest of University B) was in a difficult position because of the political situation in their country, fragmentation of competences and the fact that diplomas of their graduates were not recognised even in the neighbouring canton. In order to add weight to the diplomas issued by the faculty, it decided to apply for international recognition of its study programmes. During the recognition process, faculty members had to elaborate policies and procedures for all processes in place, including processes addressing ethical issues as a part of the faculty's quality assurance strategy. The effort devoted to gaining international accreditation resulted not only in significant improvement of academic integrity policies, but also led to improvements in curricula and development of international partnerships, including double-degree award study programmes.

Some specific examples of good practice are as follows:

- The faculty uses Turnitin as a plagiarism detection tool. All students have to submit all their assignments and theses via Turnitin. If plagiarism is discovered, teachers are obliged to report the case to a vice-dean, who decides on the penalty according to very clear guidelines.
- During orientation week, all new students are educated about plagiarism, its consequences and anti-corruption issues and are given an anti-plagiarism manual.
- Academic integrity is fully incorporated in quality assurance documents, which are regularly monitored and revised.
- To ensure that the admissions process is corruption-free, the admission exams are anonymous. An identifying number rather than the student's name appears on the examination script.

4.4. University C, Serbia

University C has adopted a document on preventing plagiarism. They also want to motivate other institutions in Serbia to follow them. Disciplinary rules for all types of misconduct which are the subject of this study (plagiarism, examination cheating, ghost-writing) are defined at university level. However, it is up to each faculty to put these rules into practice.

There are three examples of good practice to share:

- At one of the faculties of the university, there is an obligatory "Academic writing" course for all students in the first year of their bachelor studies. The course provides extensive education on plagiarism and teaches the students how to write a scholarly academic paper.
- Strict compliance with the rules. Teachers are obliged to report cases of misconduct and they do. A disciplinary committee resolves 10-20 cases per year.
- The faculty provides a fund for reducing tuition fees. There is a proposal for a new policy: only students with a clean record of conduct may benefit from this fund. The earliest possible start of this policy is in 2017/2018.

It was evident from the student focus group that the university's strategy works. Students mentioned multiple times that the teachers are very strict. In addition, the students do not understand why people plagiarise; in particular, they said:

- "I don't know if my friends ever plagiarise, but I don't know why they would";
- "It's easier to write the work than plagiarise and get caught";
- at the end of the interview, "For us, it's important to be unique".

4.5. University D, Albania

This is a relatively young institution – established in 2005 – which currently has approximately 7 000 students. A significant investment in infrastructure for expansion is already in evidence. A series of meetings with students, teachers and managers in the Faculty of Languages revealed a consistent message about a very positive approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Clearly, students involved in the focus group found their learning experience rewarding, and assessment tasks relevant and challenging. They had a good understanding of academic writing conventions, because of a compulsory module on this subject for all students in the university. The students were strongly committed to honesty, integrity and scholarship. The good news is that most of these students are planning to follow a career in teaching, therefore their excellent experience as students will have every chance of being passed on to the next generation.

4.6. Faculty of University E, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

A meeting with the senior team in this faculty, followed by a visit to learning spaces, revealed a studio-based project approach to teaching and learning, with very practical assessment. The team explained that there is no opportunity for plagiarism with this form of assessment, in which students are required to share their ideas and present evidence of their progress on architectural design at every phase of their project.

The faculty also discussed their guest speaker programme. Prestigious speakers are also invited to present at summer schools. This is intended to motivate and enrich the student experience as well as to allow teachers to engage with wider developments in the architecture field.

4.7. Institution F, Montenegro

The teachers who participated in the discussion came from multiple faculties of the university and were based across two different sites. Multi-site teaching was identified as a problem for those involved, with travel taking around an hour, leaving little time to support students. Teachers also said that a lack of access to plagiarism detection software was an issue, although one senior member of the university said that negotiations were ongoing at a national level.

Some teachers did identify access to plagiarism detection software as being good practice and had found innovative ways to access this. One teacher had purchased their own subscription to an internet service, which they used to check student work and to improve their own academic research papers.

Another teacher had formed links with a university in another country and put student assessments through their plagiarism detection software, but only after first checking the text using Google to avoid submitting assignments to their contact in which a student had cheated.

Specific examples intended to represent good practice which staff and students gave included:

- the use of an oral examination in one area to check that students understood the subject;
- a lecture on how to write and structure an essay (specific to one subject) – this was identified by students who would like other subjects to include similar tuition;
- the inclusion of a statement about plagiarism on the university website, to make it clear that this was not an activity in which students should be engaging;
- changing the layout of the room used for examinations so that students could no longer see other students' answers; some students were said to have complained about the change and the fact that they could no longer cheat;

- sending some PhD students also working as teaching assistants abroad to other universities, helping them to improve their own teaching and bring new ideas and practices back with them.

4.8. Other examples of good practice

In addition to the above-mentioned institutions, further examples of good practice were identified during personal visits and from the questionnaire responses. Some of these ideas can be easily transferred to more institutions and could have the potential to bring significant improvements.

- Designated examination rooms equipped with cameras. Copying or cheat-sheets are recorded.
- The possibility of anonymous reporting of academic misconduct. Students are able to report misconduct by other students or their teachers if necessary.
- Rule books or guidelines for students on good citation practice and plagiarism.
- Research conducted in all six countries within the study to investigate corruption in education in the region or to initiate reforms to educational practices (as defined in section 2).
- Use of US-style honour codes in at least one institution to encourage a culture of integrity.
- Cases of enthusiastic people among staff (or even faculty management), whose enthusiasm can be transferred to their colleagues.
- Students across the focus groups independently agreed that it is important to inform students about academic integrity and to teach students about academic writing conventions as early as possible.

Chapter 5

Challenges and deficits

5.1. Introduction

This research study has identified many examples of good practice across South-East Europe, but such good practice does not apply across the higher education sector in the region. Many of the examples outlined in section 4 appear to be the results of sustained efforts by individuals. Sometimes these efforts have been supported by the individual's faculty or institution. In other cases, good practice has happened even without this support.

In this section, the main challenges that were observed across the region are highlighted. The focus is on the recurrent themes that emerged during the research and where future efforts could perhaps best be placed to address any weaknesses in academic integrity. It should be noted that there are clear exceptions to many of these challenges, often in the form of individual good practice. Where such good practice exists, whether or not it was identified during this research, the recommendation is for this to be discussed, promoted and – ideally – implemented on a wider scale.

During the interviews and focus groups, the concept of a "culture of corruption" was raised many times.

- Serbia (student focus group in which the attitude to cheating is positive): "I think that cheating in schools reflects the state of the entire country – cheating at the political and structural level, that's kind of part of our culture."

Participants sometimes cautioned that this culture is so deeply embedded that efforts to achieve improvements in academic integrity are futile. The notion of the "culture of corruption" is supported by the CPI, as shown in Table 1. The six countries in this study were ranked below most other European countries (TI 2015). On the other hand, some people were optimistic that education may change the situation; concretely, teacher questionnaire respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina often shared this opinion.

Although the underlying reasons for the CPI rankings put these countries at a disadvantage, the significance of studies like SEEPPAI is that identifying the challenges can help to bring about change. Academia has the capacity to influence the overall culture of a country, by educating the next generation of leaders of industry, commerce and government. By changing the values and aspirations of young people, academia can help to break the cycle of corruption.

5.2. Cultural challenges

Very little evidence was found of leadership from the top or investment, either at government or institutional level, for addressing aspects of corruption in higher education. There is a challenge in convincing people of influence that education is a very good place to start in the difficult journey towards cleaning up wider society.

Many students reported cases of teachers, politicians and other high-profile people found to have plagiarised. The evidence concerning these cases is often reported through local media; for example, a series of cases in 2014 were reported by the independent media organisation Pescanik (BBC 2014). Pecsanik (Pecsanik 2014) and Robinson (Robinson 2014) described the case of the Serbian interior minister, Nebojsa Stefanović, who was accused of plagiarising his PhD thesis. Stefanović's mentor, Mica Jovanovic, rector of the private Megatrend University, was previously accused of falsely claiming to have a PhD degree from the London School of Economics (Miletic 2014). Other cases include the President of Belgrade municipality of New Belgrade, Aleksandar Sapic (InSerbia 2014a), and the Mayor of Belgrade, Sinisa Mali (InSerbia 2014b).

There are also cases described in the Croatian media. The Croatian science minister, Pavo Barisic, rejected calls to resign even though a parliamentary committee confirmed that he had committed plagiarism (Tatalović and Dauenhauer 2017). Croatian academics also mentioned the case of Milijan Brkic, who was secretary-general of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). Brkic's graduation thesis was found to be plagiarised, and the Police Academy in Zagreb revoked it. The decision was later reversed by an appeal court, citing procedural mistakes (EBLnews, 2016).

During a visit to Albania, a workshop on academic integrity was conducted with a class of master's level students, with teachers and senior staff also attending. One of the student participants commented that they understood the motivation behind the research, but believed Albania was so steeped in corruption that it would never change. The challenge they described is to find ways to effect radical changes to educational practice, to develop a culture of honesty and integrity in a country where corruption drives the whole of civil society and the economy. As the work of Transparency International demonstrates, the same challenge applies to varying extents in all six countries in this study and to many other countries around the world.

A clear message came from the questionnaire responses of Serbian teachers: their suggestion is that the way to improve the current state of academic misconduct in higher education is to have more intensive control and stricter penalties. This approach is in contradiction with recommendations from ETINED that a positive approach should be adopted.

5.3. Challenges in policies

Although there was evidence that policies and procedures were in place in some institutions for dealing with various forms of academic misconduct, very few examples were found of policies that had been effectively and consistently applied at institutional level. Where penalties were applied, they appeared to have no lasting consequences and were not seen as a deterrent by students.

Participants in student focus groups said that they were unhappy that students who cheated, perhaps by acquiring a piece of work or cheating in their exams, were often awarded higher marks than honest students. This problem arises due to the failure of academic staff to identify cases of cheating, and the failure of those responsible to apply a suitable penalty which serves to correct or discourage poor practice.

- One example from a student focus group: "Last year we had a course which was difficult and where many students didn't know a lot of stuff. Then at the exams, they cheated and they passed the course. A friend and I studied hard and we had good grades for the course; we got 95% in the exam. But the people who cheated, they were even better – and there were 20 of them!"

As reported by student respondents in both focus groups and questionnaire responses, the conduct of some academic staff sets a very poor example and presents a major impediment to academic integrity. According to student responses, some staff accept bribes to influence grades, ignore blatant cheating in exams, plagiarise or do not acknowledge sources in course notes given to students, and do not read work which students have submitted for grading.

- Plagiarism by teachers, Bosnia and Herzegovina (student focus group): "When professors do it [plagiarism], so do the students."
- Teachers not reading student work, Bosnia and Herzegovina (student focus group): "We have teachers who don't even read the papers."

Little evidence was found of a culture of CPD for academic teachers and researchers in this region, which is similar to what was discovered earlier in parts of the EU, for

example, in Germany, France and Belgium. In particular, no training was provided to those responsible for taking decisions on student academic misconduct and applying penalties.

Although many teachers and managers responding to the survey denied that there was an issue with pedagogy, many student respondents complained about the didactic teaching style and uninspiring assessment, which was often the same every year, typically relying on memorising notes.

At many institutions, teachers and managers even denied the fact that students were cheating. The research team were told that the students were motivated, they were unlikely to cheat and if they did, the teacher would recognise it and punish the student. At the same time, students described the extent and methods of examination cheating and ghost-writing, which were either not noticed or not addressed by teachers.

To illustrate this point, Table 5 provides a list of responses from different participants at the same institution. A student focus group was held at the same time as an interview with a senior manager (who was also a teacher), in separate rooms and conducted by different facilitators.

Table 5: Comparison of views – senior management and students from the same institution

Issue	Senior management	Students
Plagiarism	"It's not a practice here."	"Plagiarism is normal, very normal."
Ghost-writing	"The teacher would recognise it when reading the paper. It's not a practice here."	"It's very common." [everybody agreeing and laughing] "There are FB pages and websites where you can order a paper assignment, or any other assignment. Everything, you can buy everything."
Examination cheating	"Exam cheating is usually resolved by the teacher. The term exam is marked as a fail, possibly for two terms."	"They can give you a warning – if they see somebody, first they warn them and then they may rule out the exam. But it is very rare."

It is difficult to see how progress can be made in improving academic integrity in an institution unless the senior management team is more aware of what is happening with teachers and within the student community.

Although there is evidence that some training has been provided for students on academic integrity, the consequences of cheating and conventions for academic writing and use of sources, it is abundantly clear from the feedback that much more information, education and personal development would benefit the student populations (as seen in Figure 9, close to 90% of students would like to receive more training on this topic). However, this effort would be wasted unless it was made in parallel with policy reform and staff commitment to set a good example and consistently apply fair and proportional measures to address student cheating.

A lack of effective penalties was identified in some institutions, especially in Montenegro. Even if the most severe penalty (expulsion from an institution) is applied, a student can enrol in the same university the following year.

5.4. Financial challenges

One of the major obstacles to any form of change is a lack of resources and funding. It is difficult to see how improving quality and integrity in education could be seen as a priority when so much of the infrastructure needs serious investment.

It was positive to discover that systems and software tools for checking work for plagiarism are in place in parts of the region, either nationally, institutionally or within faculties. However, these services are currently restricted to higher levels of education and are specifically used to check scientific papers and doctoral theses; occasionally, master's or bachelor's theses. A worthwhile application of such tools is in formative development of writing and research skills in bachelor students and even earlier in secondary education, but this would require considerably more funding than is needed for checking work at the higher levels.

The different languages and alphabets used across the region create complexities for software tools when submitting and comparing work, but the problems are not insurmountable.

In "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Montenegro, more than 80% of young people progress directly from school to university. For some students, this is seen as an alternative to unemployment, but not all freshers are fully committed to learning, and therefore they are more likely to resort to cheating than more motivated students.

5.5. Security of assessment

Although normal practice in many universities outside South-East Europe now requires assessment tasks to be changed regularly, on the whole this did not seem to have filtered through to the countries in this study. Examples were given of the same assessments being used for several years in succession, either in the form of coursework assignments or exam papers.

The limited use of plagiarism detection software, combined with the problem of large classes, means that a student could hand in work written by someone in a previous year and it would be very unlikely to be detected as unoriginal. Likewise, students knowing the examination questions from previous papers would have an unfair advantage over those who did not know the questions.

These few examples indicate immediate ways in which opportunities for unfair practices can be curtailed. If not addressed, this form of academic misconduct can seriously undermine the authenticity and reliability of student assessments.

5.6. Examination cheating

Methods used to cheat in exams were well-known by both students and staff. However, in some faculties, staff and senior management did not share information on the extent of student cheating.

In several institutions visited, exams were used as the main method of assessment. Staff described occasions when large numbers of students took exams seated very close together, where it would be impossible to monitor for cheating.

Where students could be monitored, the technology available for cheating was also said to cause a problem, with both students and staff talking about the widespread use of hidden earpieces. These earpieces were easily available to hire across the region, allowing examination candidates to receive communications from outside parties. Candidates could also use a mobile phone or a hidden camera to communicate about questions. There were some reports that students using these devices had been caught, but this did not appear to be a commonly held view.

At a few institutions, jamming equipment is used to prevent mobile phone communications during examinations. Although staff presented this as an example of good practice and were using it as a way to reduce the impact of technology on examination cheating, this approach can be problematic. Some European countries ban the use of equipment to jam mobile communication, due to the disruption of legitimate communication nearby. For example, this can interrupt communication systems used by emergency services. A more general consideration of alternative approaches is needed to address the lapses in security of assessment within a culture where different forms of cheating – including hidden earpieces, student crib sheets and mobile phone communications – appear to be commonly used.

5.7. Contract cheating

Throughout the research, students regularly reported that they knew how to get a third party to complete their work for them. Although students did not necessarily say that they were contract cheating themselves, they identified a culture in which they knew other students who were not completing their own work. Despite the fact that some universities in the region have introduced text-matching software to aid plagiarism detection, the use of ghost-writing services poses a problem, because the detection systems are unable to detect this type of misconduct.

The survey data indicate that both teachers and students are aware of cases of ghost-writing/contract cheating. As shown in Figures 10 and 11, 57% of teachers said that they were aware of at least one case of contract cheating committed by a student at their institution, and 27% of student respondents knew at least one student who had an assessment ghost-written for them.

Figure 10: Teachers' perspective on contract cheating in South-East Europe

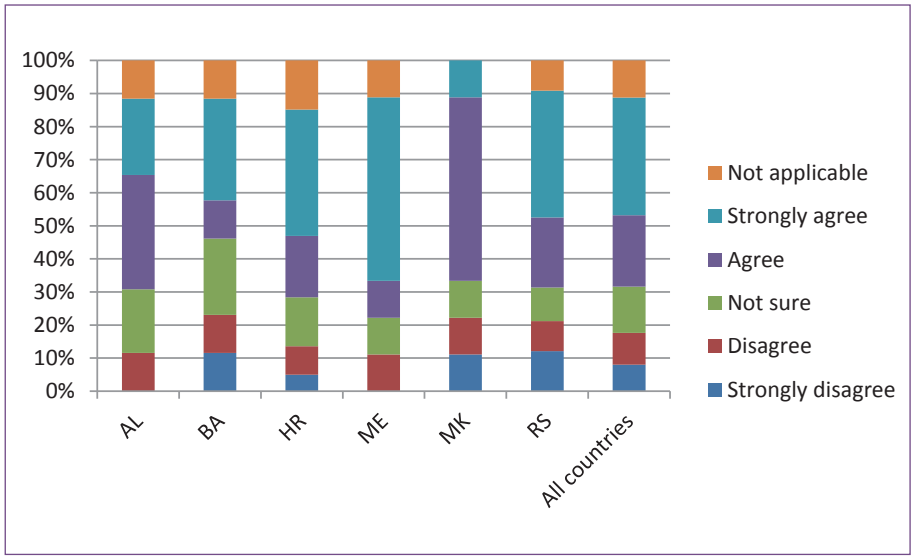
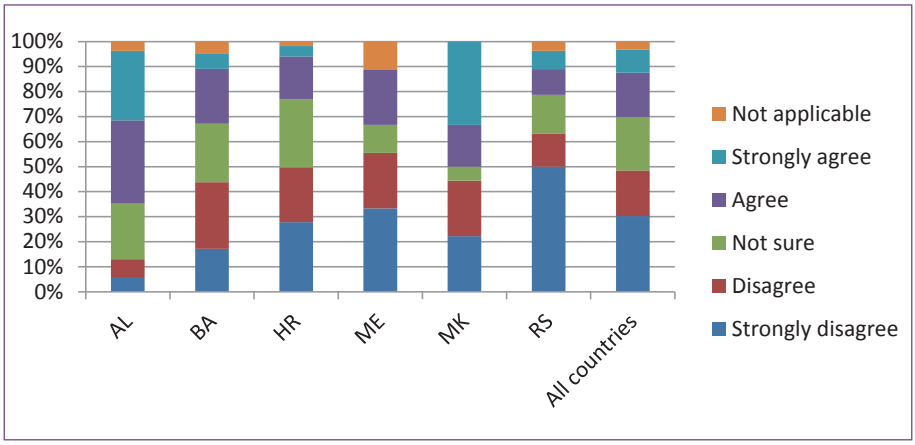


Figure 11: Students' perspective on contract cheating in South-East Europe



It has been claimed that a contract cheating industry is operating in Albania, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Manasiev and Mujkic, 2016). It has also been indicated that this contract cheating industry is operating semi-legally and that ghost-writers for student work can be found easily. The ghost-writers say that they are not operating illegally and are therefore not doing anything wrong. One ghost-writer has publicly claimed that they have written many master's theses and PhD theses for people who work in large companies and for the government.

The pricing of work acquired through contract cheating is also of interest. It is claimed that ghost-written PhD dissertations can be purchased in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and in Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2 000 euros

each (Manasiev and Mujkic 2016). In the focus groups, several students mentioned the prices at which they believed they could buy ghost-written work. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the price students mentioned for an assignment was 10 euros, although this was said to vary according to the particular assignment, the level of difficulty and the academic discipline. Examples of prices given by students in Croatia varied, with one student suggesting 40 euros per assignment and another mentioning 100 euros. In general, students seemed to think that contract cheating was "affordable".

The focus group research supported the view that it was easy for students to find people to complete their assignments for them. The advertising of ghost-writing services was said to be widespread in the region, with examples given of noticeboard requests by students to hire writers, as well as adverts placed by writers encouraging students to spend money. Although some teachers indicated that they would quiz students on the content of their work if they were not convinced that they had written it themselves, this was not a commonly expressed view. When the issue of contract cheating was raised during discussions with teachers, opinions varied from a reluctance to acknowledge or address the problem, to a belief that it was widespread.

5.8. Bribery

Previous research in the region had identified students paying for results – giving money directly to teachers in return for results and advantages. This view was echoed by students in the current study, sometimes when teachers were present, but it was not often acknowledged by staff. In some of the visited countries, teachers and students alike did not mention bribery at all during the interviews (of course, the reasons for this may vary, without presuming that bribery does not exist in those countries).

Where students did talk about bribery, this was generally in relation to other students of whom they had heard, or particular staff who were known to be open to taking bribes. In student focus groups in two separate institutions in Albania, it was suggested by participants that the first target for overcoming corruption in education should be to focus on lecturers taking bribes from students in return for a good pass mark. Students could also relate newspaper and media stories in which corrupt teachers had been identified.

More subtle forms of required payments were also identified during the research. One example from a focus group involved students being required to buy a set textbook from their teacher which was needed to pass the subject. Although perhaps not as extreme as the first example, the teacher was using a form of influence to extort money from their class of students.

Although it was uncommon to find responses regarding bribery in the IPPHEAE study, a few examples were recorded in eastern Europe. It would be difficult to ascertain how widespread this problem is in other countries in Europe and beyond.

It is unlikely that this type of corruption will be resolved just by educating students. It requires a change of mindset in the academic community and changes in quality assurance procedures and practices, such as oversight and moderation of assessment.

5.9. Types of penalty

The discussions of penalties across South-East Europe revealed that it is almost impossible for a student to be permanently expelled from their course even for the most serious forms of cheating. Most penalties were said to be relatively minor, with the heaviest penalty being a period of suspension.

Figure 12: Teachers' perspective on penalties for plagiarism in an assignment

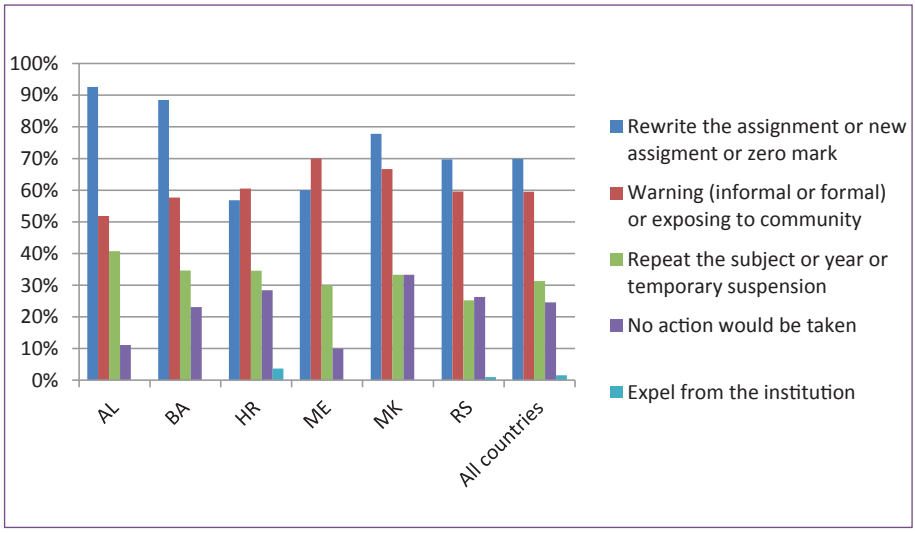
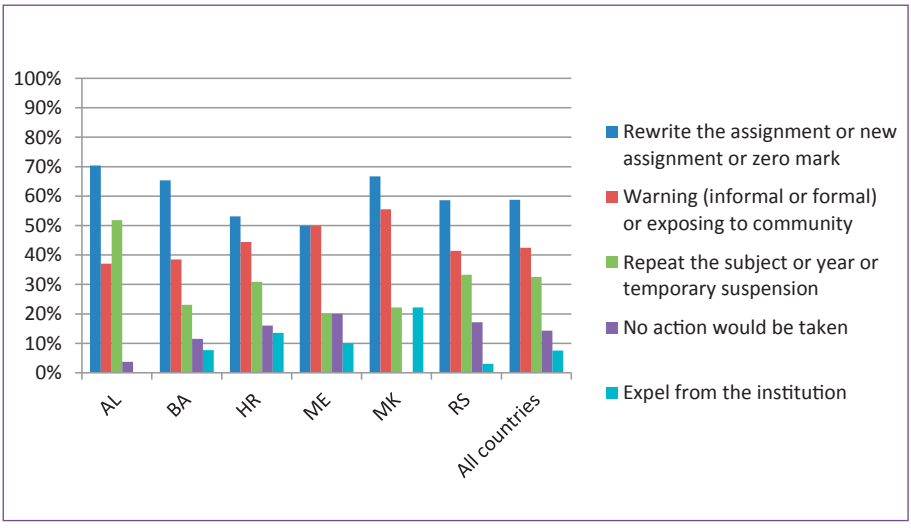


Figure 13: Teachers' perspective on penalties for plagiarism in a final thesis



Some 70% of teacher respondents said that if plagiarism was found in an assignment, the student would have to do the assignment again or would receive a zero mark. When asked about plagiarism in the final thesis, 60% of teachers believed that the same penalty would apply. Some 25% of teachers responded that no action would be taken for plagiarism in an assignment, and 14% said that nothing would happen even in the case of plagiarism in a final thesis. These results are shown in Figures 12 and 13.

The student respondents were asked the same question, and their responses indicated that some students expected the penalties to be more severe than the teachers described.

The relatively minor penalties may mean that students are willing to take the risk of cheating, particularly as cheating seems to be so much a part of local custom and practice. The risk of them being caught seems very low. Even when students are caught, they are likely to get a small penalty that will not otherwise cause them any problems. If the most severe penalty is a period of suspension of no more than six months or one year, there is little by way of disincentive to discourage academic misconduct, apart from a delay in course completion and the potential loss of financial support in some cases.

Relaxed attitudes to cheating were observed throughout the study from both students and staff. Although this view was not so clearly expressed by staff, there did seem to be an overall view that certain staff would turn a blind eye to cheating while other teachers were known to be strict.

Where university processes did exist, there was a consensus across both staff and students that these were often not followed, with staff making their own judgment on appropriate penalties. Student respondents suggested that teachers could make more effort to discourage students from cheating.

Chapter 6

Lessons learned and recommendations

6.1. Summary

Despite the examples of good practice, it is likely that the journey towards educational integrity in these countries is going to be long and difficult. However, most of the academic contacts established by the SEEPPAI team members demonstrated a sound appreciation of where the problems lie and what needs to be achieved to address the challenges identified in educational practices and policies. In addition, the volume, variety and complexity of positive suggestions from students and teachers in response to the question about how to discourage cheating/academic misconduct inspires confidence that the issue is well understood and that there is buy-in for a more mature way forward.

In common with many of the EU countries surveyed during previous research, in order to begin to make progress on improving the situation 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.

Where progress has already been made, the practices are often not shared within and across institutions and national borders, which would be a cost-effective way to begin the process of change and development.

Providing lessons for students on academic writing and avoiding plagiarism much earlier in education, preferably before students start university, would be a positive step. Academic teachers should be prepared to set a good example and provide activities that allow students to develop skills in academic writing when they arrive at university and throughout their higher education experience.

6.2. Recommendations to national governments and quality agencies

National governments, through their education ministries and accreditation and quality agencies, should proactively provide oversight for, and guidance in, strengthening policies and procedures for academic integrity in HEIs as a crucial component of quality assurance. Where institutional policies are deficient, accreditation should be conditional on their continuing development. Accreditation and quality agencies should be empowered to monitor the quality of education and academic integrity in both public and private HEIs. Research into and development of strategies, policies and systems for academic integrity should be encouraged, preferably through the provision of small-grant funding.

Recent consultations by the United Kingdom's Quality Assurance Agency regarding the problems of contract cheating – to which a member of the SEEPPAI team, Dr Thomas Lancaster, contributed directly – have resulted in an important report (QAA 2016) and ongoing discussions on introducing legislation to make such companies illegal in the United Kingdom. A legislative approach has already been adopted elsewhere, including New Zealand and some states in Canada and the USA. Given the evidence from SEEPPAI of the prevalence of contract cheating and ghost-writing, particularly in Albania, Montenegro and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", it is recommended that national governments consider following these examples as a means to deter students from using such services and to send a strong message to companies and individuals who support this serious form of cheating.

National governments should consider engaging with (text matching/similarity checking) software companies to negotiate an affordable nationwide licence. It would make sense to open discussions with these companies regarding possible complexities connected with processing documents in the local languages, and how these could be overcome.

Education ministries in the region should facilitate communications between institutions within the country and across national borders in order to learn from positive experiences and share ideas that have proved effective in countering corruption and academic malpractice.

6.3. Recommendations to institutions

To address the disparity in policies and practices across different faculties within HEIs, institutional leaders should initiate an internal review of local policies and practices with a view to establishing an institution-wide working group that will co-ordinate the development and implementation of common institutional strategy, policies and systems for academic integrity.

Institutions should develop a standard set of penalties for plagiarism, examination cheating, ghost-writing and other forms of academic dishonesty. These penalties should be made known to academic teachers and students, and procedures should be put in place to ensure that they are applied fairly and consistently for each violation.

Supervision and oversight arrangements for formal exams should be strengthened as a means to discourage cheating, by increasing the number of invigilators and clarifying and strengthening their responsibilities.

Training should be provided to academic staff, thesis supervisors and invigilators to ensure all procedures are understood and consistently followed. Potentially, institutions within the same geographical area could organise joint seminars and workshops.

Each institution should take responsibility to ensure that students at all levels are suitably informed and progressively educated on matters of honesty and integrity, academic writing and the use of materials and sources. The initial information should be provided as early as possible in the higher education process, preferably in good time before students complete their first assessment.

Institutions need to develop guidelines for students, academic teachers and decision takers on issues relating to academic integrity. Institutions also need to put guidelines into practice and enforce the rules that have been defined.

Where software tools are acquired for aiding the detection of plagiarism and collusion between students, the institution needs to develop clear policies on how the tools should be deployed and guidelines for the interpretation and use of the outputs.

The institution should take all possible measures to deter cheating in whichever form, including essay mills/contract cheating/ghost-writing, plagiarism, collusion and exam cheating.

Regarding pedagogical practices, the institution should discourage rote learning by aspiring to provide up-to-date learning experiences at all levels of study, where critical thinking is valued and teaching, learning and assessment are rewarding and inspirational. The transition from didacticism to participative learning, a radical shift in institutional and individual practices and thinking, will require carefully planned change management involving the entire academic community.

The institution should mobilise representatives of the student community as valued partners in the challenge to reduce all forms of student cheating.

The institution should consider establishing procedures to allow the reporting of cases of academic misconduct ("whistle-blowing") by either students or teachers, and particularly by students.

6.4. Recommendations to individuals

Academic staff must take responsibility for their own conduct as role models for the next generation of professionals. They should commit to integrity: fairness, consistency, honesty, transparency in both their professional and private lives.

Academic staff should ensure that all students they are teaching or supervising are aware of the value and importance of learning and scholarship, and are motivated to maximise their attainment.

CPD should be a requirement for all academic staff, in order to keep up to date with their subject, educational developments, pedagogical practices and institutional policies.

Academic staff should ensure that all suspected cases of academic misconduct are handled in line with institutional policies and procedures that ensure fairness and consistency for all students.

Chapter 7
Conclusions

7.1. Comparison between countries

As a means of summarising the results for the six countries, the Academic Integrity Maturity Model (AIMM) has been applied to each of the six countries in this study, based on the survey data collected. This tool provides a means to compare the "maturity" of policies and processes observed in the six countries, but also to compare all 33 countries studied to date (Glendinning 2013). The SEEPPAI results are shown in Figures 14 and 15, and fully detailed results are given in Appendices 1 and 2.

The radar charts in Figure 14 depict the scores in the nine AIMM categories for each country. The same data is shown as a stacked bar chart in Figure 15. All six countries show relative strength in training provision, with scores between 1.8 and 2.3 out of a possible maximum score of 4. Use of software varies between countries, with Bosnia and Herzegovina scoring the highest and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" second, but with very low scores in the other countries. Even where available, use of the software is generally restricted to the detection of misconduct rather than the more mature application of formative learning and development seen in some EU countries. Two other categories that produced reasonably good scores in most of the countries were communication and knowledge, which provides optimism regarding success in future developments. Transparency was found to be weak in all six countries.

Figure 14: AIMM results for the six countries

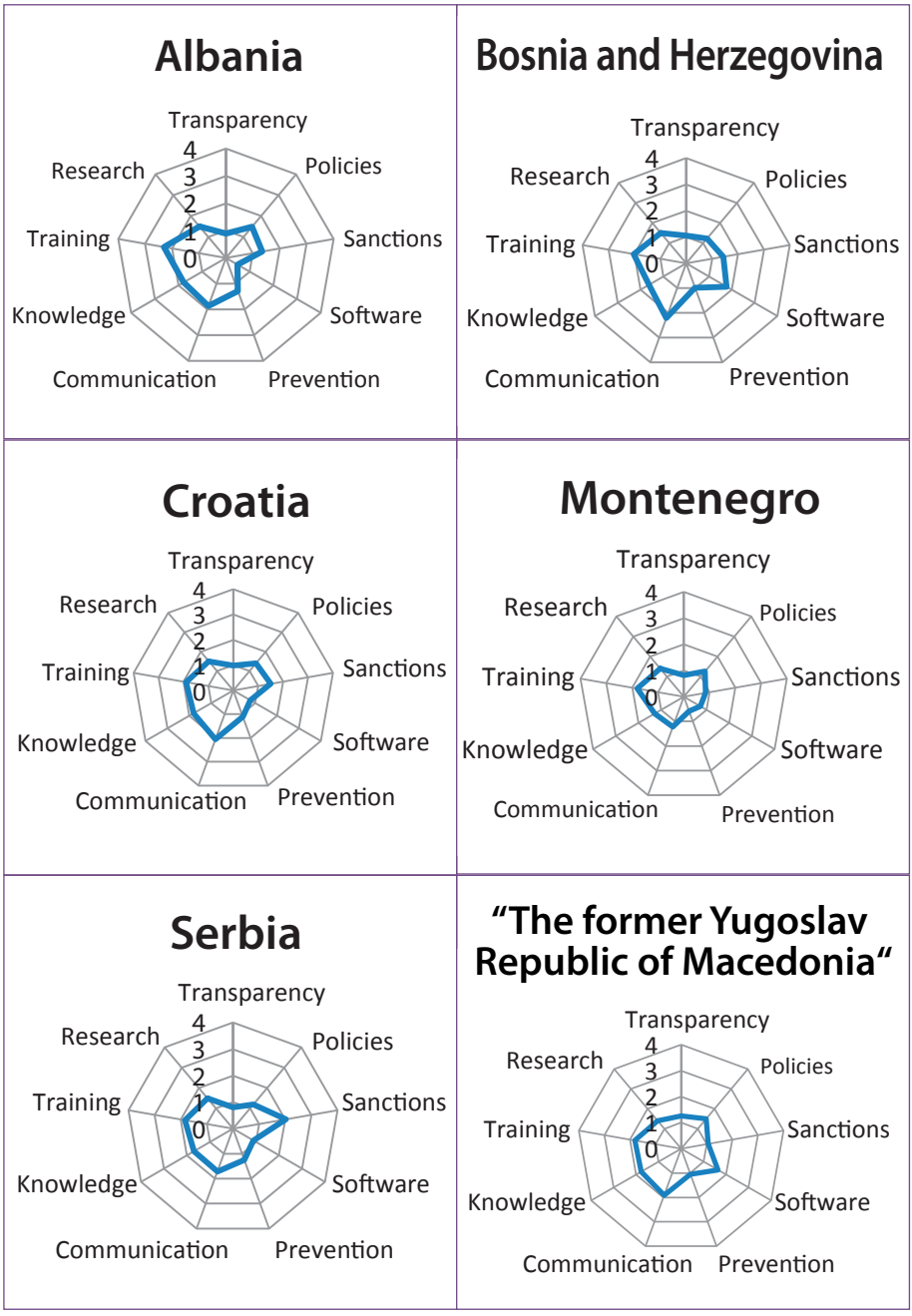


Figure 15: AIMM results for the six countries

The AIMM scores are comparable with those recorded for the 27 EU countries in the IPPHEAE survey (Appendix 1, Figure 16). However, it must be noted that the survey questions were updated and reformatted for this survey, which allowed data from more questions to be included in the AIMM analysis for SEEPPAI countries.

These results provide a useful guide to what is happening in each country and will help to prioritise where attention is most needed. However, it must also be acknowledged that self-selection of institutions for participation, combined with low volumes of data for a minority of countries in both the IPPHEAE project and SEEPPAI (particularly Montenegro), mean that these results cannot be seen to represent the full picture in every country. Since the IPPHEAE data was collected 4-5 years ago, we must also include the factor that the datasets are not all contemporaneous.

However, considering all the above limitations, it is interesting to note that when the IPPHEAE AIMM results are merged with the SEEPPAI AIMM results, most of the South-East European countries feature in the middle-to-lower half of the table for maturity (see Appendix 1, Figure 16). Of the 33 countries, the rankings order was as follows: Bosnia and Herzegovina (14), "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (18), Croatia (19), Albania (21), Serbia (24) and Montenegro (32).

When compared to many of the EU countries previously surveyed, one of the distinguishing factors for all six countries in these rankings was evidence of very recent educational research. Researchers from this region are exploring aspects of academic integrity and innovative practices that should soon begin to influence teaching, learning and assessment (for example, ACSN SEE 2015; Harjrullai 2015; Manasiev and Mujkic 2016; Zhivkovikj 2016).

7.2. Research challenges

Although a large amount of information was collected during this study on educational academic integrity in South-East Europe, this process was not without challenges.

Many participants were very interested and engaged with the research, but some participants experienced difficulties talking about academic integrity and the associated policy and processes. There was also a sense that sometimes participants in focus groups had been carefully selected, and perhaps pre-briefed, by their teachers. There were occasions where lecturers were unwilling to leave the room while student focus groups were conducted, which sometimes – but not always – restricted what students were willing or able to say.

Although some very full and frank discussions took place in student focus groups, where students were open and excited to discuss the topic, in several institutions it proved impossible to run a focus group because students were unwilling to participate. In a few cases, students seemed reluctant to provide detailed information in answer to the focus group questions. It seemed that some student participants were offended at being asked to talk about academic misconduct.

The number of completed and usable questionnaire responses varied greatly for different countries, despite great efforts by the project team to encourage participation in all six countries. It is difficult to know what could be done to encourage more engagement with research into and development of academic integrity in this region. Reducing the number of questions on the questionnaires could help to encourage more responses, but that would restrict the richness of the information captured.

Lack of language proficiency in English was a problem encountered several times when conducting interviews with senior managers, but local contacts were often on hand to translate. The ability to communicate in English was often better in students than teachers and managers.

The experience of this project team can serve to guide future studies of this kind, especially when estimating how much usable data will be collected. It is important to be aware of the culture of the institutions and countries that are the focus of the study, and to use local knowledge to gain access. When planning a visit, clear expectations need to be communicated to the host institutions regarding what is needed in terms of access to lecturers, students and other parties. Above all, mutual trust needs to be established between researchers and participants, especially regarding anonymity and confidentiality.

7.3. Summary and future research

The SEEPPAI team is grateful to the Council of Europe for providing the funding and the opportunity to extend the earlier study to six more European countries. This report includes many of the remarkable findings from the study. Conference and journal papers are already being prepared by team members that will focus in detail on specific elements of the research. These follow-up publications will serve

to disseminate the findings and recommendations to a wide audience of interested parties, in Europe and further afield.

In a very short timeframe, the team has managed to conduct a deep investigation of the region, which revealed some exemplary practices and some areas that are in urgent need of attention. The composition of the research team also helped in the conduct the study. According to the AIMM, the United Kingdom is the most developed European country in terms of academic integrity. The Czech Republic is both geographically and culturally closer to the region. This combination provided a good foundation in terms of survey tool design, interpretation of results and understanding of other circumstances.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the research has been the commitment and enthusiasm of the host institutions in the region; they helped with the research, provided information that was needed, listened attentively to the project team messages and contributed to valuable discussions on how the community can improve academic integrity, not only in South-East Europe but across the world. There is no doubt that conducting the research itself contributed to improvement. At one institution, we were told: "Your questions made us to think about issues which we have never thought about before, but are definitely worth addressing". In addition, workshops for students and staff helped to spread the motivation for change.

The reason why members of the SEEPPAI team are so passionate about promoting academic integrity is the importance they place on quality and standards in higher education. Corruption – in whichever form – undermines educational quality and standards. If cheating is widespread and becomes normalised behaviour within an institution, then the whole educational system, including the academic qualifications offered by an institution, becomes insecure.

SEEPPAI team members are concurrently part of a longer Erasmus+ funded project, also concerning academic integrity: the European Network for Academic Integrity (ENAI), which runs from 2017 to 2020. This project provides a valuable forum for disseminating this report, together with in-depth findings from SEEPPAI, to a wide audience; for example, at an international conference in Brno in May 2017.[5] In addition, a platform has been established as part of ENAI that will be used to disseminate results from previous, current and future research, not only for South-East Europe.

The team sincerely hopes that these investigations and contributions will generate a new positive vision in the region. Ideally, the project recommendations will encourage changes to enhance integrity, not just in educational systems, but also in wider society.

5. See www.plagiarism.cz for details.

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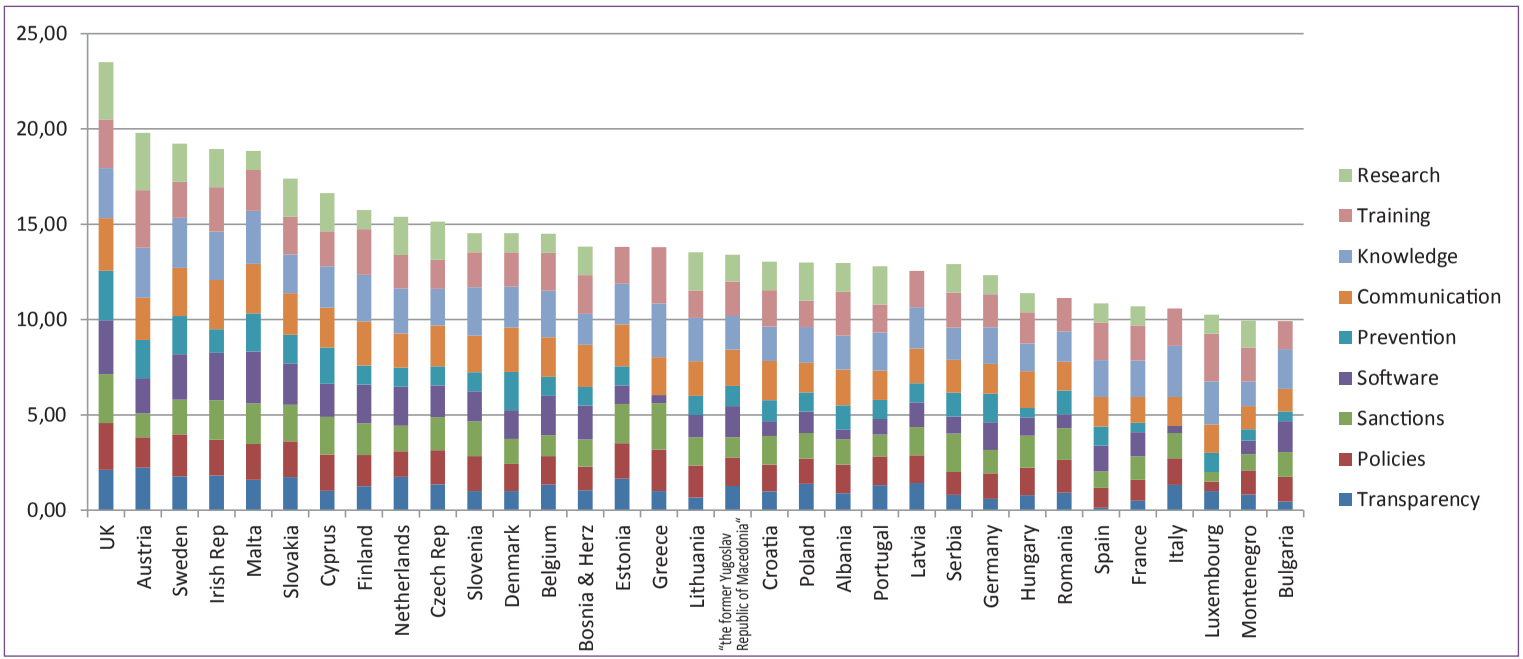
Appendix 1: Academic Integrity Maturity Model results for 33 European countries

Figure 16: AIMM results for 33 European countries, IPPHEAE and SEEPPAI analysis combined



Appendix 2: Academic Integrity Maturity Model results for South-East Europe 2016

Strengths and opportunities applying to all six countries in the study

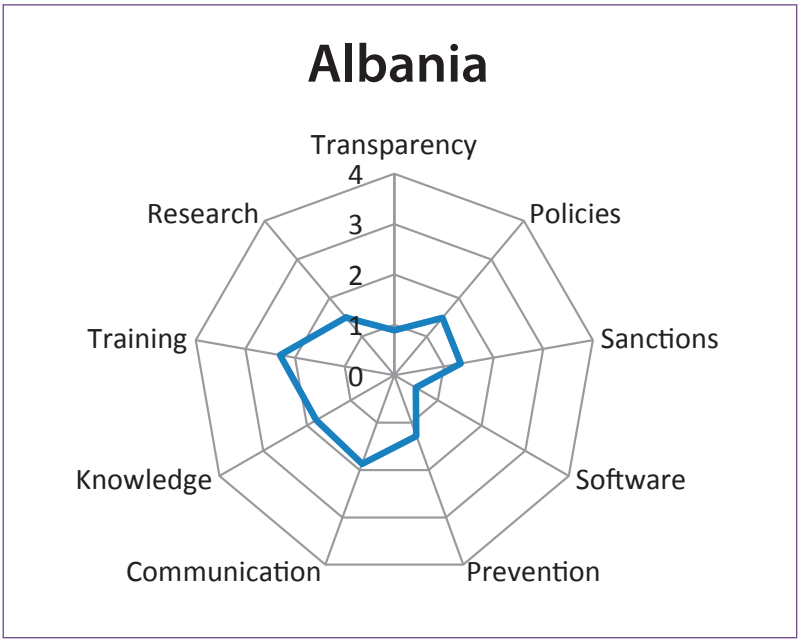
- There is a keen awareness in academic communities that more needs to be done to address academic misconduct by strengthening policies, practices, skills and knowledge in secondary and higher education.
- A few institutions in the region are already strengthening pedagogical practices and policies in order to encourage a culture of academic integrity.
- Some academics from across the region are currently partners in international research projects on education, including a study into ethics and integrity in doctoral studies and research.

Weaknesses and threats applying to all six countries in the study

- The national accreditation agency for higher education does not currently include policies for academic integrity as a routine part of institutional audits.
- The SEEPPAI survey results suggest that ghost-writing, contract cheating, examination cheating and bribery of lecturers to influence grades appear to be very common practices in higher education.
- Penalties for academic misconduct are generally lenient, inconsistently applied and generally do not serve as a deterrent.
- It is uncommon for academic staff to regularly take part in professional development to improve skills for teaching and learning.
- Rote learning and setting the same assignments year after year are common practices in higher education. This type of practice discourages original and critical thinking and encourages collusion and plagiarism by students.
- Teachers are not fully aware of sources of information used by students to understand academic integrity, including social media and other students.
- Not enough guidance and education is provided to either students or teachers on issues surrounding academic integrity.
- In general, there is a focus on penalising and detecting academic misconduct rather than exploring ways of encouraging ethical values and academic integrity.

A2.1. AIMM results for Albania

Figure 17: AIMM radar chart for Albania



Strengths and opportunities specific to Albania

- The national government has recently introduced legislation to strengthen copyright laws, but not specifically targeting education.
- It is relatively common for students to receiving training in techniques for academic writing.

Weaknesses and threats specific to Albania

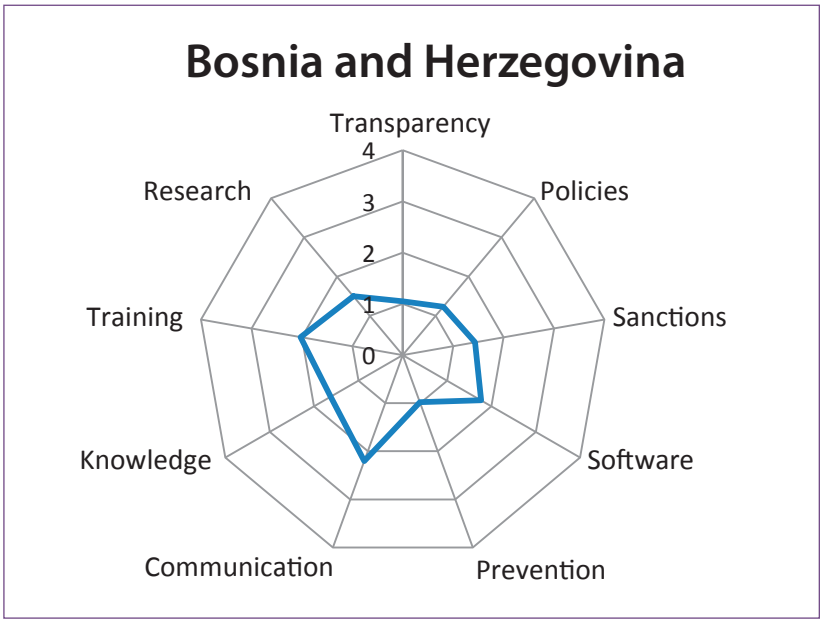
- In civil society and business, there is a high rate of corrupt practices, with Albania ranking 88 out of 168 countries in Transparency International's CPI 2015.
- It is unusual for software tools to be available within institutions for helping to detect plagiarism, and currently there is no national corpus of academic sources available in the Albanian language to use for text matching.

AIMM score: 12.96 out of 36, ranking 21 out of 33 countries.

Notes: These results are based on survey responses from 9 HEIs, 56 students, 30 teachers and 4 managers, combined with responses based on 7 student focus groups and workshops and 7 workshops and group discussions with academic staff.

A2.2. AIMM results for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Figure 18: AIMM radar chart for Bosnia and Herzegovina



Strengths and opportunities specific to Bosnia and Herzegovina

- It is common for students to receive training in techniques for academic writing.
- Teachers believe that plagiarism and academic misconduct may be reduced through more training for students.

Weaknesses and threats specific to Bosnia and Herzegovina

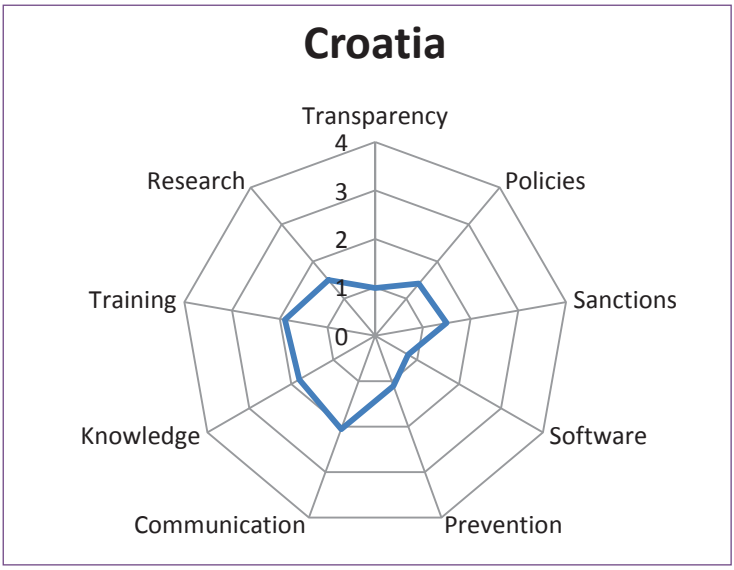
- Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently ranked 76 out of 168 countries in Transparency International's CPI 2015.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into three entities, with one entity further divided into cantons with their own education ministries. This fragmentation makes implementation of any common policy very difficult.
- General pessimism in academic communities – students and teachers alike believe that cheating is part of the national culture, which will be difficult to change.
- Academic dishonesty of teachers and politicians discourages students studing with integrity.

AIMM score: 13.84 out of 36, ranking 14 out of 33 countries.

Notes: These results are based on survey responses from 5 HEIs, 64 students, 27 teachers and 6 managers, combined with responses from 3 student focus groups and 1 national-level interview.

A2.3. AIMM results for Croatia

Figure 19: AIMM radar chart for Croatia



Strengths and opportunities specific to Croatia

- The Agency for Science and Higher Education (the national accreditation agency) requires codes of ethics of institutions to be updated every five years for re-accreditation.
- According to questionnaire responses, it is more common that decisions on penalties are made by a panel rather than individual teachers.
- According to questionnaire responses, more than 60% of students become aware of plagiarism before they enter university.

Weaknesses and threats specific to Croatia

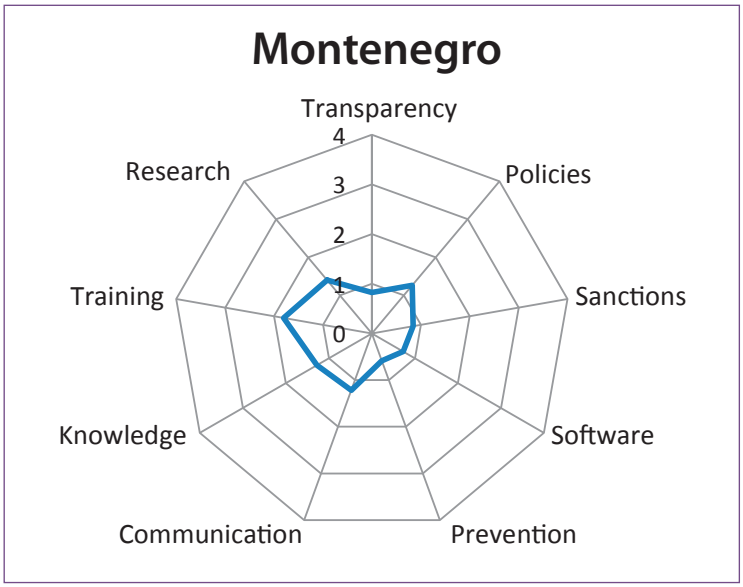
- Croatia is currently ranked 50 out of 168 countries in Transparency International's CPI 2015.
- General pessimism in academic communities – students and teachers alike believe that cheating is part of the national culture, which will be difficult to change.
- Students and teachers see cases of plagiarism committed by high-profile people (deans, rectors, ministers) without any penalties.
- Apart from the updated codes of ethics, no policies for academic integrity are required by the accreditation agencies or national government.

AIMM score: 13.03 out of 36, ranking 19 out of 33 countries.

Notes: These results are based on survey responses from 15 HEIs, 171 students, 81 teachers and 9 managers, combined with 3 student focus groups and 3 group discussions with academic staff.

A2.4. AIMM results for Montenegro

Figure 20: AIMM radar chart for Montenegro



Strengths and opportunities specific to Montenegro

- The education ministry is exploring options to purchase text-matching software to help with detecting plagiarism.
- Students appear to be aware and supportive of the move to improve academic integrity, but are not confident to discuss the issues due to wider feelings of shame.
- Where an ethics committee was used to identify issues of academic dishonesty, students were encouraged to bring an advocate with them, such as a student union representative.

Weaknesses and threats specific to Montenegro

- Montenegro is ranked 61 out of 168 countries in Transparency International's CPI 2015.
- Daily articles on plagiarism and corruption in newspapers provide a cultural model which suggests that these activities are acceptable.
- Low job prospects for students without a bachelor degree and master's degree push most young people into higher education and perhaps pressure some to cheat.
- Staff are encouraged not to penalise students for plagiarism in many areas. For example, more than half of the students were said to have plagiarised in an assessment, but all still passed.

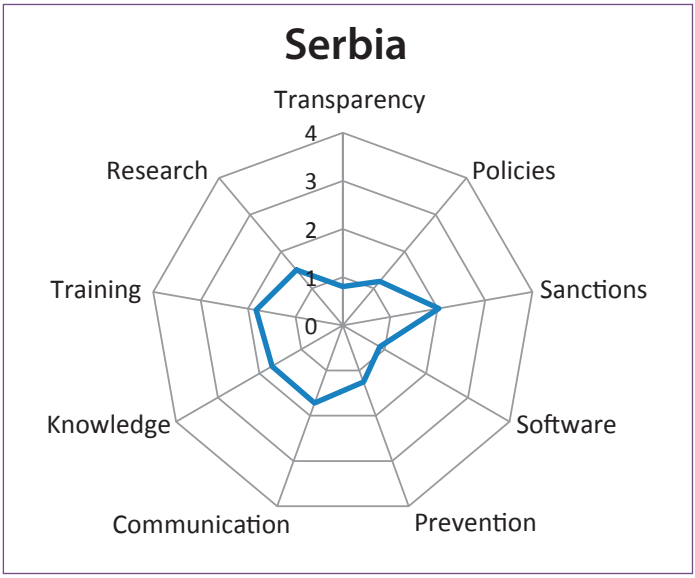
- Pressure on teaching staff to publish academic research papers, but without access to research databases and journal publications, prompting staff to suspend their own academic integrity by pirating these or accessing them through international colleagues.

AIMM score: 9.94 out of 36, ranked 32 out of 33 countries.

Notes: These results are based on survey responses from 3 HEIs, 11 students, 9 teachers and 1 manager, combined with responses from 2 student focus groups and workshops, 3 group discussions and workshops with academic staff. This result is based on a very limited dataset.

A2.5. AIMM results for Serbia

Figure 21: AIMM radar chart for Serbia



Strengths and opportunities specific to Serbia

- According to questionnaire responses, more than 60% of students are aware of plagiarism before they enter university.

Weaknesses and threats specific to Serbia

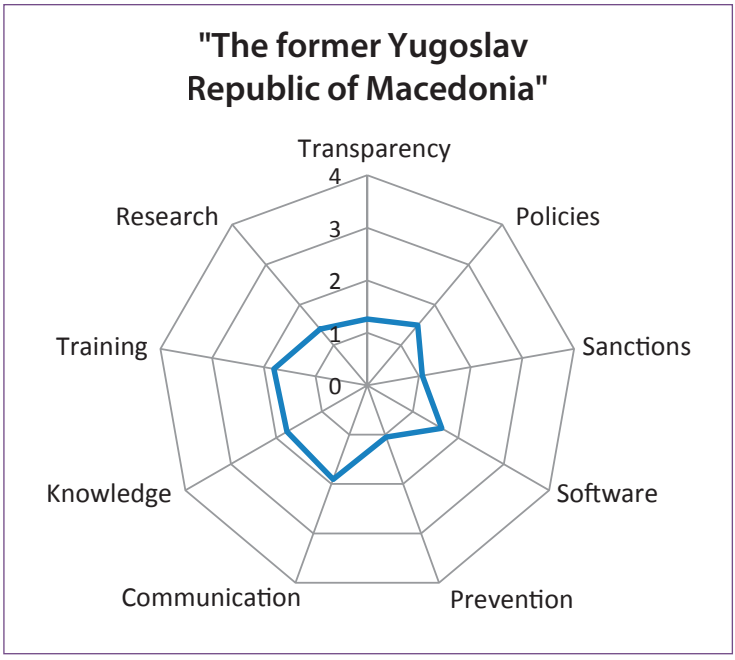
- Serbia is ranked 71 out of 168 countries in Transparency International's CPI 2015.
- There is a clear mismatch in students' and teachers' opinions on how to improve academic integrity: students believe in education, whereas teachers prefer penalties.

AIMM score: 12.92 out of 36, ranking 24 out of 33 countries.

Notes: These results are based on survey responses from 11 HEIs, 136 students, 99 teachers and 7 managers, combined with responses from 2 student focus groups and 2 group discussions and workshops with academic staff.

A2.6. AIMM results for "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

Figure 22: AIMM radar chart for "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"



Strengths and opportunities specific to "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

- All master's and doctoral theses are required to be deposited in a national database with software tools that can be used to check their originality.
- Evidence was found of academics and a student group initiating research to counter corruption and misconduct in education.
- In conversations during a visit to "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", students, academic staff and managers in HEIs were open regarding corrupt practices in the country and expressed interest in ideas for improving the situation, both in education and more widely.

Weaknesses and threats specific to "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

- "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" is currently ranked 66 out of 168 countries in Transparency International's CPI 2015.

- Low job prospects for students without a bachelor degree and master's degree push most young people into higher education and perhaps pressure some to cheat.

AIMM score: 13.40 out of 36, ranking 18 out of 33 countries.

Notes: These results are based on survey responses from 5 HEIs, 18 students, 9 teachers and 3 managers, combined with responses from 2 student focus groups and workshops, 2 group discussions and workshops with academic staff and 1 national-level interview.

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The fifth volume of the ETINED Series, this study focuses on academic integrity in higher education in six countries of South-Eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

Through on-the-spot interviews with teachers and students, questionnaires, surveys and integrity assessment, it gives an overview of policies and practices used in several institutions in the region. The results provide recommendations, examples of good practice and guidelines for policy makers and education professionals, with a specific focus on plagiarism and cheating in examinations.

This work is published as part of the Council of Europe ETINED platform, which aims to foster the exchange of information and promote best practices on ethics, transparency and integrity in education. ETINED defends the idea that quality education can only be achieved, and corruption effectively curbed, if all relevant sectors of society commit fully to fundamental ethical principles for public and professional life.

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