

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- National Report -

**MINISTRY OF CIVIL AFFAIRS
OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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LEGAL-INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two Entities – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska – and a special political unit: Brčko District.

Pursuant to its constitutional arrangement, Bosnia and Herzegovina has regulated its education sector asymmetrically: in Republika Srpska the holders of the education are regulated by the Entity Law, while in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina education is regulated at the cantonal level. Each of ten cantons has its own law on preschool, primary and secondary education, and cantons where universities are situated have their own high education legislation. The Brčko District, on its own side has its laws that regulate four education levels. So, in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are over forty laws to regulate four levels of education. This number of organic laws should be added secondary legislation that addresses the education sector directly (in education-pedagogic service, education inspection), and a number of other legislation (labour, public financing, management etc), which are binding for education institutions.

The first State level law was adopted in 2003 - Framework Law on Primary and Secondary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina – which defines the common core standards of education of the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it affirms the equal right to education for all.

In Republika Srpska (RS) the Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for monitoring policy, planning and implementation. In Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH) it is the task for cantonal Education Ministries. The Federal Ministry of Education has the role of coordinator of cantonal ministries. The two Entities formed a joint commission at entity level for standards and marking in education. The basic principle of operation is same for the Coordination Board for education. These two bodies have a function of facilitating the job of necessary formulation of a coherent education policy framework.

Up to March 15, 2003, no Ministry in Bosnia and Herzegovina has defined its role in the education field. On the same date, the new Law on Ministries and Other Administrative Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina took effect, under which the Ministry of Civil Affairs of B-H assumed competence for coordination of activities, harmonisation of entity plans, and education and science international relations strategy definition.

Financing of all levels of education is based on principles of public financing. No administrative unit (Entity of canton) does remit sufficient funds for education process itself. These are mainly spent on wages and salaries for the employed in education, and a lesser amount is earmarked to current operative costs and maintenance, but again it is fully spent to cover utilities costs. Even though funds for utilities are not sufficient, overall GDP allocations for education stand at 6.4%, which is above the European average. The budget allocations for education are not equal at Entity and cantonal levels. Also, B-H GDP is very low and education sector in B-H is not rationally arranged.

GENERAL VIEW

The education process in Bosnia and Herzegovina includes nearly 610,000 pupils and students. About 367,000 pupils attend 1,836 primary schools, and about 173,000 pupils attend 295 secondary schools. High education institutions are 95, organised at seven universities with 70,000 full-time students.

A right to education is included into the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which says that: "Rights and freedoms provided for in the European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and in its Protocols are directly implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These enactments have primacy over all other laws. All persons in territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina exercise human rights and freedoms, including the right to education" (Constitution of B-H, Article 2; Constitution of FB-H, Chapter II, Article 2, Constitution of RS, Article 38).

Preschool Education

The preschool education has no the same status as the primary education has, it is not equally part of the cantonal and Entity authorities concerns. The education budgets support is often with symbolic amounts on ad hoc annual interventions. Considering the way of financing and control of preschool institutions, they belong more to social than to education sector. Overall number of preschool institutions in B-H is less than 200, and they cover 4.5% of children of appropriate age, and this is much below the objective needs, in view of number of children of that age. A special problem is the absence of preschool institutions in rural areas, as well as a lack of private initiative on this level of education.

Primary Education

By 2003, education in B-H was organised on the principle of obligatory eight-year schooling. The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary education in B-H, which took effect on July 2003, introduced the obligatory nine-year education.

In B-H 1,836 primary schools are attended by 376,000 pupils, and more than two thirds of the number relate to the Federation of B-H (66.9%), 2% to Brčko District, and the remaining 31% belong to RS.

Several estimations on net enrolment rate to primary schools range from 93% to 98%. They all together result in an average of 85% of coverage with primary education. The problem appears with an insufficient coverage with primary education of children within vulnerable groups, such as Roma population, female children in some rural areas, refugees and displaced persons, including children who left school due to war and have not returned to education process.

The problem with primary education is a relatively small size of average school and class, irrational teacher-pupil ratio, and inadequate social and material status of teachers. Particular problem appears with often out-dated learning methodology, as well as inadequate university education for teachers.

Secondary Education

In 259 secondary schools in Federation of B-H 173,000 pupils are educated. As to their distribution by administrative parts, the ratio is the same with the primary schools.

The secondary education in B-H is not obligatory. The education time framework is two to five years, most often three and four.

The enrolment rate for secondary schools is 72%.

And enrolment rate for poorer children is as low as 57%.

The ratio between general secondary schools and vocational secondary schools is 20:80, and secondary vocational schools are too specialised.

Other than the inadequate coverage with secondary education, particularly of the poor categories, the secondary education is not linked to the labour market, and there is no needed independency in designing and execution of school programmes, and only some of professions, i.e. schools, introduced modern curricula by way of pilot projects.

High Education

Seven universities in B-H - five in Federation of B-H and two in Republika Srpska - include total 95 high education institutions with 70,000 full-time students.

Five universities in Federation of B-H (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihać, Mostar East University and Mostar West University) include 64 faculties and academies and higher schools.

The enrolment rate is 25%.

Difficulties in high education in Bosnia and Herzegovina date back from the 1980s, when investment to education begun to scale dawn. This continued and even deteriorated during the war when considerable damage was made to facilities, in addition to teaching cadre out-flow. Problems are also found with the old programmes and curricula, insufficient number of qualified professors and lack of resources. High education institutions are not mutually connected throughout the State. The average studying is overly too long. Also worrying is the duplication of high education capacities, while cooperation with the labour market is not at the satisfactory level. The scientific and research work within education process is being neglected and no State level legal framework regulations on this important issue is in place.

EDUCATION RESTRUCTURING – ROAD TO EUROPE

During the war 1992-1995, a single and highly centralised education system developed into three separate education systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The general institutional-legal education framework, especially schools structure remained the same, but significant changes appeared within three separate curricula and programmes – this being especially true for mother tongue and literature, history, geography, music and art classes.

After the war – during which the education process was continually unfolding without interruption almost throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina - and in the face of extremely difficult and most often risky conditions, the administration started to develop, under the Dayton Peace Agreement, which enabled the factual development of 12 different and practically closed education systems in ten cantons, two Entities and one district.

In parallel with this process, the awareness of right to education as a fundamental human right started to rise, implying that education holds the attribute of a special social significance, thence it could not be concern solely for regional or local authorities. In addition, inevitability of Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into European family of united states, presumes primarily harmonisation for the existing parallel education systems in order to reach a needed education system consistency and recognisability, including matching of domestically and internationally comparable and measurable quality. In other words, the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina should safeguard “entrance” and ”exit” of its own education system and should be made responsible for its quality, like other European countries.

The key turning point in that sense occurred on November 21, 2002 in Brussels, where B-H representatives presented the education reform strategy to the Peace Implementation Council.

Under the caption “Message to Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina” and title “Education reform” the documents’ five points outlined the sector reform direction where efforts will be taken jointly by all those competent and responsible.

The pivotal idea was that “our education system is key to development of intellectual capital of our country”, and mentions strategic document specified all important tasks and implementation dynamics for the whole education sector, so as to make young people integrate into European education standards.

The “Education Reform” strategy was prepared by domestic professionals, with the support of the International Community (Education Issues Coordination Team is comprised of heads of international agencies, such as OSCE, OHR, UNICEF, UNISCO, Council of Europe, European Commission, World Bank, US Embassy – CIVITAS, BH PRSP (B-H Mid-term Development Strategy)).

One has to bear on mind that B-H education reform had begun before the Strategy was adopted, but the Brussels document was the first regulation to treat comprehensively the education sector and suggest its development directions.

Education for All, Non Discriminatory or Prejudicial

The first strategic aim of the education reform is to enable all children to have a high quality education in integrated multi-cultural schools at all levels, set free from any political, religious, cultural and other prejudices and discrimination.

Right to Education of Returnee Children

Considering all the more increased number of families returnees to their pre-war homes, as well as problems of inclusion of returnee children into education system, Entity Education Ministers signed “Provisional Agreement on Meeting Essential Needs of Returnee Children”, on March 5, 2002. The aim of this Agreement is to provide necessary conditions for increased enrolment of returnee children to schools throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in places where returnees are minority groups. This Provisional Agreement provides for conditions for employment of returnee teachers and regulates school boards composition to reflect local ethnic composition. In addition, it enables parents to choose ethnic-related group of subjects (mother tongue and literature, history, geography, social and nature lessons, religion) curriculum for their children.

Entity and cantonal Education Ministers signed the overall implementation plan on November 13, 2020.

The Coordination Board, comprised of Entity and cantonal Education Ministers, was formed to ensure a full implementation of the Provisional Agreement.

The implementation results are as follows: somewhat increased number of employed returnee teachers and domicile minority teaches; in 25 schools curricula other than those usually used are chosen by parents; number of returnee pupils during a school year reached over 27,000 in Federation of B-H, and over 6,200 in Republika Srpska; the harmonised national composition of school boards with national composition in schools; inter-entity review of textbooks conducted, aimed at removing offensive content; developed criteria for school names and symbols; number of pupils transported to school in other canton decreased in four cantons, but increased in two.

“Two Schools under Single Roof” Phenomenon

In B-H there are still 54 cases of two schools under a single roof, operating in three cantons. In these schools children and teachers of Bosnia and Croat origins often do not have any mutual contact, and there are numerous examples of once united schools to become divided. In some cases, pupils use separate entrances, have breaks at different times, and teachers do not use the same staff-rooms. To now, only two such schools in two municipalities jointed into a single entity with two components, while in all other cases schools sharing one roof each maintained their independent legal entity status.

Existence of such school is contrary to the Education Reform Strategy, as verified by competent education authorities in order to “break with segregation and discrimination in education” and to “decrease surpluses, duplication and ineffectiveness of education system”.

In one of cantons, the High Representative imposed several fines on the there ruling political party because of failure to undertake measures for administrative unification of schools under a single roof. In moment of preparing of the present Report, all 54 cases of two schools under a single roof remained as they are, i.e. they remained a problem that needs to be solved.

Education Needs of Roma and Other National Minorities

Roma children are almost none in senior forms of both primary and secondary schools. Estimations suggest that 80% of Roma children do not attend schools. Reasons are many, but the main ones are poverty, discrimination, lack of confidence in authorities, tradition and customs, language, war, resettling etc.

Guided by a desire that all children, members of ethnic minorities, particularly Roma children are in a way included into the education system in the whole country, a Task Force was established for dealing with education needs of Roma and other ethnic minorities, and its task is to help ethnic minorities define their education needs.

In mid February 2004, all-level Education Ministers of B-H signed “Action Plan on Roma and Other Ethnic minorities’ Education Needs”, which provides for the funds allocation at municipal level for approach to education by Roma children, as analyses show that poverty of the population is the core reason for impossibility to attend schools.

Some municipal education ministries in Federation of B-H and Repbulika Srpska have already earmarked budget funds for these purposes.

Some schools in Federation of B-H and Republika Srpska arrange subsequent exams for uncompleted levels, so that regular schooling can be continued.

Chance for All to Complete Primary Education

Starting from a fact that a considerable number of children of relevant age (5%) do not attend primary school, or they do not graduate from it, data collection began to ascertain reasons for such situation.

Ministers of Education considered draft action plan for school enrolment and attendance, as an implementation regulation derived from the Education reform Strategy.

This plan defines possible obstacles to projected 100% coverage of children by primary education, as well as ways of overcoming them (financial aspect, school-community distance, over aged children, securing earmarked budget resources).

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is one of the Education Strategy Reform key elements that enable all children to attend regular schools near their places of living, notwithstanding their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and other abilities. Subject to the inclusive education principle, children with special need should go to regular schools, together with other children.

Some cantons and Brčko District have already effectuated legal provisions that appreciate inclusive education principles. Also, there are several agencies engaged to secure better and more mass approach to education by children of differing abilities. The Sarajevo University introduced postgraduate studies on inclusive education: it

encompasses a pilot project which supports inclusion of children with lesser mental handicap into the first and second forms of primary school. Sixteen municipalities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina obliged to undertake training for education of consultants, linguistic trainers and teachers for primary schools to introduce inclusive education.

The Inclusive Education Task Force has prepared the first draft of preliminary report containing data on children with special needs, and problems faced by them in attempting to include into regular school classes. This report will be presented to Education Ministers.

HIGH QUALITY PRESCHOOL, PRIMARY AND GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

The other strategic determination from the “Education Reform” gives primacy to a high quality well-founded education at the levels of preschool institutions, primary and general secondary schools, based on contemporary curricula and programme and modern system of marking and certifying of both pupils and teachers, with securing conditions in place that children are taught by well-trained teachers in adequately equipped and effectively managed schools.

Preschool Education

An Expert Team, formed a while ago, has prepared the draft preschool education development strategy in B-H and it is to be presented to the Council of Ministers this autumn for adoption.

This strategy analyses problems of preschool education and specifically defines ways to make it integrative part of the entire education system, with over twice as coverage of children (from 4% to 12%), as already projected under the 2004-1007 Mid-Term Development Strategy for B-H (PRSP).

Some tasks provided for under the preschool education strategy draft are already in the process of preparation, like the Framework Law on Preschool Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example.

Framework Curricula of Primary and General Secondary Education

In early June 2003, Entity and cantonal Education Ministers, assisted by the Council of Europe and OSCE Mission in B-H, signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Managing Board for Joint Core Curriculum and Programme for Preschool, Primary and General Secondary Education. The Managing Board was formed for the Project, and its mandate defined, as is a way to organise experts groups for development of joint core for four ethnic-related group of subjects and 13 non-ethnic-related group of subjects.

By beginning of August same year, cantonal and Entity Education Ministers signed the Agreement on Joint Core Curricula and Programmes, which Agreement precisely ordered that the core curricula and programmes are to be applied in all schools in Bosnia ad Herzegovina starting from 2003/2004 school year.

Lat year a nine-year education implementation started in RS and in Federation of B-H it is to start in 2004/1005 school year. The framework curricula and programme for first form of nine-year primary education is completed.

In parallel with the above activities, UNESCO and International Bureau for Education (IBE) from Geneva supported the launch of preparation of courses – expert training for development of new curricula and programmes for primary and general secondary education in B-H. The aim of these projects is the training of “curricula and programme managers” (i.e. officers in education institutes and ministries responsible for curriculum and programme policy and coordination). Two courses have been held to date for the managers – first in Geneva, in end October and second in Banja Luka,

late last year. The project first phase was finished and the second is expected to take place in autumn as specific subjects experts training.

The competent authorities' efforts, supported internationally, are taken towards reaching the Memorandum of Understanding on establishment of commissions for guidelines development for preparation of textbooks for ethnic-related group of subjects.

Last September, Repulika Srpska, Brčko District and every canton established centres of teachers' training. Thirteen are currently in operation.

Teacher's professional up-grading strategy and operation plan is underway, under the UNICEF coordination, and this involves analysis of the systems in place for their licensing.

European Union has already started the implementation of its second education sector Project. The first one, titled "Bosnia and Herzegovina Education Reform Technical Assistance", lasted from October 2000 to October 2003, and included preparation, in May 2003, of recommendations for education authorities on strategic directions of modernisation of primary and general secondary education, titled "the Green Paper". After discussions had taken place, the "White Paper" was adopted in October 2003, which contained concrete tasks and priorities for implementation in primary and secondary education, so that B-H education system would become harmonised with these of EU countries.

The second, two-year, Project was launched in January 2004 under the title "Primary and General Secondary Education Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina" and its three tasks are: curricula development, public administration education reform, networking of successfully reformed schools with an aim at promotion of positive experiences.

Early this September a modernisation of joint core of curricula and programmes for living languages will take place, in accordance with the Joint European Framework for Living Languages.

HIGH QUALITY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Bosnia and Herzegovina understands that it will manage to support its own economic development only by way of establishing a modern, broadly based, flexible and high quality system of vocational education and training to correspond to labour market requirements.

Within secondary vocational education, the “EU-VET Programme” Project lasts for several years now, and it is the leading project under the vocational education reform.

The European Commission has been active via its PHARE Project in the vocational education reform since 1998.

The aim of the programmes is to define new ways of expert education and training, and in line with this, to prepare new curricula and programmes and teachers’ training.

Six new curricula and programmes for six professions (baker, cook, tailor, waiter, administration officer, electrician) are implemented in 20 pilot schools in B-H. Next support in that sense will be directed towards three-year vocational schools in the field of metal, wood and textile procession professions.

Based on labour market research, agriculture and food procession sectors are identified as priority for optimisation of professions; 24 schools were identified for preparation, in cooperation with their EU school partners, of framework model of optimisation and modernisation of mentioned sectors.

With regard to the fact that 500 professions are registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina in over 200 education profiles offered by secondary vocational schools - quite unnecessary and inapt to respond to changeable labour market conditions - Entity Education Ministries, have developed, as assisted by the EU-VET, a new draft classification of professions and education profiles, which distributes 100 professions into 14 education profiles.

A guidelines were developed on how to research labour market with a close cooperation of employment services and vocational education schools, in an attempt to make the secondary vocational education sector adjusted to labour market and its information system.

The vocational education schools and employment services conducted 25 regional researches of labour market throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Agency for Standards and Marking in Education set-up a pilot division in charge for secondary vocational education.

A number of mentors were trained in new methodology of curricula and programmes preparation and in new teaching methodologies.

The new Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in preparation.

HIGH EDUCATION QUALITY – TOWARDS EUROPEAN SPACE

The fourth message to citizens of B-H from the Education Reform Strategy pertains to high education, and it runs as follows: “High education and research quality will be improved in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a number of persons to approach high education will be increased, and Bosnia and Herzegovina Universities participation in the European high education area will be secured”.

Last year, Entity Education Ministers signed a joint registration letter for joining Bologna Declaration, as well as the Declaration implementation plan. In September 2003, Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Bologna Declaration. The Lisbon Declaration was ratified.

The High Education Coordination Board developed a joint text model for explanation, as a diploma supplement.

All B-H universities developed, and majority of them adopted, their own plans of institutional development for period 2003-2010, and these plans enshrine the Bologna process.

The Council of Europe-supported THEMPUS Programme helped several faculties to modernise their curricula in cooperation with European partners, and some of them adopted new, two-phased studies timeframe. ECTS credited studies system was introduced at some faculties.

A group for electronic learning was formed and it was tasked to develop new technology introduction policy and electronic learning practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The distance learning centres were opened in the Sarajevo and Tuzla Universities. The Students’ Union model was developed to cover the whole of the country.

In the course of this year, the Draft Framework Law on High Education was prepared and, as a basis for the reform in this sector, it promotes and safeguards quality principles, students and professors’ mobility, university autonomy, students and professors’ rights, all in line with both the Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Convention.

Unfortunately, the Law adoption has been stopped twice during the parliamentary procedure, and this was among items discussed at the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The institutional and financial strengthening, in addition to high education reform and modernisation and new status definition of this sector, is a current priority for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

FINANCING, MANAGEMENT AND LEGISLATION REFORM

Guided by an understanding that financing, management and legislation reform in the area of education improves the education quality and its system reform, the B-H education authorities undertook in their Education Reform Strategy to “ensure transparent, competitive, rational and sustainable financing of public resources and implement education legalisation at all levels, based on European standards and norms, according to international human rights conventions”.

The World Bank experts analysed the principles and practice of financing of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels of administration. Based upon analytic review, possible models were presented under new conditions, with preferential financing per pupil/student as unit measure.

Certain improvement of public expenditures management through the budget operations, as well as better budget transparency are achieved by gradual inclusion of education institutions into the treasury system. In this way, budget discipline would be improved.

The Education reform suggests development of adequate legal framework and establishment of effective mechanisms for management of education as a whole as a continued, rather than fragmented process.

In accordance the Constitution-defined responsibility of State of Bosnia and Herzegovina for provision and protection of rights to education, the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education took effect on July 1, 2003, This Law “regulates principles of preschool, primary and secondary school institutions, adult education and establishment and operation of education service-provision institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina”(Article 1 of Law). The Law also inaugurates joint cores of curricula and programmes and other education standards, and define adequate structures for their implementation, follow-up and development.

Adoption of this Law at the State level marked a first step in creation of the adequate legal framework for legitimate proceeding by all concerned in the area of education.

All cantonal and Entity laws on preschool, primary and secondary education had to be brought into conformity with State Law within a six month deadline. A model law was developed for Entity and cantonal levels, in order to facilitate work for lower levels. Adjustment of cantonal and Entity legislation with those of the State level was finished, save it for some outstanding problems in several cantons, which was the reason for intervention on the part of the High Representative.

Even though mid 2004 was planned for adoption of the Framework Law on High Education, it did not happen for the reasons mentioned in the previous part.

Work is ongoing on Draft Framework Law on Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Also in the process of drafting is the Framework Law on Preschool Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Mid-term Development Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina (PRS for 2004-2007) defines an obligation of adoption of Framework Law on Scientific and Research Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina by end of 2004. These tasks are in the process of preparation.

A mention should be made the obligation of development of legal regulations on adult education (life-time learning).

IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

Bosnia and Herzegovina makes firm moves forward in primary and secondary education reforms, and it works intensively on preparation of system reform undertakings in the area of preschool education and vocational secondary education and training.

Not all forms of segregation are eliminated from the education system, which would be a task for domestic authorities, as backed by the international elements.

Likewise, there is an extensive activity ahead on legal founding of high education reform, with simultaneous further engagement on going through planned stages of reforms and modernisation, so that Bosnia and Herzegovina could, as soon as possible, be brought closer to the joint European high education space.

ANNEX

A message to citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Education Reform

A Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Education Reform

Our educational system is crucial to the development of our country's intellectual capital. Our young people must be confident that they can receive the quality education that they require to open the door to the future – here at home.

We know that the education system in BiH is in urgent need of modernisation. It has fallen behind the rest of Europe. We need to make a combined and sustained effort to enhance the quality of education across the board.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's last and best chance for a viable future hinges on its young people. If they decide to desert it in search of better educational opportunities elsewhere, or if they conclude that they cannot compete in the region or the wider world, the country's future will be bleak.

We must start by taking politics out of the classroom, where it has no place. Instead, we should concentrate on doing what is necessary to develop and enhance the quality of education, and to ensure that this enhanced education is available to all, fairly and without discrimination.

There is no place for an education system in our country that divides and segregates children on an ethnic basis. Our education system must enable our children to go to school together, so that they can learn to respect and cherish the precious cultural diversity that makes our country unique.

The education system must also train our primary and secondary school children to live and work in a constantly changing world. But in BiH, our curricula are overloaded, our teaching methods require updating, and too often learning is based on the mechanistic transmission of large quantities of facts. All this must change. Education for Europe and the world in the 21st century requires critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills, entrepreneurship, and a command of new technologies.

Our university students, who are so important to the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, are likewise too often faced with a system that does not properly prepare them to be successful in a highly competitive world. More attention needs to be paid to the acquisition of the skills and values that the modern university graduate requires and expects to receive. Our goal is to establish a higher education system with credible structures and instruments of effective governance, management and accountability. The Bologna Process offers a tested framework for university reform. We need to embrace and implement its crucial provisions if universities in BiH are to join the "European Area of Higher Education."

We must modernise the financing and management system and the legal framework, which underpin the education system.

Urgent reform is needed in all these areas.

The only way to accomplish this is through the commitment and active support of dedicated, hard-working and forward-looking professors, teachers, parents, administrators and political leaders in this country. Nothing can be achieved without them, and their efforts are already beginning to make a difference. We encourage everyone involved in the process of education reform to show how, together, we can move Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its young people, decisively towards the highest European standards.

Education: Our Mission

Reforming Education To Give BiH a Better Future

Our overriding objective is to depoliticise education, while creating the conditions that will ensure equal access to a high-quality, modern education throughout BiH.

Quality education is needed:

- 1. for the individual. It brings confidence and personal growth, as well as the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that are critical for a young person to become a good and successful citizen.*
- 2. for the community. It produces an aware and engaged citizenry, an enhanced potential for prosperity, and a society that is both fair and just.*
- 3. for the country. As BiH strives to become a modern European state, quality education is essential to prosperity and progress.*

We aim to put an end to segregation and discrimination through education, and to encourage returnees with school-age children to continue to go back to their homes.

We aim to de-segregate education, while respecting the rich cultural diversity that is the hallmark of our country.

We aim to establish a system with a strong legal basis, in which the needs and interests of all children and students come first.

We will cut wastage, duplication and inefficiencies in BiH's education system.

We will incorporate the principle of inclusive education for children with special needs in all aspects of legislative and pedagogical reforms.

We will associate all the education stakeholders in these reforms, including students, parents and teachers, in a democratic and transparent manner.

We will energetically remove the bureaucratic and organisational impediments to the reform of our education system.

We will foster and reinforce innovation in the classroom at all levels, and promote the implementation of the provisions and criteria of the Bologna and Lisbon Convention processes in higher education.

This is our mission: reforming education to give our people a better future. Building on what has already been accomplished, we must now work together to finish the job.

Our pledges on Education

Pledge 1

We will ensure that all children have access to quality education, in integrated multicultural schools, that is free from political, religious, cultural and other bias and discrimination and which respects the rights of all children. We will accomplish this by:

Providing returnee children with ready access to education, in integrated multicultural schools in their area of return, that is free from political, religious and cultural bias and discrimination.

Ensuring that all children who are members of national minorities (particularly Romani children) are appropriately included in the education system throughout the country.

Ensuring that all children have the opportunity to complete primary education.

Including children with special needs at all levels of the education system.

Delivering on our pledges

Pledge 1

We will ensure that all children have access to quality education, in integrated multicultural schools, that is free from political, religious, cultural and other bias and discrimination and which respects the rights of all children. We will accomplish this by:

Providing returnee children with ready access to education, in integrated multicultural schools in their area of return, that is free from political, religious and cultural bias and discrimination.

Implement the March 5th 2002 Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children (February 2003).

Develop long-term solutions for the education of all constituent peoples and persons belonging to national minorities (August 2003).

Ensuring that all children who are members of national minorities (particularly Romani children) are appropriately included in the education system throughout the country.

Ensure that the national minorities, and especially Roma, are enabled to define their own needs and support them in assessing what is necessary for successful education (March 2003).

Establish a flexible, BiH-wide implementation plan to include all children belonging to national minorities (in particular Romani children) within the educational system, addressing the problems of access, financing of textbooks and transportation (August 2003).

Ensuring that all children have the opportunity to complete primary education.

Undertake data collection on primary school enrolment and completion rates, so as to determine the reasons why a significant number of children of primary school age are not enrolling in or completing primary school in Bosnia and Herzegovina (August 2003).

Develop a flexible implementation plan to ensure primary school completion for all children and to remedy basic education gaps for young people, addressing issues such as the location of schools and transportation, financing, community needs and alternative (non-formal) education channels (December 2003).

Including children with special needs at all levels of the education system.

Assess the number of children with special needs and the difficulties they face in order to determine the challenges that impede their inclusion into the general classroom (December 2003).

Develop a plan to educate the community (including school boards, teachers, parents and students) with respect to the inclusion of children with special needs at all levels of the education system (August 2005).

Our pledges on Education

Pledge 2

We will provide basic education of good quality at the pre-school, primary and general secondary levels, with a modern curriculum and a modern system of assessment and certification for students and teachers. We will ensure that students are taught by well-trained teachers, in properly equipped and efficiently managed schools, by:

Establishing countrywide, affordable and accessible pre-school education.

Developing a modern curriculum framework for all levels of primary and general secondary school education, encompassing the entire range of subjects, focussing especially on relevant and contemporary knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable students to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Ensuring that the quality of teaching reaches and remains at acceptable standards throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Reviewing and achieving agreed minimum standards for pre-school and school facilities, including standards of safety, hygiene, equipment and learning materials, and ensuring compliance with those standards within three years.

Improving the quality of management practices to ensure that pre-schools and schools are managed in a modern, democratic and inclusive manner.

Delivering on our pledges

Pledge 2

We will provide basic education of good quality at the pre-school, primary and general secondary levels, with a modern curriculum and a modern system of assessment and certification for students and teachers. We will ensure that students are taught by well-trained teachers, in properly equipped and efficiently managed schools, by:

Establishing countrywide, affordable and accessible pre-school education.

Establish a multi-sectoral strategic planning group of experts in early childhood education to analyse current legislation and cost structures and develop a feasible structure for this sector for the future(2003).

Design a developmentally appropriate pre-school curriculum using appropriate expertise in contemporary principles of curriculum, in close consultation with experts and contemporary principles of education(2003).

Increase progressively the number of pre-school age children receiving appropriate education (2010).

Developing a modern curriculum framework for all levels of primary and general secondary school education, encompassing the entire range of subjects, and focussing on relevant and contemporary knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable students to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Develop a modern curriculum for each subject in close consultation with education authorities and drawing on appropriate expertise in contemporary principles of curriculum, (2004-2010); in the initial stage, this will mean developing a common core curriculum to enable pupils throughout BiH to go to school together (July 2003).

Develop and implement a system of standardised assessment and certification of student achievement for the entire country (July 2006).

Continue technical support to the Standards and Assessment Agency in order to ensure that, consistent with the terms of the Lisbon Convention, a standardised secondary school leaving certificate (such as the “matura” examination, or equivalent) is developed (2006).

Ensuring that the quality of teaching reaches, and remains at, acceptable standards throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ensure all teachers receive training in modern teaching methodologies within four years (2003-2006).

Develop standards and procedures for licensing and certifying pre-school and primary school teachers (2004) and secondary school teachers (2007).

Establish a network of in-service training centres and implement a system of in-service training, including accredited programmes for professional development of pre- and primary school teachers (2003) and secondary school teachers (2004).

Implement revised courses and systems for pre-service primary and general secondary teacher training, including significant practice teaching (2004-2005).

Develop and implement a program of pre- and in-service teacher training for children with special needs at all levels of education (2003-2004).

Revise the current classification system for children with special needs to ensure that contemporary principles of inclusive education are followed (2003).

Reviewing and enacting agreed minimum standards for pre-school and school facilities, including standards of safety, hygiene, equipment and learning materials. Our aim is to ensure compliance with those standards within three years.

Establish a representative group of experts to review and develop agreed codes and standards for pre-, primary and secondary schools (2003), and ensure that an audit of school facilities and equipment is conducted and achievable targets for improvement for pre- and primary schools (2003) and secondary schools (2004) are set.

Improving the quality of management practices to ensure that pre-schools and schools are managed in a modern, democratic and inclusive manner.

Appoint school boards and school directors according to principles of fairness and consistent with the democratic process (2004).

Develop appropriate and contemporary models of educational management and management structures, and develop and implement a system of training for school executive staff and members of school boards (2003-2004).

Develop terms of reference for Parents' and Students' Councils (2003), and establish a Parents' Council and a Students' Council in every school and a Parents' Council in every pre-school (2004).

Our pledges on Education

Pledge 3

We will support the economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the development of a modern, broad-based, flexible and high-quality vocational education and training system that is responsive to labour market requirements, by:

Improving vocational education and training to ensure that these activities are responsive to labour market needs, well integrated with the primary, general secondary and higher education systems and based on the principles of lifelong learning.

Ensuring teaching of high quality in vocational education and training institutions in BiH.

Ensuring that educational and training schools are managed in a modern, democratic and inclusive way, and in close association with employers, parents and other stakeholders.

Delivering on our pledges

Pledge 3

We will support the economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the development of a modern, broad-based, flexible and high quality vocational education and training system that is responsive to labour market requirements by:

Improving vocational education and training to ensure that these activities are responsive to labour market needs, well integrated with the primary, general secondary and higher education systems and based on the principles of life-long-learning.

Rationalise the vocational education and training system into broad occupational categories in order to raise the quality and reduce costs.

Identify high-priority areas for rationalisation of occupations (February 2003).

Develop and test a pilot framework model for rationalisation and modernisation of one economic sector (April 2004) and rationalise and modernise six to eight occupational families (April 2006).

Develop broad, modern, flexible curricula that are consistent with EU standards.

Ensure that curricula are adjustable to changes in the labour market and responsive to the social and individual needs of youth and adults.

Develop and implement vocational education training curricula for at least six new occupations (September 2004).

Establish a vocational education and training standards and assessment department within the existing Standard and Assessment Agency (2006).

Establish a labour market information system.

Strengthen specialised post-secondary, labour-market-orientated training for adults and youth, including unemployed and displaced persons.

Develop a system where the possibility exists for both vertical and horizontal mobility within the educational structure (April 2006).

Ensuring teaching of high quality in vocational education and training institutions in BiH.

On an urgent basis, establish a system for initial and in-service training of teachers through both mentor training programmes and the teacher training institutions, and ensure that teachers within vocational education and training institutions have access to high quality training and retraining.

Include support for the professional, methodological and personal development of teachers within their training and retraining.

Establish a group of mentors trained in the new curriculum and teaching methodology in order to provide concrete support and advice to teachers (May 2003).

Systematically train teachers and managers in the new curriculum and teaching methodology.

Ensuring that educational and training schools are managed in a modern, democratic and inclusive way, and in close association with employers, parents and other stakeholders.

Devolve responsibility for schools, allowing school directors and teachers more flexibility to innovate in both the curriculum and the management of the school (2004).

Revise the composition of school boards and ensure the representation of social partners (2004).

Establish tripartite advisory councils (employers/trade unions/government officials) through legislation, in order to ensure links between schools and the labour market (2004).

Create a legal and financial framework to encourage employers to provide work practice (February 2004).

Create a legal and financial framework that will enable schools to engage in commercial activities (2004).

Our pledges on education

Pledge 4

We will raise the quality of higher education and research in BiH, significantly increase the number of people with access to higher education, and ensure the full participation of the universities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European Higher Education Area, by:

Giving universities autonomy in decision-making and ensuring accountability to their stakeholders, for the quality of their teaching; the welfare of their students; the standard of their research; the professional development of their staff and the cost-effectiveness of their administrative and management operations.

Improving the quality of university-level teaching and learning, with a view to achieving standards consistent with practices elsewhere in Europe.

Fostering the mobility of students and academics within BiH and abroad.

Promoting research that will improve the academic process and support overall social and economic development.

Delivering on our pledges

Pledge 4

We will raise the quality of higher education and research in BiH, significantly increase the number of people with access to higher education, and ensure the full participation of the universities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European Higher Education Area, by:

Giving universities autonomy in decision-making and ensuring accountability to their stakeholders for the quality of their teaching; the welfare of their students; the standard of their research; the professional development of their staff and cost-effectiveness of their administrative and management operations.

Integrate universities through attributing legal status solely to the university as a whole, including the faculties and other academic units within that legal person (July 2004).

Give overall responsibility for the management of the entire university budget to the central decision-making body of that university (July 2004).

Professionalise the administration of universities and improve their management and governance capacity.

Provide for the institutional participation of students, academic and non-academic staff in internal decision-making processes (July 2004).

Support universities in developing strategic plans adapted to new higher education legislation.

Improving the quality of university-level teaching and learning, with a view to achieving standards consistent with practices elsewhere in Europe.

Support the universities in undertaking and implementing the following reforms, and establish (December 2003) a reporting system on the implementation of these objectives:

Reform curricula, teaching and learning in ways that promote active participation, critical analysis, innovation and adaptability, using modes and methodologies including distance learning.

Attract more adult learners and promote lifelong learning by strengthening the labour-market relevance of curricula, updating or reorienting professional qualifications, placing a greater emphasis on practice and application, developing courses of shorter duration, and offering more opportunities for part-time study.

Increase the proportion of students successfully completing their studies within the intended time-scale.

Strengthen infrastructures at universities, in particular accommodation and services for out-of-town students.

Establish public and transparent mechanisms for quality assurance, including a procedure for the periodic external evaluation of universities (2004).

Fostering the mobility of students and academics within BiH and abroad.

Support the universities in the following reforms, including the signing of the Bologna Declaration (September 2003), and signing and ratifying the Lisbon Convention (by April 2004) -- the latter in line with BiH's accession commitments to the Council of Europe -- and establishing a reporting system on the implementation of these objectives (December 2003).

Establish a system of equivalencies for the academic awards conferred by BiH universities, consistent with practice elsewhere in Europe.

Finalise the introduction of an explanatory transcript to accompany diplomas (the now standard "Diploma Supplement") at all universities (July 2003).

Accelerate the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System in order to complete the process for the majority of academic programs (July 2004).

Introduce procedures for the admission, assessment and certification of students that are open, transparent and accountable (July 2004).

Ensure that entrance to universities is regulated by a secondary school leaving certificate (such as the now standard "matura" examination or an equivalent) affording recognition through the Lisbon Convention (July 2006).

Promoting research that will improve the academic process and support social and economic development.

Strengthen scientific and research activities by allocating at least 2% of public budgets to research, developing new legislation for scientific research, and ensuring tax benefits for scientific institutions and individuals conducting scientific research (end of 2003).

Improve the quality of learning and teaching at universities and their contribution to cultural, economic and social development, by strengthening the scientific and research activities of the students and academic staff through competitive access to the above funding, and by allocating competitive grants specifically for research projects within the new funding system for higher education (end of 2004).

Note: The successful implementation of all of the above strategic goals is contingent upon the early adoption and implementation of new legislation, regulations and funding mechanisms for higher education at all levels, based upon best European practice.

Our pledges on education

Pledge 5

We will ensure the transparent, equitable, cost-effective and financially sustainable investment of public resources, and implement education legislation at all levels that is based on European standards and norms and grounded in international human rights conventions, by:

Improving the cost-effectiveness of spending and the efficiency of budget allocations to and within the education system, and ensuring equity of public financing in education across regions and between levels of income.

Improving the management of public expenditure throughout the budgetary cycle and developing alternative financing mechanisms and sources of service delivery.

Implementing a state-level law on education in primary and secondary schools, as prescribed in the Council of Europe post-accession commitments, and implementing the human rights and educational principles embedded in this by adopting laws in the Entities and Cantons that are consistent with it.

Implementing contemporary legislation for both higher education and vocational education and training that is consistent with the highest European standards of equity and governance and in keeping with the priority needs of the country.

Implementing modern legislation for pre-school education, and considering the need for development of contemporary legislation for adult education and appropriate legislation and instruments to support lifelong learning.

Delivering on our pledges

Pledge 5

Finance, management and legislative reform underpin the quality of education and its systematic reform.

We will ensure the transparent, equitable, cost-effective and financially sustainable investment of public resources, and implement education legislation at all levels that is based on European standards and norms and grounded in international human rights conventions, by:

Improving the cost-effectiveness of spending and the efficiency of budget allocations to and within the educational system, and ensuring equity of public financing in education across regions and between levels of income.

Clarify the legislation/regulations governing the assignment of public revenue generation and expenditure responsibilities across various levels of government throughout the education sector in order to achieve the cost-effective and equitable delivery of educational services (2003-2004).

Establish on the entity and/or state level a student-based financing system for tertiary education that will serve to reduce fragmentation, promote efficient system-wide resource allocation, and facilitate mobility throughout BiH (2003-2004).

Reinvest efficiency gains in the education sector by increasing the share of spending for operations, maintenance and teaching materials, while at the same time, establishing incentives for teachers by offering professional development opportunities and revising teacher salaries as the number of positions in the sector is reduced over time.

Develop entity-level education equalisation funds to ensure equitable financing for all levels of education across sub-entity levels of government (cantons in FBiH and municipalities in RS) in order to correct financial imbalances and promote nationally uniform standards and norms.

Improving the management of public expenditure throughout the budgetary cycle and developing alternative financing mechanisms and sources of service delivery.

Establish financially sustainable budget allocations based on per pupil/student funding methods for all education levels (primary, secondary, tertiary) that promote a more efficient use of human resources (teachers and non-teaching staff), school facilities and material support (2003-2004).

Promote the public accountability of spending by ensuring the transparency of budget allocations to academic institutions and schools, as well as revenues raised outside the public budget by these institutions (2003-2004).

Develop tools for multi-year operational planning at the level of schools and training institutions, and for medium-term strategic budgeting at the central level (2003).

Improve the execution of the budget in the education sector, in line with the overall public expenditure reform program (financial/cash management, public procurement, reporting, auditing), and improve the balance between budgeted allocations and actual spending.

Develop a plan to increase private and corporate contributions to higher and post-secondary education, and increase corporate contributions to secondary education.

Establish fair and transparent student loan and means-tested scholarship programs in tertiary education to ensure affordable cost sharing by beneficiaries of university education (2003).

Implementing a state-level law on education in primary and secondary schools, as prescribed in the Council of Europe post-accession commitments, and implementing the human rights and educational principles embedded in this law by adopting laws in the Entities and Cantons that are consistent with it.

Submit a draft state-level law on education in primary and secondary schools to the State Parliament no later than 15 January 2003, with a view to its adoption no later than 24 April 2003 and implementation by mid-2003.

Establish a high-level expert working group, bringing together the OSCE, Council of Europe and OHR in co-ordination with the Ministries of Education at all levels of competence, to begin developing a common core curriculum (from 1 December 2002), completing work no later than 15 July 2003.

Establish an effective instrument to ensure that the common core curriculum and its implied European human rights standards, as prescribed by the state-level law on education in primary and secondary schools, are implemented throughout BiH (September 2003 at the latest).

Develop, adopt and implement laws in the Entities and Cantons that are consistent with the human rights and education principles and standards embedded in the state-level law (at least two months before the beginning of the school year (2004 - 2005)).

Implementing contemporary legislation for both higher education and vocational and technical education that is consistent with the highest European standards of quality, equity and governance and in keeping with the priority needs of the country.

Establish higher education legislation at the state and entity levels based upon the standards, instruments and criteria required for the implementation of the Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Convention (mid-2004).

Obtain agreement of the cantonal authorities in the Federation to defer their powers in the area of higher education to the entity level, in accordance with the Constitution of the Federation of BiH, to achieve overall consistency in legislation for higher education.

Develop, adopt and implement contemporary legislation for vocational education and training in keeping with the priority needs of the country and to prepare the

schools to meet European labour market standards and foster the social and economic development of BiH (March 2004).

Implement modern legislation for pre-school education, and consider the development of contemporary legislation and instruments for adult education and lifelong learning.

Develop, adopt and implement contemporary legislation for pre-school education in order to lay the groundwork for a productive and rewarding life for the children of BiH (mid-2005).

Establish a high-level expert working group tasked to consider contemporary legislation for adult education, as well as appropriate legislation and instruments to support a domestic life-long learning capacity in BiH, based on the terms of the UNESCO's Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, July 1997, and develop policy and legislation recommendations (end of 2003).