



**Regional Preparatory Workshop on Inclusive Education
Eastern and Southeastern Europe
in preparation for the
48th Session of the International Conference on Education**

Organized by

IBE-UNESCO
in partnership with the Center Education 2000+ (Bucharest, Romania)

within the IBE-UNESCO Programme
“Community of Practice (CoP) in Curriculum Development”

Sinaia, Romania, 14-16 June 2007

GENERAL INFORMATION

The IBE-UNESCO, within the programme “Community of Practice (COP) in Curriculum Development”, in partnership with the Center Education 2000+ is organizing the Regional Preparatory Workshop on Inclusive Education – Eastern and Southeastern Europe in preparation for the 48th Session of the International Conference on Education (ICE).

1. Objectives

- i) to share visions, strategies and practices on inclusive education at the regional and national level;
- ii) to identify common challenges related to inclusive education;
- iii) to provide structured technical inputs from a regional perspective for the debates of the 48th session of ICE.

2. Provisional Agenda

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| Session 1: | General Introduction of the Workshop |
| Session 2, 3 & 4: | Presentation of Country Reports |
| Session 5: | Sharing Good Practices and Experiences |
| Session 6, 7, 8 & 9: | Discussion of the four Sub-themes of the 48 th ICE |
| Session 10 & 11: | Shaping a Regional Roadmap |

3. Expected Outcomes

- i) a common understanding of the Inclusive Education concept is developed
- ii) based on discussions on visions, strategies and practices; key issues and challenges are clearly identified and
- iii) a regional “Road Map” is formulated to feed into the next preparatory steps for ICE

4. Overall Goal

To initiate a participatory, consultative process to highlight key issues and challenges in Inclusive Education, to be presented at the 48th session of ICE.

5. Date and venue

14-16 June 2007, Sinaia, Romania

6. Participants

- National Experts on Inclusive Education approaches from Europe
- International Organizations and Foundations
- Representatives of NGOs, universities, programs and Ministries

- UNESCO-CEPES
- Organizers: IBE-UNESCO and Center Education 2000+

7. Schedule of the Meeting

Please see attached programme

8. Working Language

English

9. Contacts

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10. Information about the organizers

The organization of the Regional Preparatory Workshop – Eastern and South-eastern Europe will be carried out by the IBE in partnership with the Center Education 2000+.

10.1 The IBE Capacity Building Programme has been developing the global Community of Practice in Curriculum Development (COP) since 2005. The COP was conceived as an interactive entity, providing an open space to generate collective thinking and action on curriculum issues at intra and inter-regional levels as well as national level. Since its establishment, it has been working actively on several issues, such as: reform and adaptation of curriculum change to a broader vision of basic education, South-South cooperation in curriculum research and development, competence-based approaches in curriculum design, reduction of inequalities through curriculum action, sustainable implementation, follow-up and evaluation of curriculum change as well as its links with school leadership and teachers' training and professional development.

One relevant asset of the Community of Practice is its dynamic role in getting curriculum professionals together, mainly through:

- (i) Regional seminars, workshops and fora aimed at facilitating policy dialogue and exchanging experiences, in collaboration with Focal Points localized at the five UNESCO regions. The regional Focal Points are placed within Ministries,

Universities, NGOS and UNESCO Regional Offices led by high-level curriculum specialists and developers.

- (ii) Inter-regional comparative research on curriculum change processes in basic education.
- (iii) The elaboration and dissemination of regional and national curriculum resources aimed at improving the quality of educational change.
- (iv) Sharing of information, research and documentation on a permanent basis.

10.2 The Center Education 2000+ is the COP Focal Point in South-East Europe and Central Asia. It is an independent think tank in the domain of educational policy, consultancy and services. The Center, one of the sector's key players in Romania, currently implements educational programmes and offers technical assistance for educational change in Romania and abroad. The Center is a member of the Education Policy Centers Network funded by the Open Society Education Support Programs. Its areas of interest and expertise are:

- (i) educational policies: consultancy and specialized services for analyzing, developing and implementing educational policies;
- (ii) institutional capacity building: consultancy for school development and school improvement processes, school and community issues, parental involvement, improving education in disadvantaged groups and areas and in multicultural/intercultural settings, improving education for Roma communities;
- (iii) human resource development in education: training of trainers and teacher training for Romanian and foreign experts in different areas;
- (iv) European and global integration processes through education.

In collaboration with the IBE and other partners, the Center Education 2000+ recently published *Current and Future Challenges in Curriculum Development: Policies, Practices and Networking for Change* (Bucharest: Education 2000+ Publishing, Humanitas Educational, 2006). The publication will be presented and discussed during the Regional Preparatory Workshop – Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

Background Note

Regional Preparatory Workshop on Inclusive Education Eastern and Southeastern Europe

I. Theme of the 48th Session of the International Conference on Education (ICE)

The International Conference on Education (ICE) is a major international forum for educational policy dialogue among Ministers of Education and other stakeholders (researchers, practitioners, representatives of intergovernmental organizations and civil society). It is organized by the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the UNESCO institute specialized in assisting Member States in Curriculum Development to achieve quality Education For All. The IBE Council, composed of 28 UNESCO Member States, has proposed in January 2007 that the 48th session of the ICE should focus on the theme “**Inclusive Education: the Way of the Future**”, to be tentatively held in Geneva in November 2008. UNESCO¹ defines inclusion “**as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education**”. “**It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision, which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children**”. Based on this definition as a reference framework, four sub-themes have been proposed (see Annex 1) to structure the discussions:

- (i) Inclusive Education: Approaches, Scope and Content: “to broaden the understanding of the theory and the practice of inclusive education”;
- (ii) Inclusive Education: Public Policies: “to demonstrate the role of governments in the development and the implementation of policies on inclusive education”;
- (iii) Inclusive Education: Systems, Links and Transitions: “to create education systems which offer opportunities for life-long learning”; and
- (iv) Inclusive Education: Learners and Teachers: “to foster a learning environment where teachers are equipped to meet the learners’ diverse expectations and needs”.

The 48th session of ICE should play a pivotal role in orienting and clarifying the debate on the concept of Inclusive Education, its implication and impact. It will be based on evidence-informed policies.

II. On the Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is an evolving concept that informs the processes of educational reform in both developing and developed regions. Traditionally, the concept of inclusive education has been limited to the gradual integration process of the group of students with special needs such as, and predominantly, physically and/or mentally handicapped students into mainstream

¹ UNESCO. 2005. *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All*. Paris: UNESCO.

schools. The approaches and the responses initially have been essentially remedial, mainly by setting up differentiated structures and special schools, which ultimately contributed to further segregation and isolation.

The objectives and implications of inclusive education have however shifted significantly, since the 1990's, primarily due to the recognition that integration models are not well fitted to respond to the diversities of learners' expectations and needs. Indeed, different forms of manifested exclusion seem to question the capacity of the educational systems to provide effective learning opportunities for all. Exclusion can also come from within the mainstream educational system. It has been noted that repetition, over-age and dropping out intermingle, so as to perpetuate exclusion – empirical evidence clearly indicates that a student who repeats the first school years has a strong probability of dropping out in secondary education –, based many times on pervasive and regressive institutional and pedagogical practices. On the other hand, exclusion, as it was said in the 2004 International Conference on Education², implies the absence of professional and social competencies as well as the impossibility of acceding to essential knowledge, so as to achieve an autonomous and responsible citizenship.

How can the circuit of exclusion that occurs in the first years of primary school be broken? How can the relationship between the increasing access to secondary education and the subsisting elitist model that penalizes the deprived be addressed? How much do we respect, tolerate and empower diversity in school and children as a way of attaining more inclusion? What are the explicit and implicit contents that feed social and pedagogical exclusion? What is the relationship between a prescriptive curriculum and the processes of exclusion? Do low expectations of principals and teachers impact upon the learning outcomes of students?

The concept of inclusion has gradually evolved towards the idea that all kids be exposed to similar teaching and learning styles (mainstream schools) regardless of their cultural and social backgrounds as well of their differences of abilities. The focus is on integration and on providing equal formal access to the same type of education.

Forging conditions and opportunities for all is the laying foundation of a democratic concept of quality education, which is clearly embedded in the UNESCO statement that “Education for All can't be achieved without improving quality”³. Inclusive Education could be one core strategy in addressing the challenges of **Education For All** (EFA)⁴ goals. Some of them indicate the need for:

- (i) assuming in a more decisive way a human-rights based approach, which implies exercising and enjoying the right to education;
- (ii) better visualizing education as a public good based on an irreplaceable governmental mission and responsibility as well as its commitment to providing appropriate funds, conditions and opportunities; and

² UNESCO. 2004. *Final report: International Conference on Education. 47th session*. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO. Annex XVI, pages 8-14.

³ UNESCO. 2004. *EFA Global Monitoring Report. The Quality Imperative*. Paris: UNESCO.

⁴ The six EFA goals refer to the expansion of early childhood care and education, to the provision of free and compulsory primary education for all, to the promotion of learning and life skills for young people and adults, to the increase of adult literacy by 50 per cent, to the achievement of gender parity by 2005 and gender equality by 2015, and to the improvement of the quality of education. See portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php.

- (iii) developing a comprehensive agenda of educational change and policy reform tied to promoting and facilitating the right to access in order to obtain a high quality, equitable education; which should not be driven by the demands and the corporate interests of the suppliers.

From a societal perspective, inclusive education is clearly linked to the discussion around the type of society and well-being as well as the quality of democracy to be pursued (a reciprocal relationship between education and society). It is based on the consideration of education as a central social policy, which lays the foundations for an equitable development of the society under a long-term perspective.

Under this broadened perspective, some central issues on inclusive education are related to:

- the education of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties;
- the struggles against poverty, marginalization, gender based segregation and HIV and AIDS related exclusion;
- the consideration of cultural diversity and multiculturalism as both a right and a learning context;
- the protection of the rights of minorities, migrants and aboriginal populations;
- the effects of natural disasters and conflicts on populations; and
- the existing digital divide among groups;

From a purely educational perspective, an inclusive strategy implies the careful consideration of the specificity and uniqueness of each child so as to provide him/her with a real educational opportunity during his/her life. It is about the ways in which teachers and students interact and generate mutual empathy and nearness, understand and respect their diversities and jointly create suitable conditions for achieving relevant learning opportunities for all. Cognitive education plays a key role in achieving inclusive education, as it tends to make children aware of their own cognitive functions, which can help them to understand more and learn better.

The transformation of education to inclusive education⁵ demands collective thinking and action on the concept of social justice, on the beliefs around the learning potential of each student, on the conceptual frameworks that sustain good practices of teaching and learning and on endorsing a comprehensive vision of curriculum that encompasses processes and outcomes.

In overall terms, Inclusive Education implies four key elements:

- (i) it is essentially a process of looking for the most appropriate ways of responding to diversity as well as learning how to learn from the differences;
- (ii) it is linked to stimulating, through multiple strategies, the creativity and the problem solving capacity of students;
- (iii) it comprises the right of the child to attend school, to express his/her opinion, to have quality learning experiences and to attain valuable learning outcomes without regard of their natural, social, cultural and ethnic characteristics;

⁵ British Educational Research Journal. 2005. *Thematic Review. Inclusive education: discourse and action*. Vol. 31, No. 2, April 2005, pp. 269-275

- (iv) it implies the moral responsibility of prioritizing those students who are at risk of being marginalized and excluded from the school, and of obtaining low learning outcomes; and
- (v) The debate on inclusive education should be based on existing international obligations like: ...

III. Objectives

In order to enrich the debates that will take place during the 48th session of the ICE, the IBE plans to carry out several activities mostly focused on generating opportunities for an in-depth, open and constructive discussion around Inclusive Education. Well-known experts and institutions coming from the Ministries, Universities, international organizations, foundations, NGOs and civil society in general should be involved in the process. The IBE will carry out regional preparatory workshops in the different UNESCO regions⁶ as a way of sharing visions, strategies, experiences and good practices. This will be followed by a worldwide e-forum where the regional inputs can be discussed, and the contents and strategies of a “roadmap” to achieve Inclusive Education will be formulated.

This process of collective thinking, solidly based on a vast geographical coverage linked to the Community of Practice in Curriculum Development (at the moment 674 members from 80 countries covering the five UNESCO regions), should substantially feed into the elaboration of the ICE reference document as well as the ICE workshop’s discussions.

The objectives of the Regional Preparatory Workshops are:

- (i) to share visions, strategies and practices on inclusive education at regional and national level;
- (ii) to identify common challenges related to inclusive education; and
- (iii) to provide structured technical inputs from a regional perspective to the 48th session of ICE.

IV. The Project Process

The Regional Preparatory Workshop – Eastern and Southeastern Europe, organized by the IBE in partnership with the Center Education 2000+, will discuss a series of questions around inclusive education within a selected group of 10 to 15 high-level educators, curriculum specialists in Inclusive Education and other stakeholders.

The participants are expected to prepare a short country/sub-region report, to be submitted to the organizers 30 days before the Regional Preparatory Workshop’s date, elaborating on the following questions, linked to the ICE 2008 sub-themes:

- (i) Sub-theme 1. Inclusive Education: Approaches, Scope and Content
What are the critical aspects of the conceptualization and the definition of inclusive education in your country and/or sub-region? How has the concept

⁶ There are five UNESCO regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Gulf Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and North America.

evolved over the last ten years? What are the groups to focus on? What are the current main sources of exclusion?

- (ii) Sub-theme 2. Inclusive Education: Public Policies
What is the role of inclusive education in the curriculum reform and educational agenda of your country and/or sub-region? Can you provide evidence about the significance of its role? Is it a government priority with regard to the construction of a public agenda, to carry out initiatives under a long-term perspective and allocate resources for their adequate development?
- (iii) Sub-theme 3. Inclusive Education: Systems, Links and Transitions
How is the concept of inclusive education integrated in the curriculum structure of basic education? Is this integration subject to a coherent transition from primary to secondary education? Is inclusive education conceived as a way of democratizing opportunities for life-long learning? Is the system flexible enough to allow accessing education and developing life-long learning?
- (iv) Sub-theme 4. Inclusive Education: Learners and Teachers
Do on-going processes of curriculum change foster learning environments that can facilitate inclusion at the school and classroom levels? How can the learning processes be activated with children of very different abilities? How and to what extent are teachers equipped with the required competencies to attend the growing diversity of learners' expectations and needs? What outcomes are already achieved in these areas in your country/sub-region?

The Regional Preparatory Workshop will last three days:

- (i) Country/sub-regional reports will be presented and some keynote speeches will enrich the discussions.
- (ii) Each of the four sets of questions will be discussed and common issues as well as good practices will be identified.
- (iii) The participants will formulate regional inputs leading to a "roadmap" on Inclusive Education.

The Report of the Regional Preparatory Workshop will be jointly prepared by the IBE and the Center Education 2000+, and disseminated.

A series of similar Regional Preparatory Workshops are planned over the period June 2007 – March 2008 in different geographical regions according to the following calendar

- i) Eastern and Southeastern Europe: Sinaia, Romania (13-16 June 2007)
- ii) East Africa: Nairobi, Kenya (25-27 July 2007)
- iii) Arab Gulf States: Kuwait City, Kuwait (27-28 August 2007)
- iv) Latin America: Victoria, Argentina (11-14 September 2007)
- v) Europe and West Asia: Minsk, Belarus (29-31 October 2007)
- vi) Asia: Beijing, China (22-23 November 2007)
- vii) The Caribbean: Kingston, Jamaica (5-7 December 2007)
- viii) Eastern Europe: Riga, Latvia (February 2008)

- ix) Northern Europe: Finland (March 2008)
- x) Sub-Saharan Africa: Dakar, Senegal (tentative)

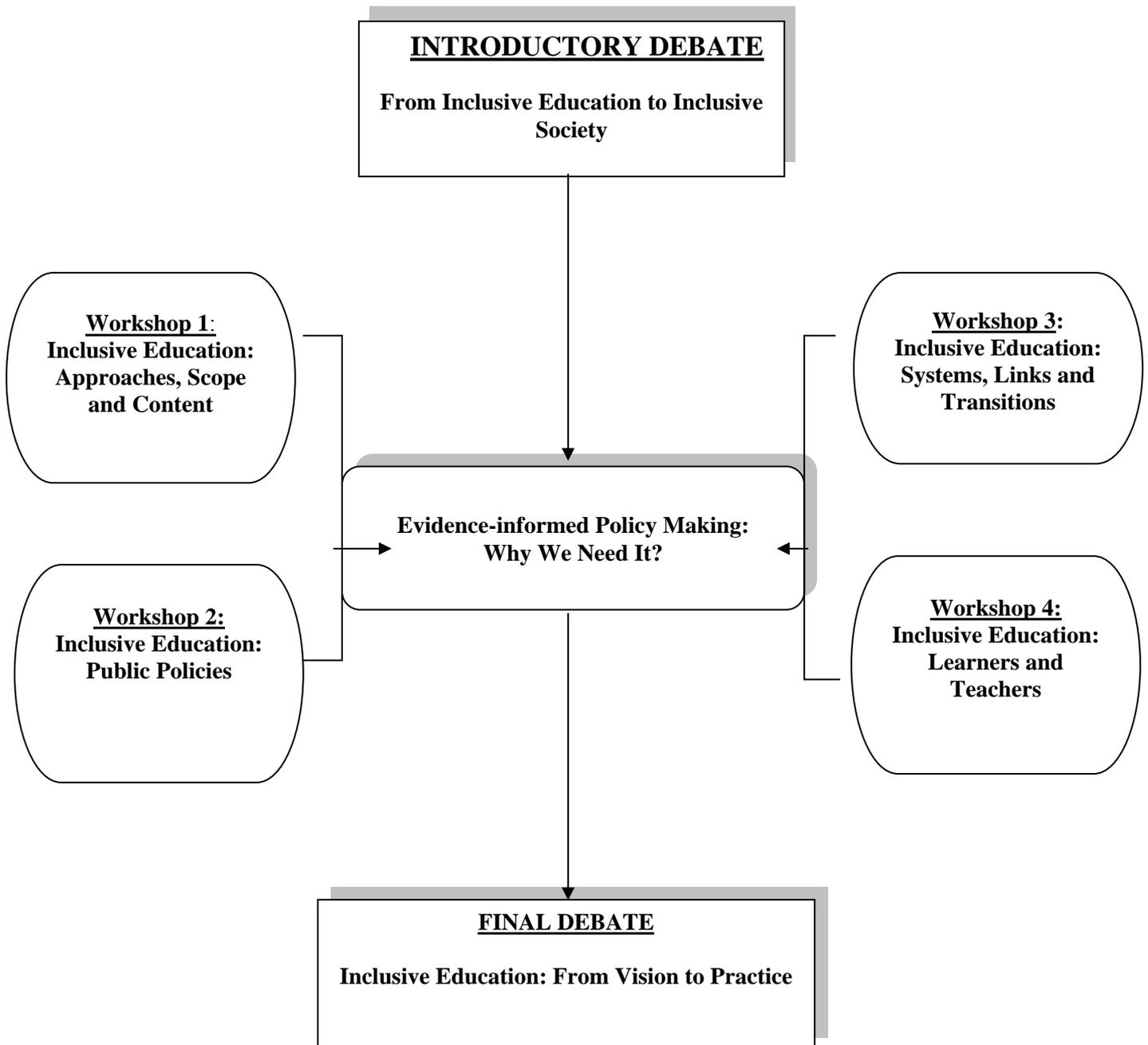
The contributions of all the Regional Preparatory Workshops will feed into the preparations of the concept papers as well as in the discussions which will take place during sub-theme sessions of the 48th session of the International Conference on Education.

Annex 1

48th SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION

(Tentative: November 2008)

“INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE”



Regional Preparatory Workshop on Inclusive Education
Eastern and Southeastern Europe
in preparation for the
48th Session of the International Conference on Education
Sinaia, Romania - 14-16 June, 2007

Agenda

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

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| 15:00 | Arrival of participants |
| 18:00 | Registration of participants |

Thursday, June 14, 2007

09:00 – 10:30 **Session 1 – Welcome Addresses and General Introduction**

- Welcome address by Mr. Alexandru Crisan, Executive President, Centre Education 2000+ (CEDU)
- Welcome address by Ms. Costanza Farina, Secretary of the IBE Council, and brief introduction of mandate and activities of the International Bureau of Education (IBE)
- Welcome address by Ms. Melanie Seto, Programme Specialist, UNESCO European Center for Higher Education (CEPES)
- Brief introduction of the Centre Education 2000+ by Mr. Alexandru Crisan
- Presentation of the objectives of the Regional Preparatory Workshop – Eastern and Southeastern Europe by Renato Opertti, Programme Specialist, Coordinator Capacity Building, IBE
- Introduction of participants

Keynote speaker: Ms. Ritva Järvinen, Planning Specialist, Finnish National Board of Education, Finland

Moderator: Mr. Alexandru Crisan, Executive President, Centre Education 2000+

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 13:00 **Session 2 – Country reports (3)**

- Mr. Virxhil Nano, Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, Albania
- Ms. Daria Duilovic, Senior Education Advisor, Office of the High Representative in BiH, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ms. Jasna Kudek Mirošević, Executive Staff Consultant, Specialist for Children with Special Needs, Primary School Dragutin Tadijanović, Croatia

Open Discussion

Moderator: Mr. Renato Operti, Programme Specialist, Coordinator Capacity Building, IBE

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 16:00 **Session 3 – Continuation of Country reports (3)**

- Ms. Tatia Pachkoria, Inclusive Education Coordinator, National Curriculum and Assessment Centre, Ministry of Education and Science, Georgia
- Ms. Valentina Chicu, Superior Lecturer, State University of Moldova, Republic of Moldova
- Ms. Tamara Milic, Coordinator for Special Needs Education, Ministry of Education and Science, Montenegro

Open Discussion

Moderator: Ms. Lili Ji, Assistant Programme Specialist, Capacity Building, IBE

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee break

16:30 – 18:30 **Session 4 – Continuation of Country reports (3)**

- Ms. Ecaterina Vrasmas, Professor, University of Bucharest and President, Association RENINCO, Romania
- or Mr. Traian Vrasmas, Associate Professor, University OVIDIUS of Constanta and National Projects Coordinator, Association RENINCO, Romania
- Ms. Darinka Radivojevic, Consultant for Inclusive Education, Fund for an Open Society, Serbia
- Ms. Iryna Ivaniuk, Consultant of Monitoring and Evaluation, Education Programs Development Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science, Ukraine

Open Discussion

Moderator: Mr. Alexandru Crisan, Executive President, Centre Education 2000+

Friday, June 15, 2007

09:00 – 10:30 **Session 5 – Sharing Good Practices and Experiences on Inclusive Education**

Experts:

- Mr. Gerhard Kowar, Consultant, Directorate for Education/NME, OECD
- Ms. Gordana Miljevic, Senior Program Manager, Education Support Program, Open Society Institute
- Ms. Raluca Bunea, Program Officer, Mental Health Initiative, Open Society Institute
- Ms. Letitia Baba, Director, The Rehabilitation Foundation "Speranta", Romania

Moderator: Ms. Costanza Farina, Secretary of the IBE Council

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

- 11:00 – 12:30 **Session 6 – Discussion on the 48th ICE Sub-theme I “Inclusive Education: Approaches, Scope and Content”**
- Moderator: Mr. Renato Opertti, Programme Specialist, Coordinator Capacity Building, IBE
- 12:30 – 14:30 Lunch break
- 14:30 – 16:00 **Session 7 – Discussion of the 48th ICE Sub-theme II “Inclusive Education: Public Policies”**
- Moderator: Mr. Renato Opertti, Programme Specialist, IBE
- 16:00 – 16:30 Coffee break
- 16:30 – 18:00 **Session 8 – Discussion of the 48th ICE Sub-theme III “Inclusive Education: Systems, Links and Transitions”**
- Moderators: Mr. Alexandru Crisan, Executive President, Centre Education 2000+

Saturday, June 16, 2007

- 09:00 – 10:30 **Session 9 – Discussion of the 48th ICE Sub-theme IV “Inclusive Education: Learners and Teachers”**
- Moderator: Mr. Alexandru Crisan, Executive President, Centre Education 2000+
- 10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:00 – 12:00 **Session 10 – Shaping a Regional “Roadmap” on Inclusive Education**
- Moderators:
Mr. Renato Opertti, Programme Specialist, Coordinator Capacity Building, IBE
Mr. Alexandru Crisan, Executive President, Centre Education 2000+
- 12:00 – 13:00 **Session 11 – Wrap-up and Concluding Remarks**
- Moderators:
Mr. Renato Opertti, Programme Specialist, Coordinator Capacity Building, IBE
Mr. Alexandru Crisan, Executive President, Centre Education 2000+
- 13:30 Lunch break and open afternoon

Sunday, June 17, 2007

- 10:00 Departure of participants

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48th Session of the International Conference on Education

Organized by

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14-16 June, Sinaia, Romania

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