

“Regional Support for Inclusive Education”

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by the Council of Europe

An inclusive school is a school where:

every child is welcome,

every parent is involved,

every teacher is valued.

2nd Annual Conference in South East Europe

“INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRACTICE”

Patterns, tools and actions

28-29 October 2014

Hotel International, Zagreb, Croatia

Concept Note and Programme



Inclusive Education in Practice

The Joint European Union and Council of Europe Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education” and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of Croatia are organising the Second Annual Conference in South East Europe on “**Inclusive Education in practice**”. The conference takes place in the city of **Zagreb, on 28-29 October 2014** and brings together policymakers, educationalists and school practitioners to discuss how the gap between policies and practices on inclusive education in the SEE region can be bridged.

RATIONALE

While inclusive education remains high on the agenda of the SEE region, it is not easy to achieve. Two dimensions are to be constantly considered when pursuing this goal: on the one hand policies and on the other practices. Finding the instruments to bridge gaps between the two is therefore an inevitable task for stakeholders in the region.¹ Indeed the gap between the rhetoric of policy and the reality of practice has been stated as an issue in a number of recent reports and research and represents an issue of relevance even beyond SEE.^{2 3} The lack of awareness raising and sensitisation around inclusion, teacher capacity development and support to schools, teachers and students are among the major region-wide policy areas that require intervention.⁴

As regards inclusive education policies, governments across the region have endorsed key strategic documents among which are the Salamanca Statement and the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All and they have ratified and signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The SEE 2020 strategy puts forward the key instruments, measures and activities that governments should take towards achieving *high and sustained economic growth through greater competitiveness*. “Education and Competences” is one of the main dimensions of Pillar 1 of the regional strategy, pertaining to “Smart Growth”, in particular the first instrument “Introduce policies to increase equitable access to, and participation in, high quality education at all levels (...).”⁵

Experience from the field shows that some inclusive practices already present in schools and in classrooms are recognised, while others go unnoticed and are therefore not promoted. Achievements but also challenges faced from practitioners are aspects of the reality that should be informing policy-making. The conference will mobilise education practitioners to put forward and make the practices

¹ *South Eastern Europe, Israel and Turkey trends, perspectives and challenges in strengthening vocational education for social inclusion and social cohesion*. Prepared for the ETF by Will Bartlett, Marina Cino Pagliarello, Claire Gordon and Simona Milio. London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

² A number of gaps have been presented in the conclusions of the 28th session of the International Conference on Education held in International Conference Centre, Geneva, 25-28 November 2008, with the theme of “Inclusive Education: The Way Of The Future”. Accessible at:

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Dialogue/48th_ICE/CONFINTED_48-5_Conclusions_english.pdf

³ The Council of European Union invites the member states to “Adopt effective and inclusive education and training policies which take due account of the needs of learners with disadvantaged backgrounds;” (Council conclusions — Efficient and innovative education and training to invest in skills (1) Supporting the 2014 European Semester (2014/C 62/05)

⁴ Report of the first Regional PolicyNet Meeting of the Joint Project, Sarajevo, 6 March 2014. Accessible at: [First Regional PolicyNet Meeting](#)

⁵ SEE 2020 Strategy. Key instruments of the SEE 2020 Strategy. p.43

visible to the policymakers, and the policymakers to consider which policies can be improved from these practices.

Considering the above, the Joint EU/CoE Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education” intends to facilitate the process of debate among stakeholders – policymakers, academicians, educationalists and practitioners, on how the policies and practices can be brought together. The Joint Project will engage the three Networks – PolicyNet, SchoolNet and TeacherNet – in an interactive discourse about practice- and evidence-informed policy that guarantees inclusion of children in the SEE region. The conference comes at a moment when the 49 Project pilot schools are building and strengthening their inclusive practices and while policy teams are involved in identifying and prioritising the topics for policy interventions. This is the moment to merge the two tracks into one, by recognising the achievements, redefining the dynamic context and identifying the required instruments for a systemic change.

OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The conference will be contributing to:

1. Valuing the achievements and setting the scene for the discourse
2. The evolving regional context of inclusive education policies and practices
3. Identifying instruments to connect policies and practices on inclusion in education

Objective 1: To highlight the stakeholders’ contribution in the region towards inclusive education

Much has already been done in South East Europe to make the school more inclusive. The contribution will be recognised in the EXPO FOR INCLUSION event during the first day of the conference. Representatives of the seven Beneficiaries will present their past and current experience, practices and projects on inclusion in a creative open exposition. Moreover, since the Joint EU/CoE Project started, all actors involved have been committed to and have taken action towards the common goal.

The conference will give the floor to school practitioners – from SchoolNet and TeacherNet – educationalists and policy team members to recognise, value and to take pride in the progress made. While most current promising *practices* from the field will be promoted, relevant changes in *policies* on inclusive education will be pointed out. Part of this process is also a reminder of the commitment reached jointly in the 1st Regional Conference “Embracing diversity through education” organised by the Joint Project in Tirana, on 6-7 November 2013.⁶

Objective 2: To strengthen mutual understanding of the evolving regional context of inclusion

⁶ More information on the first regional conference can be found on: [Regional conference: "Embracing Diversity through Education"](#)

Based on a mutually shared definition of inclusiveness, participants will engage in discussion about what has evolved, changed, and improved or what new contradictions and challenges have been presented since last year in inclusive education policy and practice. Input will be obtained in thematic areas, according to the levels of education and cluster themes of school projects. The pilot school representatives will present their perspective and actions, while policy members will offer a view on policy gaps at different levels of education - primary, general secondary and vocational secondary. The contextual overview will be enriched through current research findings including those from the LSE Enterprise baseline research study, the inclusive education teacher training mapping report (both produced by the Joint Project), ETF synthesis and country reports on social inclusion and the recent European Commission reports on education.

Objective 3: To discuss joint regional instruments for connecting inclusive education policies and practices

While the contextual premises and assumptions will be re-defined, the process will also involve identifying the instruments that connect the dots between policies and practices. Discussions will be dedicated to reviewing how well policy and practice are interlinked e.g.: *if policy A on inclusion exists on paper, how is it practically implemented in school? And if inclusive practice B is implemented successfully in school, how – if so – is it reflected in the policy?* The discourse at this stage will be very interactive, switching to different levels (individual/group-level, inductive/deductive level, expert/practitioner-level, policy/school-level), to provide the opportunity to all participants to contribute.

It is expected that in this part of the discussion policy-makers will hold to their views that legislation exists, while the practitioners will strongly advocate that the practices are there, but need to be supported by policies in order to be sustainable and scaled up. The role of the experts will be crucial in pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments from both sides, so that the next steps are formulated realistically. The discourse will aim to design actions steps both at the beneficiary level and the regional level.

THEMATIC AREAS

The conference will address the issue of bridging policies and practices from two different angles:

a) Clusters of school project themes

Discussion will be based on the key themes emerging from the pilot school projects, which the Joint EU/CoE Project is supporting with small grants of up to €9,500 per school. The main objective of small grants is to help schools develop and/or improve their existing inclusive practices in the widest sense for children at higher risk of marginalisation and exclusion. The 49 pilot schools in the Project serve diverse communities across the SEE region, including students from different ethnicities, students with different levels of abilities, students coming from vulnerable social and economic

background and so forth. In order to respond to the diverse needs and improve school culture, practices and policies, the pilot schools will be working on:

- development of outreach mechanisms for vulnerable and excluded groups of students;
- development of teachers' competencies related to diversified ways of support for students;
- support to school teams in the development of a diversified approach to involving parents of vulnerable groups of students in school life;
- peer learning and exchange of experiences/good practices with other schools and/or institutions and other areas.

b) Levels of education

The second type of clustering will be based on levels of education: primary, general secondary and vocational secondary. This type has been adopted by the Policy Component of the Project, as part of which three cross-beneficiary working groups were established. The groups have identified priorities for the respective levels of education and have started discussing possible policy recommendations to address each priority. Organising discussions according to levels of education will give a deeper insight and various perspectives on specific issues that each level faces, on both policy and practice dimensions.

EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Enhanced commitment, motivation and empowerment of the stakeholders towards the joint objective;
2. Action steps and instruments identified by stakeholders on how the policies and practices of inclusive education can be connected and gaps can be reduced.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

DAY 1 – Tuesday, 28 October

08.00-09.00	<p><i>Registration of participants</i></p> <p><i>Conference moderator, Mr David Addis</i></p>
09.00-10.00	<p>CONFERENCE OPENING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Vedran Mornar, Minister of Science, Education and Sports of Croatia• European Commission (TBC)• Jean-Christophe Bas, Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Council of Europe
10.00	<p>Launching the EXPO FOR INCLUSION</p> <p><i>Open exposition event of the variety of inclusive education practices and tools across SEE. Each Beneficiary will present its own experience in a creative way. The exposition will be open during the 2 day conference and will be visited not only by the conference participants, but will also be open to other interested parties: schools, organisations and media.</i></p>
10.15-10.45	<p>Press Conference</p>
12.30-14.00	<p><i>Lunch</i></p>
14.00-16.00	<p>SESSION 1: Regional support for inclusive education: What progress has been made?</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Sarah Keating, Council of Europe</p> <p>Status of implementation of Joint Project on Inclusive Education: Challenges and Opportunities for the three regional Networks (School, Teacher and Policy Net) Ms Vesna Atanasova, Council of Europe</p> <p>Perception of inclusiveness and Index for Inclusion of the SchoolNet Mr Will Bartlett, LSE Enterprise</p> <p>Support to SchoolNet for implementing inclusive policies and practices Ms Lana Jurko, Network of Education Policy Centres</p> <p>Mapping of existing inclusive teacher training programmes for TeacherNet Ms Judith Hollenweger, Zurich University of Teacher Education</p>
16.00 – 16.30	<p><i>Coffee Break</i></p>

16.30 – 18.30	<p>SESSION 2: Inclusion: how does it work in schools? - Panel discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Julian Stanley, Vocational Education and Training Specialist, ETF</p> <p>Keynote speaker: Ms Maria Golubeva, Education Policy Expert</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Antonela Jončić, Vladimir Nazor school, Ploce, Croatia• Parent representative (TBC)• Ms Verica Kjosevska, Psychologist, Vocational secondary school “Boro Petrushevski“, Skopje, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”• Ms Brikena Kullolli, Gymnasium “Ismail Qemali“, Tirana <p><i>A summary of the 49 school projects will be given by the keynote speaker. Panellists from SchoolNet and TeacherNet will discuss the most common types of interventions proposed by the pilot schools, focussing on finding creative solutions.</i></p>
18.30	End of day one
20.00	Dinner at LOBBY Restaurant, hosted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of Croatia

DAY 2 – Wednesday, 29 October

09.30 - 11.00	<p>SESSION 3: Regional PolicyNet recommendations in line with the Beneficiaries commitment to EU accession. Panel discussion, PolicyNet per thematic groups (primary, secondary and VET)</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Vanja Ivošević, ERI SEE</p> <p>Keynote speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Tamara Milić, Ministry of Education and Sports of Montenegro• Mr Blerim Saqipi, University of Pristina• Mr Estevan Ikonomi, National Association of Social Workers (Albania) <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Fatima Smajlović, Save the Children• Mr Branko Slivar, Slovenian Institute for Education• Ms Lida Kita, European Training Foundation
11.00 – 11.30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11.30 – 12.30	Interactive discussion panel continues

12.30 - 14.30	<i>Lunch</i>
14.30 – 16.00	SESSION 4: Panel discussion: Inclusive education in the region: the future Moderator: Ms Lida Kita, European Training Foundation Keynote speakers: Mr Aleksa Bjeliš - Council of Europe Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice Ms Sabine Rohmann - Council of Europe Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice Panellists: Steering Board members <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Tatjana Vuçani (Albania)• Ms Lejla Divović (Bosnia and Herzegovina)• Ms Nada Jakir (Croatia)• Ms Vesna Vučurović (Montenegro)• Ms Snežana Vuković (Serbia)• Ms Natasha Janevska (“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”)• Ms Lulavere Behluli (Kosovo[*])
16.30 – 17.30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
17.30 - 18.00	Panel discussion continuation: Interactive session with Q&A among the panellists and audience
18.00	Concluding remarks Conference ends

PARTICIPANTS

Around 180 participants from South East Europe representing primary, secondary and vocational pilot schools participating in the project, Ministries responsible for inclusive education, members of the Regional PolicyNet, members of the Regional SchoolNet, members of the Regional TeacherNet.

Plus international, regional and local partner organisations: European Commission, European Training Foundation, London School of Economics, Network of Education Policy Centres, Save the Children, academicians, experts and educationalists.

LANGUAGES

The working languages will be: English, Albanian, Macedonian and Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian/Montenegrin.

^{*} 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.

CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of Croatia
Council of Europe

**Please check the website of
the Joint EU/CoE Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”
for more information:**

[Regional Support for Inclusive Education in South East Europe- Homepage](#)

Check our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/RegionalSupportInclusiveEducation?ref=hl>