

**A BRIEF TOUR THROUGH THE EDUCATION
SYSTEM REFORM IN THE
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

January 2001 – June 2003 and beyond

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0. INTRODUCTION

The comprehensive, ongoing education system reform in the Republic of Serbia, led by the Ministry of Education and Sports is entering its third year. Given the participatory, integrative, in-depth, need-driven, future-oriented and long-term sustainability of the approach, the education reform process is an extremely complex endeavour consisting of a vast range of interlinking tasks and involving increasing numbers of partners and supporters, both locally and internationally. The purpose of this paper is to guide the readers through the reform (chronologically and conceptually), highlighting its main points, benchmarks, participants and partners.

1. REFORM TIMELINE

October, 2000. – Constitution of a new democratic government of the Republic of Serbia that identified education as a priority area in its reform process.

February, 2001. The new Ministry of Education and Sport started by combining structures from three Ministries (Education, Higher Education and Sports). The current structure of the Ministry can be seen at www.mps.sr.gov.yu. Its first and most important task was to develop the reform agenda for the

highly-centralised, ruined, outdated, stagnating education system with

- 1,021,428 pupils age 7-18
- 120 000 employees (71 000 teaching staff and expert associates)
- 3,607 primary (8-years) schools and 475 secondary schools (3 and 4 years)

and address the issues resulting from a decade of neglect, such as

- An inefficient and bureaucratic school system, strongly centralised, with inappropriate management tools and unclear roles and responsibilities
- Poor qualifications and lack of motivation amongst teachers, resulting from insufficient training and remuneration. Outdated or nonexistent documentation and information and almost no international exchange (resulting in poor knowledge of international standards and lack of information about who is who)
- Inadequate curricula and teaching material, which does not reflect the demand of the economy and society, and is detached from required competencies
- Poor and dilapidated infrastructure as a consequence of almost non-existent financial resources.¹

Having in mind the extremely bad economic situation of the country on one hand and the financial component of the reforms on another, the Government and the Ministry of Education and Sports approached the international community to secure the funds needed. Largely because of the international assistance, the reform is Happening.

¹ The comprehensive analyses and reviews of the Serbian education system were done by UNICEF (www.unicef.org) OECD (www.see-educoop.net) and World Bank (www.worldbank.org)

Spring, 2001 – onwards – Intensive capacity building adjusted to the needs of the reform preparation and implementation process.

July, 2001. The first conference on education reform “Perspectives of Education in Serbia – Education Reform: Objectives and Strategies”, with about 500 participants was held in Belgrade. It was supported by Council of Europe (CoE), Kulturkontakt, Austria, Stability Pact Task Force Education and Youth (SP – TF E&Y), Fund for an Open Society (FoS-YU), OECD, UNICEF, Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC). The aims of the education reform, endorsed by the Government, were presented:

- to reorganise the schooling system in accordance with the need to efficiently contribute to the economic revival of the country;
- to modernise or reorganise the schooling system so that it substantially contributes to the democratic development of the country;
- to modernise or reorganise the schooling system so that it substantially contributes to the future European integration of the country,

Local expert groups were formed for developing the strategies for the first wave of Education Reform addressing global areas of decentralization, democratization, quality assurance, teacher professional development and specific areas of vocational education and training, preschool and higher education and youth. The work of the expert groups was supported by FOS, SDC, OSEP-SEE.

International expert input and necessary capacity building was provided with the assistance of UNICEF, UNESCO, OECD, CoE, FOS-YU, Open Society Education Programs- South East Europe (OSEP-SEE), SP– TF E&Y, European Training Foundation (ETF), World Bank (WB), CRS/Serbia and Montenegro Governments of Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, The United Kingdom, The United States of America.

Autumn, 2001 Local consultation processes around the issues of decentralization, democratization, quality assurance, teacher training and curricula were organized in 85 places throughout Serbia involving 9000 persons. The purpose was to ensure the participation of all stakeholders and to provide the base for the activities of the expert groups and the implementation of the reform steps.

January 2002 - The second conference – “From Vision to the Concrete Steps” was held in Belgrade with more than 700 participants. The White Paper “Quality Education for All – a Way Toward a Developed Society”² Reform Strategy and Action Plan were presented. It was supported by UNICEF, WB, OECD, TF – E&Y, OSEP-SEE, Kulturkontakt).

► **The vision of an education system is clear. This is the system**

- Capable of responding to both local and global social and economic needs
- That includes parents and teachers and students in the decision-making processes
- That is governed in a decentralized way and managed economically and efficiently with financing and administration which are transparent and based on real indicators
- That employs highly professional, reflexive, creative and motivated educational staff
- That is directed at learning, and standard-based, into which the perspective of lifelong learning is built, and in which teaching focuses on relevant contents,
- That promotes a culture of evaluation, self-evaluation and school development,

² The conference report and the White Paper can be seen at www.mps.sr.gov.yu

- That nurtures an atmosphere of tolerance and constructive communication,
- That is just and capable of responding to the educational needs of minorities and children with special needs, and
- That is continuously supported by suitable equipment and teaching.

The improvement of the education system and making the vision a reality is possible through coordinated, simultaneous and synergic efforts

- decentralising the system, by means of a redefinition of the role of central administration, regional and local educational authorities
- enhancing democratisation of the educational system, by means of stakeholder involvement and introduction of civic education in the curriculum and school activities
- improving the quality of education at all levels, by means of establishing quality assurance and evaluation systems (learning achievements and accreditation); by means of improving teacher education and establishing continuous professional education for teachers and related staff; by means of state-of-the-art curricula
- establishing a seamless coordination between education and economic sector with a view to achieving social and economic standards, by means of vocational education, teacher training and adult education.
- upgrading the education infrastructure and equipping of education institutions,

in other words, reinforcing the three main pillars the education system is relying on:

- decentralisation and democratisation of the system
- improving the quality of education provision: of the teaching/learning process, the educational content and of learning achievements
- upgrading the education infrastructure and equipping of education institutions.

Those pillars need to be developed simultaneously, in a coordinated manner, mutually reinforcing, and they need to be realized both on national and local level.

► **The first wave of the education reform is conceived encompassing**

- Global areas of decentralization, democratization, teacher training and professional development, education quality evaluation and
- Particular education areas: preschool, secondary vocational, higher education adult education,

► **The second reform wave was announced addressing**

- Curricular reform,
- Education of minorities, the Roma, children with special needs,
- Textbooks, school network, private schools

► **Initial donors' support for the most important reform steps has been ensured, targeted and coordinated.**

► **The start of the implementation of the first reform wave – the concrete achievements in the specific first and second wave reform areas and the next steps will be dealt with in the next chapter.**

Spring and summer, 2002 – School-based consultations processes and discussions about the reform – “Us in Reform” – continued seeking the practitioners’ views on the current reform developments and the necessary next steps, through the constructive exchange of the ideas, suggestions, problems and dilemmas of all school employees and the school board members. The “Us in Reform” talks were held in May and June 2002 in 207 schools involving 8468 participants.

September 2002, the third conference - “The First Steps and Forthcoming Challenges” was held in Belgrade having more than 1200 participants. It was the checkpoint for the first reform wave, the official entrance into the second one and announcement of the third wave.³

The conference was supported by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA, FOS-YU, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Kulturkontakt, OSEP-SEE, SP-TF and SDC.

The overall status of the reform process taking place through 3 (partly) overlapping "waves" is the following:

- the first wave, obviously encompassing the most pressing areas of reform and therefore areas, where first reform steps have already been taken: decentralisation and democratisation in education, teacher professional development, entrance examinations and quality assurance, education for democratic citizenship, secondary vocational education in a flexible system and higher education
- The second wave, holding areas, in which concepts have been developed and elaborated, are currently in the public debate; principles and goals of education; curriculum structure and education areas; structure and organisation of the education system; implementation of the curriculum; higher vocational education and training.
- the third wave, where issues are being opened and reform moves have commenced: development of strategies for minority education, education of Roma, education of children with special needs; evaluation and accreditation in higher education.

December 2002, January 2003 – The second round of “Us in Reform” consultations and discussions about the **national** curriculum framework, new roles of the school and staff in the reform process including 285 schools with 11300 participants.

February, 2003 Public presentation and debate on the national curriculum framework

March, 2003 – The government endorsed the national curriculum framework. Curriculum reform to start in the first grades of elementary schools in September 2003.

³ The conference report can be seen at www.mps.sr.gov.yu

2. CONSTRAINTS AND RISKS TO THE REFORM PROCESS

The reform agenda urgently requires immediate success stories and concrete results – a difficult undertaking, having the following constraints in mind:

- The existing political situation, though improving and consolidating is still fragile
- The lack of financial resources makes the reform process strongly dependent on the financial and contextual support of international donors and development agencies
- Action has to be taken and an organisational structure implemented without having had adequate time to build (political) coalitions and public consensus.
- Lack of adequate number of qualified MoES staff to deal with overwhelming and highly diverse tasks, ranging from the need of internal reform and staff development, to policy definition and donor coordination.
- **Human factor** – resistance to changes that can be alleviated by adequate training, regular and clear informing, different kinds of incentives.

3. THE FIRST WAVE OF THE REFORM - ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

3.1. Decentralisation and Democratisation

3.1.1. Decentralisation

In order to ensure an education system that is governed in a decentralized way and managed economically and efficiently with financing and administration of which are transparent and based on real indicators, and that includes parents, teachers and students in the decision-making processes, and nurtures the atmosphere of tolerance and constructive communication, the following steps have been, are being and will be taken to realize the following basic concept for decentralization:

Current Concept for Decentralisation

Level	National	Regional	Municipal	School
Education area				
Curriculum	Framework	Support for Implementation	Cooperation in the preparation of the school curriculum	School curriculum
Teacher prof. Development	Accreditation, Licensing	Support for the Coordination, Support	Funding	Selection Implementation
Evaluation and assessment	Assessment system, Monitoring	Coordination Support		Implementation
Quality assurance inspection	Guidelines	Implementation		Self-evaluation
Legal inspection	Second level	Coordination, Support	First level	

Information system	Development Use	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation
Funding by pupil	Formula Guidelines		Implementation	
Facilities			Ownership, Maintenance	

- New structure of the school boards is set up and regulated by the amendment to the Law on Primary and Secondary School. The board consists of nine members, three representatives of the parents, three of teaching staff and three of the local community administration.
- The new procedure for selecting the principals is introduced with the school board responsible for the selection procedure. The Minister only formally approves the selected candidate.
- The training program for school board members and principals to build their capacities for the new roles is prepared under the Decentralisation component of the Education Improvement Project funded through World Bank IDA credit proceeds World Bank supported Education Improvement Project and is expected to start in October, 2003. The partners at the implementation of this project are Marmanet and Civic Initiatives. Project coordinator is Mrs Nevena Vranes-Krompic, e-mail stramex@yubc.net
- The series of informative workshops on the education reform activities for the school principals will be organized in June 2003. Coordinators are Mrs. Nevena Vranes-Krompic e-mail stramex@yubc.net and Mrs. Biljana Stojanovic, e-mail bdabic@beotel.yu. The workshops empowering the principals to follow and participate in the curriculum, quality assurance and other school-based activities will be organized in July and August. The coordinator is Mrs. Nevena Vranes-Krompic with the support of Mrs. Snezana Klasnja.
- School development planning and School grant, as another component of the Education Improvement Project funded through WB IDA credit proceeds, is being implemented. The pilot phase that has started in February 2002 with the support of the Swiss Agency for the Development and Cooperation and KulturKontakt Education, Austria, included:
 - The selection and extensive capacity building of the school development team ("Team 26" – two members in each of 12 regional departments of MoES, four members in Belgrade, plus the coordinator and assistant),
 - Support for development of the school development programs in 40 schools, selected by open competition, through education and assistance in self evaluation, strategic planning, team work, initiative conception, making school development plan, school project proposals and their realization.
 - Evaluation of Project proposals by Evaluation board
 - Allocation of small grants to the selected schools and monitoring the realization of the school development plans
 - The main phase, supported through the School development component of the World Bank has started in November 2002 involving 70 schools (primary and general secondary) from 12 regions. From March 2003 the Team has been working with 40 old and 52 new schools.
 - In February 2003 Team 26 was included in Curricula Implementation.
 - Team has prepared the Manual "*School development planning*" which includes three modules and Application for School Project proposals.

Program coordinator is Mrs. Borislava Maksimovic, e-mail borismax@yubc.net

- Institution and capacity building at national level is taking place
 - Council for Reform is set up and functioning, having regular monthly or biweekly sessions to discuss and endorse the current reform issues. More information on the structure and the tasks of the Council can be obtained from Ms Nada Vukovic, e-mail nada.vukovic@mps.sr.gov.yu and Council Secretary, Ms Tatjana Rajkovic, e-mail tatjana.rajkovic@mps.sr.gov.yu.
 - NAFOS (National Forum for Education for All) is set up in the framework of UNESCO Education for All initiative. The details on its work can be obtained from Ms Natalija Konjevic, natalija.konjevic@mps.sr.gov.yu
 - Education development centers are being established, namely
 - Center for Evaluation and Assessment, the third component of the Education Improvement Project funded through WB IDA credit proceeds. A Dutch consultant firm ETS Europe (with a local partner Institute for Psychology, Belgrade) was contracted to provide consulting services for support and training in standard-based assessment. The component coordinator is Dr. Aleksandar Baucal, e-mail: abaucal@eunet.yu,
 - Center for Professional Development of Teachers, supported by SDC and headed by Mrs. Snezana Klasnja, snezana.klasnja@mps.sr.gov.yu
 - Center for Vocational Education and Training supported by GTZ. Coordinator of this project is Mrs. Iskra Maksimovic. E-mail: mmaks@eunet.yu
 - Establishing of a unique Education Information System is a task of a third project component funded through WB IDA credit proceeds. A German consultant firm GOPA (with regional and local partners) was contracted to develop software and establish the system. The system is to be fully operational by spring 2005 and will incorporate the following:
 - Pupils data base (name, age, school, class, results, achievements)
 - School personnel database including teachers, teaching assistants, expert associates, non-teaching staff (name, current position, pre-service and in-service professional development, years of service in education, etc)
 - Inventory and rooms database that covers all physical capacities of the schools – inventory, equipment, furniture
 - Financial module (education accountancy and bookkeeping – salaries of the employees, operational and running costs of the schools) and
 - Per Pupil Funding Formula and analytical framework to be implemented by central and municipality funding.

All data bases - modules, except the Funding formula will be developed at the school, municipal, regional and central Ministry levels and will serve as the basis for the different types of analyses. The Funding formula will be the basis for the allocation of the public financial resources for education.

- The training for the school administration staff (secretaries) and accountants as well as for municipality and ministry staff will be organized.

Project coordinator: Dr. Jasna Soldic-Aleksic, e-mail jasnasel@one.ekof.bg.ac.yu or sinalex@eunet.yu; the MoES responsible person is Ms Ivana Zlatanovic, e-mail ivana.zlatanovic@mps.sr.gov.yu

- Internal MoES structure is re-organised⁴ and strengthened to ensure the organisational structure and appropriate capacities to contribute efficiently and effectively to the initiation and implementation of the education reform process through setting up below listed units and corresponding capacity building.
 - Education Policy Unit, supported by SDC and UNDP Capacity Building Fund, coordinator Ms Nada Vukovic, e-mail nada.vukovic@mps.sr.gov.yu. This unit's selected staff is to receive targeted mentorship-based training aimed at MoES capacity building under the WB IDA funded "Serbia Education Improvement Project", Decentralization/ Local Capacity Building component (implementation partner Marmanet). The objectives of this consultancy are to produce reliable, readable municipal report cards to ensure citizens have the information required to play their role in accountability; increase the quality of analytic studies to be carried out by the MoES; and to develop the capacity to analyse and report on education finance policy and to produce high quality, data-based policy analyses.
 - School infrastructure Unit, currently supported by UNDP, CBF, coordinator, headed by Ms Emira Djeldum Jovanovic, e-mail focus@beotel.yu responsible for establishing the data base on the school buildings, directing the international support for reconstruction and refurbishing towards the actual needs and priorities, and to organizing the program for the training of maintenance staff in the schools and municipalities.
 - Media Unit, supported by UNDP CBF, tasked with ensuring the proper media coverage of the education system reform, to contributing to the transparency of the actions and procedures thus ensuring public support and active involvement in the education sector of the wider public.
The coordinator of UNDP CBF project is Mrs. Natalija Panic, e-mail npanic@mps.sr.gov.yu
 - Education Reform Coordination Unit (ERCU) supported by SDC with the goal to support the MoES in the implementation of the education reform. It supports the activities of the MoES with regard to the education reform (contextual inputs – support to the policy formulation and development and involvement of the different stakeholders). At the same time it enhances performance and efficiency of the MoES (organisational and management inputs) through the coordination of the reform activities within the different departments and the planned and ongoing projects within the education sectors, facilitating the contacts with and outreach of MoES to other donors; continuation and intensification of cooperation with international organisations and institutions allowing for a fast adoption of world wide standards and new developments (especially with regard to the EU) in the Serbian education.
- **Strengthening the role of the middle layer – regional education administration and building their capacity for the regional policy development.**
Although the Serbia policy of "regionalisation", that is the role of the regional level in the overall system of the governance of the country is not defined yet, MoES recognizes the importance of this level for assuring the genuine decentralization of the education system and

⁴The new organizational chart is attached to this document.

for establishing a seamless coordination between education and economic sectors in view of achieving social and economic standards and enhancing the integration of education into European and global mainstreams. Thus, the decentralization in the education sector in Serbia is preceding the overall reform of the public administration. The comprehensive report on the reform of the regional level administration of education has been prepared by Dr Gabor Halasz, leading expert at the “Project of Regional Decentralization of Education Management in Serbia: Twinning of Ministry of Education Regional Departments with European Counterparts,” funded by Austrian Government and realized in the partnership with Kulturkontakt, Austria. The report is available through Mr. Dejan Stankovic, e-mail dejan.stankovic@mps.sr.gov.yu

The regional administration of education is now assured by 12 Regional Departments of MoES whose main function from the beginning of 1990s until recently has been the educational inspection. Their role and internal structure has been changing through:

- Strengthening the developmental role by involving them in the coordination of reform implementation, cooperation in the development of new policies, procedures and activities,
 - Introducing new job profiles and capacity building for the new tasks, such as school development planning, in-service teacher training coordination, quality assurance, education information system, regional and municipal development planning,
 - Introducing the new methods of work coordination such as network management for which the training will be provided through the World Bank decentralization component and Twinning project,
 - Intensifying international contacts and experience exchange through WB Projects – School Development in Serbia, EIS and “Twinning Project”. The basic concept of the twinning project is to strengthen the regional departments by cooperating with international partners on the jointly developed projects in the different reform areas that would build the necessary but lacking or insufficiently developed capacities of the RDs. The results will be shared and disseminated between all RDs and give the basis for the MoES regional policy. The international partners have been identified and are already preparing the joint projects with 8 RDs selected for the pilot phase. The Local Project Manager is Ms Snjezana Mrse, e-mail njeza@eunet.yu, MoES liason person is Ms Gordana Miljevic, e-mail gordana.miljevic@mps.sr.gov.yu.
- Strengthening the role of the municipalities for their tasks related to the school management, teacher professional development, legal inspection and maintenance and building of school infrastructure through the corresponding trainings provided under the WB project and by the Ministry.

The immediate next steps are

- Passing a new Education Act (expected in June 2003) Establishing National Councils for:
 - Compulsory and General Secondary Education (transformation of the current Council for Education Reform),
 - Vocational and Adult Education and Training,
 - Harmonisation of attitudes and opinions on the education

- Establishing Centers for:
 - Accreditation of the education and training programs,
 - Art, music, drama education,
 - Curriculum and textbooks development
 - Education of children with special education needs,
- Stabilization of the new governance in schools. Training of all principals and school board members in July and August about new curriculum and assessment methods by MoES and in October 2003 in school autonomy and decentralized governance by the World Bank
- Continuation of the local consultations (Us in Reform talks - so far 420 meetings with 15000 participants)

3.1.2. Democratisation

Democracy in education relies on respecting two basic principles:

- **The principle of equality** (fairness, accessibility and respect of equal rights for all regardless of sex, age, race, ethnic or religious background, place of living and wealth, ability, health status),
- **The principle of participation** (freedom to express one's opinion, to choose and actively participate in decision-making about and within the practice of education, while assuming responsibility)

Education for Democratic Citizenship is defined as a set of education measures, actions and activities with the primary goal to prepare the children, youth and adults for the role of active citizens in a modern democratically arranged society.

Education for Democratic Citizenship includes the issues usually dealt with in civic education, education for human rights, multi- or intercultural education, education for peace and development, and global education. The concept paper outlining the strategy for democratisation of education and education for democratic citizenship is available at www.mps.sr.gov.yu

To ensure the realisation of the above, the following has been completed

- MoES is a full, actively involved member of the CoE Education for Democratic Citizenship program. The national coordinator is Ms Radmila Gosovic, e-mail Radmila Gosovic, e-mail radmila.gosovic@mps.sr.gov.yu
- Two international seminars were organized in Belgrade:
 - December, 2001 The National Seminar on Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) organized by MoES, CoE and UNESCO with the goal to enable the insight in and sharing of national (Non-government Organizations programs and initiatives) and international experiences in EDC.
 - January 2003 - "Including EDC in the National Curriculum" at which the CoE program on "Teacher Improvement on Human Rights and Civic Education" in Bosnia and Herzegovina was also presented.
 - The five key Council of Europe documents from the first phase of the project (1997-2000) and the Recommendations are translated to Serbian and disseminated

- EDC is integral, cross-curricular segment of the new national curriculum to be implemented from September 2003 and it is included in the teacher training of the teachers implementing the new curriculum in the 1st grade of the reformed school,
- Various accredited programs for teacher training are related to EDC,
- **Civic Education** was introduced as optional subject in primary and Secondary schools in Autumn 2001. Teacher training, preparation and publishing of necessary manuals were supported by UNICEF and The USA government.
 - 3491 teachers were trained. The training empowered them not only for teaching CE but also to act as the promoters of the new democratic ethos in the schools.
 - 9423 (23%) of 84536 Primary School and 4176 (4,6%) of 90780 Secondary school pupils attended the classes in the first year.
 - International evaluation of the first year was completed in cooperation and with the support of UNICEF, UNESCO, FOS-YU, the results of which were incorporated into the development of the CE program. The evaluation report “Civic Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Republic of Serbia”, Belgrade 2002, is available through Belgrade UNICEF office and on www.mps.sr.gov.yu.
- CE was introduced as the elective subject in the school year 2002/2003 with 41,6% (33593) Primary and 53,2% (36590) Secondary pupils attending the classes in the first year.
- The pilot program “Project Citizen” was introduced to the 6th grade in 100 schools in 2002/2003. There are the plans to extend the program in 50 more schools in 2003/2004. The preparation for its external evaluation are in progress.

The MoES Civic Education program coordinator is Mrs. Evgenija Jokanovic, e-mail e.jokanovic@mps.sr.gov.yu

- Six schools have become the members of the Network of Peaceful Schools International programme which aims to improve the school ethos. The pilot project was supported by CIDA.
- Violence prevention and psychological support programs have been introduced, namely:
 - “A school policeman” program was introduced in 2002 in the cooperation with the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Specially trained policemen were placed in 243 (84 Primary and 159 Secondary) schools. Program coordinator Ms Biljana Lajovic, biljana.lajovic@mps.sr.gov.yu
 - The team for psychological crisis intervention was formed. Specially trained experts are empowered to intervene in cases of traumatic incidents in the educational setting, to help schools to return to their regular routine and to alleviate the consequences of trauma. Team coordinator is Miss Jelena Brmbota, jelena.brmbota@mps.sr.gov.yu
 - Staff support and the prevention of burn-out programs have been realized with the support of The Swiss and USA governments.

In order to enhance the incorporation of democratic and civic society values in the education system, the new Department for Democratization of Education is introduced within the redefined structure of the Ministry. The head of the department is Ms Radmila Gosovic, radmila.gosovic@mps.sr.gov.yu.

The immediate next steps are:

- Civic Education becomes the official elective subject to be offered by all schools under the new national curriculum framework in force from September 2003.
- Establishing EDC Unit in MoES in cooperation with UNHCHR (during 2003) to coordinate and develop activities related to EDC.
- Establishing EDC Teacher Education and Training Centre (Autumn, 2003)
- Organising CE teacher association at the local level in Serbia to work on the development of the new programs for the compulsory EDC subject in the new curriculum for the primary and secondary school.
- Organising Peaceful Schools International Conference (September 2003) in the cooperation with Serbian NGO Most and PSI Canada.
- Continuous cooperation with Citizenship Foundation from London
- Establishing the mobile mediation service to mediate in the conflicts involving school staff, school administration and staff and between the school and the local community.
- Training a new group of school policemen in September 2003.

3.2. Assessment and Evaluation

The following issues determined by the analysis of the inherited situation regarding to the assessment and evaluation in education need to be addressed by the reform:

- There are no coherent and integrated system for the quality assurance
- Standards of educational outcomes are not defined
- There is a prevalence of external evaluation and almost complete lack of contemporary forms of evaluation including the self-evaluation
- The external exam that is part of the entrance exam for secondary schools needs to be significantly improved
- There are no national or international assessment studies
- Classroom assessment is mostly limited to traditional forms, it is unreliable and not valid, requires simple reproduction on part of the student, with no agreed criteria etc.
- The supervisory service is encumbered with administrative supervision
- Professional support service (psychological-pedagogical) that exists in almost every school and is seen as one of the important resources for reform does not fulfill its potential

Taking these issues in consideration, a strategy for building a quality assurance system based on educational standards and balance between external and internal forms of evaluation is proposed. It is available in the document: “Quality Education for All – a Way Toward a Developed Society”, MoES, 2002. and on www.mps.sr.gov.yu

In this respect, the following was completed

- The new system of entrance exams for secondary schools was introduced in 2002/3 enabling the pupils to take the exam in their schools and to list as many as 15 secondary schools they would like to attend. The results are processed electronically and pupils offered places in the schools according to their results and the school entry criteria. This

system takes a lot of stress from the pupils and ensures the placement of all in one of the desired schools. The procedure is completely transparent and available on the MoES web site.

- The concept of transferring to the system of final exams by 2006/07 is in preparation
- PISA: international comparative analysis of school achievements (OECD), pilot research completed – results in January 2003, main phase has started in May 2003. The national coordinator is Mrs. Dragica Pavlovic, D.Pavlovic@f.bg.ac.yu
- National assessment for Grade 3 as a part of follow up of the implementation of new curriculum
- The training of the PISA and National assessment implementers was also used to introduce them to the new methods of assessment.
- Teacher training for new grading methods (formative and standard based classroom assessment) in school is in progress supported by British Council, Stability Pact – SICI)
- Building capacity for the school self-evaluation is going on assisted by the School Development project and to be supported by the new concept of pedagogical inspection.

In order to assure the quality of education through regular monitoring, counseling and guidance the role of the inspectorate is changing. The inspectorate reform is in progress. The legal inspection – in charge of assuring that the schools are working in accordance with law – is transferred to the municipalities. The MoES coordinator is Mr. Bogoljub Lazarevic, e-mail blazarevic@mps.sr.gov.yu. The traditional subject inspection is transformed and divided into the **subject inspection** and the **quality assurance inspection**.

- **Subject inspection** belongs to the Sector for Pre-school, primary and secondary education and is necessary during the transition period (i.e. until the new curriculum is not implemented in all grades of primary and secondary school) to preserve the continuity of the existing system and will gradually cease to exist.
- The work of the **Quality assurance inspection** will be organized through the newly formed Department for Education Quality Assurance in the Sector for Education Development and International Cooperation in Education. Currently, there are 25 quality assurance inspectors working in Belgrade and 11 Regional Departments of MoES. The immediate task is to set, in cooperation with all other education stakeholders, the standards, procedures and evaluation scales to enable the evaluation of the education work internally (self-evaluation) and externally (external whole school evaluation) and the evaluation of the entire education system to assure the quality of teaching/learning process and the realization of the desired outcomes of education.

To prepare and to build the capacity of the new inspectors the following was undertaken:

- Drawing on the education quality assurance systems and experiences in developed countries acquired through the study of relevant documents and study trips to Scotland and Germany, the training concept for the inspectors was developed.
- The first training by the international experts was delivered at the beginning of 2003.
- The work on determining quality indicators is currently going on in cooperation with schools, and with the support of foreign experts and EU experienced quality assurance inspectors.
- Study trips to EU country are planned to take place in autumn 2003 to enable inspectors to share the experiences and examples of good practice with their colleagues.

The responsible person is Mrs. Nevena Vraneš-Krompić, e-mail stramex@yubc.net

Immediate next steps:

- Establishment of the National Standards and Evaluation Center that will focus on: (a) raising quality in Serbian education, by setting standards that encourage critical thinking skills in pupils of all abilities; (b) modernizing student assessment, and using results for evidence-based policy making; and (c) the establishment of a modern, credible national service for standards, assessment and examinations, trusted by the public, employers and higher education institutions within Serbia, in the European Union and beyond.

The National Standards and Evaluation Center will be staffed and operational in charge of the following:

- Setting standards of educational outcomes
- Participate in setting standards of school quality
- Participate in setting standards for teachers' self-evaluation
- National examination system, including final exams (matura)
- National assessment studies
- Participation in international assessment studies (PISA, TIMSS etc.)
- Support to standard based classroom assessment
- Support to regions, local community, schools and teachers in evaluation and self-evaluation

3.3. Teacher Training and Professional Development

The main pillar of school development is the teachers (as well as other representatives of the education system). There will be no change, if they are not able to play an active role in facing today's challenges. In order to be able to do so, they must be adequately trained and the opportunities for their professional development and career advancement created. The professional development of teachers and school associates is a continuous process consisting of three basic, inseparable phases: pre-service, induction, and in-service training. Setting up and developing a coherent, comprehensive system of the professional development of teachers is necessary to build the teachers' capacity for fulfilling the complex and diversified roles, to achieve the autonomy and accept the responsibility for own professional development leading to the career advancement. This is a long term, continuous process integrating the regular possibilities and experiences systemically planned to promote the growth and development on the professional level. The strategy for the teacher professional development is presented in the MoES document: "Quality Education for All – A Way towards a Developed Society."

So far, the following has been undertaken:

- Preparation of curricular reform for teachers' faculties is in progress currently involving the teachers' faculty in Sombor. This is supported by the Finish Government. The proposal for the new curriculum taking into consideration ECTS and Bologna process is expected by June 2003, following the expert group survey of the pre-service teachers' education at the

teachers faculties. The MoES coordinator is Ms Nada Vukovic, e-mail nada.vukovic@mps.sr.gov.yu

- An accreditation system for teacher training programs is set up and functioning (The first Catalogue with 120 accredited teacher training programs is published and available in every school.) The accreditation process was opened permanently until 31st March 2003. It will be re-opened in autumn 2003, upon the publishing of the 2nd Catalogue. The schools are free to choose any program for their staff. The interest is great but the funds are lacking. Some of the trainings were financed by the Ministry, some by the local governments, the other by the training providers and some by the schools themselves. The coordinator is Ms Lidija Miskeljic, e-mail lidija.miskeljic@mps.sr.gov.yu
- Continuous capacity building through INSET, so far 360 seminars with 12.765 participants were held
- Teachers' career advancement criteria and profiles were defined and covered by the amendments to the Act on Basic and Secondary schools (new titles: teacher-counselor, mentor, instructor and senior counselor),
- The preparation of the training program for the teachers who are implementing the new curriculum in the 1st grade of elementary school and the training of trainers has been completed by May 2003.
- The training of about 7500 1st grade teachers is in progress, organized in two waves (A and B). The training for the first wave - about 25% schools – will be completed in June and for the second (75%) in August 2003. The first wave products resulting from the work with trainers and quality assurance inspectors (examples of the good practice) will be collected and printed by July and used as the training material for the second wave. The training, besides the class teachers, includes foreign language teachers, school psychologists and pedagogues – that is the members of the school team for the development of the 1st grade curriculum. The coordinator is Ms Snezana Klasnja, e-mail snezana.klasnja@mps.sr.gov.yu
- The training of the trainers for English language teachers in the 1st grade of primary and in gymnasiums has started in November 2002 and is going on with the support of the British Council. The training of the teachers is foreseen for the second half of May 2003. The teacher trainers' for German and French languages were educated with the support of Goethe Institute and French Cultural Center. The training of those teachers will start in July 2003.
- The preparations for the founding of the National center for professional development are being finalized with the support of SDC.

Immediate next steps

- Opening the National Center and setting up two pilot regional centers for teachers' professional development.
- Introducing the procedure for obtaining a teaching license. The license will be issued for the period of five years and renewed for each subsequent five-year period upon the fulfillment of the required conditions
- Development of the new concept for the induction, required to obtain the teaching license. It also involves designing the program for the future mentors and the cooperation with the teachers' colleges to ensuring the appropriate schools and classrooms for the practical studies of the future teachers.
- Preparation of the program for the teacher training for the implementation of the curriculum in 2nd and 7th grades. The development of training program for the 7th grade teachers (about

9000 persons) will start in September and the training in November 2003. The training for the 2nd and 7th grade teachers and new 1st grade teachers will start at the beginning of 2004.

- Publishing of the new INSET accredited programs catalogue.

3.4. Preschool Education

Until 2002, preschool education was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Affairs. In 2003 it became an integral part of the education system where it naturally belongs. The New Law on Preschool Education is prepared under which the last pre-school year becomes the compulsory or the 0 grade in the reformed education system. The work on defining the quality standards for the pre-school programs is in progress. Other developments are:

- Intensive training of pre-school teachers in new development methods and approaches realized through 39 seminars with 1355 participants from 132 pre-school institutions, the majority of which was supported by CRS who is the major supporter of the reform of pre-school education.
- The work on the development of the open curriculum at the pre-school level in the form of the action research for the professional development of the practitioners and improvement of the education practice quality is in progress. Its aim is to support the reform activities and to strengthen the pre-school teachers capacities for the developmental planning,
- The training of pre-school teachers in the specialized pre-school programs in the model-center
- The training of pre-school staff in developing and setting the professional norms and codes of practice of the education profession which are to support the standards of the education work and professional development.
- Establishing the network of the pre-school institutions practicing and developing the different programs as the means to enhance the cooperation and to exchange the best practices and experiences.

The head of Department for Preschool Education is Mirjana Markovic e-mail marmi@infosky.net .

3.5. GENERAL SECONDARY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The comprehensive review of the developments in general secondary and vocational education and training is given in the Annex 2.

3.6. HIGHER EDUCATION IN SERBIA – REFORM STRATEGY

The comprehensive review of the developments in higher education in Serbia – reform strategy is given in the Annex 3.

4. THE SECOND WAVE OF THE REFORM

4.1. Curriculum reform

The following issues determined by the analysis of the existing situation and the needs voiced during the Roundtables on Reform, regarding the curriculum, need to be addressed

- Traditionally input oriented teaching provisions,
- Outdated, overloaded , fact and content oriented curricula with frequently non-synchronised and unconnected syllabi within the same area and for different age groups,

- Centralised decision making concerning obligatory curricula which are same for all students at the same level and kind of education, and in which the syllabi follow the structure of the respective academic discipline leading to very little or non-existent cross-curricular issues.
- Influence of political and ideological interests
- Teachers with no professional autonomy but have to follow centrally given syllabi with very limited or no power to influence decisions
- Teaching methods which are frontal and verbal
- Students are expected to reproduce contents;
- Little attention paid to the actual acquisition of skills, applicable knowledge, and the connection between the knowledge and real life, and education and economy.

Given the scope of the inherited and accumulated problems and their delicate status, the first fundamental changes in the curriculum were planned for the second reform wave, i.e. 2002/2003. The emergency measure was 30% shortening of the existing syllabi undertaken in 2001.

The following was done so far:

- March 2002 – MoES formed the Central Commission for the Development of Curricula.
- July 2002, the Commission presented the Draft concept of the Strategy for Development of Curriculum in Compulsory and Secondary Education to the Council for Reform. It was prepared on the basis of the education reform general strategy and action plan, the results of the international thematic reviews on the education in Serbia (UNICEF, OECD, World Bank), the results of the local consultation process, international experiences and local tradition, and research results. The paper was prepared with the help of the international experts provided with the assistance of the Fund for an Open Society. This assistance continues.
- September, 2002 Having been endorsed by the Council for Reform, the paper was presented publicly at the 2nd International Conference “Education Reform in the Republic of Serbia – First Steps and Forthcoming Challenges” held in Belgrade, from 5-8 September. The document is the first concept of the national curriculum framework.

Some of the major changes and innovations proposed by the document are:

- Giving more space for the autonomous and accountable professional initiative of the teachers and schools through the development and preparation of the school based curriculum in line with the requirements and responsibilities defined at the national level. Up to 30% of the curriculum can be school based.
- Shifting the focus from content (program) to educational goals and outcomes, processes and activities – i.e. the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that the pupils should possess, from teaching to the processes, methods and activities of learning and knowledge building
- Basing education on educational areas rather than on unconnected subjects. Five education areas are defined:
 - Social sciences and philosophy;
 - Language, communication and literature;
 - Sciences, mathematics and technology;
 - Arts
 - Physical and health education).
- The introduction of nine years of compulsory education, organised in three three-year cycles,

- The introduction of foreign language learning from the first grade of compulsory education
- Autumn/winter 2002.
 - Public debate of the strategy in all regional departments of the Ministry of Education and Sports and among the professionals;
 - Forming the commissions for the education areas;
 - Beginning of the process of preparing the framework and related documents.
 - February 2003 – curriculum implementation teams were formed tasked to develop the implementation strategy and teacher training programs
 - March, 2003 – preparations for piloting the **curriculum reform in gymnasiums** started. The curriculum reform in gymnasiums will start in 2007/2008. 30% of gymnasiums that have responded to the invitation of MoES will be included into the preparations of draft curriculum framework. In May 2003, the trainers that will work with gymnasium staff were trained. The aims of the preparations are:
 - to inform and sensitise gymnasiums for entering into the reform,
 - to ensure the understanding of the general reform strategy and the outcomes of the education,
 - to build the capacities in the methods of work, evaluation and assessment, planning and programming, for team work,
 - to obtain the input for the preparation of the conception of the reform of gymnasiums,
 - to obtain the input for the matura exam concept.

MoES coordinator of the project is Mrs Vidosava Grahovac, email-vidosava.grahovac@mps.sr.gov.yu

- April 2003 - The draft National Curriculum Framework was published. This is the result of the joint work of the Central and education areas curriculum development commissions (approximately 100 people). It is the draft of the legal document that defines and regulates the school curriculum at the national level, and serves as the basis for the development of the school curriculum of each school. Public debate followed.
- May 2003, the draft Curriculum for the First Grade of =Compulsory Education was published.

Immediate next steps

- June 2003, Publishing the final version of the National Curriculum Framework and the Curriculum Framework for the First Grade of Compulsory Education,
- September 2003 – the beginning of the implementation of the new national curriculum, that will proceed as follows:
 - 2003/2004 – the first grade of compulsory education
 - 2004/2005 – the second and seventh grade of compulsory education,
 - 2005/2006 – the third and eighth grades of compulsory education,
 - 2006/2007 – the fourth and ninth grade of compulsory education,

2007/2008 – the fifth grade of compulsory education and the first grade of the general three-year secondary school (gymnasium).

- September 2003 onward – intensifying the work on the Curriculum Frameworks for the 2nd and 7th grades of compulsory education and the work of subject teams.
- Summer 2003 onwards – preparations to set up the National Center for Curriculum and textbooks to institutionalize curriculum development, textbook preparation and publishing policy and the professional strengthening of teachers and schools for the work on developing school based curricula and related activities (textbooks selection, suggestions to the writers, etc).

More details about the curriculum development can be obtained from kurikul@sezampro.co, contact person Ms Biljana Stojanovic

4. 2. Textbooks and teaching materials production

In winter 2002, the Ministry engaged the expert team consisting of members of the Institute for Psychology and Education Forum to prepare the policy document on the quality textbook production.

Textbooks and teaching materials production

In winter 2002, the Ministry engaged the expert team consisting of members of the Institute for Psychology and Education Forum at the project Quality of Textbooks and the Related Quality Assurance Mechanisms.

The project consists of three phases:

1st phase – Review and analysis of the textbook quality issues and the implications on the overall textbook policy,

2nd phase – Defining textbook quality parameters and the relevant quality assurance mechanisms,

3rd phase – Textbook quality and general policy of creating, publishing, utilisation and evaluation of textbooks.

The aims of the project are:

- To set operational definitions of the textbook quality parameters (content quality and quality of psychological-educational, didactic and media characteristics),
- To define effective mechanisms for assuring the textbook quality,
- To precise implications that the standards of the quality have on the overall textbook and education policy;
- To contribute to the overall policy of creating, publishing, utilization and evaluation of the textbooks as the integral part of the education reform.

The first phase was completed in February 2003 and the relevant document presented to the Ministry and Council of Reform. Its English version will be available in July 2003.

The next steps are

- Completion of 2nd and 3rd phase foreseen by spring 2004,

- Setting up the Center for Curriculum and Textbooks

The head of the team is Prof Ivan Ivic, Ph.D. iivic@unicef.org.yu The MoES coordinator is Ms Radmila Gosovic.

4.3. Foreign Language Learning

Besides introducing a foreign language as a subject from the 1st grade of the primary school and enlarging the number of foreign languages to be taught at schools, MoES has made the preparations to join the Council of Europe Foreign Language Portfolio initiative.

The contact person for the foreign languages is Ms Ljiljana Djuric, e-mail zkdur@eunet.yu .The MoES official in charge of Portfolio is Ms Biljana Lajovic.

4.4. Education of minorities and vulnerable groups

Ministry of Education and Sports in cooperation with the Ministry for National Minorities and the Provinces' Education Department is working on the Strategy for the education of minorities.

A separate expert group is working on the strategy for Roma education which will be presented and discussed at the international seminar on Roma education to be held in Belgrade in September 2003.

The MoES coordinator is Ms Radmila Gosovic.

4.5. Education of persons with special needs

The expert group has prepared the proposal of the strategy for the education of children with special needs. Three models are suggested:

- Inclusion of the children with special learning needs into the regular classes,
- Integration – the classes for the children with special learning needs in the regular schools,
- Special schools.

The **Center for the Children with Special Learning Needs** to be founded will be in charge of:

- Establishing a data base of the persons that require special support for the education, namely the persons with physical and mental disabilities, behaviour and emotional difficulties, serious chronic diseases, children without parents, abused children, refugees, displaced and socially, culturally or economically deprived children.
- Developing creative and stimulative programs for the work with those children,
- Developing the programs for the material and psychosocial support of the education, and enhance the active inclusion and participation of special needs children in society.

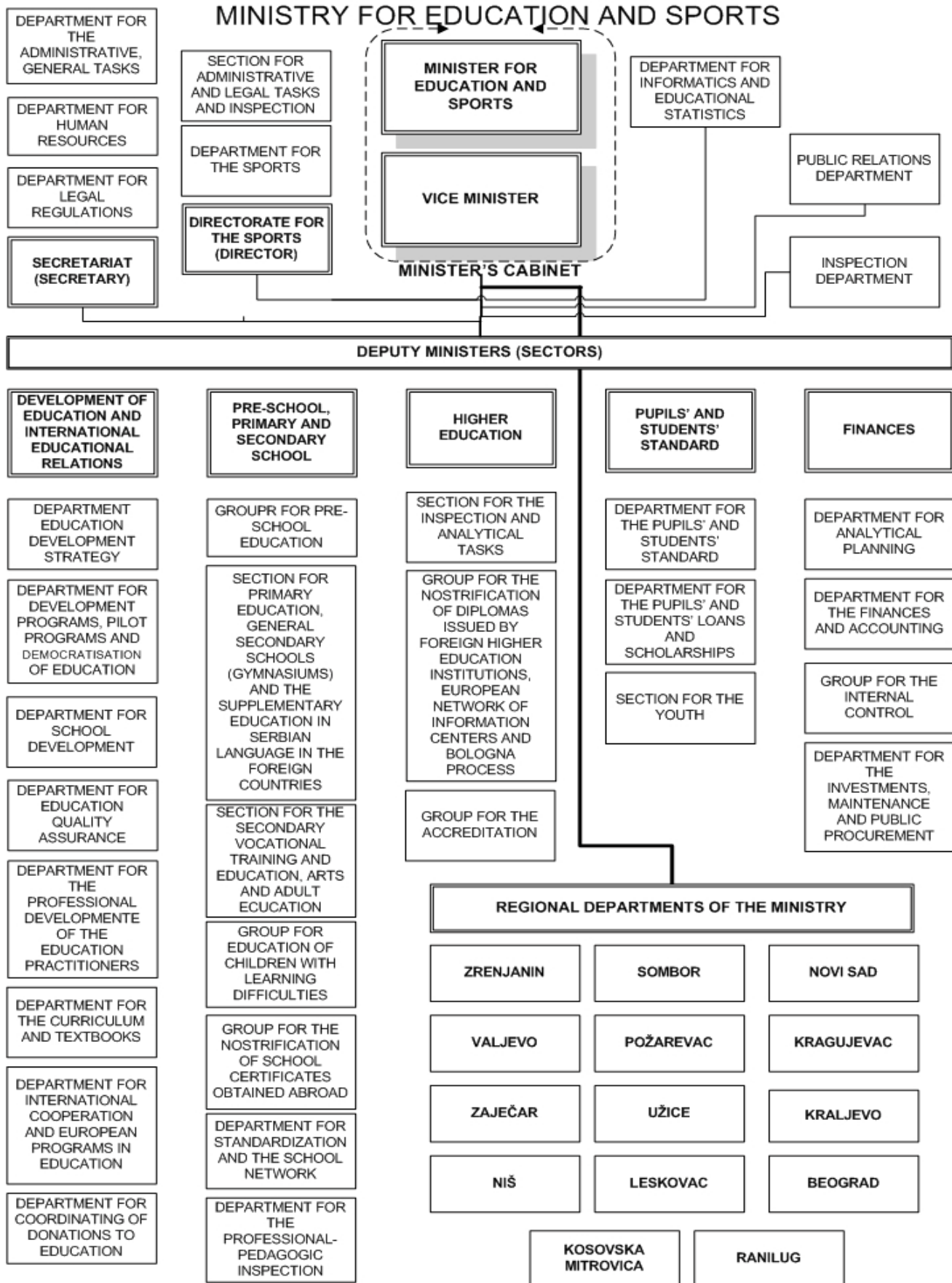
CONCLUSION

Education reform is a continuous, self-evolving process. When one issue is being implemented, another is evaluated, and yet another prepared. As you read this paper, the new developments are under the way with more and more people involved, with each building block laid leading us closer to the desired goals, at the same time setting new goals and new tasks. Our role is to carefully weigh and measure each building block that we lay, each scaffolding element we install, so that they fit in with others, support them and be strong enough to sustain the weight of those to come.

Compiled by

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MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS



ANNEX 2

GENERAL SECONDARY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

prepared by Gabrijela Bratic

Modernization of the state, and its orientation towards modern technologies will have an influence on the modernization of the goals of vocational education in Serbia and involve drawing closer to European countries. Having this in mind vocational education in our country will be aimed at improving knowledge, gaining skills and competence, with greater flexibility in responding to the changing needs of work and society so that young people, ready for new professional challenges, can join the total modernization processes of society. As our society developing efforts to become a *learning society*, it is important to make young people ready and able to join vocational training and re-training.

Since January 2001 the Ministry of Education and Sports has launched a reform process of the education system also including vocational education and training. The first step was to prepare a strategic plan for reform. The strategic priorities for VET reform encompass (i) decentralisation and democratic school management, (ii) aligning VET with future needs of the economy, (iii) innovating curriculum delivery and pedagogy (critical thinking, teamwork, creative application of knowledge), and (iv) devolving education management to local government⁵.

An Expert Team for VET Reforms has been established. Besides educational experts this team includes also representatives of social partners. This Team has a close cooperation with key stakeholders. It developed and published the VET policy as *Reforms of Secondary Vocational Education and Training: From Discussions to Realization*. Parts of this book are available also in English: “Analysis of Current State in VET” and “Strategy of Development of Secondary VET”. This book was distributed to representatives of all stakeholders and social partners creating a good basis for further cooperation in reform issues with all these partners. Based on the analysis of the current state in vocational schools and on the strategy framework a public discussion was organized so that all schools could have an input through suggestions in the process of designing national policy for VET reforms.

International support is obtained for the reform efforts: GTZ (Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit), CARDS 2003 Program of the EU, European Training Foundation (ETF). As a follow up to the strategic plan, the Ministry of Education and Sports has proceeded with a number of reform initiatives. Besides those mentioned above, the activities in the area of VET are:

- activities for establishment of new professional institutions at central level including a National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Centre;
- decision to establish a National Council for VET;

⁵ For more information see the report of the expert group on Vocational Education and Training in www.min.edu.yu/index_e.htm

- Support the work and good functioning of associations of VET⁶ schools in the development of new profiles and curricula.

Modernization of the curricula:

- modernisation of curricula of general subjects (mother tongue, mathematics and foreign language) in secondary vocational education. In the future general subjects of vocational education will account for 40% of the whole curriculum.
- modernisation of curricula by introducing pilot schemes in the following 9 sectors: agriculture and food processing, health, mechanical engineering, building and construction, electrical engineering, economics, chemistry and graphic industry, traffic and transportation, forestry and wood processing. This will be done by the support of GTZ (Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit) , CARDS 2003 Program of the EU and ETF (European Training Foundation);
- launching of a pilot project for the modernisation of curricula in agricultural and food processing schools with the support of VET schools association in this sector. Its implementation started in September 2002. The pilot curricula are implemented in 37 schools, covering 5-6 classes per educational profile;
- decision to support quality training provision for adults through the re-conversion of VET schools into regional training centres for adults. VET schools in general must become flexible and open also for vocational education of adults obtaining horizontal and vertical mobility for all within the education system.

In each Association of VET schools expert teams have been established. Their role is to develop, in cooperation with relevant social partners and stakeholders, new pilot curricula based on modules for the pilot programs. Members of these teams as well as teachers included in these activities are supported by special training programs. About 60 teachers have passed ICT courses; another 60 teachers included in pilot classes in the field of agriculture and food processing have been trained in interactive teaching methods by the support of GTZ and ETF/National observatory. Those included in policymaking and legislation in VET reforms were trained by ETF experts. Seminars on developing occupation standards and on transformation of occupational standards into teaching modules were also held by experts of ETF.

GTZ supports reforms in the field of economics also by numerous trainings, capacity buildings, etc.

The study on the *Price of Education in Serbia*, supported by ETF/National Observatory of Serbia and by GTZ, has been a good input to the activities in the rationalization of the network of schools. The current network of schools had to undergo thorough changes. It was larger than needed, expensive and did not meet the real needs of the economic and social life of the country or its development needs. The new network has to become a basis for implementation of future reform activities so that VET schools could be a generator of social and economic development. It has to be based on the real needs of the economy, labour market and must respect data resulting from the analysis of enrolment to secondary schools in 2002/2003. As there is no defined national policy yet, data from the previous

⁶ There is one association of VET schools by sector e.g. association of agricultural schools, association of health schools, etc. In the association participates one teacher per school. The participation of the teachers to the associations is on a voluntary basis.

enrolment year, student's preferences as well as local indicators (if available) can be used in these purposes. Therefore, the enrolment policy has a great role in the reform processes.

New Enrolment Policy

- a new enrolment policy in all secondary schools has been implemented for the school year 2002-2003 through a computerised process which tries to match students' preferences for secondary education and VET programmes to the supply. A database on all 6th, 7th and 8th grade students has been created and is updated regularly (giving general data as well as data on achievements, grades, awards and prizes, etc.)
- In 2003/2004 enrolment students from the whole territory of Serbia are included (e.g. including Kosovo and Metohia)

In 2003/2004 enrolment covers:

- 130 gymnasiums
- 336 VET schools
- 33 art schools
- 34 schools for children with special needs

There are: 26 new educational programs, 9 new job fields, 202 pilot classes (4162 students); 131 VET schools have pilot classes (one or more). 17 profiles of the existing ones are not included in the new enrolment or the number of vacancies in them is reduced as there is no need for them at the labour market.

Furthermore:

- 6 new schools have been established in Serbia
- new private secondary VET schools opened functioning according to the programs of the public schools

The whole enrolment process is transparent to the public. All information and data on each school and student are available from the link of the MoES web-site www.mps.sr.gov.yu.

International activities and support to VET

In May 2002 a Serbian-Hungarian seminar was organized for VET schools and bilingual VET schools. It was an opportunity to exchange reform experiences with colleagues from Hungary, on network of VET schools in Hungarian, on vocational textbooks and teacher training. This event was supported by FOS.

VET schools are involved also in international programs. Project activities on *Linking and Renovation of Dairy Schools in SE Europe* has been started by the support of GTZ, GESO. This project will link dairy schools from Pirot/Sjenica with agricultural schools in Travnik (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and similar institutions in Germany.

The project of the Italian Ministry of Education through IRRE Friuli-Venezia-Lombardia is running as Educational Program for SE Europe: *Transnational Course for Creating a Network of Schools between Countries of Central and SE Europe*. Two VET schools from Serbia established partnership with two Italian schools of the same sector. They develop and share modules as a contribution to create a profile of expert in European citizenship.

BIP (Norway) initiated a program on student' entrepreneurship involving two schools from Serbia in the pilot scheme. *European Movement with Junior Achievement* initiates introducing entrepreneurship into secondary schools.

In the *Twinning Project* (Kultur Kontakt Austria) the Regional Department in Kragujevac cooperates with the International Office for Lifelong Learning from Tuscany, Italy with the aim to transform a secondary VET school into adult education centre.

In order to get a better view of the situation in all secondary schools and to give priority to solving problems that are most important to the schools themselves, the Ministry of Education and Sports, Sector for Secondary Education collected projects prepared by the schools. These projects concern rehabilitation and rebuild of school buildings, purchase of equipment, teaching aids, international cooperation, etc. They were presented on a *Stock Exchange of Secondary School Projects*. Some schools found donors with the help of these activities. A CD-ROM database and a catalogue of the project contribute to the continuous presence of them on all major events organized by the Ministry.

A further CD-ROM database summarizes all courses and possibilities provided by VET schools in adult education tasks. These data are an input in the future new role of schools as education and training providers also in lifelong learning.

GTZ Project: Support to VET Reforms in Serbia (Started March 2002):

GTZ focuses on reforms in economic schools and trained in roughly one year more than 400 people and gave numerous donations.

The GTZ supports with seminars and grants

- The foundations of the VET-Center
- The work on occupational standards
- The development of new occupational profiles
- The training of teachers in 5 training lines (Curriculum development, methodological training; training in soft skills; concept development for learning offices; network administrators)
- Training of school principals) in two training lines at the moment
- The identification of qualification needs inside companies by company analysis and – as long-term measure- set up of a qualification research system

The adaptation of offered qualification to identified needed qualification via a Regional Vocational-Education Dialogue.

GTZ also financed seminars for agriculture schools, interactive teaching inside agriculture schools, equipping pilot-schools with learning offices, supported the study *Price of Education in Serbia*, the Learning Festival of Adult Education and publishing of the Book “Interactive Teaching.

Immediate next steps

➤ **Establishment of the National Center for VET**

The National Center of Vocational Education would have an analytical, educational, methodic and advisory function.

Basic goals of work of this Center would be: *development and improvement of vocational education in Serbia, to project and process vocational training and competence in teacher training for teachers working in secondary vocational schools.*

This Centre would focus its activities as follows:

- To prepare various models of vocational education both in formal and non-formal sector; to process pilot programs and experiments; to analyze their results and propose system solutions;

- To set up unity of secondary vocational education in regular formal sector, non-formal education (especially of adult education) and various schools for vocational education of students with special needs;
- To open vocational education to European mainstreaming and to link secondary vocational education to developed European systems;
- To monitor successful processing of secondary vocational education in secondary vocational schools.

CARDS 2003

The European Union through the European Agency for Reconstruction and the European Training Foundation are launching CARDS 2003 Program: Vocational Education And Training Reform – Capacity Building And Implementation Support. The objectives of this program, that is going to start this summer, are the following:

- To develop a flexible vocational education and training (VET) system based on the principles of Lifelong Learning, responsive to local as well global socio-economic needs and democratic values.
- To contribute to the economic development and social stabilisation in Serbia through a well skilled labour force.

Therefore, with this strong EU support the following activities are awaited:

- Build up the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education & Sports (MoES) and other national stakeholders to develop and implement a strategy and policy framework for vocational education and training based on partnership and ensuring the link between training provision and economic development.
- Strengthen the capacity of national and local actors to design and implement new vocational education and training programmes for young people and adults so as to enhance their employability and support their personal development.
- Ensure quality training provision for adults through the transformation of VET schools into regional training centres in selected areas of industrial reconstruction.
- Support innovation of learning processes in VET at grassroots level.
- Upgrade the school infrastructure (equipment and other teaching aids plus buildings).

ANNEX 3

HIGHER EDUCATION IN SERBIA - REFORM STRATEGY

Prof. Srbijanka Turajlic, Ph.D.

I. Mission statement

The Ministry of Education and Sports, appointed by the newly elected government of Serbia in February of 2001. defined its mission with regard to the higher education system as:

Establishment of modern higher education system in accordance with the Bologna process.

Within the system the main defined objectives were:

- Increase the efficiency of the HE system in terms of the drop-out rate and the length of studies – introduce the two-tier system with the ECTS as a measure of students' workload.
- Harmonize the HE system with the European tendencies with special emphasis on quality assurance – introduce quality control mechanisms that will ensure quality outcomes for learners, quality in educational provision and performance, and excellence in research.
- Establish the relevance of the programs with respect to the national needs as well as the market demand. Promote the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary programmes leading towards the new professions created in the technological era.
- Promote the concept of applied studies, which provide skills and competencies required by the labour market.
- Incorporate students as partners in the educational process
- Promote mobility of students and teachers.
- On a broader scale the set goals were expected to imply:
 - Contribution to the democratic development of the country.
 - Support of the transition process especially in economic recovery
 - Promotion of the value of European integration

II. Adopted Approach

1. Introductory remarks

In order to achieve the defined goals a number of activities were planned. They can be broadly separated into three categories:

- The analysis of the European HE system, with the particular emphasis to the changes that took place during the nineties, while Serbia was under sanctions;
- The analysis of the current state of the Serbian HE system;
- The analysis of the Department for Higher Education – structure, functions and services, human and financial resources – together with the overall national management of the HE system.

The results of these activities led to the outline of the reform strategy of the Serbian HE system which was presented in January of 2002 at the conference "From Vision to the

Concrete Steps". The White Paper "Quality Education for All – a way Toward a Developed Society", Reform Strategy and Action Plan were published⁷.

Simultaneously, the draft of the new Law on Universities was prepared. With full awareness that this Law would not be able to reflect the necessary reforms in their entirety, it was nevertheless needed to alleviate the negative effects of the existing one enacted in 1998, which had cancelled all autonomy and brought us suspension from the CRE.

In addition, while preparing the strategy certain issues like accreditation, introduction of ECTS, quality control and so on were identified as having high priority and corresponding activities were planned.

The afore-mentioned steps led finally to the concept of the new reform HE law whose drafting was started in January of 2003.

2. A survey of the activities related to the European HE

Learning about the changes in European HE area started near the end of 1999 through an educational NGO (AAEN) established as a response of part of the academic community to the 1998 University Act. Defining its mission as *providing additional and alternative graduate education for young academics (students and junior faculty members) and a model for university reform, thus helping the processes of transition towards an open civil society, market economy, and political democracy*, the AAEN was accepted by the relevant European HE institutions and was able to monitor the beginning of the Bologna process. The results of the many seminars and conferences were summarized within a booklet "Serbian HE in 2010?"⁸ that was printed in the spring of 2001 and served as an introduction to the conference "Serbian HE on the road to Europe" which was organized in March of 2001 by the Council of Europe, CRE, Serbian Ministry of Education and sports and the AAEN. The conference had an audience of over 700 academics from Serbia who were introduced to the major aspects of the Bologna process, Lisbon recognition convention as well as the results of the Legislative reform project carried out but the Council of Europe. Later, during the academic year 2001/2002 a number of seminars and conferences were organized with the help of Council of Europe, EUA, HRK, DAAD, GTZ, Konrad Adenauer and so on. Most of the conferences were dedicated to the general HE topics, while only a few focused on particular issues like vocational schools, privatisation, recognition, ECTS and diploma supplement, and so on. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Sports organized several debates and workshops at Serbian universities. It can be concluded that the Serbian academic community had been exposed to the most of the relevant documents concerning the creation of the EHEA and had been offered an opportunity to discuss them in detail. In general, there is an agreement that Serbia should join the EHEA. However, to what extent each institution, or to that matter each academic is willing to really commit itself remains yet to be seen.

3. Analysis of the Serbian Higher Education system

a. Serbian HE system

⁷ The conference report and the White Paper can be seen at www.mps.sr.gov.yu

⁸ Turajlić S, Z.Milutinović, S.Babić, *Univerziteti u Srbiji 2001*, AAOM, Beograd 2001, (available also at www.aaen.edu.yu and www.mps.sr.gov.yu)

Post-secondary education and university education are regulated by two separate laws. Over the years these two laws regulated all aspects of institutional life. Even when the establishing of private institutions was introduced (in the mid-nineties), they were subjected to the same set of rules. Thus the university governance structure, study rules and degree structure, teaching staff and their corresponding titles and rules for promotion, students rights and obligations are homogenized throughout the country. In general, the institutions are deemed to be autonomous, implementing their own decisions within the strictly prescribed framework. The only difference between state and private institutions lay in financing and ownership.

A brief summary of the present state of the HE system in Serbia is presented in Appendix I. However, the major strengths and weaknesses of the system are presented together with the reform concept, as a rationale behind the proposed steps.

Until the 2002 University Law all major decisions, ranging from the national education policy to institution accreditation, were made by the government through the Ministry of Education, which lacked the necessary expertise to accomplish these tasks efficiently.

b. Sources

- The analysis carried out by the Ministry of Education and Sports, based upon the statistical data, as well as upon the existing legislation, and observations. First draft presented in June 2001.
- "The University we desire" - a series of seminars organized by the Student Union of Serbia (December 2002 to December 2003). Those conferences gathered around 400 hundred students from Serbia for each session⁹.
- The report on the two-year post-secondary vocational schools had been prepared by the beginning of 2002. This was followed by a detailed review of the practice in some European countries, together with a proposal for the reform of the existing schools into 3-year Schools for applied studies organized within the universities of applied studies. (GTZ is running a project for reforming the Business schools. The results will be used as a template for other schools).
- Institutional Evaluation of the 5 Serbian state universities¹⁰:
 - Self-evaluation seminars held in November 2001, reports presented in January 2002.
 - External evaluation carried out during the spring of 2002, with reports presented in July 2002.
 - Final conference, with summary report held in November 2002.

4. Ministry of Education and Sports – Department of Higher Education

b. Background

⁹ Conferences reports can be seen at the Students Union website www.sus.org

¹⁰ Evaluation reports can be seen at the corresponding universities websites (links available at www.mps.sr.gov.yu)

In spite of the fact that the Department of Higher Education was over the years formally in charge of the overall national HE policy and management, it was never developed towards fulfilling this task. It might be even said that it was never expected to take its role seriously.

The national HE policy was always considered to be the privilege of the ruling party, and was used and abused in accordance with the current political goals. Since academic quality assurance, or to that matter any other aspect of the HE system was never an issue to be seriously considered the Department did not have an employment policy that would call for experts in this area.

In addition, international cooperation was organised through specialized agencies outside the Ministry. Hence, the existing staff never had an opportunity to be exposed to different educational systems, nor to cooperate with the civil servants from Ministries for Education in other countries.

The only set of activities that were developed to their fullest were the bureaucratic, administrative supervision of the existing state HE institutions. Consequently the majority of the staff has general legal education and is well acquainted with all the legal regulations. In spite of this, it seems that the final decision seldom depended on the findings of the supervisors, but rather on the predefined political decision that was to be covered by the formal supervision. Hence, staff was not motivated to take even this task seriously. The situation was further aggravated by the poor remuneration of the civil servants, particularly during the nineties.

A similar situation was encountered within the group that was in charge of the financing. Again, they were not asked to develop any substantial financing policy, but acted merely as a transmission mechanism between the Ministry of Financing and the HE institutions. Since the resources were scarce, they had an additional role in deciding which institutions were going to be favoured over others, which made them vulnerable to all kinds of pressure.

Finally, in spite of the fact that the ICT had started to develop in the mid-nineties, the Ministry of Education has not been exposed to it. PCs were scarce, and were seldom used even for the simplest office activities. Internet and its services were unknown, and the majority of communications were done in person. Hence, the staff spent long days conferring with different parties who considered it necessary to attend personally to almost any business.

b. A Survey of the Activities

Intensive capacity building, adjusted to the needs of the reform preparation had to be put on the top of the agenda. However, the fact that the country was emerging from the long period of complete isolation called also for a number of tasks that could not have waited for the restructuring of the Department. This problem could have been solved in two different ways:

- Engage foreign and domestic experts for the reform tasks and organize training for the existing personnel.
- Ask the existing personnel to carry out all the necessary tasks and try to provide them some assistance in doing it.

The first approach might have looked more promising, and was certainly preferred by most of the potential donors, but in the view of the still poor remuneration in the civil service

sector it would have brought the risk of losing the proper motivation. It was not hard to imagine the feeling the staff would have, had it been left out of the more interesting and demanding activities. In fact, it's hard to expect capacity building in an under-paid civil sector, while extremely well-paid experts are swarming around. Hence, accepting the risk that some of the tasks might be slightly delayed, and probably not accomplished with the same level of excellence, the second approach was adopted.

In addition to the gathering of the data for a survey of the HE system, two major activities were initiated at the same beginning: applying to sign the Lisbon convention and to join the Bologna process. The right to sign the Lisbon convention was granted in the June of 2001. This was followed by a study tour to the Austrian ENIC centre and establishment of the Serbian ENIC centre. With the implementation of the ICT and the start of the information exchange within the ENIC/NARIC network, this Centre became a seed around which the modern HE civil service is going to be built.

The proper training in computer application as well as the English language was organized for the entire staff. The database for the financing system was designed, that allowed drafting of the new financing decree that is based on the input model. Finally, due to the "University management project" carried on by the UNESCO-CEPES the issues of strategic management, governance and policy making; financial management and institutional relationships with civil society and local economy as well as quality assurance and development of study programmes were studied in great detail.

Next, the nation-wide management of the higher education system was re-examined. It was decided that the decision making process should be removed from the administrative clerical personnel in the Ministry and delegated to experts. This will be achieved by establishing a National Council for HE together with a certain number of agencies that will be in charge of accreditation and evaluation, funding policy, research and other aspects of the higher education system.

5. The New University Law (2002)

In spite of the fact that the primary objective of the new University Law was to reinstate university autonomy, this Law together with the *Decree on the financing of university activities*, offers provisions for:

- Two types of undergraduate degrees (3 to 6 years)
- The autonomy to define programmes and courses (approved at the university level)
- The introduction of ECTS (unspecified in details, not mandatory)
- Governance and management autonomy (17% of the members of the Council appointed by the Government)
- Financial autonomy (to some extent):
 - Bulk sum for salaries (distribution determined by the faculty)
 - Bulk sum for operating costs and investments (distribution determined by the faculty) up to the percentage of the state's participation in the faculty's turnover
 - Ownership over the acquisitions gained from the faculty's income
- Students' participation:
 - 17% of the members of the faculty Council delegated by students
 - Student parliament (unspecified in details)
 - Students' opinion in the re-election (and promotion) of professors

Faculties' and universities' statutes that were drawn up during the summer of 2002 reveal all the differences among the institutions in terms of their present state, as well as the

understanding of the needs to reform and willingness to implement it. Namely, some of the institutions have incorporated all the reform elements provided by the Law, and set the frame for their implementation. The others took a more conservative approach relying mostly upon the existing practice.

The University Law also has a provision for the establishment of the National HE Council that will be in charge of organizing the evaluation and accreditation procedure and deciding on strategic issues related to the HE. In addition, it should set the strategy and monitor the reform process. The establishment of the Council provides the necessary framework for setting up efficient national HE management. At this moment it acts as a reform instigator, by organizing the appropriate working groups that will explore possible reform models, and using its authority to adopt the final solution. With the reform process underway, the National HE Council will set the guidelines for establishing a number of agencies that will become permanent expert groups dealing with the particular aspects of the HE system. Eventually, with the growing economy, some of these agencies might become independent institutions, while the Council will remain in charge of supervising their work (establishing a sort of meta-agency criteria).

6. Preparing for reform

Several activities identified as the highest priority within the HE reform strategy were organized. The choice was guided by different factors.

Firstly, in order to set the ground for the future assessment of the existing HE institutions, it is necessary to establish a clear procedure and to leave some time to the institutions for reorganizing themselves in order to satisfy the prescribed criteria. Hence, the Accreditation agency was chosen as a starting point. In addition, the established methodology will be important in accrediting the private institutions that applied for the license.

Secondly, the curricula reform that is planned by some faculties might introduce the ECTS. Consequently, it is important that the country accepts the standards in this area.

Finally, though the universities can achieve a certain level of reform within the existing University Law, the vocational schools are working under the old legislation that does not allow for their reform. In order to avoid drafting the new legislation for those schools, it is more rational to set the frame for the entire HE system through the new HE Law.

The undergoing activities were aimed at preparing a review of the existing practice and publishing them as handbooks that can be used as basic material for public debates throughout the academic community.

All the activities were carried out by working teams that included members from the academic community as well as the MoES. By doing so, the HE reform process is also used for the re-education of civil servants within the Ministry, and their adjustment to the jobs that await them in the reformed system.

- **Accreditation**

A review of the accreditation agencies and the applied methodology in most of the European countries, USA, Canada and South Africa has been compiled. It is accompanied by the proposal for organizing a Serbian

accreditation agency. The handbook was printed and distributed in October of 2002¹¹.

In January of 2003, the National HE Council has appointed an Accreditation Committee, that is in a process of designing the accreditation procedure in Serbia. This Committee is supposed to transform itself into an Accreditation Agency that will be stipulated within the new HE Law.

- ECTS and Diploma Supplement

The Handbook on ECTS¹² and Diploma Supplement had been printed and distributed in December of 2002. The National Council is in the process of adopting the rules for implementing the ECTS.

- State and university

A review of the different solutions regarding state universities in Europe has been made. A summary of the most applicable solutions will be prepared for print.

- The Law on student organizations

The debate with the student organizations revealed that it is not yet clear whether a separate Law on Student organizations is needed. While contemplating this, it was agreed to define a procedure for electing the student parliaments. This procedure has been submitted to the National HE Council, and waits to be formally accepted.

- Evaluation

An evaluation team was organized within the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sports. This team proposed a research project that includes the evaluation of teaching activities and programmes to be performed at the Faculty of Philosophy as a pilot institution. Additionally, a handbook on student evaluation has been also printed and distributed¹³.

In addition to the activities organized by the Ministry of Education and Sports, a number of regional projects related to university reform is under way. These projects also serve as a valuable source of knowledge in preparing for the coming reform.

III. The Concept of the HE System

1. Introductory remarks

¹¹ Nikolić R., V.Malbaša, *Akreditacija Akreditacija univerziteta u Srbiji*, AAOM, Beograd 2002, (In Serbian), (available also at www.aaen.edu.yu and www.mps.sr.gov.yu)

¹² Marinković-Nedučin R, P.Lažetić, *Evropski Sistem prenosa bodova u visokom školstvu – Vodič kroz ECTS*, AAOM, Beograd 2002, (In Serbian), (available also at www.aaen.edu.yu and www.mps.sr.gov.yu)

¹³ Handal G, *Studentska evaluacija nastave – Priručnik za nastavnike i studente visokoškolskih ustanova*, AAOM, Beograd 2003, (Translated in Serbian)

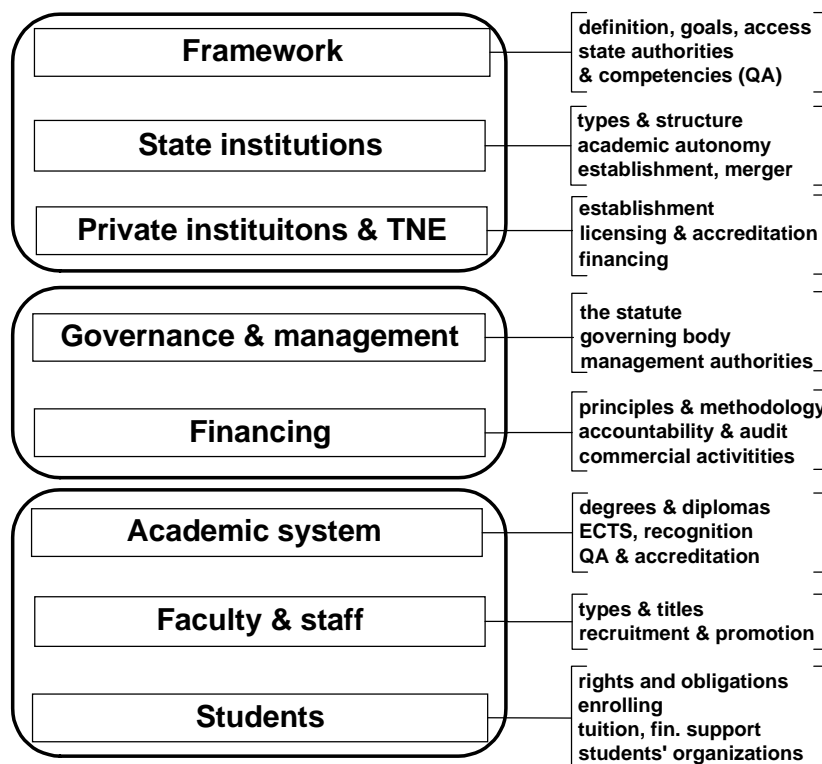
At the beginning of this year the National HE Council appointed a Committee for preparing the new HE law that will include universities as well as schools for applied studies. So far the Committee is still preparing the first draft.

The HE Department of the MoES has prepared the initial concept that has yet to be discussed within the Committee and approved by the National Council. Hence, only the starting point together with some of the proposed solutions can be outlined.

Drafting the concept was based upon the weaknesses of the existing system that has been detected through numerous analysis. In addition, the obligations accepted by signing the Lisbon Convention, as well as by applying to sign the Bologna Declaration were also taken into account. Finally, a number of new legislations adopted in several European countries, together with their experience in reform were also analysed.

Another aspect of the drafted concept relates to the existing institutions and their ability and willingness to change. Namely, the concept has had to take into account that we are *reforming an existing HE system, and not building it anew*. The fact that there are significant differences among the existing institutions yielded to the idea that only general framework should be defined by the law, with the tendency to highly deregulate their operation, while stressing the link between autonomy and accountability. Thus, the law will set the final goal, together with the mechanism with which it can be achieved, allowing each institution to decide upon its own pace in the reform process.

There are three broad areas that are covered by the drafted concept as depicted in the following diagram



2. Institutions

⇒ General framework

Background

The objectives and definition of higher education were probably set at some of the previous Communist Party Congress, though it is difficult to find records. In spite of this, the number of years that have passed since then undoubtedly call for reconsidering the role that HE is expected to play in the period of transition.

The university autonomy has always been (rightly) perceived as a guard from state (ruling party) political interference. Hence, it will be difficult to distinguish the state's right and obligation to supervise the higher education system from the university's autonomy as a precondition for an efficient academic system in a modern society. The problem will further be complicated by the need to introduce some mechanisms for accountability.

Objectives and proposed solutions

- To define the HE system and its role in society –

HE is considered to be a public good that should be financed by the state to the limit of the available budget. Students are trained in order to perform on the labour market for highly qualified personnel

In order to explain this concept it is necessary to point out that the Serbian state HE institutions have found themselves in a rather peculiar situation. Over the years they grew in accordance with the tendency of massification of the HE system, which was considered to be a public good. However, with the declining economy within the last decade, their actual capacity significantly outgrew the budgetary funds. Therefore, if the HE is regarded as a public good offered on the basis of merit, then most of the institutions will operate with half or even lower capacity. On the other hand a number of private HE institutions were established, offering HE to those who could afford it. Since the country has not yet established any specific procedure for accreditation or quality assurance, there is no means to assert that private institutions are any better. On the contrary, based on the years of existence and accumulated experience it seems that state institutions are more likely to offer higher quality. Hence, there is a question whether by insisting that the state institutions continue to offer only "free" (budgetary funded) education, the government will deny the right to those who can pay to achieve a possibly better education?

Under the assumption that in a country where the overall percentage of the citizens with HE is extremely low one cannot afford any institution working below full capacity, this issue can be solved in several possible ways.

- a) Define a tuition-fee for all students that will add up to the budgetary funds so to cover the existing capacity of the HE institutions.
- b) Define a scale of tuition-fees (from 0% to 100% on the basis of merit) that will add up to the budgetary funds and cover the existing capacity.
- c) Define a number of students for which HE is public good (selected on the basis of merit) and let the institution decide on a tuition-fee for the remaining students. This fee is not related to the fee paid from the budget, but to the estimated market value.

d) Define a number of students that have full or part access to the budgetary funds (on the basis of merit) and let the institution decide on a tuition-fee for the remaining students.

In the first two schemes the state HE institutions remain the ones offering the public good, while the interested parties are simply asked to help their country to overcome its "poverty". This might seem a "fair" approach, but only if the state is correctly estimating the cost it is covering per student. In countries that are relatively poor, and where governments are constantly struggling with potential social unrest, the state is bound to try to underestimate the tuition-fee it is paying. As a consequence, the institution will be forced to lower the quality of its services.

The second two schemes establish the state HE institutions as semi-private institutions, which are partially competing on the market. For those institutions that are offering market attractive programmes this seems to be an ideal solution. However, the government will have to cope with the public dissatisfaction with high tuition fees. On the other hand, non-attractive programmes will be forced to lower tuition-fees under the real value (to get at least some money), which will probably result in somewhat lower quality of services.

Faced with the possible choices Serbia has opted for the scheme c). The two year experience is hardly adequate for any definite conclusions, but some of the problems are already apparent.

Firstly, Serbian universities are loose associations of faculties, which are completely independent in their enrolment process. Thus, some of the faculties are collecting substantial funds, while others remain extremely poor.

In addition, the faculties are autonomous to decide upon spending policy. Some of them are investing in infrastructure, but some only in salaries. According to the existing legislation neither the university nor the government can alter this behaviour.

The second encountered problem is related to the overall number of enrolled students. Realizing that enrolment is a possible source of significant financial gain, some of the faculties tend to increase the number above the real capacity (which is hard to establish in the absence of any QA mechanisms). In theory the university can control this number, but in practice it seldom has the strength to do it. (Each faculty tends to keep to itself, thus preventing possible future influence in its own decisions). Moreover, the government which also has the right to control the number, is under the pressure from future students (facing a scarce chance to get a job with a high school diploma) and their parents, so it is reluctant to cut the enrolment number down.

Finally, the merit is based on prior academic achievement and entrance exam results, which are inevitably influenced by the standard of living and educational structure of the family. Hence, those "who have" have a double advantage. They are more likely to get budgetary funding, and even if they don't their families are more likely to be able to pay tuition-fees. The

question of why their financial status is not taken into account has an easy answer. Half of the population income is still earned on the 'grey market', which prevents any serious evidence of real financial status.

There is no doubt that the existing scheme will have to be re-examined. However, as long as the economy is stagnating it is hard to expect any real improvement. In the state in which Serbia is now, any solution will be almost equally un-fair.

- To specify, as precisely as possible, the state's authorities and competence including its role in the accreditation process –

The nation wide management of the higher education system is conceived so to combine the governmental political mechanisms with the academic professional mechanism.

The first one, to be implemented by the Ministry for education includes:

- i. Planning and distributing the budgetary resources
- ii. Licensing of the HE institution
- iii. Monitoring the operation of the HE institution from the administrative and legislative point of view
- iv. Supervising the Accreditation Committee
- v. Supervising the recognition procedure in accordance with the Lisbon convention

The second mechanism should provide for professional decisions regarding the national management of the university system to be made by experts, particularly those inside the system, with due observance of university autonomy. This is achieved through the National Council for HE that is charge of:

- i. Developing the overall HE policy
- ii. Setting the evaluation policy together with the accreditation criteria that are proposed by the Accreditation Committee
- iii. Setting the enrolment policy
- iv. Proposing the funding policy

The Centre for accreditation and quality control is established as an independent entity whose role is to initiate, monitor, promote and perpetrate the accreditation procedure.

State institutions

Background

Over the years the government has established a number of state universities (with a certain number of faculties) together with vocational schools. The decisions were based more upon

political will, than upon the proper evaluation of the academic merits. The established institutions were left to develop themselves as they deemed appropriate. In a way, there was a taciturn consent that each faculty would mind only its own profession and would not get involved with educational academic policy or to that matter to any policy at all. The university represented only a weak conglomerate of highly autonomous faculties. In fact each faculty is almost a highly specialized university in itself (independent institutional development, development of the disciplines needed to support the major programme, building its own administrative infrastructure, etc.). This has resulted in:

- Multiple layers of unnecessary and costly duplication in a number of fields (teaching, administration, services), resulting in wasted resources at all levels and a high degree of inefficiency. Also due to these structures, inadequate use is made of essential but scarce equipment which does exist in some universities.
- Misbalance between the authority of the rector (mostly honorary) and the dean (executive).
- Difficulties in organizing multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary programmes

Contrary to the university that has a certain level of supervising authority over the faculties (promotion, M.S. and PhD thesis), higher vocational schools are completely independent and supervised only by the Ministry of Education. Over the years they were left to expand out of all proportion, acting as a "safety valves" for those young people who, upon graduating from high-school, were not offered jobs or indeed any other opportunity. Obviously, such an unregulated existence is no longer tenable.

Objectives and proposed solutions

- To define the university and set relationships between the university and its faculties-

Establishing the university as the single legal entity, with the departments offering programmes in specific areas has been proposed. Several departments offering programmes in one broader area (such as engineering, medicine etc.) can be grouped as Schools.

Even in this preliminary phase this proposal provoked strong disagreement within the existing Faculties. Solution will probably be found by clear division of authority and competencies among the university and its departments (Faculties).

- To define the organizational framework for the schools for applied studies (colleges)–

The existing vocational schools will have to try to reform themselves and to introduce a three years (180 ECTS points) applied studies programmes. The transformation is not going to be automatic, but each institution will be properly accredited before getting the license to operate as a school for applied studies. Wherever possible, colleges will be grouped into the universities of applied studies.

Most of the existing vocational schools are ready to accept this proposal, and are already preparing for the reform.

- To define the role and the position of the research institutes which are related to the HE institutions –

This issue is left for the separate Law on Research Policy that is drafted by the Ministry of Science and Technology

- To establish a licensing procedure –

The Ministry of education is in charge of the licensing of the institution, based upon the recommendation of the Accreditation Committee that is evaluating the programmes offered by the institution.

The licensing conditions are set by the HE National Council.

⇒ **Private institutions and TNE**

Background

In the mid-nineties the space was opened for establishing of the private universities and vocational schools. However, even then the accreditation procedure was loosely outlined within the Law, and focused again only on the set of formal criteria that included the availability of space, teaching equipment and an adequate number of professors. The Ministry of Education was formally in charge of defining the more specific procedure, but it never came to it. It might be said that only the poor economic conditions saved the country from an uncontrolled mushrooming of private institutions.

Presently there are three private universities each with several faculties. They were established at the end of the 1990s, but records of their licensing by the Ministry of Education are incomplete. Inspection revealed that they all fulfil the formal criteria, but their programmes are yet to be evaluated. In addition there are five private faculties offering programmes in the specific areas. Due to the overly regulating University Law, all private institutions are organised in the same way as state institutions.

One of the peculiarities of our private sector is the fact that almost half of the teaching staff is employed at the state institutions and working part-time in the private institutions.

Only one institution offering so-called "trans-national education" operates within the country. The Federal government of the former Yugoslavia licensed it in 1985. Several foreign institutions have inquired about the conditions for the establishing of distance (external) programmes or franchised institutions in Serbia.

Considering the fact that the requests for the opening of over twenty private faculties await the Ministry of Education's decision, it is important to prevent the uncontrolled growth of the private sector and the corresponding consequences that have marked all the countries in transition.

Objectives and proposed solutions

- To set the precise conditions and criteria for the establishing, licensing and accrediting of private institutions –

The accreditation procedure does not differ significantly from the one defined for the state institution. The only difference being the initial project proposal that has to state clearly the mission, main objectives, target group as well as secured financing to support the running cost for a certain period.

The license is issued for a number of accredited programmes and predefined number of students. Each change in programmes and/or number of students has to be formally requested, and can be introduced only if specifically granted.

- To examine the state funding policy towards private institutions –

At this point there are no provisions for state funding of private institutions.

- To define the stance towards trans-national education –

The TNE will not be regulated by the HE law. However, all diplomas issued by a TNE institution will have to be recognized within the country. The "Code of good practice" adopted by the ENIC/NARIC network will be promoted within the recognition procedure.

3. Governance

⇒ Governance & management

Background

All higher educational institutions have a peculiar combination of centralized and decentralized management. To begin with, the managerial role is highly reduced by the overtly regulating law, which prevents any managerial skills to show their full potentials. All political and professional decisions that are to be made at the national level are prepared by the administrative personnel at the Ministry for Education and approved by the government. Apart from this, the state has reduced itself to a modest supervisory function whereby it appoints 15% of the members in the managing boards of each of the higher education institution. The students' participation is reduced to the 15%, while the remaining members are coming from the institution.

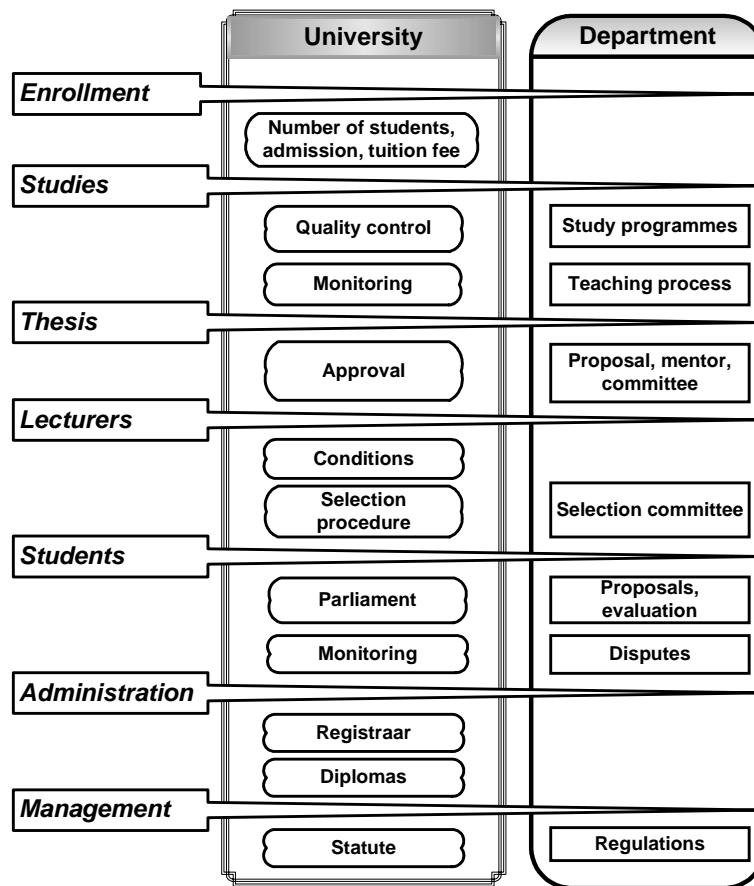
At the institutional level (faculty or vocational higher school), the major role is played by the Educational Council whose members are all lecturers within the institution. The council is in charge of all activities, ranging from the election of dean and vice-deans, to appointments, promotions as well as curricula and thesis revisions. In spite of the fact that the elected dean's appointment has to be confirmed by the managing board, while appointments and promotions have to be confirmed by the university council, the final outcome always reflects the will of the institutional council. This is considered to be the major asset of the university autonomy. Inasmuch as it can be argued that the members of the institution are in a position to decide among themselves who deserves to be promoted, or appointed as a dean, there is a fact that collective deciding is prone to reduce accountability. As long as one vote represents something like one hundredth in the overall decision, it is cast without the full awareness of the responsibility it could consequently carry. Hence, the question of accountability becomes also rather vague and fuzzy.

Objectives and proposed solutions

These issues are related only to the state institutions. The private institutions can organize themselves freely.

- To set the institution competencies (staff employment, students' admission, curricula etc.).

The division of competences between the university and its departments is presented on the diagram.



- To define the structure of the governing body and the rules for appointment.

The institution governing body is the University Council whose members are appointed from the three interest groups: teaching staff, students, and founders (the State or the private consortium). Members coming from the first two groups are elected, while the external members are appointed by founder. The percentage of the representation of each group is not yet decided.

The Council is in charge of adopting the university statute, appointing the management body, developing the institution mission and strategy, as well as supervising its activities.

- To specify management authorities.

Management activities are conferred to the Rector and Vice-Rectors that are appointed by the Council.

Teaching and research activities are coordinated and supervised by the Educational Council that comprises representatives from all the departments.

Student related issues are coordinated by the Student parliament.

The Rectorate, the Educational Council and the student parliament can appoint a number of committees for specific tasks.

⇒ **Financing**

Background

Public sector higher education is financed from two types of sources:

- Public funds (the State budget);
- Higher education institutions' own funds derived from revenues outside the budget.

Public funds that are allocated to an institution consist of three parts: salaries, teaching and running costs and maintenance.

The lump sum allocated for salaries depends on the total number of teaching positions needed to cover the estimated teaching load under the compulsory six 45 minutes classes per week. The overall teaching load is deduced from the formula that links the number of enrolled state funded students, the total number of courses as specified by the curricula and the number of teaching groups whose size depends upon the disciplines (i.e. the prevailing teaching methods) that particular institution is covering. The sum is finally adjusted so to reflect the actual state within the institution with regard to the distribution of different positions together with the years of employment. Regardless of this "ideal" number of lecturers, an institution is entitled to its own hiring policy. This means that it can be easily overstaffed or understaffed.

In general the institution is expected to determine the level of salary based upon the ranks. However, this is not compulsory so certain institutions decided to introduce different criteria based upon the actual teaching load. Experience has shown that these institutions have fewer employees than ideally estimated which gladly accept having higher weekly workload in order to get better salaries.

The teaching and operating costs are calculated in a similar way. They are again based upon the number of students as well as upon of the equipment required for lectures. However, since a part of the expenses results from the activities that are not directly linked to teaching, only a certain percentage of the calculated amount is provided. This percentage equals the ratio of the state's participation in the faculty's turnover. Since these funds are allocated on the level of faculties there are no any incentives on the university level that will call for higher efficiency in implementing teaching equipment and reduce the existing overlapping of laboratories. Within the last years, these funds were rather scarce and only a certain percentage of the allocated budgetary funds were actually transferred to the institutions.

The funds needed for maintenance of the premises are defined by the institutions themselves. This usually represents a long list of "wishful thinking" from which only those items that are absolutely indispensable are covered.

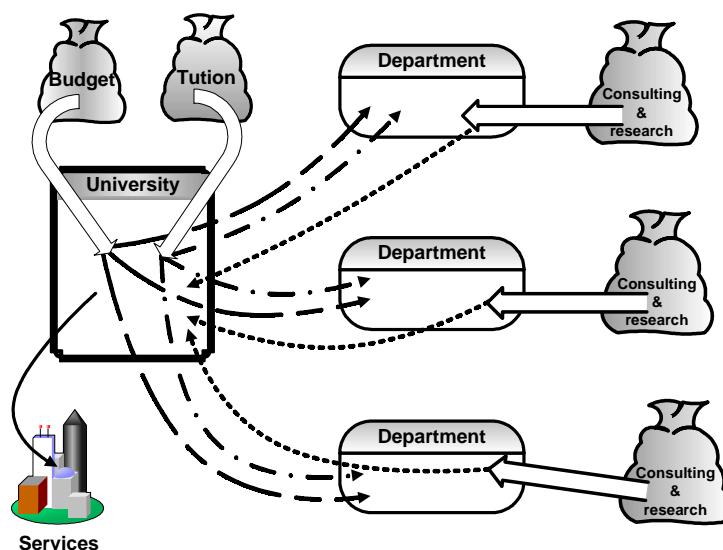
The extra budgetary revenue comes from students' tuition, research projects and cooperation with industry or public sector. The last two sources are typically linked to a group of professors within one institution, and serve as additional source for their salaries. As a general rule, this group is required to credit a certain percentage to the institution. Depending of the institutional policy this percentage may range from a symbolic 5% to the substantial 50% of the total sum. With the declining economy, the extra budgetary revenue was reduced mainly to tuition, which prompted the institutions to fight for a large number of students, even at the expense of lowering the teaching standards.

It is obvious that the amounts of extra budgetary revenue differ significantly from institution to institution. This is due to students' interest as well as to the possibilities to sell particular expertise on the market. With the missing role of the university as the cohesive factor, there is no solidarity among the institutions so that there financial status significantly varies. This in turn have direct effect on the teaching and research conditions.

Objectives and proposed solutions

- To set the principles, conditions and methodology for state funding –

The overall funding scheme is presented on the following diagram. The exact percentages have yet to be determined.



The main objective is to make the institution financially responsible. The lump sum model that is based mainly on input factors is revised so to link to quality measures, output factors or good performance in priority areas as well as to some stimuli for innovation and reform. The budgetary funding is directed to the university that would have to manage the lump sums they received according to pre-established criteria of excellence in teaching and research. They will be forced to set their priorities, establish some balance within different non-profitable and profitable disciplines and to carefully re-examine the policy they adopted toward the extra budgetary revenues. This will allow for increased efficiency in using the available resources. In addition, this will also call for a more systemic approach to the hiring policy and the overall teaching and research load.

In order to motivate the departments to carry on their external activities, they are allowed to manage the major part of the income earned through these activities.

- To establish the accountability policy and define the audit procedure –

The overall organization of the state budget transaction provides the full transparency of the funding. In addition the Ministry for Education is in charge of the audit procedure.

4. Academic system

Background

As mentioned earlier, the founding of state universities and vocational schools was guided mostly by political consideration. Existing universities were not asked for their opinion, and even if some academic group was prepared to voice it, there was nobody willing to listen. Once established, the institution was never subject to any proper academic evaluation. The only type of supervision, defined by the law, consists of verifying whether the prescribed bureaucratic procedure was carried out to the last letter. The Ministry of Education was in charge of this procedure, but in spite of some vague attempts, it never introduced even the rudimentary quality control.

The existing HE state institutions, though similar in form, vary significantly in their internal organization and achievements. Deciding for themselves about their mission and goals, defining their curricula autonomously with respect to their perception of the country's needs, together with respect to similar institutions worldwide, competing, though informally, with other institutions in the country in terms of former students' achievements, published papers, research activities, etc., some of these institutions managed to achieve very high standards. The price to be paid was twofold. On one hand, the university studies became rather difficult, resulting in a prolonged study period, while on the other hand the focus was set on research, neglecting teaching activities and students' needs.

Due to a lack of better means for evaluating institutions, the success of former students in their graduate studies at world-renowned universities became the only applied criteria. Setting this as a goal, each institution started revising its curricula, adding more and more subjects to it until it covered the undergraduate and graduate level. Left without a choice, students have been trying to cope with this. The promise of a highly valued diploma kept them in pursuit of the first degree for an average of seven to eight years. Those who made it, indeed excelled, but over 60% of the enrolled students never got any degree, in spite of the fact that they had completed two to three years of studies and passed over 20 exams. Often they could not even sidestep to vocational schools, which have a completely different curricula. Naturally, the throughput of vocational schools is much higher. In spite of the fact that some of them offer decent practical skills and knowledge, they are still regarded as second-rate higher education institutions.

The external institutional reports list the major weaknesses of the existing academic system as follows.

- Outdated and highly repetitive curricula, outdated teaching methodology, together with the outdated and internationally not relevant literature.
- Highly structured mono-disciplinary programmes that cannot answer the market needs. Focus is placed on the theory, with practical skills and knowledge being neglected
- Long and rather difficult undergraduate studies, large dropout rate, too long actual study period, non-existent side exits. Too many teaching hours, with no room for alternatives to traditional ex-cathedra teaching. Large number of exams. Weak and poorly organized post-graduate studies
- Non-existing quality control system and programme and institution accreditation

Another problem that has to be dealt with is the fact that the recognition of diplomas and certificates is left entirely to the faculty that seems to be the closest to covering those disciplines in question. The usual practice relies mostly upon counting the courses and years of studies and not looking for substantial differences. Hence, very often the diplomas issued by the same foreign university are recognized by some faculties in Serbia, while rejected by the others. This practice, being in opposition to the Lisbon convention, has to be re-examined.

Objectives and proposed solutions

- To define the degrees and diplomas in accordance with the Bologna declaration-

Increased overall study efficiency, diversified curricula and balancing theoretical knowledge versus practical skills are the obvious axes of change.

Two types of undergraduate study programmes are introduced: *applied* and *academic* programme.

Applied study programme combines some basic theoretical knowledge with the acquisition of professional skills and expertise. The curricula should be flexible, allowing the students to select their own route of professional training. The first degree is awarded when a student acquire 180 ECTS points.

The academic undergraduate curricula is a mix of fundamental scientific and applied vocational training. It should satisfy the needs of those professions that require advanced professional and cultural training, as well as of those who are contemplating a career in research or in higher education. Students should be given freedom to opt for a few elective disciplines, alongside the common core subjects, building thus their own specialties. The narrow academic specialization should be left out for the graduate (master) courses. The first degree is awarded after completing between 180 and 240 ECTS points.

The second degree can be a professional (applied) master (300 ECTS points in total) and an academic master (300 to 360 ECTS points in total – cumulative from the beginning of studies).

The doctoral degree (PhD) remains as a step toward research or higher education career. It is awarded after completing the doctoral study programme leading towards the total of 420 to 480 ECTS points.

The division between the types of study should occur at the beginning of the programmes. However, possibilities for transfer from one type of the programme to the other have to be built into the system.

Universities are the institutions that can offer both types of programmes, while the colleges can offer only applied study programmes and professional master programmes. The underlying rationale for this solution is found in the present distribution of human resources.

- To specify the recognition procedure in accordance with the Lisbon convention -
The recognition process is coordinated through the Ministry of education that is monitoring the observance of the Lisbon convention. The universities are still in charge of carrying the recognition procedure.
- To set the evaluation procedure and programme accreditation criteria
The evaluation and the quality control are left for the university statute, while the Accreditation committee is in charge of the accreditation of the programmes.

⇒ **Faculty and staff**

Background

The existing legislation defines five levels of teaching positions: assistant-apprentice (holders of the first degree), assistant (M.S), docent, associate professor and full professor (all three positions require a PhD). Except the full-professorship, which is a lifetime tenure, the other positions are held under contract for a fixed term (3 years for assistants, and 5

years for docents and associate professors). When the term expires the person can be re-elected to the same position or promoted to a higher level. The promotion conditions, specified within the law, focus upon research activities, as they seem to be the only one that can be easily evaluated (by simple counting published papers and text books). This has resulted in an artificially high number of published works and certain neglect in teaching activities, particularly in those disciplines that have a markedly applied character and call for practical experience and laboratory experiments, rather than fundamental research. In addition, in spite of the relatively rigorous mechanism installed by the law, faculties' councils, put under pressure to decide about their peers' future, were always finding a way to interpret the candidates' results as sufficient for promotion. As a consequence, most assistants who get the PhD degree can be sure that they will end their career as full professors.

Objectives and proposed solutions

- To define teaching ranks and titles

Instead of appointing assistants, the teaching-aid jobs are delegated to a wider group of MS and PhD students. Only after obtaining the PhD degree they might apply for a lowest teaching position – docent. This approach will not only allow for a larger pool from which docents are elected, leading thus eventually to better choice, but also offer the candidates the possibility to test themselves and verify their attitudes towards the teaching versus research activities.

The first two teaching positions (docent and associate professor) remain on a contract base, with eventual limits on the number of re-electing periods (remains to be agreed).

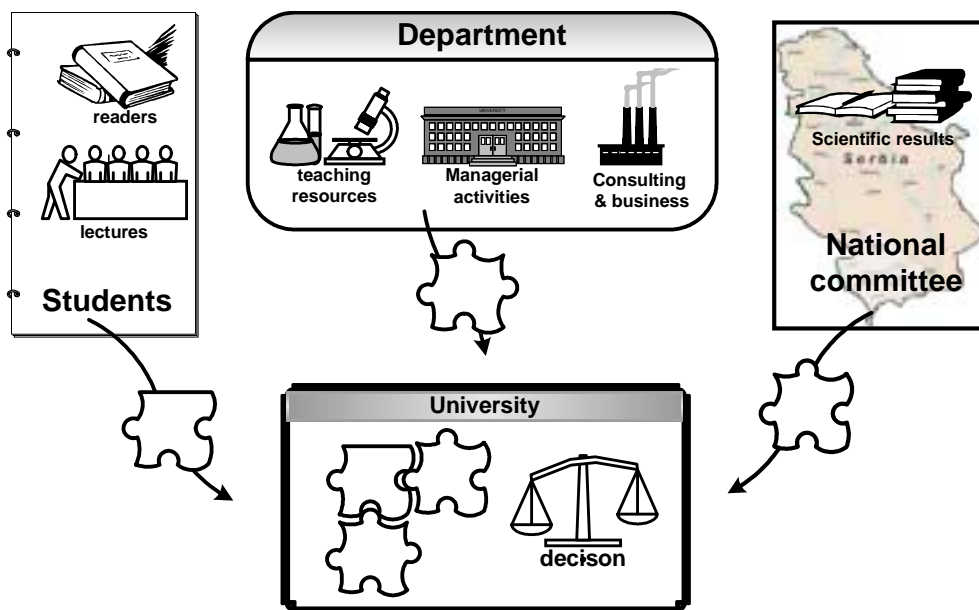
The possibility of introducing two distinct professional routes: teaching/research route and teaching route, is also included. Teaching activities combined with the practical skills can lead towards the position of lecturer. Adopting this approach alleviates the pressure of being involved in research at all cost, especially for educators within colleges and eventually within some university programmes that offer more applied training.

The teaching rank can be also conferred to the experts that are not fully employed at the university or college.

- To establish the rank-conferring procedure and criteria

Promotion conditions are some sort of integral over teaching, research and activities within the department related to the development of teaching resources, managerial and business activities as depicted on the diagram.

In order to avoid peer pressure and achieve impartiality within the institution the Accreditation committee sets the necessary conditions. The sufficient conditions are regulated by the institution's statute.



⇒ Study system and students

Background

Students' admission is based upon ranking lists that are compiled by the addition of 60% of the score achieved in the entrance exam to 40% of the average grade derived from all four years of secondary education.

Each year the Government decides on the total number of students that can be enrolled at each state-owned university and post-secondary vocational school, together with the distribution of students among different institutions (faculties and vocational schools). These numbers are not based upon the estimated needs, but mostly reflect the capacity of the existing institutions. The government also specifies the number and the distribution of students that are going to be state funded. The total number depends on the allocated budget, while the distribution is derived by combining the estimated needs and the efficiency of the institution (average ratio of the awarded degrees and the enrolled students). The tuition fee for the remaining students is set by the university. The number of students and the tuition fee at the private schools are set by their management.

Once enrolled, the student is expected to pass a certain number of exams in order to be allowed to proceed to the next year of studies. Those who fail, remain formally enrolled in the same year until they give the specified number of exams. Enrolling into the next year the student gets an accumulated number of exams: the total of exams prescribed for this year plus those that he failed to give in the previous year. This accumulation usually results in failing the second or third year of studies.

A student who fails an exam is not required to repeat the whole course, but only to re-take the exam. Theoretically, the same student can sit the same exam an unlimited number of times. In practice this number can be very high. The fact that for many exams the average pass rate is between 10% and 20%, indicates that the students should not be the only ones held responsible.

The significant number of students found that the lecturing is boring, old fashioned and does not capture their imagination. In consequence they do not bother to attend classes and do not

develop adequate working habits. The overall situation is farther aggravated by widespread stories in student circles of corruption amongst the Faculty's teaching staff.

State financed students do not receive scholarships. Instead their tuition fees are waived, and they have access to the student dormitories and cafeterias where they only pay a symbolic price. The student can fail a year twice prior to losing the state financed status.

During the previous year a number of new student organizations have been created. They compete for membership mostly by insisting that the academic criteria be lowered. In spite of their efforts to organize a number of discussions about the different aspects of the HE system and to prove that they have something to contribute to the reform process, up until now the universities were not considering them to be partners in any debate. The student Parliament, as envisaged by the Law of 2002, should allow for the student representatives to be actively involved in the reform.

Objectives and proposed solutions

- To set the admission procedure and define the structure of tuition fees

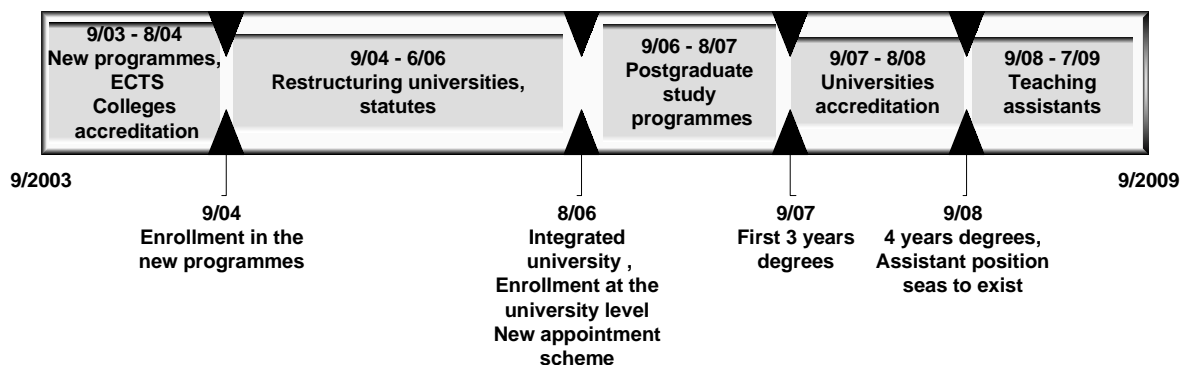
The admission procedure will be regulated by the General Law on Education that envisages the national final exam that will substitute the entrance exam. There are two categories of students: state funded and self-financed students. The first number is defined by the government, while the second one is defined by the total number of students for which the institution is accredited. The division between the state funded students and the self-financed is made upon their ranking based on previous results (final secondary school exam). The structure of tuition fee is still under consideration.

- To define the study system
 - The study system is unique for all level of studies (undergraduate and graduate).
 - Teaching activities are organized within semesters or trimesters.
 - Certain courses or part of courses can be organized in the form of distance learning, but the exams have to be held within the institution.
 - The majority of courses are one-semester courses. The teaching load of each course is defined through a number of ECTS points. Grade points should be accumulated during the course (homework and mid-term), so that the final exam contribute to the grade with a certain percentage. Exceptionally a course can last for two semesters, but the student has to be offered a possibility to accumulate a certain percentage of grade points by the end of the first semester.
 - The courses are mandatory and electives. Attendance of some course can be conditioned with a number of prerequisite courses.
 - The curriculum defines a number of courses that are offered within each study year (60 ECTS points). The student decides on his/hers pace of studies by subscribing a number of courses he/she will attend in one year.

- At the beginning of each academic year a student subscribes to a certain number of courses:
 - *State funded student* has to subscribe the minimum of 60 ECTS points.
 - *Self-financed student* has to subscribe the minimum of 37 ECTS points (and to pay the tuition fee only for the subscribed courses). (The underlying rationale being the fact that this student is probably working part-time, and cannot be expected to carry the full teaching load. Hence there is no need to pay the full tuition fee for that year).
 - If the exam is not passed by the end of the academic year, the same course has to be attended the next year.
 - The state funded student keeps this status only if he/she accumulates at least 60 ECTS points. If not, this student can enrol in the next year as self-financing student.
 - The self-financing student can change the status into the state funded student if he/she has accumulated 60 ECTS points in the previous year and if there are free spaces on the state funded list.
- To set the general framework for student organizations and their participation in the HE system.
 - In addition to students' involvement in evaluating the teaching process, major participation is expected through the student parliament that will discuss all the issues relevant for the student body. In addition, a number of student representatives will be included in the university council.
 - The student organizations acts as classical NGOs and are not regulated by this law.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The transformation from the current state of our HE system to the designed one will have to be done gradually over a number of years. A realistic time line is presented in the following diagram. The starting date has been fixed for the beginning of the next academic year. At this point it is still unclear whether this process will be able to be initiated at this date. Nevertheless, whenever it starts it will be staged as indicated bellow.



6. Critical Success Factors

Strengths

- The decision of the Serbian government to join the Bologna process, and to support the higher education system in implementing it.
- Acceptance of the Bologna process by the Serbian association of universities.
- University participation in a number of regional, as well as Tempus projects related to the HE reform.
- Recognition by the vocational higher education schools that they will not survive within the HE system as two-year, traditionally discipline-oriented, low-rated schools.
- A number of NGOs that have been active in higher education within the last decade, actively following the reform process in Europe, ready to undertake the same endeavour at home.
- Strong students' awareness of the necessity of reforms and their willingness to actively promote it and participate in the process.

Threats

- The university system in Serbia is very traditional, set in its ways, with the overwhelming attitude that only lack of financial support keeps it from being excellent.
- Extreme weariness of any external influence the state (which, in the past was always synonymous for the ruling party) might exert upon the university. Hence, in striving for absolute autonomy, the notion of accountability has been completely lost. Lack of the latter also implies the absence of self-evaluation or indeed any other comparative evaluation method that can help establish one's own place in the academic world.
- Lack of any experience in active participation in reform, since, within the last fifty years it was always externally imposed by the government. Fear of establishing a different system of values, without the ability to predict one's own position in it.
- Delayed visibility of results might impede competition among institutions.

Weaknesses

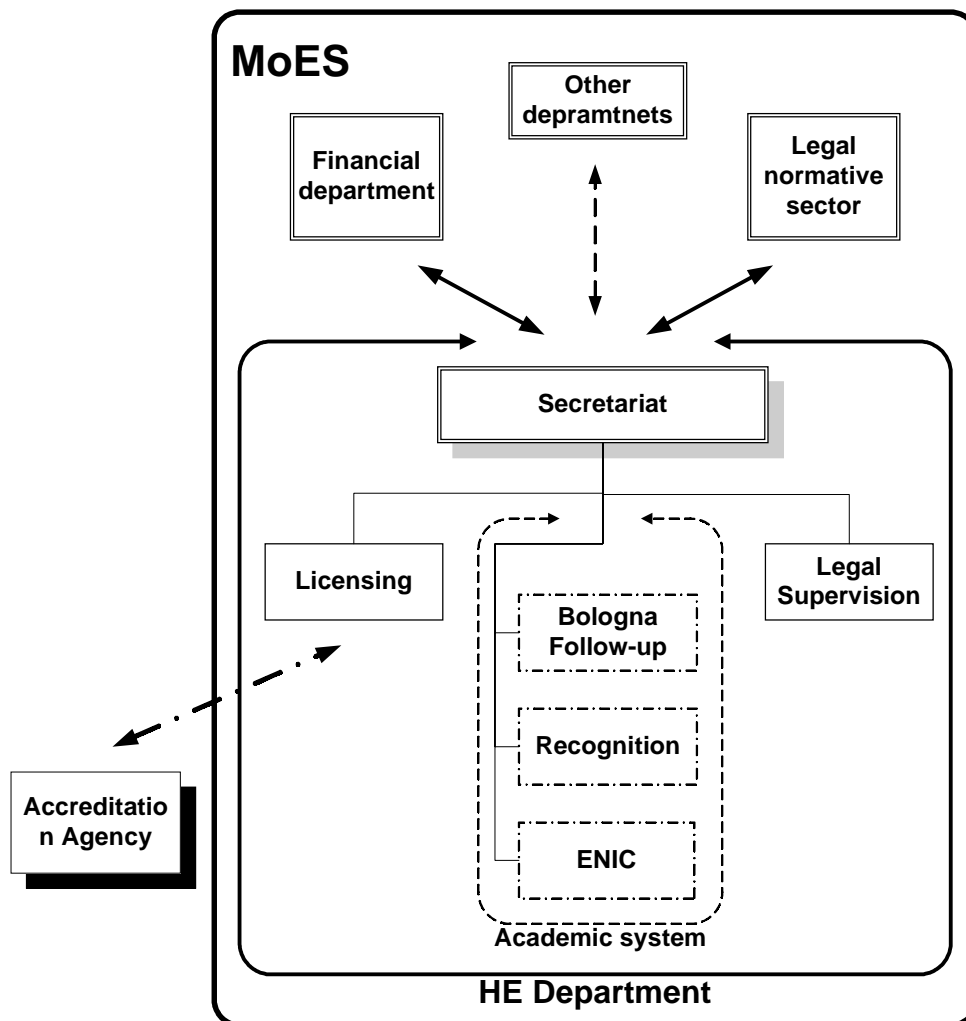
- Lack of the financial means to promote the reform process or even to support the developing of new curricula and implementation of new teaching methods. The budgetary fund is inadequate, while the majority of potential donors have up to now declined to offer any substantial support, apart from expertise and consultancy.
- Struggling economy with undefined overall development policy that prevents estimation of the labour market's future needs. Contradicting requirements stemming from the lack of job positions and extremely low percentage of the population with higher education.
- Long-lasting phenomenon of brain-drain, whose consequence is a missing link of a whole generation of scholars, precisely the one that should induce changes.
- Non-existing pool of experts in different HE fields, which cannot be filled until the proper graduate course in HE is established.
- Lack of financial means to fully implement the ICT and to promote life-long learning to support a knowledge-based society.

7. Restructuring of the Department of HE

The organizational structure of the Department of HE within the MoES has to reflect the planned reform activities. The focus is placed upon the activities related to the support of the reform process. This sector will play the major role in implementing the Bologna process and will later serve as the coordinator of the developments in higher education.

The Licensing Sector will carry the administrative task based mainly upon the recommendations from the Accreditation Agency, as well as the report from the Supervision Sector.

The financing activities are removed from the HE Department and concentrated within the Financial Department. This solution should allow for the better planning and management of the financial resources allocated to the entire education system.



A local area network is established throughout the Department. However, the only external communication can be achieved through the general e-mail activities. A proper I/O procedure allowing for the introduction of the e-government has yet to be designed.

Appendix I

The Structure of Serbia's higher education system

The higher education system includes post-secondary vocational education programmes and university education leading to bachelor, masters and PhD degrees.

⇒ Post-secondary education – College

The two to three year vocational schools (i.e. colleges) leading to *Level VI professional qualifications* offer theoretical and practical preparation for performing sophisticated executive tasks and for organisation and management of other specialists' work. The certificate awarded by these schools is regarded as the final one. However, certain faculties within the university may decide to accept holders of the college certificate and to enrol them into the second or third year of study, offering them a chance to get a university degree. The decision is made in accordance to the degree of overlap between the programmes offered by the college and the university.

⇒ University education

Universities are associations of the faculties and academies of art, which exist as legal bodies offering a number of programmes within specific disciplines. Faculties, representing the highest educational and scientific institutions, organize and conduct scientific research, art development and educational work.

Universities offer three types of degrees:

- first degree (*Diploma*)
- second degree – Master (*Magistarska diploma*)
- second degree – Specialization (*Specijalistička diploma*)
- doctoral degree – PhD (*Doktorat nauka*)

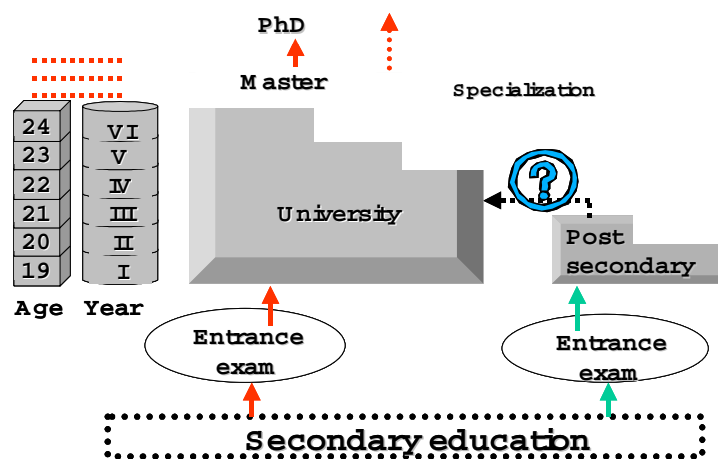
In order to obtain a first degree certificate a student has to complete 4 to 6 years of undergraduate studies, depending on the particular faculty. Engineering faculties have five-year programmes, while medical faculties' programmes range from 5 to 6 years of study. In order to graduate from the majority of faculties a student has to successfully complete all the exams within the given curricula and to pass the final exam which consists of presenting a written thesis on a specific topic. The number of exams depends on the faculty and varies between 20 to 50 with the average of 5 to 10 per year.

Graduate studies for the second degree last 1 year (specialization) and 2 years (masters). It is expected that students enrolled in these studies are employed, hence classes are usually conducted in the evenings. Students graduate after passing all exams (6 to 8) and completing the written thesis.

Doctoral studies are not organized as a specific instruction. Instead a candidate decides upon a topic, proposes the thesis subject to the faculty, which upon approval of the subject appoints a mentor to the candidate. The corresponding research project can last for several years until the candidate reaches some valuable results and presents them in the form of a written thesis. Appropriate faculty and university committees evaluate the submitted thesis, and decide upon conferring the PhD to the candidate.

⇒ Access to higher education

Graduates with general secondary education certificates as well as four-year vocational education certificates and secondary art school certificates have access to higher education. However, universities and post-secondary vocational schools have the prerogative to specify which particular subjects must be completed at the secondary school level in order to qualify for admission to a chosen programme. In addition, certain arts programmes accept students without the secondary education certificate under the condition that they pass the special exam specified by the corresponding programme.



Higher education in Serbia

Each year the Government decides on the total number of students that can be enrolled at each state-owned university and post-secondary vocational school, together with the distribution of students among different institutions (faculties and vocational schools). The government also specifies the number and the distribution of students that are going to be state funded. The tuition fee for the remaining students is set by the university. The number of students and the tuition fee at the private schools are set by their management.

The admissions procedure is not centralized: each higher education institution has its own admission board which is in charge of the entrance exam. The entrance exam consists of one to two written tests or essays, covering the subjects that are pertinent to the chosen area. The exam is eliminatory, meaning that the candidate has to score above 30% in order to qualify for enrolment as a student paying tuition, and above 50% in order to qualify as a state-funded student.

Admission is based upon the ranking lists that are compiled by the addition of 60% of the score achieved in the entrance exam to 40% of the average grade derived from all four years of secondary education.

In order to qualify for the arts programme the candidates have, in addition, to pass a specific exam attesting their skills and attitudes.

⇒ **Student statistics**

The students' statistics (presented in the following tables) are somewhat obscured due to the system of study. Namely, each student is supposed to pass a certain number of exams in order to be allowed to enrol in the next year. If a student fails to achieve this requirement he/she is required to enrol again in the same year, though most of the time he/she is not attending any courses, but only sitting the exams. In addition, upon attending the courses in the final year student is expected to enrol once again, thus extending his/hers status for another year. This explains the difference between the total number of the enrolled students and the so-called "active" students that are attending the courses.

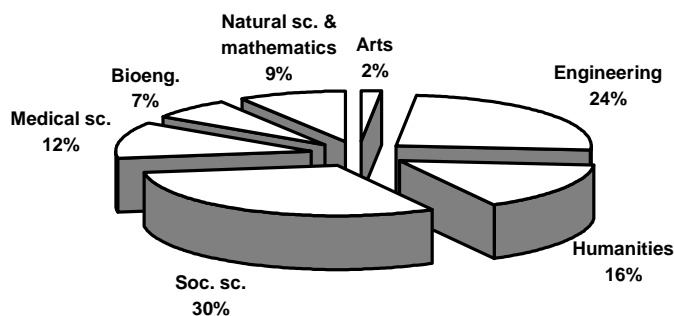
Academ ic year 2002/2003

University	Total number of enrolled students			Number of students enrolled for the first time in the respective year		
	Total	Budget	Self-financed	Total	Budget	Self-financed
BEOGRAD	86,755	53,151	33,604	51,179	40,881	10,298
ART - BEOGRAD	2,185	2,070	115	2,092	1,987	105
NOVI SAD	36,431	24,852	11,579	29,393	20,276	9,117
KRAGUJEVAC	13,632	8,188	5,444	9,457	6,409	3,048
NIŠ	25,399	16,609	8,790	13,605	10,700	2,905
KOSOVSKA MITROVICA	5,086	4,030	1,056	3,087	2,223	864
Total	169,488	108,900	60,588	108,813	82,476	26,337

Academ ic year 2002/2003 - Students that have not completed all the courses

University	Total number of enrolled students			Number of students enrolled for the first time in the respective year			Active students/enrolled
	Total	Budget	Self-financed	Total	Budget	Self-financed	
BEOGRAD	77,428	47,771	29,657	46,801	37,929	8,872	60%
ART - BEOGRAD	1,872	1,757	115	1,784	1,679	105	95%
NOVI SAD	31,637	22,185	9,452	27,216	19,219	7,997	86%
KRAGUJEVAC	12,190	7,172	5,018	8,435	5,917	2,518	69%
NIŠ	18,725	11,878	6,847	12,077	9,574	2,503	64%
KOSOVSKA MITROVICA	4,088	3,126	962	2,991	2,127	864	73%
Total	145,940	93,889	52,051	99,304	76,445	22,859	68%

On average the total number of undergraduate students enrolled each year is approximately 33,000, of which half are funded from the budget. The distribution according to areas is shown in the diagram. It should be pointed out that the distribution mostly reflects the available capacity in the corresponding fields, rather than students' interest.



Each year, around 12,000 students are awarded their first degree. Only 11% graduate in time, while the average length of study is approximately 8 years.

Funds

The value allocated to education from the state budget in 2002 is at a level of 3.4% of GDP. The distribution of the budgetary funding is presented in the following table. Since the research activities are funded through the Ministry for Science and Technology the amount allocated to this Ministry is also included. It should be noticed however, that in addition to the universities, researchers from the research institutes are also eligible for this funding. The exact distribution between the groups is obscured by the fact that the same person can participate in projects that are run by either of these institutions.

In spite of the fact that a certain growth of the HE participation in the budget can be detected, the overall allocated amount is far from being sufficient.

	Year 2003		Year 2002		INDEX 2003/2002
	amount	% of the budget	amount	% of the budget	
	1	2	3	4	1/3
Serbian budget	261,501,819,000	-	217,379,629,540		120.3%
Student standard (accommodation and meals)	2,207,200,000	0.844%	1,646,715,000	0.758%	134.0%
Salaries and running costs	6,330,000,000	2.421%	4,837,550,000	2.225%	130.9%
Ministry for Science and Technology	3,740,831,000	1.431%	2,602,414,000	1.197%	143.7%
Total	12,278,031,000	4.695%	9,086,679,000	4.180%	135.1%

The operating costs are covered only up to the percentage of the state's participation in the faculty's turnover. Although this percentage varies significantly from faculty to faculty, the average participation of each university is presented in the table.

University	Lecturers	% budget funds/total turnover
BEOGRAD	4784	49%
ART - Beograd	476	83%
NOVI SAD	3100	72%
KRAGUJEVAC	704	61%
NIS	1398	58%
KOSOVSKA MITROVICA	980	92%
Total	8223	51%