

## “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”

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Funded  
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Implemented  
by the Council of Europe

*An inclusive school is a school where:*

*every child is welcome,*

*every parent is involved,*

*every teacher is valued.*

# Agenda

*1<sup>st</sup> meeting and study visit of the PolicyNet working group on general secondary education*

Slovenia  
14 – 16 October 2014

**The working group meeting on general secondary education** is a thematic (cross beneficiary) policy meeting of the Regional **Inclusive PolicyNet** members from 7 Beneficiaries of the Joint EU/Council of Europe Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education” in South East Europe (SEE). The meeting will be combined with a study visit to Slovenian general secondary schools and relevant educational institutions to learn how to connect/align SEE inclusive education policy recommendations with EU requirements.

**The Inclusive “PolicyNet”** is a platform for exchange of experience and learning. It contributes to developing a common understanding of inclusive education within the region and it actively seeks how to influence politicians about inclusive education. The Inclusive PolicyNet will develop concrete policy recommendations and plans for their implementation at various levels of education (primary school, secondary, VET).

**The policy working group on general secondary education** will develop policy recommendations based on:

1. the findings from the Baseline survey on inclusive policies and practices done by LSE Enterprise
2. focus groups questioners done by Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC);
3. the EU inclusive education practices from Slovenian general secondary schools; and
4. EU inclusive education policies requirements and Slovenian experience.

## Background

South East European countries have committed themselves to make their education systems open to diversity. The Regional Support for Inclusive Education Project promotes the concept of inclusive education in South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Kosovo<sup>1\*</sup>) as a reform principle that respects and caters for diversity amongst all learners, with a specific focus on those who are at higher risk of marginalisation and exclusion.

The Project established the **Inclusive PolicyNet**, a multi-composition group of key stakeholders involved in policymaking in education, which will be influencing the policies based on the successful examples from schools and teachers. It has 70 members, comprised of representatives of the Beneficiary Policy Teams - 10 representatives per Beneficiary.

The Beneficiary Policy teams held their first meetings to discuss main issues and challenges for each level and type of education (Primary, General Secondary, and VET). A summary of the Beneficiary Teams’ reports was prepared and used as a framework for the first Regional Inclusive PolicyNet meeting. Many of the issues and challenges identified are common to all education levels, but there are also specific issues at each education level.

At **the first Regional PolicyNet** meeting in Sarajevo, on 6 March 2014, the working group on general secondary education was established to identify common general secondary education policy areas across the region. The areas identified are

### 1. Parent and Community involvement

Involvement of parents and local community in IE

### 2. Support to Teachers and Students at the level of school and classroom

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<sup>1</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Direct and indirect assistance and support to teachers and students

### 3. Promoting Inclusive General Secondary Education

Recognizing a school as an inclusive environment and disseminating good practices

### 4. Teacher Professional growth and advancement

Promotion of inclusive schools and teachers' professional growth and advancement

### 5. Comparative analyses

Comparative analysis of policies and practices in the beneficiaries as well as in EU countries.

The Inclusive PolicyNet continues its work in thematic working groups. The main objectives of the working group meetings are to further develop the inclusive education policy priorities identified at each level and type of education and to start discussing policy recommendations for each of these priorities. Once the thematic working groups develop recommendations, the Inclusive PolicyNet will endorse them and agree on the implementation mechanisms.

***Within the Regional Support for Inclusive Education Project*** the LSE Enterprise team of researchers has carried out a baseline study to measure the nature, extent and level of awareness of inclusive education in 49 Pilot schools in the SEE region (out of which 14 are general secondary schools – 2 per Beneficiary). Furthermore, the NEPC team had interviews with focus groups in these schools.

The main findings and recommendations from these two studies ***provide evidence-based suggestions*** on how to change the school's culture in order to improve general secondary schools environment and its multi-dimensional contributions to socialisation, civic values, social inclusion and social cohesion.

## **Objectives of the general secondary education working group meeting**

- 1) to discuss the findings from: the Baseline survey on inclusive policies and practices; focus groups discussions; and inclusive education practices in EU/Slovenia
- 2) to obtain feedback from the participants about the findings and agree on how the general secondary education working group will use this evidence in their further policy work

## **Expected result**

Draft regional recommendations for general secondary education identified and agreed.

**14<sup>TH</sup> October 2014, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

- 09:00 – 09:15**      **Opening and Project update**  
*Vesna Atanasova, Senior Project officer, Council of Europe*
- 09:15 – 09:30**      **Meeting objectives and expected results**  
*Zorica Lešič, Project officer, Council of Europe*
- 09:30 – 10:30**      **Inclusive SchoolNet update:**
- *Research findings from the Baseline survey on inclusive policies and practices in general secondary pilot schools*
  - *Findings from meetings with focus groups in general secondary pilot schools*
- Marijana Todorović, Project officer, Council of Europe*
- 10:30 – 11:00**      **Coffee break**
- 11:00 – 12:00**      **Inclusive TeacherNet update:**
- *Results from mapping report*
- Eljona Elmazi, Project officer, Council of Europe*
- 12:00 – 12:30**      **Web-platform**  
*Elmaja Bavčič, Project Assistant, Council of Europe*
- 12:30 – 14:30**      **Lunch**
- 14:30 – 16:00**      **Ministry of Education, Slovenia**  
*Polona Šoln Vrbinc, Head of Department for education of children with special needs*  
*Ksenija Švalj, Secretary of Department for education of children with special needs*  
*Erika Rustja, Secretary, Department for Education*
- 16:00 – 16:15**      **Coffee break**
- 16:15 – 17:30**      **EU inclusive education policies requirements and Slovenian experience – Preparation for the Study visit**  
*Branko Slivar, Head of Secondary Education, National Education Institute, Slovenia*  
*Brigita Žarković Adlešič, Head of Professional Development, National Education Institute, Slovenia*  
*Marta Novak, Senior Consultant, National Education Institute, Slovenia*

**15<sup>TH</sup> October 2014, Slovenia**

- 08:00 – 14:00**      **General secondary school visits**  
*Šolski Center Ljubljana*  
*II. gimnazija Maribor*  
*Biotehniški center Naklo*  
*Srednja ekonomska in poslovna šola Koper*
- 14:00 – 15:30**      **Lunch**
- 15:30 – 16:30**      **Inclusive Education challenges - NGO perspective**  
*Natalia Kocjančič, All-Slovenian initiative for equal opportunities for persons with autism*  
*Andreja Luštek, Association for Volunteer Development, Novo Mesto*
- 16:30 – 17:00**      **Reflection on Slovenian experience**

**16<sup>TH</sup> October 2014, Slovenia**

- 09:00 – 10:00**      **Links between Policy and Practice – General Secondary Pilot school projects and Policy recommendations**  
*Maria Golubeva, expert*
- 10:00 – 13:00**      **How will general secondary education policy working group use these findings for further policy work?**
- **Policy recommendations**  
*Small group discussion*
- 13:00 – 15:00**      **Lunch**
- 15:00 - 16:00**      **Draft Policy recommendations**  
*Presentations from the small groups*
- 16:00 – 16:30**      **Wrap up and next steps**  
*Zorica Lešić, Project Officer, Council of Europe*