



# Guide to Minorities and Education

Foundation of Stable Relations in the Region



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of Stable Relations in the Region**

**2007**

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# Executive Summary

The principle of education for national minorities in minority languages is no longer in dispute in most countries of South-East Europe (SEE). Despite significant advances in the field of education for minorities in the past two decades, the levels of education vary greatly. This guide highlights existing standards, the variety of practices across the region, challenges and initiatives to overcome existing problems. As will emerge repeatedly throughout this guide, education for minorities is not separate from broader educational reform in the region. Minority education cannot be effective without a paradigm shift in mainstream education. Only an education system which values diversity and promotes tolerance can effectively provide a learning environment for minorities.

This guide is a first port of call for NGOs and others working in the field of minority education in SEE. It contains a discussion on existing international standards, regional experience in the field of education in legislative terms and recommendations.

It draws on contributions made at the regional conference entitled “Minorities and Education: Foundation of Stable Relations in the Region” organized by Civic Initiatives in Belgrade on June 8-9, 2006, as part of the “Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe” programme of the King Baudouin Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Open Society Foundation.

In this guide the contributions from the conference and additional materials on the countries of the region from partner organizations in the Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe Programme have been compiled by Civic Initiatives.

The first chapter discusses the challenges of education for minorities and argues that there is a need to take a broad approach to understanding the issues at stake rather than solely focusing on education for minorities. The subsequent chapter examines the international legal standards in the field and how and by whom they are applied in South-East Europe. The third chapter examines a number of countries and regions in South-East Europe, analyzes their policies, laws and international commitments to address educational needs of minorities and contrasts them with their implementation in practice. In conclusion, each country study highlights key problems and challenges. These are summarized in the subsequent chapter which highlights key cross-regional challenges and offers brief case studies from individual countries. Next, a series of regional, national and local case studies explore various initiatives of states and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address these challenges. The concluding recommendations draw from these cases studies and the regional experience and offer suggestions for subsequent steps in addressing minority education in South-East Europe.

## Synthèse

Le principe du droit des minorités nationales à suivre un enseignement dans leur propre langue n'est plus controversé en Europe du Sud-Est. En dépit d'avancées significatives dans le domaine de l'éducation des minorités ces deux dernières décennies, les niveaux d'enseignement divergent considérablement. Ce guide épingle les normes existantes, les différentes pratiques dans la région, les défis à relever et les initiatives prises pour surmonter les obstacles. Comme répété à plusieurs reprises tout au long du guide, l'éducation des minorités ne peut être dissociée d'une réforme éducative plus vaste dans la région. L'éducation des minorités ne peut porter de fruits sans une évolution parallèle dans l'enseignement en général. Seul un système éducatif valorisant la diversité et promouvant la tolérance peut créer un environnement favorable à l'apprentissage des minorités.

Ce guide se veut un outil de référence pour les ONG et autres acteurs travaillant dans le domaine de l'éducation des minorités en Europe du Sud-Est. Il contient un exposé sur les normes internationales existantes, l'expérience régionale dans le domaine de l'éducation sur le plan législatif ainsi que des recommandations.

Il tire ses informations des contributions à la conférence régionale "Minorities and Education: Foundation of Stable Relations in the Region" organisée par Civic Initiatives à Belgrade les 8-9 juin 2006, dans le cadre du programme "Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe" mis en œuvre par la Fondation Roi Baudouin, la Charles Stewart Mott Foundation et les Open Society Foundations.

Les contributions émanant de la conférence ainsi que les matériaux complémentaires sur les pays de la région en provenance d'organisations partenaires du programme "Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe" ont été rassemblés par Civic Initiatives.

Le premier chapitre aborde les défis de l'éducation des minorités et insiste sur la nécessité d'adopter une approche large pour comprendre les problèmes en jeu plutôt que de se focaliser uniquement sur l'éducation des minorités. Le chapitre suivant traite des normes légales internationales dans le domaine et examine comment et par qui elles sont appliquées en Europe du Sud-Est. Le troisième chapitre passe en revue plusieurs pays et régions d'Europe du Sud-Est, analyse leur politique, leur législation ainsi que les engagements internationaux pris pour répondre aux besoins éducatifs des minorités, et les confronte à leur mise en application dans la pratique. En conclusion, chaque étude de pays souligne les problèmes et les défis principaux. Ils sont résumés dans le chapitre suivant qui met en lumière les principaux enjeux trans-régionaux et propose de courtes études de cas venant de différents pays. Ensuite, une série d'études de cas régionaux, nationaux et locaux explorent différentes initiatives, publiques et d'ONG, visant à faire face à ces problèmes.

Les recommandations finales s'inspirent de ces études de cas et de l'expérience régionale, et s'accompagnent de suggestions pour les prochaines étapes du processus en cours en matière d'éducation des minorités dans l'Europe du Sud-Est.

# Samenvatting

Het principe van onderwijs voor nationale minderheden in minderheidstalen staat in Zuidoost-Europa niet langer ter discussie. Hoewel er de voorbije twee decennia aanzienlijke vorderingen zijn gemaakt op het vlak van onderwijs voor minderheden, zijn er toch nog grote verschillen wat het niveau van dat onderwijs betreft. Deze gids biedt een overzicht van de verschillende normen en praktijken in de regio en ook van de uitdagingen en van de initiatieven om de bestaande problemen aan te pakken. Uit de gids blijkt herhaaldelijk dat onderwijs voor minderheden niet los staat van een ruimere hervorming van het onderwijs in de regio. Onderwijs aan minderheden kan niet doeltreffend zijn zonder een verandering in het paradigma van het reguliere onderwijs. Alleen een onderwijsstelsel dat waarde hecht aan diversiteit en opkomt voor verdraagzaamheid, kan een effectieve leeromgeving bieden voor minderheden.

Deze gids is een eerste aanknopingspunt voor ngo's en andere instanties die actief zijn op het vlak van onderwijs aan minderheden in Zuidoost-Europa. Hij bevat een discussie over de bestaande internationale normen, de juridische ervaringen op het vlak van onderwijs in de regio en een aantal aanbevelingen.

De gids is gebaseerd op de bijdragen tijdens de regionale conferentie "Minorities and Education: Foundation of Stable Relations in the Region", die Civic Initiatives op 8 en 9 juni 2006 organiseerde in Belgrado, als onderdeel van het programma "Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe" van de Koning Boudewijnstichting, de Charles Stewart Mott Foundation en de Open Society Foundations.

Civic Initiatives heeft in deze gids de bijdragen van de conferentie gecombineerd met bijkomend materiaal over de landen in de regio afkomstig van partnerorganisaties binnen het Programma "Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe". Het eerste hoofdstuk van de gids gaat over de uitdagingen voor onderwijs aan minderheden en stelt dat een ruime aanpak nodig is om inzicht te krijgen in de problematiek en dat het niet volstaat om zich toe te spitsen op onderwijs voor minderheden. Het volgende hoofdstuk onderzoekt de internationale wettelijke normen ter zake en gaat na hoe en door wie die in Zuidoost-Europa worden toegepast. Het derde hoofdstuk gaat specifiek in op een aantal landen en regio's in Zuidoost-Europa en analyseert hun beleid, hun wetten en internationale verbintenissen om de onderwijsnoden van minderheden aan te pakken en vergelijkt die met de toepassing ervan in de praktijk. Aan het eind van elke landenstudie komen de belangrijkste problemen en uitdagingen aan bod. Die worden dan nog eens samengevat in het volgende hoofdstuk, dat de belangrijkste uitdagingen voor de hele regio aangeeft en enkele korte casestudies aanbrengt uit individuele landen. Vervolgens bieden enkele regionale, nationale en locale casestudies een beeld van enkele initiatieven van de overheid en van ngo's om deze uitdagingen aan te pakken.

De aanbevelingen aan het einde zijn gebaseerd op deze casestudies en de ervaringen in de regio en bieden suggesties voor de volgende stappen in de benadering van onderwijs aan minderheden in Zuidoost-Europa.





# Foreword

The role of education in building a more tolerant society is probably one of the most challenging issues in South-East Europe today. This topic encompasses a wide variety of issues ranging from the basic human right to equal access to education for the most discriminated minorities, such as the Roma community, to the rights of minority groups to enjoy education in their mother tongue, as recognised by the provisions of the Framework Convention for National Minorities of the Council of Europe amongst other international treaties.

A recent survey covering 2000 teachers in Serbia showed that 46% of primary school pupils would not want to sit at a desk next to an Albanian or Roma pupil. The survey also illustrates the importance of addressing discrimination at its roots and fostering intercultural dialogue at the earliest stage in the school curriculum or in informal education.

In this respect, education for democratic citizenship is probably one of the most appropriate approaches to handling the ethnic and cultural diversity of the countries of South-East Europe. Indeed the challenge we face in this region is to promote a balanced approach focused on ensuring the rights of minority groups while building a common space shared by all. Intercultural or civic education may represent the missing link between those two objectives by establishing that respect for minorities and their cultures does not amount to differential treatment. On the contrary, it is essential if we are to achieve true equality based on the individual rights of all citizens.

Furthermore, education plays a crucial role in the European integration process. Encouraging majorities

to understand minority cultures and languages can contribute to and indeed strengthen the identity of a country in line with European values of tolerance.

Finally, while most Western European countries have made special efforts and huge investments to set the Bologna process in place and adjust all EU policies to the Lisbon agenda, it is crucial that the countries of South-East Europe maintain their efforts to invest in human capital and pursue education reforms. These not only offer an opportunity to update obsolete education systems and bring them into line with international standards, but also to adjust them so as to infuse a system of values among the majority that would contribute to mainstream diversity and tolerance.

This is one of the objectives of the Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe programme, in the framework of which this guide has been published. The following pages draw on contributions made at a regional conference entitled Minorities and Education: Foundation of Stable Relations in the Region organized by Civic Initiatives in Belgrade on June 8-9, 2006.

The Foundation would like to express its gratitude to Civic Initiatives's most dedicated staff for putting together this important event and to the authors of this guide for their invaluable contribution. The amount of know-how and expertise gathered in this publication makes us confident of its capacity to achieve its ambitious goal. However, we have to recognise that huge challenges still lie ahead. After all, tolerance is a life-long learning process.

**King Baudouin Foundation**  
October 2007

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# Introduction

There are few such potent meeting points of state, national identity and the individual as education. Even more than police and local administration, education is possibly the most pertinent field where the state makes itself noticed. The authority of the state and the way in which it views itself and its citizens are thus strongly expressed through the educational system. In fact, the modern nation state in most of Europe has been using education as the main tool, to use Eugen Weber's potent metaphor, for "turning peasants into Frenchmen", i.e. to create and subsequently perpetuate the dominant nation.<sup>1</sup> Education has always been at the core of nationalism. The establishment of a state language, as well as the promotion of a unified and often homogenized historical narrative, constitute a central part of the nation state bias in education systems. Whether this bias has its roots in economic necessity in creating a mobile and compatible labour market, as some have argued, or whether it was part of creating a common cultural space, education brings out the "nation" in nation state.

Due to the coercive nature of imposing a singular concept of history or language on often very differing and more complex realities, education has been the first focus of minority rights since the early 20th century. In fact, private education for religious and later national minorities has had a much longer tradition in wide parts of Europe, dating back either to the aftermath of the religious wars of early modernity or the experience of Ottoman rule.

The challenge of education for minorities in the dominant framework of the nation state is thus whether to consider only minority education as a contained enclave separate from majority education

or whether minority-majority relations highlight the need to transform the overall nation-state paradigm in the education system. The establishment of a dominant state language also has practical considerations in facilitating administration and the effective development of the modern state. Although a common language is by no means a requirement for the success of modern states – see Switzerland – the establishment of modern states has often meant the imposition of a dominant language, promoted by the state education system.

Currently there is broad recognition that simply allowing for private minority education is not enough. First, it disregards the fact that the state not only has the obligation not to prohibit private education, but also needs to provide minorities with education in a way which is normal and expected by the majority. Secondly, private and thus separate education fails to ensure sufficient cross-community communication and can thus promote segregation rather than integration. The terms integration and segregation are loaded with values and often abused, so we have to use them with care. Majorities at times accuse minorities of segregation and in other cases seek to segregate and marginalize minorities from mainstream societies, whereas minorities sometimes accuse majorities of assimilation. The balance between bringing minority education (on and for minorities) into mainstream education and allowing for separate education for minorities is a continuous challenge in providing effective education in a diverse society.

In South-East Europe, some of the most controversial minority rights issues in the past

1. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979.

decade have revolved around education rights. In some cases, they focused on higher education, such as minority language universities in Romania and Macedonia. In other cases the focus was on the marginalization and exclusion of Roma from mainstream education through so-called 'special classes' or schools in a number of Central, as well as South-East European countries. These two types of issues highlight the underlying challenges in the field of education which dominate much of the debates. On one side stands the idea of minority autonomy, the idea that minorities are recognized and enjoy some degree of self-government. On the other side stands the need for integration, overcoming mechanisms of exclusion and marginalization by mainstream society. Integration has often been used by states and majorities to describe what effectively amounts to assimilation. In this publication, however, integration is defined as policies which enhance communication and reduce stereotypes between majority and minority without requiring either to give up their identity.

This challenge extends beyond South-East Europe and bears relevance in a broader European context, linking to larger efforts to accommodate the education system to contemporary challenges. In the framework of the European Union, the Lisbon Strategy outlined the need for a European «learning economy». The Bologna process and various exchange programmes (e.g. Erasmus) in higher education have broken down national borders in education. In South-East Europe, education reform has often been neglected amidst the multiple tribulations of transition and as conservative elites neglected the needs for open and reformed educational systems. As a consequence, education

systems across South-East Europe often reflect a closed, nation and state-oriented approach, unable to prevent the brain drain reflected in the widespread desire of young people in South-East Europe to emigrate.

This guide is an outcome of the regional conference entitled “Minorities and Education: Foundation of Stable Relations in the Region” organized by Civic Initiatives in Belgrade on June 8-9, 2006, as part of the “Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe” programme of the King Baudouin Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Open Society Foundation. The conference participants discussed the regional experience of minority-specific education, focusing in particular on Roma education. Beyond just focusing on minority rights in the sphere of education, it explored more broadly the challenges which both minorities and majorities face in the field of education. The conference presentations and additional contributions by project partners form the basis of this guide.

The purpose of this guide is to shed light on education in the multi-ethnic societies of South-East Europe. It is not strictly speaking a guide on minority education, but takes a broader approach. In order to address minority needs effectively and bring marginalized minorities into mainstream societies, education is as much about majorities as it is about minorities. Of course, the main focus will be on how minority needs are met by the state, but there will also be discussion on civic education and ways in which majorities can be made aware of minority issues.

This guide is meant as a tool for NGOs and policy makers working in the field of education in South-

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East Europe. As such, it broadly outlines the relevant issues in the field and represents a starting point for dealing with the issue rather than comprehensively answering all aspects. First, it sets out some general considerations on how to conceptualize and think about education for multi-ethnic societies.

In the first chapter, the guide discusses the relevant international legal standards. In the second chapter, it turns to the reality across South-East Europe. After identifying regional themes, country studies provide

brief overviews of the status of education in terms of the legal framework, implementation and core challenges. In the third chapter, the guide discusses a series of more detailed case studies from the region and beyond which might serve as examples of good practice or at least illustrations on how to meet some of the challenges. The concluding fourth chapter summarizes the findings in the form of recommendations and principles for minority-relevant education in South-East Europe.

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# 1. Minorities and Education: An Introduction

Education is a prominent aspect of minority rights in international law and in most national legislation. At the same time, minority rights themselves do not adequately encompass the needs of minorities and a diverse society in the field of education.

The legal framework of education and minority rights highlights that the concepts of ‘minority education’ or ‘education in minority languages’ cannot cover the entire breadth of education in the field. Essentially, one needs to examine four components of the relationship between minorities and education:

1. Access of the individual to education through the ability to use her/his mother tongue;
2. Promotion and upkeep of minority identity through education;
3. Inclusion of minorities into society through education;
4. Majority awareness of diversity through education.

As this brief list highlights, merely providing for language classes to a minority by the state can hardly be considered an adequate response to the challenge posed by minority rights in education. In fact the relationship between these four aspects is frequently uneasy and it is neither possible to establish a clear hierarchy or easily determine a clear system which would accommodate all aspects equally. There is thus no blueprint for an education system in a diverse society, as each education system has to be relational, situated at the meeting point of majority, minority and state.

The first component is linked to the individual who does speak the state language. In this aspect, education is about providing mother tongue education in the language of the individual. This approach is borne out of the observation that children often learn better if taught in their mother tongue than in another language, which may be the state language for minority children. This issue clearly illustrates that fact that minority rights do not constitute any ‘special’ or ‘extra’ rights for

minorities, since learning in the mother tongue is automatically granted to children from majority communities. The challenges in this sphere are related to the degree of minority language and state language teaching. Thus in some cases, minority language might only be a small extra subject focusing on the traditions and culture of the minority, but not really facilitating the general learning process through teaching general subjects in the minority language. In other cases, all classes from biology to physical education might be taught in a minority language. These variations might be specific to minorities rather than to the country. Thus, Serbia for example, offers full education in Hungarian, but only limited courses in Romani. The second challenge in South-East Europe is related to the recognition of languages. Are Bosnian, Montenegrin, Serbian and Croatian, the official languages in today’s Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo, different enough to merit minority education? Thirdly, numbers matter in South-East Europe as they do everywhere. While the right to mother tongue education might be linked to the individual, it cannot be offered to single isolated pupils. It requires the presence both of fellow minority members in school and of teachers able to teach. Whereas the state can provide teacher training, it cannot create a need. While some countries, such as Albania, have been criticized by international organizations for only providing for minority education in certain geographic areas, a numerical threshold will always limit the geographical scope, so that a Hungarian speaker might be able to learn Hungarian in Cluj/Kolozsvár (Romania), but not in Bucharest, or an Albanian in Tetovo, but not in Stip.

The second aspect of the relationship between minorities and education is linked to the minority community at large. Every definition of a minority,



including the closest to the widely accepted international definition by Francesco Capotorti, emphasizes identity: “Numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of a state – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion, or language.” Today, the qualification of citizenship has been largely abandoned, considering for example the status of Russian-speakers in Latvia and Estonia. All ‘objective’ differences between a smaller and a larger group in a society are not sufficient to establish a minority without solidarity among the group and the willingness to preserve the ‘stuff’ which makes the group. Education is crucial in reproducing (and re-creating) the identity of a group. Without the transmission of the aspects of their identity through education, minorities might disappear. This transmission can and does often take place in homes, from parents to children, or might take place in church, mosque, synagogue, Sunday schools and folklore. However, education in the more formal sense plays a central role in this process which cannot be replaced by other forms of less formal education. Whereas the first component was about enabling the individual from a minority community, here the emphasis is on enabling the group to continue its existence by communicating language, history, culture and tradition.

The third component is about linking minority communities and individuals to the society they live in. This is often very sensitive and viewed at times with suspicion by minorities, since integration and incorporation of minorities into larger society have often been by-words for assimilation and policies which deny minority communities the right to be different. At the same time, segregation is

problematic, whether externally imposed on individuals or by the group itself. Many societies around the world, including in South-East Europe, are deeply divided and little communication takes place between majorities and minorities. This frequently comes at a high price for individuals – particularly from minority communities – who have less access to jobs, social networks and other opportunities. Especially if being a minority coincides with a lower socio-economic status, as with Roma across the region, segregation and exclusion may be the main obstacle in the field of education. Few countries today would institute formal segregation, but in practice it remains widespread when both the authorities and majorities perpetuate the segregation of minority groups through informal practices. Segregation here means that minorities receive a lower quality of education and are thus disadvantaged in later life. This applies in particular to Roma. Other, better established minorities are not necessarily disadvantaged by segregation and may benefit from receiving education in a separate education system. A further aspect may derive not from segregation or exclusion, but from insufficient teaching of the state language. Thus, children from a minority community have less professional opportunities in the broader society, possibly resulting in the ghettoization of the minority. Here, educational separation might not go hand in hand with socio-economic disadvantages, but the challenge is to prevent the fragmentation of society which provides space for both minority and majority.

Finally, the fourth component highlights the risks of taking a minority-centered approach to education and diversity. If educational policies focus only on minorities and their access to education, there is a serious danger of creating policies which, though minority-friendly, are anchored in a broader society

hostile to minorities. Without a positive view of diversity itself and the relations of the particular group, there might be no social backing for minority rights. Furthermore, ghettoization and segregation are mostly the direct result of majority attitudes, reflected in stereotypes, policies and their implementation. As noted in the introduction, education is based on the triangle of relations between state, majority and minority. The education needs of minorities cannot be satisfied by the state alone if the majority is left out. In practice, this approach has three aspects. Firstly, at the most practical level, minority language training can enable majorities to learn minority languages and not just vice versa. This is often challenging as foreign languages (e.g. English) hold greater allure and practical advantages than learning a minority language, especially if this language is not that of an economically or culturally attractive kin state. Such policies might be most effective when there is a specific advantage, such as language requirements in public administration, as has been the case in Macedonia since the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001. The second aspect relates to the content of education. Subjects related to identity and reproducing the culture of the majority have often been woefully hostile or just silent on minorities. Thus, if minorities learn about their own culture and history and majorities do the same, children from the different groups may be exposed to contradictory and distorted 'truths' which are irreconcilable. This not only promotes segregation, it also reproduces stereotypes which fundamentally undermine the underlying principles of minority rights and inclusion.

As these four underlying concepts to education and minorities demonstrate, there is no straightforward answer to the challenge minorities and diverse

societies face in the field of education. Education is about preserving group identity, but also changing groups' perceptions of each other. The maintenance of minority identity through education thus should not be viewed as reducing minority identity to folk dancing or other 'traditions'. Just as the majority identity and the way in which it is communicated changes with time, so does that of minorities. Education is about re-affirming difference, but also creating points of contact. Maybe even more than other fields of minority rights, education summarizes the complex challenges in addressing the need for a diverse society to accommodate difference without making this difference the only and most important marker of identity.

Consequently, education matters with regard to minorities cannot be viewed as a separate 'enclave' removed from broader education issues. While some aspects, in particular education for minorities and education on minority identity for minorities, are distinct and separate from the larger sphere of education, these measures are likely to be ineffective if they are not part and parcel of broader educational reforms. Minority issues in education thus have to be part of mainstream education reforms. More often than not, the experience in South-East Europe has been otherwise: reform in the education sector has widely been a mere afterthought following other reforms. The superficial legacies of communism have been tackled, but the hierarchical and authoritarian methods and approaches frequently remain in place, as does a parochial view of the past and present in textbooks and curricula. Thus, minority education has often been an 'add-on' to an insufficiently reformed educational system, leaving the fundamental challenges unresolved.





## 2. International Standards

International Standards on minorities and education focus on the rights of minorities to have access to minority-specific education. Education has been a core field in minority rights ever since minority rights emerged in the 20th century.

Although minority rights in education suffer from the same weaknesses as minority rights in general – lack of clear and firm norms, frequent scepticism on the part of states towards minority rights and lack of comprehensive monitoring mechanisms – there are clearer standards than elsewhere, such as the right to minority language teaching at the primary and secondary school level. The main challenges, as will emerge from the country studies, lie less in the denial of these rights than in the lack of implementation and measures which render them ineffective.

The underlying principle of education rights can be broadly described in terms of 4 A's: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. While not only pertaining to minorities, it is clear that all four principles apply particularly to minorities. As Duncan Wilson points out, "education must adapt to the individual, and the individual is not required to adapt to whatever education happens to be

available."<sup>2</sup> This clearly means that it is the responsibility of the state to provide education for minorities, rather than minority children being forced to just accept any education offered.

#### LINKS

*Duncan Wilson, Minority Rights in Education. Lessons for the European Union from Estonia, Latvia, Romania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Right to Education Project, 2002.*

[http://www.right-to-education.org/content/lessons/roul\\_ww.pdf](http://www.right-to-education.org/content/lessons/roul_ww.pdf)

*Minority Rights Group, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Guide for Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, 2005.* <http://www.mrg.webbber.co.uk/download.php?id=50>

## 2.1 Organizations and Conventions

The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the Charter on Regional and Minority Languages are three foremost international legal norms in the field of education and minority rights, whereas some earlier UN Conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) touch upon the matter more in passing than in detail.

The United Nations system provides for basic protection of education rights through its general human rights provisions and the protection of children's rights. The advances in the field are

monitored through the regular reporting requirements of all major international human rights conventions and offices such as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Finally the UN Working Group on Minorities has also been addressing teaching in minority languages and the issue of intercultural and multicultural education.

#### LINKS

*Charter on Regional and Minority Languages (CRML):* <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

2. Duncan Wilson, *Minority Rights in Education. Lessons for the European Union from Estonia, Latvia, Romania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Right to Education Project, 2002, p. 6.*

*Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):*  
<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

*UNESCO, Convention against Discrimination in Education:* [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_c\\_educ.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_c_educ.htm)

*International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):* [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_ccpr.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm)

*International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):* [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_cescr.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_cescr.htm)

*International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD):*  
[http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_icerd.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm)

*United Nations, Fact Sheet No.18 (Rev.1), Minority Rights:* <http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/publications/docs/fs18.htm>

*European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR):* <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm>

*Protocol 12 of the ECHR:*  
<http://www.humanrights.coe.int/Prot12/Protocol%2012%20and%20Exp%20Rep.htm>

*European Court of Human Rights:* <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr/>

*European Court of Human Rights Cases Collection:*  
<http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/search.asp?skin=hudoc-en>

*Anneleen Van Bossuyt, Fit for Purpose or Faulty Design? Analysis of the Jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice on the Legal Protection of Minorities, JEMIE 1/2007, [http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/1-2007\\_van\\_Bossuyt.pdf](http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/1-2007_van_Bossuyt.pdf)*

#### **EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS**

The European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) has no direct references to minority rights except for a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of association with a national minority (Art. 14). It is nevertheless a cornerstone of human rights and, in extension, also minority rights protection in Europe. Through the prohibition of discrimination and other provisions and particularly through the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, it has become a key instrument in advancing minority rights, including in the field of education.

#### **HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES**

In addition to these legally binding treaties, educational matters are subject to the scrutiny of a number of international actors. The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) of the OSCE has focused extensively on educational matters. As an institution based on quiet diplomacy and conflict prevention, the HCNM has taken a pragmatic approach in terms of international law, but instead focused on resolving minority-majority disputes through negotiations. Repeatedly educational matters have been the focus of his work. Thus, while there is no specific right to minority language education at the university level, a core aspect of the dispute between the Albanian minority

and the Macedonian state and between the Hungarian minority and the Romanian state during the 1990s has been over the establishment of a minority university. Accordingly, the two conflicts resulted in different recommendations and outcomes: in Cluj, Hungarian language higher education remained part of the Babes-Bolyai University, whereas in Macedonia, a new university was established.

#### LINKS

High Commissioner on National Minorities:  
<http://www.osce.org/hcnm>

Hague Recommendations Regarding the  
 Educational Rights of National Minorities:  
<http://www.osce.org/item/2931.html?html=1>

The intervention of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in Tetovo thus resulted in the founding of the South-East European University; colloquially called the “Van der Stoel University” after the first High Commissioner whose negotiations between the Albanian community and the Macedonian state brought about the institution. On a more general level, the HCNM commissioned the drafting of the “Hague Recommendations Regarding the Educational Rights of National Minorities” which brings together the main aspects of education rights in a non-binding document, which arguably consolidates international law and national practice into clear standards. Unlike other international minority rights standards, it also takes note of the need to address majorities in advancing tolerance of minorities and reshaping the societal view of diversity.

#### HAGUE RECOMMENDATIONS (KEY POINTS)

1. Education should be decentralized and involve minorities and parents.
2. States should allow for private minority education institutions.
3. Primary school education should provide training in the children's mother tongue and the state language.
4. Secondary school education should be bilingual with slowly increasing emphasis on the state language.
5. The state should provide for adequate teacher training in minority languages.
6. Higher education can be provided in minority languages, preferably taking place in the framework of state language institutions.
7. The general curriculum should incorporate minority issues and majorities should be encouraged to learn minority languages.
8. Minorities should be involved in curriculum development.

#### FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES (FCNM)

The main source of international minority rights protection in the field of education in Europe is based on the FCNM. Despite its weak wording, especially in the field of education rights, it has given rise to a substantial and growing body of standards and practices which have advanced minority rights in this field. The most substantial and detailed comments which highlight minority education rights are those made by the FCNM Advisory Committee on the state reports.<sup>3</sup> These comments show the weakness of some articles in the FNCM and have given more weight to others, despite the sometimes feeble wording of the original text.

3. Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. 2006. *Commentary on Education under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. ACFC/25DOC(2006)002, 2 March 2006.



Before discussing international legal standards through the lens of the four aspects of minority rights in education mentioned above, we shall briefly highlight some key aspects of FCNM. The convention has a number of relevant articles laying out general principles of minority rights protection by the state, which have an impact on education even when not specially mentioned. These include Art. 4, which secures equality while introducing the concept of effective equality through special measures. Art. 5 prohibits assimilation and calls on states to allow for minorities to maintain and promote their culture. In Art. 6, the convention emphasizes the need to promote intercultural dialogue and tolerance, while the subsequent articles guarantee the right of association and expression, key prerequisites for minority-sensitive education. The three key articles N° 12 to 14 then set out the specific education aspects of minority rights. These are aimed at securing education on the culture, language, history and religion of minorities and the majority and the means required for this (teacher training, textbooks), as specified in Art. 12. Subsequently, Art. 13 requires states to recognize private minority education, but without calling on the state to provide funding. The more detailed Art. 14 contains the clear commitment that minorities have the right to learn their language. The second paragraph, however, contains the most escape clauses in the convention as it spells out when and where the state has the obligation to provide mother tongue education for minorities: “in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial number” (how many, for how long?); “if there is sufficient demand” (who determines it, how?); “as far as possible” (in which way?). This weak wording made many observers sceptical of the ability of the FCNM to contribute to the advancement of minority rights. Considering

the high expectations in the early years following the end of the Cold War, the weak wording seemed like a step back. Nevertheless, robust implementation has gone to great lengths to make the convention meaningful and render it difficult for state parties to use the escape clauses to hide bad practice.

The key mechanism which has made the FCNM a useful tool in advancing minority rights has been the reporting process which explicitly solicits shadow reports by NGOs and minority communities themselves. The expert-based Advisory Committee has furthermore challenged restrictions which states have sought to place on who is considered to be a minority and who is not.

To summarize, the standards contained in the FCNM emphasize the need for effective equality between minorities and majorities, adopting an expansive interpretation of non-discrimination and underlining tolerance and the need to preserve minority culture. In the field of education, minorities have the right to learn their own mother tongue, learn about their culture and organize their own education.

## LINKS

### Convention

[http://www.coe.int/T/e/human\\_rights/Minorities/2.\\_FRAMEWORK\\_CONVENTION\\_\(MONITORING\)/1.\\_Texts/index.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/e/human_rights/Minorities/2._FRAMEWORK_CONVENTION_(MONITORING)/1._Texts/index.asp)

### Explanatory Report

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/2.\\_framework\\_convention\\_%28monitoring%29/1.\\_texts/H\(1995\)010%20E%20FCNM%20and%20Explanatory%20Report.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._framework_convention_%28monitoring%29/1._texts/H(1995)010%20E%20FCNM%20and%20Explanatory%20Report.asp)

**Convention-related Documents**

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/)

**Council of Europe Project, European Centre for Minority Issues**

[http://www.ecmi.de/doc/CoE\\_Project/](http://www.ecmi.de/doc/CoE_Project/)

This website offers a comprehensive article-by-article review of the implementation practices by cross-examining country reports and the responses of the Council of Europe.

**Country Reports**

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/2.\\_framework\\_convention\\_\(monitoring\)/2.\\_monitoring\\_mechanism/3.\\_State\\_Reports\\_and\\_UNMIK\\_Kosovo\\_Report/](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._framework_convention_(monitoring)/2._monitoring_mechanism/3._State_Reports_and_UNMIK_Kosovo_Report/)

The country reports are an obvious first stop for looking at the self-presentation of government policies in the sphere of minority rights. While some might be less frank than others, they usually are good source of data and key policy documents.

**Shadow Reports**

<http://www.minelres.lv/coe/statereports.htm>

An integral part of the monitoring mechanism is the opportunity for NGOs to submit shadow reports. They also constitute a key source on minority issues and are more open and critical than state reports.

**Opinions of the Advisory Committee**

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/2.\\_framework\\_convention\\_%28monitoring%29/2.\\_monitoring\\_mechanism/4.\\_opinions\\_of\\_the\\_advisory\\_committee/1.\\_Country\\_specific\\_opinions/index.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._framework_convention_%28monitoring%29/2._monitoring_mechanism/4._opinions_of_the_advisory_committee/1._Country_specific_opinions/index.asp)

The opinions of the expert-dominated Advisory Committee have been crucial in shaping the success of the FCNM and interpreting it.

**Commentary on Education under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Advisory Committee**

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/2.\\_framework\\_convention\\_%28monitoring%29/3.\\_advisory\\_committee/5.\\_thematic\\_work/Thematic\\_work.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._framework_convention_%28monitoring%29/3._advisory_committee/5._thematic_work/Thematic_work.asp)

In this key guide the Advisory Committee comments on the convention's rules on education and also offers an interpretation of what they entail on the basis of its country-specific opinions.

Other than the Council of Europe and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, few organizations in Europe deal specifically with minority issues. Nevertheless, these are not without significance. In its regular reports on current or potential candidate countries, the European Union regularly invokes education matters, though not systematically (esp. Roma and Russian-speakers in the Baltics). The fact that minority rights form part of EU conditions for membership has meant that minority rights implementation, including in education, to some degree depends on the EU. As the EU neither sets the standards nor monitors minority rights systematically, the impact is constrained to the enforcement capacity of the EU.

**EU Progress Reports**

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key\\_documents/reports\\_nov\\_2006\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key_documents/reports_nov_2006_en.htm)

**Minority Rights Group International, *Minority Rights Advocacy in the European Union: A Guide for NGOs in South-East Europe*, 2006**

<http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=911>

## 2.2 Categorizing Minority Rights in Education

Looking at the role of the state in the field of minority rights, one can see the legal system as protecting minorities from the state taking certain policies such as discrimination against minorities, permitting minorities to take a degree of their own initiative in protecting their rights and finally promoting minority cultures and the diversity they entail through their relationship with the majority. The FCNM is strong on the first aspect, protecting minority rights and allowing for minorities to organize their own institutions. The weakness of the Framework Convention and the main contention in the field of minority rights have been in identifying to what degree the state should promote minority rights and what type should be promoted.

### 2.2.1 Culture and Mother Tongue Education for Minorities

The first step with regard to the education rights of minorities is the recognition that while state majorities generally receive their education in their mother tongue, minorities often do not. Not learning in one's mother tongue can be a crucial obstacle to good performance in the education system, with all the mid- and long-term consequences such a disadvantage might entail. The concept of providing minority language education is often constrained along three lines.

The **first** is defined by the need to learn the state language as well as the mother tongue (HCNM 1995: Art. 1), in order to enjoy all opportunities in society, especially if minority education is not offered at all levels. The challenge is to balance the need to provide training in both languages. At one extreme stand classes on minority languages and culture, as offered in Serbia to some minorities (Roma), which provide minimal training in the minorities' mother tongue; at the other extreme is the full education programme taught in the

minority language, relegating the state language to a second, de-facto foreign language.

The **second** constraint is the issue of technical limits. It is hard, if not impossible, to organize a minority language class for just one pupil. Thus, much of the discussion has focused on the level at which to provide education in minority languages and at which threshold. The implementation of the FCNM has led to an emerging practice where there might not be clear thresholds above which the state must provide minority education, but three standards have crystallized: firstly, thresholds should not be disproportionately high (i.e. number of students required); secondly, any hurdles should be handled flexibly rather than with rigidity; and thirdly, existing institutions, classes and other facilities should not be discontinued lightly.

**Thirdly**, the relationship needs to be determined between minority culture and language, or between the form of communication and the substance of communication. For example, textbooks used in Montenegro in 2002 in Albanian referred to the national culture and depicted Montenegrin traditional dress, rather than Albanian (or both). Thus the provision of education in the minority language can be insufficient if it merely comprises a translation of the educational materials into the majority language without sensitivity to the minority culture.

### 2.2.2. The Promotion of Minority Identity

As noted in the introduction, education is not only about communicating knowledge and skills to individuals, but also about what kind of values and into what kind of society education integrates the individual. Just as states seek to maintain the identity of the state and, in the case of the nation state, of the majority (ethnic or otherwise), education systems for minorities seek to maintain the identity of the minority.

As the FCNM Advisory Committee noted in its report on Germany in connection with the Sorb minority, “schools [do] not only have an educational function, but also contribute to the expression of Sorbian identity in areas traditionally inhabited by the minority” (Advisory Committee 2002, para. 59)

As such, schools and education institutions help to reproduce the minority culture and maintain their identity, which explains why educational institutions often form the focus of minority communities themselves (H 257). As this aspect focuses on the minority group as such, it can be understood as a collective right, with very clear consequences for individuals. If state prohibitions prevent minorities from securing their cultural survival, these groups might cease to exist altogether. The consequence of this can be assimilation. If a minority is not allowed to maintain and promote the characteristics which define its membership, no other minority rights make sense as the minority group would simply disappear and become assimilated into the majority. It is important here not to conceptualize the promotion of identity as being self-contained. Frequently, minority culture and language are conceptualized by states and minorities in the narrow sense of ‘authentic’ national culture, expressed through traditionalist forms of cultural expression such as dance performances. Minority culture, just like majority culture, is dynamic and maintains constant communication with other cultures. Thus, maintaining a culture should not be understood as maintaining a static culture, but rather the changing culture of what is arguably a dynamically changing group like the majority.

### 3.3.3. Inclusion of Minorities

The FCNM mentions the culture and language of the majority or state both in regard to education on minority cultures and in regard to languages equally. Conceptually, rules against discrimination similarly

focus on the ability of minority members to enjoy equal access in the state and society. The education situation of Roma across Central and South-East Europe clearly highlights the fact that separate education is not necessarily a form of minority rights protection, but can be a form of discrimination (Advisory Committee 2006: 17). The education system thus has to secure the equitable opportunities to minority communities which should have extended from supposedly equal treatment which might a) either be oblivious to the inbuilt cultural and linguistic biases of the education system or b) fail to address and redress past instances of discrimination. A more contentious aspect is the balance between identity and cultural reproduction and inclusion into majority society. In disputes over higher education in minority languages, minorities have emphasized the need for separate institutions, based on arguments related to the above aspect, whereas majorities have rejected such demands on the basis of the need of minorities to integrate into society. Such arguments were particularly pertinent in the discussions over the two university controversies in Cluj and Tetovo mentioned above. These debates point to a very real tension, even if their protagonists might further politicize the issue. Multilingual and multicultural institutions might serve best to promote the inclusion of minorities into mainstream society, but these institutions run the risk of not being “by the minority and for the minority”. At the same time, cultural reproduction without integration can result in segregation and self-isolation, often the result of majority policies of monocultural dominance of the state. In this regard, the FCNM Advisory Committee noted that some minority language education in Serbia places insufficient emphasis on teaching the state language and thus prevents pupils (Advisory Committee 2003) from finding easy access to further education or jobs in majority populated areas. Considering the profound impact of education on children and their opportunities

and constraints later in life, a careful balance needs to be struck here between allowing groups to preserve their identity through educational institutions and at the same time allowing for cross-communication.

### 2.3.4. Multicultural Education

#### Awareness and Tolerance

It is commonplace to call on states to promote tolerance (Art. 8) and intercultural education (Art. 12.1), as do the Framework Convention and The Hague Recommendations (HCNM 1995: 19). The relational aspects between minority and majority are easily overlooked in the field of minority rights and need to be acknowledged. Without this aspect, the education system runs the risk of providing two separate, nationalist and antagonistic versions of education for minorities and majorities. The specific role of the state to promote tolerance arises for two reasons: firstly, inclusion into society is impossible if the majority rejects the minority for whatever reasons. In this connection the education system has to provide means to include majorities, rather than only focusing on minorities; secondly, the state is not the only potential violator of minority rights. In fact,

in many democratizing states, pressure against minorities arises from majorities rather than directly from state institutions. Whether in the form of violence or peer pressure to assimilate ('fit in'), such patterns of behaviour cannot be prevented through anti-discrimination measures and minority affirmation alone. Efforts to promote tolerance and intercultural education have frequently been relegated to the domain of conflict management or other spheres which lack any legal obligation. An example of this is the efforts to reform history textbooks in South-East Europe to avoid or reduce mutual stereotypes. Beyond the elimination of stereotypes, challenges remain in what is frequently nation-state centered education where the role of minorities is little discussed, if at all (and then often negatively). Providing minority language training to state majorities or actively promoting the value of diversity are still an exception, not the norm. Neither the general commitment to promoting tolerance (Art. 8), nor the commitment to education and research about minority and majority (Art. 14.1), has lead to a systematic evaluation of how education systems communicate diversity and minority issues to majorities.

## 2.3 Conclusions

This cursory glance suggests that international legal standards and their implementation have evolved over the past decade to provide a clear framework to protect various aspects of educational rights pertaining to minorities. While some, such as the provision of minority language education, have been significantly strengthened and ample examples of good practice exist, others, such as intercultural education and tolerance, remain weaker in practice and are given less attention in international monitoring. Successful implementation of minority rights in education is not about creating an isolated and self-contained enclave for minorities, but to open a space for minorities to have access to the same rights as

majorities and for both communities to interact as equals. As such, these rights and state policies have to target the educational sector more broadly, rather than narrowing it down to minorities only. Simultaneously, minority inclusion is essential in effectively providing education for minorities. Curricula cannot be designed and schools cannot be established without a process which involves the minorities themselves (HCNM 1995: 5). Such inclusion can take place from the highest level, i.e. the education ministry, to local school boards and similarly might involve various forms from consultation to a process driven by minorities themselves.





## 3. Regional Legal Standards and Policies

# 3.1

## General Issues

The experiences of minorities across South-East Europe vary widely: from the opportunities for Albanians in Western Macedonia to choose between studying in two universities in their mother tongue to the situation of Roma in Bulgaria, for example, where they account for 20.6% of all first grade pupils but only 1.7% of those in tenth grade. While variations exist between countries, different minorities in one and the same country often experience very different degrees of access to education. A crucial variation is between minorities which can look back to a long history of minority rights protection to those which were either recognized only recently or have traditionally lacked adequate state policies to protect the rights of their communities. In Socialist Yugoslavia in particular, *narodnosti* or nationalities (e.g. Hungarians, Italians), enjoyed substantial autonomy and minority rights in the sphere of education.

By today, 2007, all the countries of South-East Europe have committed themselves to the key international conventions and have introduced legislation to allow for some degree of minority language education and prevent discrimination against minorities. This represents considerable progress from the 1990s. Nevertheless, as the country studies in this chapter explore, there are great differences between the legal framework and the reality experienced by minorities. Laws across the region are either not fully implemented due to the lack of political will or the legal framework is too vague and provides local and national decision-makers with loopholes to opt for a minimalist interpretation. Furthermore, although textbooks and curricula across South-East Europe no longer incite hatred, minorities are regularly ignored and ethnocentric world views abound. One of the dilemmas in many countries of the region is textbooks

for minorities. Whereas in the past many countries prohibited the import of textbooks from minority kin-states, such imports have become more frequent, for example in Serbia. However, the books often do not reflect the particular needs of minorities as they make little mention of the particular minority and the state in which it lives. This results in the majority and minorities learning from different textbooks without references to each other.

Possibly the most serious challenge in the field of education is the segregation and high dropout rate among Roma children. In every country of South-East Europe, the dropout rate among Roma children is significantly higher than among children from the majority and most other minorities. Similarly, 'special' classes in which Roma children are taught separately from majority children remain widespread.

This chapter will examine these different aspects of education and minorities in South-East Europe. Each country case comprises a general overview followed briefly by discussion of the international obligations the country has undertaken and some key observations by international organizations on minority education. Subsequently, the country cases examine broader policies on minorities and education. This includes both specific policy plans and the overall political framework within which education takes place. The legal framework is then examined, looking at issues such as the requirements for minority language instruction and the forms which this can take. Crucially, all cases then look at the implementation of these legal requirements and identify gaps between the legal framework and the reality experienced by minorities. In conclusion, the country cases identify the key problems and challenges.



As the subsequent discussion of cross-cutting issues highlights, there are many common challenges across the region. While the problems of each

country and even each minority might seem particular, the underlying challenges are the same.

## 3.2 Albania

### 3.2.1. Overview

The Albanian Education system is undergoing extensive reform to achieve European education standards. The level of human capital in Albania, measured by the average number of years adults have spent in the educational system, is relatively low (8.5 years compared to 12 years in the EU and 14 years in OECD countries). In addition, Albania still has low enrolment rates in secondary and higher education (56% and 13% respectively). This is considered a very problematic situation as the Albanian economy has a growing need for a more sophisticated labour force with the appropriate abilities, knowledge, and workplace

skills that cannot be developed without reforming the education system. The current education reform is based in the National Strategy for Social and Economic Development and in specific sector strategies such as the Pre-University Education Sector Strategy, the National Vocational Education and Training Strategy, etc. Improvement of teaching and learning quality, introduction of a new curricular system, decentralization of the education system, strengthening of school autonomy and increasing the quantity and efficiency of public funding for education are among the main challenges facing the country in the field of education. This reform encompasses majority and minority-related education equally.

	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma
Census 1989	98% Albanians	1.8% Greeks	0.3-3.3% (10,000-120,000)

### 3.2.2. International Standards

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed by the Albanian Constitution. Albanian legislation recognizes three national minorities (Greek, Macedonian and Montenegrin) and two ethno-linguistic minorities (Aromanians-Vlachs and Roma). In addition, Albania has ratified a number of UN human rights conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1991; the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination in 1994; as well as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (signed in June 1995 and adopted in January 2000). With regard to regional instruments, Albania ratified the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (EHCR) and some of its Protocols in 1996.

The Albanian Government submits reports on the implementation of the above conventions on a regular basis. In addition, recommendations are received especially by the European Commission in the framework of the Stabilization and Association Process. International monitoring has repeatedly noted the need for further efforts to be made to provide accurate statistics on the size of minorities (the last census which asked about ethnic background was held in 1989), to complete the legal and regulatory framework for the protection of minorities, to reinforce its implementation and to extend minority language education.

Questions related to the Roma minority are a matter of special concern. The education of children, vocational training and the employment of persons belonging to the Roma minority remain unsatisfactory and the relevant provisions of the Framework Convention are not yet fully implemented.

#### LINKS

*Ministry of Education and Science:*

[www.mash.gov.al/ministria\\_eng/home.html](http://www.mash.gov.al/ministria_eng/home.html)

*EC Progress Report 2006:* [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2006/nov/al\\_sec\\_1383\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/nov/al_sec_1383_en.pdf)

*State Report, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities:* [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/2.\\_framework\\_convention\\_%28monitoring%29/2.\\_monitoring\\_mechanism/3.\\_state\\_reports\\_and\\_unmik\\_kosovo\\_report/1.\\_first\\_cycle/PDF\\_1st\\_SR\\_Albania.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._framework_convention_%28monitoring%29/2._monitoring_mechanism/3._state_reports_and_unmik_kosovo_report/1._first_cycle/PDF_1st_SR_Albania.pdf)

#### 3.2.3. Policies

International standards in human rights and fundamental freedoms are considered by Government Policy and Strategy Documents on national and sectoral levels in accordance with Albania's commitments on international conventions. A National Committee on Minorities was also established to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the above policies and strategies.

Government Decree N° 463 of July 5 2006 adopted the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU, including specific legal and institutional measures on human rights in general and minority rights in particular. A specific National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions was adopted by the Government in 2003 including measures promoting the education, employment, housing etc., of the Roma community.

Specific policy measures are also stipulated by the Ministry of Education and Science to facilitate the education of minorities in publicly funded schools: (i) improving the flexibility of curricula, introducing a two-stage curriculum comprising Framework Curricula, which are a standard framework developed and approved on a central level, and Detailed Curricula developed by schools themselves in accordance with the Framework Curricula; (ii) In the lower level of basic education pupils from ethnic minorities learn about 90% of the curricula in their mother tongue and only 10% in the Albanian language. In the upper level, this ratio is 60% and 40% respectively; (iii) The geography of the country of origin can be learned in all minority schools; and (iv) one optional subject is stipulated for each school in Albania, in accordance with a decision of the School Board (of parents), permitting the minorities to introduce subjects in their mother tongue. In addition, non publicly-funded schools teaching in minority languages are permitted in the whole of Albania.

### 3.2.4. Laws

The right of minorities in Albania to education is stipulated in a number of legal acts such as: the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, the Pre-University Education System Act, the government Decree on Basic Education in the Mother Tongue of Minorities, the government decrees for opening non publicly-funded schools teaching in the mother tongue of minorities and several other Ministry of Education and Science orders to facilitate the enrolment of Roma children at school, etc.

The standards regarding the number of pupils required to establish school classes are the same for the majority and minority. Existing standards stipulate a minimum of 32 pupils per class in the lower level and of 35 pupils per class in the upper level. Legal provisions state that in the event of a low number of children per class, the teaching may be performed in combined classes. If the number of pupils is not sufficient for separate classes in the lower level, the 1st grade is combined with the 3rd grade and the 2nd grade with the 4th grade for up to 25 pupils per combined class. In cases where the number of pupils in all four grades is lower than 20 in total, then all children are included in a single combined class. Once the classes are established, the number of pupils is not a precondition for the consecutive years. In the lower level, the minimum number is 32 pupils per class. If the number of pupils is not sufficient for separate classes, combined classes may be established with up to 25 pupils (5th and 7th grades or 6th and 8th grades). In secondary education the minimum number is 35 pupils per class.

If the number of pupils is lower than in the above cases, the Ministry of Education and Science can authorize the establishment of the classes on the basis of proposals issued by the Regional Education Directorate.

Two other Ministry of Education and Science orders

address Roma children: the first one establishes a psychological service especially for Roma pupils and the second one assists pupils who have dropped out. Non-publicly-funded schools on all levels may be established by application to the Ministry of Education and Science. The establishment of non-public Universities is under the responsibility of the Council of Ministers.

### 3.2.5. Implementation

In order to coordinate and monitor the above legislation, one special Inspector was appointed in each of the Regional Education Directorates of the Gjirokastra and Korça Regions.

The Gjirokastra, Saranda and Delvina Districts are typical of the Greek minority areas. There are 9 kindergartens, 9 lower level schools, 17 basic education schools (lower level plus upper level) and 3 secondary education schools for minority pupils in these areas. Most of them have less than 50 pupils. The schools of Catia, Grapshi and Policani have 4, 4 and 5 pupils respectively. The pupil/teacher ratio in the Greek minority areas is about 7.8/1 as compared to 18.2/1 on a country level. The unit cost of education for pupils from the Greek minority is about 2.3 times higher than for Albanian pupils. In addition, a Greek Language branch started from 1993 at the University of Gjirokastra and a Greek Language Chair was established at Tirana University in 1997.

The Liqenasi Commune in the Korça District and the village of Vernik in the Devolli District are typical of the Macedonian minority areas. There are 8 kindergartens, 6 lower level schools, 2 basic education schools (lower level plus upper level) and 1 secondary education school for minority pupils in these areas. The pupil/teacher ratio is about 12.6/1 and the unit cost of education for pupils is about 30% higher than for Albanian pupils.

Non-publicly-funded schools teaching in minority languages are also authorized. The Arsakeio College was authorized in Tirana in 1998 and the Omiros 9-year school in Korça in 2004, enrolling Albanian along with minority pupils.

In general, the demands of Roma Associations are more focused on the integration of the Roma pupils in schools with pupils from the majority than in the establishment of separate schools or classes. There are teams of 2-3 additional teachers in most Roma community areas, appointed by the Regional Education Directorates as part of the “Second Chance” initiative to assist Roma pupils to integrate in school. In addition, some schools and classes specifically for Roma pupils are established in areas with a high concentration of Roma population such as the school of Morava (Berati District), “Cajupi” in Gjirokastra, “Liria” in Shkodra, classes in Llakatund and Novosela (Vlora District), Roskoveci (Fieri District), Elbasani, Berati, Pogradeci etc.

Non publicly-funded schools for Roma pupils are also authorized in the Pogradeci and Kruja Municipalities.

### 3.2.6. Problems and Challenges

Further efforts are required in the following main specific issues:

1. All administrative bodies at central and local levels (Ministry of Education and Science, Regional Education Directorates, Municipalities and Communes) and at school level (school director, school board, teachers) should be made fully aware of their responsibilities regarding the education of the minority children and of the existing legal and regulatory framework;
2. The Regulatory Framework should be further developed to create conditions necessary for the implementation of the existing legal framework, which in general is well harmonized with the related EU standards;
3. Administrative procedures, especially in local administration, should be redefined because a large number of responsibilities are already decentralized to Local Government and/or delegated to the Regional Education Directorates.
4. Specific rules should be developed to facilitate the extension of minority language education outside minority areas;
5. The publication of text books in minority languages should be facilitated. At present the average cost of a textbook for minority pupils is about 11 times more than for majority pupils;
6. Education for Montenegrin minority pupils in their mother tongue should be promoted;
7. Extensive reform should be implemented with regard to the education of Roma children to promote the enrolment of the Roma pupils and decrease the illiteracy rate.

All of the above challenges are related to the more general problem of the lack of accurate data on the size of minorities in Albania.

## 3.3 Bosnia and Herzegovina

### 3.3.1. Overview

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), education, like many other fields, has been fragmented as a result of the war and the Dayton Peace Accords. Education was one of the competences delegated to the entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS). In the FBiH, education was further delegated to the cantons and in mixed Bosniak-Croat cantons, education was even further delegated to municipalities. As a result, education has been largely dominated by a mono-ethnic and nationalist environment.

The education system in post-war BiH paid little attention to minorities and the constituent people (Croats, Bosniaks, Serbs), living in the ‘wrong’

part of the country, i.e. where others dominate. Education reform began hesitantly in 1999 at the initiative of the OSCE. Since then, major framework laws in the field of education have been passed at a state level and other aspects of educational reform are in progress (the Bologna process for universities and reform of elementary education). In addition, BiH now has a minority rights law. However, implementation of both the state-wide framework education laws and the minority law is lagging behind. The slow implementation, as in other spheres in BiH, results from a combination of a lack of capacity, competing layers of competences and resistance from nationalist elites.

	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma (UNDP)
<b>Census 1991</b>	43.5% Muslims/ Bosniaks 31.2% Serbs 17.4% Croats	5.6% Yugoslavs 0.2% Roma 0.1% Albanians 0.1% Macedonians	1.1-1.3% (40,000-50,000)

### 3.3.2. International Standards

The Constitution incorporated in the Dayton Peace Accords stipulates that all relevant international human and minority rights treaties are in effect in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to the country's difficult institutional structure and a lack of priority, BiH submitted its state report on its implementation of the FCNM to the Advisory Committee nearly three years late.

In its report on the first monitoring cycle, the Advisory Committee notes the challenge that the

larger ‘constituent’ people live as de-facto minorities in large parts of Bosnia, i.e. where they do not constitute a regional majority (e.g. Bosniaks and Croats in RS, Serbs in the FBiH). Thus the number of functional minorities by far exceeds the official definition of national minorities. It furthermore criticizes the slow implementation of state legislation, which is only a framework lacking specific regulations, and limited state/entity and cantonal funding for minority education.

## LINKS

NGO Be my friend [www.budimojprijatelj.com](http://www.budimojprijatelj.com)  
 OSCE Education: <http://www.oscebih.org/education/?d=2>  
 OHR: <http://www.ohr.int/>  
 Ministry for Civil Affairs, Sector for Education, Science, Culture and Sport: [http://www.mcp.gov.ba/pages\\_en/sekt\\_obr\\_nauka.php](http://www.mcp.gov.ba/pages_en/sekt_obr_nauka.php)  
 Ministry of Education and Science (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina): <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=963>  
 Ministry of Education and Culture (Republika Srpska): <http://www.vladars.net/lt/min/mp.html>  
 Reports  
 Minority Rights Group, Bosnia and Herzegovina: National Minorities and the Right to Education  
<http://www.minorityrights.org/admin/Download/pdf/BiHEducationMicro2006.pdf>

## 3.3.3. Policies

Policies in BiH are rarely coherent, as the various layers of government pursue their own and often competing policies. In addition, strong international influences have shaped the policy making process. The tension in terms of policies, including in the sphere of education after 1999 when international organizations started taking note of education matters, has been between local, often nationalist actors and international organizations, primarily the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative.

Formally, BiH has committed itself in the Dayton Peace Accords to all key conventions, which are incorporated into the constitution, but often de-facto state-level commitments have had little impact on a local level.

BiH passed a law on the protection the rights of members of national minorities in April 2003 and a Roma Strategy in July 2005. An action plan for the education of members of national minorities was signed by all Ministries of education in BiH (12 ministers) and some Cantons also adopted regulations for the education of national minorities.

## 3.3.4. Laws

The education system in BiH is highly fragmented. Competences for education have been devolved entirely to the entities. In RS education matters are a responsibility of the Entity, whereas in the Federation these competencies have been further devolved from the entity level to the ten cantons. Education also falls under the competences of the Brcko District. On a national level, education falls under the remit of the Ministry for Civil Affairs, with highly limited competences. State-level legislation thus only set a broad framework, but does not detail any measures. The Action Plan on the Education Needs of Roma and Members of Other National Minorities in BiH was adopted in February 2004 by the entity and cantonal Ministries of Education under the guidance of the OSCE. This plan calls for systematic action to ensure equal access to education for all and to accommodate the education needs of pupils belonging to national minorities. It furthermore proposes steps to ensure that the language and culture of all national minorities is respected in schools and that aspects of the culture, history and literature of national minorities are incorporated into the existing curricula.

In other respects the various laws on education scarcely address the needs of national minorities. The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, for example, prescribes that “the language and culture of any significant minority [...] shall be respected and accommodated within the school to

the greatest extent practicable, in accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.”

According to the Protection of Members of National Minorities Act the regional (i.e. entity and cantonal) governments are obliged to provide for minority language instruction in pre-school, primary and secondary education in cities, municipalities and neighbourhoods where minorities constitute a majority. The FCNM Advisory Committee criticized this high threshold in its first report, but also noted that the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education offers more flexibility for the establishment of minority language education. In 2004, the RS authorities dropped the 20-pupil threshold for establishing minority language classes at primary school level. Independently of the number, local authorities have to provide courses in minority language, culture and history as an additional subject (Art. 14). In addition, the regional governments have to permit minorities to establish their own private institutions.

### 3.3.5. Implementation

The main challenge in BiH has been the implementation of legislation and the transformation of international and state norms and legal frameworks into specific regulations on an entity and cantonal level: while some cantons have adopted regulations for the education of members of national minorities, they are often not implemented.

The lack of implementation can be attributed to the fact that national minorities are not high on the agenda of the governments nor of the international community. Recently, members of national minorities have been increasing pressure on government representatives to implement the relevant laws and regulations. For example in the Tuzla Canton, Roma have organized demonstrations

demanding the implementation of the regulations for the education of members of national minorities.

### 3.3.6. Problems and Challenges

Minority education in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains difficult in part due to the structural difficulties of the country, namely the complex institutional structure and the nationalist legacy. Amidst the continuing political tensions between the political elites of the three constituent peoples (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs), minorities are often marginalized and lack effective access to the policy process. Secondly, the small size of national minorities and the lack of geographic concentration renders many measures even more difficult.

Since 1999, efforts have been made by international organizations to reform school curricula and textbooks to reduce their strong ethno-nationalist orientation. Although primarily aimed at reducing tensions between the dominant nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the down-toning of stereotypes and nationalist imagery has also benefited minorities. Nevertheless, these reforms have been pursued top-down with limited impact on a local level.

As for the largest and the most marginalized community, poverty is the main cause for the low number of Roma pupils, as well as traditions of discrimination in schools. The primary challenge is to secure the support of the government, including budgetary means at all governmental levels, to ensure that basic educational needs are satisfied (transportation, books, meals etc) for Roma pupils.

# 3.4 Bulgaria

## 3.4.1. Overview

In Bulgaria, the difficulties children encounter in the education system are a particular problem for ethnic minorities. Lack of sensitivity to ethnocultural diversity at school and its ineffective management is an extension of these problems at a political level. Bulgarian schools should be freed from the continual political pressure to which they are subjected in the form of a refusal to recognize the minority status of minority children and their specific educational needs (and hence

difficulties). The proportion of minority populations in Bulgaria is approximately 20%, and the quality of education of this significant section of the human potential of the country must no longer be underestimated. (According to the last census from March 2001, the total population of Bulgaria was 7,928,901, the number of ethnic Turks was 746,664; the number of Roma was 370,908, though expert opinions put their number between 600,000 and 800,000).

	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma (UNDP)
Census 2001	83.9% Bulgarians	9.4% Turks 4.7 % Roma	8.8-10.1% (700,000-800,000)

## 3.4.2. International Standards

Bulgaria is party to the key international and European human and minority rights conventions. In its monitoring of Bulgaria's implementation of the FCNM, the Advisory Committee in its April 2006 report focused on two aspects in particular: the isolation of Roma in 'special' schools—70% of Roma children attend separate schools with lower standards and worse conditions than those of the majority—and the high dropout rates and the fact that the education system as a whole does not promote diversity.

In addition, as one of the two EU member states in post-Communist South-East Europe, Bulgaria was required to adhere to additional requirements

in the sphere of minority rights set out by the EU. Thus, the European Commission Reports on the implementation of EU membership criteria from May and September 2006 noted the need for further measures to reinforce implementation of the Action Plan on the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, including in the education sector, and drew attention to the limited implementation of the Framework Programme for the Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society. With regard to education matters in particular, it noted that measures to integrate Roma children in school do not relate to pupils in higher grades and that job descriptions and budgets of assistant teachers have still not been determined.



## LINKS

*Ministry of Education and Science:*

<http://www.minedu.government.bg/>

*State Report, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/2.\\_FRAMEWORK\\_CONVENTION\\_\(MONITORING\)/2.\\_Monitoring\\_mechanism/3.\\_State\\_Reports\\_and\\_UNMIK\\_Kosovo\\_Report/1.\\_First\\_cycle/List%20of%20State%20Reports.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._FRAMEWORK_CONVENTION_(MONITORING)/2._Monitoring_mechanism/3._State_Reports_and_UNMIK_Kosovo_Report/1._First_cycle/List%20of%20State%20Reports.asp)*

### 3.4.3. Policies

In July 2004 the Ministry of Education and Science announced its Strategy for the Education and Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities for the period from 2005 to 2015. The strategy was elaborated by a working group at the Ministry of Education and Science Advisory Council on the Educational Integration of Minority Children. The very fact that this public advisory body was created was the result of intense pressure on the part of the non-governmental sector to channel its efforts to influence education policy in the direction of increased inclusiveness and more effective management of diversity in education. Participants in the Council included representatives of a broad circle of civil sector (including minority) organizations and made a great contribution to the development of this document with new vision, values, aims and objectives based on international human/minority rights protection standards. The same working group also elaborated an Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy covering the same period. Both of these documents were created to carry further and to build on the principles, goals and objectives set out in the Framework Programme

for the Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society (1999), the first complete programme document in this field drafted on the initiative of the civil sector and approved by the government following intensive advocacy on the part of the non-governmental sector. Although in the process of consultations between various ministries the Strategy encountered numerous interventions from various quarters, the amendments finally drafted in the text were not drastic.

After initiation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015 in February 2005, the Bulgarian government drafted a National Action Plan, which largely repeated the principles and activities set out in the Strategy for the Education and Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities.

The National Programme for the Development of School and Pre-School Education 2006-2015 was adopted in 2006 and described by the Bulgarian government as progress on the education of minority children in its latest report in 2006 on Bulgaria's implementation of the EU membership criteria. However, this assertion is not supported by any real evidence. On the contrary, the document itself backtracks categorically on the policies adopted during the previous few years of the education ministry on the education of minorities.

This Programme is entirely indifferent to Bulgaria's commitments, including those of education institutions, with regard to the education and integration of minority children, which are set out in numerous international treaties to which Bulgaria is a party. This national programme fails to recognize the commitments undertaken by the education ministry itself in 2004 with its own Strategy for the Education and Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities. The Programme does not include a single one of Bulgaria's commitments under the Decade of Roma Inclusion set out in the

National Action Plan under the “education” priority. At the same time, other ministries relevant to the implementation of the priorities of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works have included commitments arising from the National Action Plan under the Decade in their long-term strategies and operational programmes.

The National Programme for the Development of School and Pre-School Education 2006-2015 refuses to mainstream any issues related to the education of minority children in its common education policy and fails to recognize the need for policies targeted to children from particular minority groups in compensation for shortcomings in the education system which affect them and to bring their opportunities genuinely into line with those of other children.

Although the National Programme formulates fundamental education policy goals including the provision of: 1. Equal Access to Education; and 2. Quality Education, the document fails to put forward any vision on how these goals can be implemented with regard to the needs of minority children in the policies of the Ministry of Education and Science.

### 3.4.4. Laws

Despite the fact that the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was ratified without any accompanying declaration concerning which minorities are officially recognized, state institutions and most of society for various reasons do not recognize the minority self-identification of members of the Macedonian community and the self-identification of a proportion of Pomak communities as an ethnic minority. This non-recognition has been a persistent policy of all governments and parliaments to date.

The Bulgarian legislative base on education contains a number of laws as mentioned below and numerous sub-judicial acts which are frequently amended and do not ensure good correlation between the measures which they regulate.<sup>4</sup> In addition, there is no minority-specific law in Bulgarian legislation.

The Constitution guarantees in Article 36, Paragraph 2: that “citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian have the right to learn and use their own language along with compulsory learning of the Bulgarian language.” A number of other norms and various laws fill out this constitutional provision with specific measures.

In accordance with the National Education Act, a “mother tongue” may be learned “in municipal schools under the protection and control of the state” (Art 8, para. 2). The definition of “mother tongue” is the language which the child uses to communicate with his or her family. There are no legal provisions to allow minority children to be educated using their mother tongue as a teaching medium. Instead, a government ordinance, which is still in force, was the first which stipulated that a “mother tongue” could be learned as an optional subject outside compulsory school hours (facultative) for the first to the eighth grade (7-14 years of age). This means that the pupils do not receive assessments and the subject is not taken into account in calculating the overall annual assessment. With the adoption of the Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act in 1999, mother tongue teaching became an optional subject taught during compulsory school hours, which can be learned in addition to the compulsory curriculum if the pupils or their parents choose this option. Accordingly, the pupils receive assessments during and at the end of the school year. Assessments from this subject are taken into account in calculating the overall annual assessment. As mother tongue is now an optional subject taught

4. A new cycle of amendments is under way with the aim to bring the laws and sub-judicial acts in compliance with the changes, introduced by the latest strategic document National Programme for the Development of School and Pre-School Education 2006-2015.

during compulsory school hours, pupils in the lower secondary and upper secondary education levels may also learn it. A number of the provisions in Ordinance No. 183/1994 are still in force, since the ordinance has not been revoked in full. According to an ordinance of the Ministry of Education and Science from 2000 the minimum number of pupils with which a group may be formed to learn an optional subject during compulsory school hours is 11 for mother tongue as a subject (the group may comprise pupils from one or more classes). The issue of forming mixed groups of pupils numbering less than 11 who wish to learn their mother tongue is still not legally regulated, nor is the issue of dividing classes when more than 24 pupils wish to learn mother tongue.

### 3.4.5. Implementation

The legislative base of the education system has serious shortcomings and discrepancies which give rise to obstacles to the implementation of international standards for minority protection in education. The laws are largely outdated and have only been replaced with ministerial instructions, rather than new laws. At the end of 2006, the Ministry of Education and Science started to draft amendments in the National Education Act and other key education laws and sub-judicial acts with the aim to bring them into line with the changes introduced by the National Programme for the Development of School and Pre-School Education 2006-2015, but this process took place without consultation with relevant NGOs and minority representatives.

This points to a larger challenge in the implementation of the policies and laws: the lack of political will. Despite a perfunctory commitment to reform, there is a lack of political commitment to the process.

The implementation of the policies and laws is also hampered by a number of structural and organizational problems. Thus the implementation

of the various programmes and policies is scattered between a large number of different institutions (Ministry of Education and Science, the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works). As a result, there is a lack of synchronization between the jurisdiction and responsibilities of the education administration on various government levels and between it and other national, regional and municipal institutions. In addition, the decentralization of schools is still inadequate and fragmentary, encompassing only a small number of education establishments and only with regard to the use of delegated budgets.

At the level of teacher training, teachers and head teachers are still totally unprepared to manage diversity in school effectively: to work effectively with minority children and to communicate with their parents, to harmonize ethnocultural differences in the classroom and the school and to implement rights-based education and integration. This is due to linguistic, cultural and psychological alienation; to a lack of practical training; to insensitivity and failure to identify instances of intolerance at school; to the inability to counteract racism and discrimination; to the lack of skills in contacting minority parents. In particular, teachers have been widely unable to tackle the challenge of dropouts among minority children. Finally, although the 2004/2005 school year was set as the beginning of the Educational Integration Strategy, as a result of the lack of genuine political will it began without the education system being prepared for it in terms of funding, organization and programmes. Due to this, thousands of Roma children were again sent to segregated schools instead of ethnically mixed schools outside their neighbourhoods.

There is no explicit education policy to affirm diversity. Despite sporadic attempts in various

governing documents to establish tolerance policies, the reality in the Bulgarian education system is still one of insensitivity to ethnocultural diversity in every sense of the concept: teaching plans, programmes and curricula, methodologies, the overall school environment, etc.

Although only one year old, the National Programme for the Development of School and Pre-School Education 2006-2015 fails to address the issue of overcoming the unequal treatment of children through the maintenance of the system of so-called “Roma schools”. As long as such a strategic document for school education fails to provide answers to such fundamental questions, unequal access to education (despite its declared “strategic goal” of promoting equal access) will continue to increase the growing inequality along ethnic lines between the education level of various groups of citizens.

#### 3.4.6. Problems and Challenges

A key challenge in the education system in Bulgaria is the high dropout rate among minority children. According to a 2003 survey by the International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, the number of school dropouts is 2% among Bulgarians (for age 15-19: 3.9%), but 8.3% among Turks (for age 15-19: 21%) and 20.9% Roma (for age 15-19: 42.8%). The interpretation by the education ministry of the causes of these high rates in the National programme for the development of school and pre-school education 2006-2015 is based on spurious arguments, asserting that it is due to a low priority given to education in family values (referring to Roma). Recent research, however, shows that the reasons for the high dropout rate from the point of view of the children lie in the education system itself. Despite positive steps forward in standardizing the age of compulsory education (16 years of age) to coincide with the completion of the

compulsory first phase of secondary education (i.e. 10th grade) instead of compulsory 8th grade or basic education level (as it was until now), this new educational structure was introduced into action without any advance preparation.

A second challenge arises from inadequate incorporation of diversity and minority related issues into the mainstream curriculum and textbooks. Although the state educational requirements for curricula were updated in 2000, they cover the themes of identity and the history and culture of ethnic minorities in an abstract and monotonous manner, mainly comprising traditions and folklore, without offering anything about the other dimensions of cultural identity and of the contribution of minority groups to the life and achievements of the nation as a whole. On the basis of the renewed state education requirements for curricular content, reforms were initiated in the national curriculum but are making very slow progress. The primary school curriculum has now been amended and work is now in progress on the curricula for various subjects in middle-level education courses. Textbooks, even of those published during the last 4-5 years, however, do not comply in full even with the minimal education ministry requirements for curricular content. Although the culture and traditions of minorities begin to appear more frequently, curricula and textbooks for primary school children in many cases are based on aims and approaches seen mainly from the cultural point of view of the Bulgarian majority, which places obstacles to an intercultural approach. Entire ethnocultural communities are absent, some of which are very numerous, such as the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims/Pomaks.

Intercultural approaches are still not applied sufficiently in mixed-school teaching practice with regard to introducing issues related to minority history and culture in the content of the main school subjects. The crucial objective of contemporary

schools to ensure the mutual familiarization and harmonization of cultures is mainly relegated to optional subjects within and outside compulsory school hours. This isolates these issues from the mainstream classroom in which mass prejudices are usually found. Where intercultural programmes are introduced in school practice, it is usually in the form of temporary external projects carried out by individual teachers, without being turned into sustainable school policy.

A third major challenge lies in a lack of relevant teaching capacity. Even when faced with a trend towards increasing numbers of early school dropouts (mainly minority children), teachers and school

managers are still not adequately trained to overcome their educational shortcomings effectively and to bring the process of early school-leaving under control successfully. Ethnic Bulgarian teachers working with minority children in regions with compact minority populations have no bilingual skills to enable them to work in a bilingual environment. The number of bilingual teaching personnel from minority communities, especially the Roma community, is quite unsatisfactory and fails to meet the needs. This places an unacceptably heavy burden on only one side in the educational process: minority children. Universities still fail to provide future teachers with the relevant abilities to work in a multicultural/bilingual school environment.

## 3.5 Croatia

### 3.5.1. Overview

The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia stipulates that primary education in Croatia shall be compulsory and free, while secondary and higher education shall be equally accessible to everyone according to their abilities.

The National legislative framework makes it possible for national minorities to be educated in their own language and script. It satisfies all preconditions for quality organization and implementation of education in the language and script of national minorities that

request such education, and is in line with core international standards. The education of persons belonging to a national minority is performed in pre-school institutions, primary and secondary schools and other school institutions with the education in the language and script of particular national minority, as well as in other forms of education (seminars, summer and winter schools etc.), under the conditions and in the manner stipulated by the Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities Act.

	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma (UNDP)
<b>Census 2001</b>	89.6% Croats	4.5% Serbs 0.5% Bosniaks 0.4% Muslims 0.4% Hungarians 0.4% Italians 0.3% Albanians	0.7-0.9% (30,000-40,000)

### 3.5.2. International Standards

Croatia has ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages, as well as all relevant UN human rights treaties.

The Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities, in its second opinion on Croatia of October 2004, concluded that there is a degree of legal uncertainty in Croatian legislation concerning the conditions and procedures for the implementation of national minority educational models. In particular the Croatian authorities were recommended to clarify the rules and responsibilities concerning the implementation of education models stipulated in the Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities Act; to ensure the availability of textbooks for persons belonging to all national minorities; and to take further steps in the education system to encourage contacts between pupils of different communities and encourage media engagement in the promotion of intercultural dialogue.

#### LINKS

*Ministry of Science, Education and Sports official web-site:*

<http://public.mzos.hr/>

*Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages in the Republic of Croatia, Second monitoring cycle, 7 September 2005:*

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal\\_affairs/local\\_and\\_regional\\_democracy/regional\\_or\\_minority\\_languages/2\\_monitoring/2.4\\_Committee\\_of\\_Ministers%27\\_Recommendations/Croatia\\_CM\\_Rec2.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/local_and_regional_democracy/regional_or_minority_languages/2_monitoring/2.4_Committee_of_Ministers%27_Recommendations/Croatia_CM_Rec2.pdf)

*Paper on the exercise of the rights to education of persons belonging to national minorities in mother tongue and script in eastern Croatia; Coalition for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, March 2006: <http://www.center4peace.org/Various%20document%20for%20web/Web%20materijali%20septembar%202006/MRP%20Paper%202/Doc%20english%202.pdf>*

*Third Report by the Republic of Croatia on the Application of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages, August 2006:*

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal\\_affairs/local\\_and\\_regional\\_democracy/regional\\_or\\_minority\\_languages/2\\_monitoring/2.2\\_States\\_Reports/Croatia\\_report3.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/local_and_regional_democracy/regional_or_minority_languages/2_monitoring/2.2_States_Reports/Croatia_report3.pdf)

### 3.5.3. Policies

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, as far as technical and material possibilities allow, takes a number of measures aimed to ensure conditions for quality education in minority languages and to overcome certain difficulties in the organization and performance of teaching. In 2006 the Ministry established a special Department for National Minorities.

The Ministry appointed advisors to monitor the implementation of education in minority languages and scripts and established teams of activists for the professional training of teachers teaching in some minority languages. It provides funding for the translation, production and acquisition of primary school textbooks in the languages and scripts of national minorities. The Ministry also recognises the need to produce new textbooks coordinated with the Knowledge Catalogue and the Croatian National Education Standard, adopted as part of the 2005 Education Sector Development Plan for 2005 – 2010.

Although the minimum number of pupils required to establish a class or group to be educated in a minority language and script is not established by Croatian law, the Ministry shows a high level of understanding for the requests submitted by minority communities.

The Ministry takes a number of measures to strengthen and intensify contacts between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds and to contribute to the integration of minority pupils. Following an agreement concluded by the Ministry and local Serb representatives, a joint history textbook was introduced for all pupils in the area of eastern Croatia affected by the war. As from the 2006/2007 academic year pupils from eastern Croatia attending classes in the Serbian language and script and those attending classes in the Croatian language and script are no longer physically separated in different shifts and/or facilities as was case in the past. The Ministry has launched special programmes for inclusion of Roma students in the education system and contributes to the implementation of the National Programme for Roma within its domain.

### 3.5.4. Laws

The national legislative framework for the exercise of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to education in their mother tongue is regulated by provisions of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities Act.

Three basic models of teaching organization and performance are stipulated for minority pupils:

- **Model A**, where the entire teaching is performed in the language and script of a national minority with the obligation to teach the Croatian language and the language of the respective minority for the same number of hours. The pupils have the right and are obliged to learn additional subjects

important to their minority community. This kind of teaching model is conducted in special institutions, but can also be performed in institutions which teach in the Croatian language, in special classes where teaching is conducted in a minority language and script;

- **Model B**, in which the teaching is conducted bilingually, natural sciences are taught in the Croatian language while social science classes are taught in a minority language. Teaching is conducted in institutions which teach in the Croatian language, but in special classes;
- **Model C**, in which teaching is performed in the Croatian language with an additional 5 school hours intended for national minority language and culture learning. An additional 5 school hours per week include teaching about the language and literature of a national minority, geography, history, music, and art.

Special forms of education (seminars, summer and winter schools, correspondent and consultative classes) are organized for pupils for whom regular classes using models A, B, or C cannot be organized. Schools which teach in a minority language and script may be established for a smaller number of pupils than that prescribed for schools teaching in the majority language and script. The same possibility is provided for the establishment of a school class or group in a minority language and script in schools which teach in the majority language and script.

All minority language and script teaching models are an integral part of the education system of the Republic of Croatia, and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport covers the expenses.

### 3.5.5. Implementation

Eleven minority communities - Italian, Serb, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian, Ruthenian,



German, Austrian, Albanian and Macedonian - exercise their right to education in their mother tongue and script in one or two of the three basic teaching models stipulated for minority pupils.

Model A is applicable and exercised in some parts of Croatia by members of the Italian, Serb, Hungarian and Czech minorities in pre-school education programmes and in elementary and secondary school education.

Minority pupils generally attend higher education provided in the Croatian language and script. Exceptions consist of two teacher training colleges where teaching is in Italian and Serbian.

Roma pupils are in a distinct situation. The right of persons belonging to the Roma National Minority to education in their minority language is recognized through the National Programme for Roma. However, they attend classes in regular schools where teaching is in the Croatian language and script. In some parts of Croatia they are continuously exposed to discrimination and segregation. Roma children face various problems regarding motivation and continuation of their education due to poverty and language barriers and in some cases lack of family support. The Croatian Government and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport promote and conduct a number of measures against segregation to integrate Roma pupils into the education system, such as supporting their access to pre-school education programmes, providing scholarships, employing Roma assistants to improve cooperation between parents and schools, funding informal education methods, providing opportunities for enrolling in high schools under favorable conditions, etc. Measures for the integration of Roma into the wider society are prescribed by the National Programme for Roma and the Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015. In the region of Medumurje

Roma children were subjected to discrimination, with 60% of children in the region attending separate classes for Roma. The case was taken up by the Croatian Helsinki Committee and the European Roma Rights Centre and referred to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in 2004.

### 3.5.6. Problems and Challenges

The main problems in minority education in Croatia, in particular connection with small minorities, refer to access to textbooks in minority languages and the engagement of teachers and special advisors. Provision of adequate secondary school textbooks remains problematic for pupils belonging to particular minorities and can influence decisions taken by certain pupils to choose to be educated in their mother tongue and script. Additional efforts should be made to establish and introduce school curricula, plans and programmes with contents related to the specific characteristics of national minorities. In some cases there is a challenge in relieving pupils of additional obligations.

The Committee of Experts which monitors and evaluates the implementation of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages encouraged the Croatian authorities to strengthen Slovak, Ruthenian and Ukrainian language education in primary schools and at least introduce the teaching of the Slovak, Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages in secondary education.

There is a need to clarify the procedures and competencies for the establishment and registration of schools which teach in minority language and scripts. This in particular relates to a long-standing demand by local Serb minority representatives to register a minority school in the Serbian language and Cyrillic script in eastern Croatia. Exercise of the right to register minority schools stems from the law, and in this case, representatives of the Serb



community from eastern Croatia consider that non-implementation of the law amounts to discrimination.

There is also a need to invest additional efforts in building and strengthening inter-ethnic relations and building trust between teachers and pupils of Serb and Croat ethnicity in eastern Croatia. Promotion of understanding and tolerance toward minorities, and promotion of the positive

contribution of minorities to Croatia's history and culture in the general school curriculum may be considered valuable.

Full and adequate integration of Roma pupils in the national education system is dependent on the elimination of the discrimination and segregation which they faced in some parts of Croatia, as well as on conducting consistent measures and ensuring the support of the authorities at all levels .

## 3.6 Kosovo

### 3.6.1. Overview

A report of the International Crisis Group described the key problem of the tense relationship between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo as a lack of social contract: "A simple but effective formula exists for peace in diverse societies. It consists of a civic contract: the government recognizes and supports special rights for minorities, and minorities acknowledge the authority of the government. No elements of such a contract currently exist in Kosovo. The Albanians remain reluctant to support enhanced rights for the Serb minority, and the Serb community does not recognize the authority of Kosovo's institutions. Moreover, Kosovo is not a state and its future status remains unresolved. After years of United Nations authority in Kosovo, the foundation of this civic contract and of sustainable peace has not been laid"<sup>5</sup>. This situation is also applicable to the minority language status in the Kosovo education system. The government has followed a credible outreach programme, but regrettably higher education is not part of the standard process, though it has implicitly and integrally become a

part of the status process. This is due to the fact that the necessity to deal with higher education is poorly understood. The need is indicated for a sustainable education system in which minorities share ownership, encouraging responsibility to be taken by both sides.

Inter-ethnic relations have been tense in Kosovo both during the period of political instability in the 1980s and especially the 1990s and since the war in 1999. While most of the tension has involved Albanians and Serbs, smaller communities, such as Roma (Ashkali and Egyptians), Gorani and other minorities have been caught in the crossfire of these tensions. Issues of security and the lack of full freedom of movement for all minorities overshadow educational issues in Kosovo. There are two parallel education systems in Kosovo: the dominant education system is organized by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo and is attended by the Albanian population and some minorities, while most Serbs and some other communities visit education institutions funded by the Serbian government. Education institutions have thus become extremely divisive and politicized.

5. International Crisis Group, *Kosovo's Ethnic Dilemma: The Need for a Civic Contract*, 28.5.2003.

	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma (UNDP)
Est. 2000	88% Albanians	7% Serbs 1.9% Bosniaks/Muslims 1% Turks	1.8-2% (36,000-40,000)

### 3.6.2. International Standards

In June 1999 the United Nations (UN) Security Council established the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) pending a political settlement. Military authority was vested in the NATO-led multi-national Kosovo Force (KFOR). Executive, legislative and judicial authority was vested in UNMIK, led by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG). UNMIK's authority in Kosovo was, from its inception and according to the UN Secretary-General, to "be guided by internationally recognized standards of human rights". These standards, including the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), were subsequently incorporated into acting law in Kosovo in December 1999. The government has authority over education matters, but remains supervised by UNMIK. In its 2006 report, the FCNM Advisory Committee noted that Kosovo faces particular discrepancies between the legal framework, international commitment and reality. Similarly, the parallel educational systems for Serb and Albanian students have further consolidated the division between communities.

### LINKS

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology:  
<http://www.ks-gov.net/masht/>

United Nations Administration, Official Gazette:  
<http://www.unmikonline.org/regulations/unmikgazette/index.htm>

International Crisis Group: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1243>

Humanitarian Law Center:  
<http://www.hlc-rdc.org/english/index.php>

Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, Higher Education for Minorities in Kosovo, 2006: <http://kec-ks.org/botimet/education.pdf>

### 3.6.3. Policies

Institutionally, education in Kosovo is determined both by the policies of the Kosovo authorities under the auspices of UNMIK and by the government of Serbia. The official policies of the Ministry of Education have been to accommodate minority communities. At the same time, textbooks continue to promote nationalist and ethnocentric perspectives and the sharp division between Albanians and Serbs is perpetuated by mutually conflicting visions on the status of Kosovo.

The Kosovo Constitutional Framework and the Use of Languages in Kosovo Act guarantee the right of

minorities to be educated in their own languages. The Kosovo Humanitarian Law Center (HLC) monitored the implementation of the applicable legislation over a 3-month period. HLC Kosovo considers that the Use of Languages in Kosovo Act is duly implemented in relation to the Turkish, Bosnian and Roma-Ashkali-Egyptian (RAE) communities and the part of Gorani community who attend schools in the Bosnian language.

Pupils from these ethnic communities attend lectures based on the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (Kosovo MEST) curriculum. Curricula enacted by this Ministry are prepared in Albanian, Bosnian and Turkish languages. The mother tongue of Ashkali and Egyptian community members is Albanian and therefore they attend schools teaching in the Albanian language. Serbs and a part of the Gorani community who attend schools teaching in the Serbian language follow the educational curriculum established by the Serbian Government in the Serbian language. HLC Kosovo emphasizes that the Kosovo Government still has not enacted the educational curriculum in the Serbian language. On the other hand, Serbs refuse to be part of the deliberations with Kosovo MEST to outline the educational curriculum in the Serbian language and for this Ministry to promulgate this. The Kosovo Government has sent them an official and public call on this matter. The Roma language education process has neither been organized in school under Kosovo MEST jurisdiction, nor in schools under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Government Ministry of Education. Sections of the Roma community who live in a predominantly Albanian environment attend school in the Albanian language, while Roma who live in Serbian enclaves attend schools in Serbian language. A smaller number of Roma children attends schools in Bosnian language”<sup>6</sup>.

### 3.6.4. Laws

Mother tongue education is guaranteed to all ethnic communities by Article 4.4 of the 2001 Constitutional Framework for Kosovo. The Use of Languages in Kosovo Act also guarantees the right of minorities to be educated in their own language. The right to mother tongue education at the primary and secondary level is re-affirmed by the 2002 Primary and Secondary Education Act.

In addition a unified curriculum was developed in 2002 to offer education catering for Bosniaks, Turks and Serbs. Under the Kosovo Government regulation of 4 November 1999, Bosniaks can be taught in their mother tongue and use textbooks from Bosnia and Herzegovina, while another Regulation N° 11, dated 11 December 2002, allows persons belonging to the Turkish ethnic community to attend classes in Turkish language and use textbooks from Turkey. Instruction in the Bosnian and Turkish languages is provided at primary and secondary school levels. Two faculties have also been opened: the Faculty of Business in Pe /Peja and the Teacher Training Faculty in Prizren.

### 3.6.5. Implementation

Despite provisions in the constitutional framework for the right to education in minority languages, this right is not fully respected. As the International Crisis Group (ICG) noted: “Minorities are denied the right to education on an equal basis through discrimination in access to schools and by lower standards, in the absence of trained minority teachers and in the failure to provide teaching in minority languages. In the enclaves, some minorities have set up parallel education systems. Minority schools outside enclaves have problems in recruiting qualified teachers”.<sup>7</sup> The gap between norms and practice is probably larger than elsewhere in South-East Europe. Beside the inter-ethnic issues mentioned above, additional problems derive from the legal

6. Section drawn on Humanitarian Law Center, Practice of Implementing the Law on the Use of Languages in the Kosovo Education Process, July 2007.

7. International Crisis Group, Kosovo’s Ethnic Dilemma: The Need for a Civic Contract, 28.5.2003.

framework. According to the FCNM Advisory Committee, there is no clearly defined threshold above which minority language classes must be formed, although it notes that in practice a threshold of 15 appears to have been applied. For smaller minorities such a threshold constitutes a serious obstacle for minority language instruction.

Most problems are experienced by Serbs, whose children continue to attend schools in the Serb enclaves, establishing parts of the parallel institutions of the Serbian Government. One of the reasons Serb children go to these schools is due to the fact that the Kosovo Government has still not passed a resolution on education in the Serbian language. For this reason the Serb schoolchildren still attend classes held under the instruction plan and programme of the Serbian Government Ministry of Education. But owing to the lack of conditions for normal schooling in Kosovo, the number of Serb pupils has declined even in the Serb enclaves. Teachers in these schools are paid by the Serbian Government. A number of Serbian teachers who used to be paid from the Kosovo budget and represented a chance to integrate the Serbian minority into Kosovo society closed down their Kosovo accounts and waived their Kosovo budget remuneration following an instruction by the Serbian Government. Despite being granted the right to attend classes in their mother tongue, Bosniaks living in some areas cannot exercise this right owing to pressure for their children be instructed in Albanian. Thus, for example, the few Bosniaks who remain in Đakovica/Gjakovë communicate amongst themselves in Albanian and send their children to Albanian schools because there are not enough Bosniak children of school age to organize classes in Bosnian. The Bosniaks requested supplementary classes for their children to teach them Bosnian and Bosniak history, culture, and traditions, which the municipality rejected on the grounds of insufficient resources.

### 3.6.6. Problems and Challenges

The marginalization of Roma is one of two major challenges in the education system. Although no segregated classes exist as in other countries, there is also no organized instruction for Roma in their mother tongue. Roma children go either to schools administered by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and are taught in Albanian, Bosnian or Turkish, or to schools run by the Serbian government where they are instructed in Serbian. Ashkali and Egyptian children go freely to schools together with Albanian children and are instructed in the Albanian language, which is their mother tongue. Nevertheless, after primary school only a small number of Ashkali and Egyptian children continue their education in secondary schools, and fewer still at post-secondary schools or faculties. A survey by the Roma non-governmental organization Durmish Asllano in Prizren, carried out in collaboration with the Communities Office, found 1,950 Roma children of school age in the municipality. Of these, only 24 per cent or so were included in the education system: 21.6 per cent in primary schools, 1.6 per cent in secondary schools, two in post-secondary schools, and only one at a higher education faculty.

The second challenge relates to the parallel primary education system, which affects not only Serbs, but also other minorities. In Dragas/Dragash around 2,000 Gorani pupils attend primary and secondary schools using the Serbian curriculum. Some of Gorani teachers who taught the Serbian curriculum refused to receive remuneration from the Kosovo government as of April 2006. They insisted on receiving payment remittances from the Serbian government budget. For this reason, the municipal Education Directorate of the municipality of Dragas/ Dragash published a vacancy announcement for new teachers in July 2006. Although this conflict was eventually resolved, it highlights the politicization of

education in Kosovo. The parallel system also extends to higher education. The University in Pristina/Prishtin offers lecturers in Albanian, with no Serb students and only a few Bosniaks, Turks and RAE students. The state of affairs at the private universities is no different. Faculties run by the Serbian Government provide lecturers in the Serbian language. These operate in the northern part of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, Zvean/Zvečan, Leposavi / Leposaviq, and Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok. The

students are Serbs, with no Albanians. In common with the University in Pristina/Prishtinë, these facilities are attended by only a very small number of individuals of other ethnic communities in Kosovo.

Finally, Kosovo faces the problem of discrimination and lack of educational provision for forcibly repatriated refugees from Western Europe, whose children often have no access to education because of language problems.

## 3.7 Macedonia

### 3.7.1. Overview

The Republic of Macedonia is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious country. The 2001 conflict between the state and the Albanian National Liberation Army increased inter-ethnic tensions, while at the same time resulting in far-reaching reforms which have at least partially transformed education for minorities amongst other matters. Legal standards are generally high and Albanians enjoy education at all levels, including higher education. Nevertheless, differences between minorities with regard to their access to education, tension between Albanians and Macedonians and the familiar problems of Roma point to the limitations of educational reforms in recent years. In particular, there has been a widening gap between the education provisions for the largest minority community, i.e. ethnic Albanians, and smaller minorities.

Data based on the 2002 census show that 3.6% of the population is officially illiterate (5.5% of women, 1.7% of men). 67,358 citizens have not taken part in the formal education system and 219,507 people have not completed compulsory education. Nevertheless, the trend is towards a decreasing number of illiterate people compared with the numbers indicated by the previous census. There is significant variation between majority and some minorities, however. It is thought that only 1 out of 10 Roma people completes primary education. Data from the 2005-2015 National Education Development Programme show an alarming trend: the proportion of people without education on a national level is about 14%, while the proportion of people with completed primary education is 35%. This means that about half of the population in the country has a low level of education.

	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma
<b>Census 2002</b>	64.2 % Macedonians	25.2% Albanians 3.9% Turks 2.7% Roma 1.7% Serbs 0.8% Bosniaks 0.5% Vlachs	4.9-6.9% (100,000-140,000)

### 3.7.2. International Standards

Macedonia is party to all key international conventions. Since becoming a signatory to the FCNM, Macedonia has submitted two reports. In response to the first report, the Advisory Committee noted in 2004 that key problems in the education sector are related to tensions between Macedonians and Albanians in schools which have been reformed since 2001 to include more Albanian language teaching, the unequal treatment of all minorities and the disadvantages which Roma face, mirroring similar problems elsewhere in South-East Europe.

#### LINKS

Ministry of Education and Science: <http://www.mon.gov.mk/visokoustanovi.asp>

National Programme for the Development of Education 2005 – 2015: <http://www.npro.edu.mk/>

Educational Development Bureau: <http://www.bro.gov.mk/podracje/koncepciski/srednostrucno.html>

Realization of the Right to Use Community Languages in Communication with the State: [http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=22&Itemid=39](http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=22&Itemid=39)

### 3.7.3. Policies

Since the signing of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement, the government has undertaken legal and political efforts to open the state and its institutions to the Albanian community. This includes the legalization of the University of Tetovo, the establishment of additional Albanian schools and more beneficial provisions for minority languages. While most policies

officially target all minorities, Albanians have benefited disproportionately from these policies while smaller minorities are often left behind.

In the 2005-2015 National Education Development Programme particular emphasis is placed on multicultural and intercultural education. In this framework some courses in Civic Education are taught and components on multicultural education are being incorporated into the curriculum. In 2003 the government established an office in the Ministry of Education and Science for developing and enhancing education in the languages of the representatives of ethnic minorities.

### 3.7.4. Laws

All citizens of Macedonia are equal under the law and the Constitution provides for the protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identities of minority groups.

The legal framework for inter-ethnic education is laid down in the 1991 Constitution, which states that minorities have the right to education in their native language at primary and secondary levels of education, but the teaching of Macedonian is also compulsory in all minority language schools (Article 48).

Similarly, the Ohrid Framework Agreement (2001) clearly lays out the obligation of the state to provide teaching in the mother tongue of various minority groups if requested, while ensuring that all minorities have the opportunity to learn the state language at the same time.

With the decentralization process schools are now under the jurisdiction of municipalities. This jurisdiction covers the management of schools and their facilities, but not the education curricula, which are defined on a national level. It is expected that the decentralization process will continue to include funding for the remuneration of school employees during the following period.

In 2007 the government initiated amendments to the current Primary and Secondary Education Act to increase the duration of primary education from 8 to 9 years and to make secondary education compulsory. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is preparing a regulation that offers higher social support for recipients whose children regularly attend school.

### 3.7.5. Implementation

Four languages of instruction are used in the Macedonian education system: Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian in primary education, and Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and English in secondary and higher education. Romani is not used for instruction.

For Albanians, as the largest minority, mother tongue education is ensured from kindergarten to university. Since 2001 the South-East European University in Tetovo has been operating as a private university in three languages: Albanian, English and Macedonian. The university was established through the mediation of the High Commission on National Minorities after years of controversy over Albanian university teaching. Three years later, the previously illegal Albanian-Language University of Tetovo received recognition as a state university with five faculties. The creation and recognition of these universities increased the number of Albanian students in higher education institutions: enrolment in the 2004/05 academic year was 12.79%, or twice the number during the 2000/01 academic year when it stood at 5.6%. While the South-East European University is widely viewed as providing a high level of education, there has been considerable controversy over the quality of education at the University of Tetovo. According to the 2006 FCNM state report, conditions in many Albanian schools are poor as there are few qualified teachers and facilities are often inadequate.

For the Turkish community, education in their mother tongue is provided at primary and secondary school levels and there is a Department of Turkish Language at the University of Skopje and in the Pedagogical Faculty at the same university. There is also a private Turkish college providing courses in Turkish, English and Macedonian. Demand from the Turkish community for private primary education is currently in the process of consideration, but the law on primary education in Republic of Macedonia does not offer such a possibility on the grounds that primary education is compulsory and free of charge. This prohibition was criticized by the FCNM Advisory Committee in its 2004 report.

The Serbian community only has access to mother tongue education at the primary school level. Beginning with the 2005/06 school year, the Ministry of Education and Science has given the authorization to open a class in general secondary education in Serbian in Skopje, but the class did not materialize due to an insufficient number of pupils.

The Roma, Bosniaks and Vlach minorities do not receive education in their mother tongue, but in some primary schools these minority languages are offered as optional subjects. Despite the legal possibility, teaching in Romani does not take place in practice. The reasons include a lack of funding, of technical conditions and of appropriate staff for teaching the Romani language. Roma are portrayed in textbooks in a stereotypical manner. Reform of the textbooks and curriculum requires new textbooks to be written in the four dominant minority languages and mother tongue instruction books in Romani and Vlach languages.

### 3.7.6. Problems and Challenges

Minorities in Macedonia face major challenges in the area of textbooks, qualified minority school teachers, sufficient state language learning and high

dropout rates among minorities. All the textbook titles are published in Macedonian and three minority languages for primary schools, and at least two languages (Macedonian and Albanian) for secondary schools. However, textbooks in some languages are still unavailable. In particular, there are no textbooks for teaching in Serbian and some textbooks for teaching in Turkish are unavailable. Problems arise due to the fact that the required circulation is too small to be economically viable for publishers. For some minority groups, especially Vlach, Roma and Bosniaks, no textbooks are available.

A further major challenge for minorities is the lack of qualified minority school teachers. Pedagogical universities do not provide equal education opportunities for potential teachers from all ethnic groups. As a result of a lack of adequate pre-service and in-service teacher education, minority schools/classes often end up hiring individuals with no adequate pedagogical qualifications, leading to a declining quality of education in schools.

At the Pedagogical Faculty in Stip, where there is a sizeable Vlach community, Vlach language, literature and history teaching was included as an optional subject. This will generate further adequate teaching staff for the Vlach minority. There are also projects for similar training for the Roma and Bosniak minorities. Nevertheless, the

situation is precarious for some minorities. Among more than 14,000 teaching staff, only 14 are Roma and less than 50 are Vlachs or Bosniaks. Other communities are also underrepresented.

The main reason for the inequitable minority representation in higher education is the lack of Macedonian language skills. Currently, minority school pupils receive two classes in Macedonian language per week, which does not ensure the appropriate proficiency in the state language. Various projects, however, have attempted to improve Macedonian language skills among minority school pupils, which helped them to prepare for the entrance examinations to some higher educational institutions.

Finally, although all ethnic groups have equal rights to education as elsewhere in the region, there are significant differences in the participation rates of minorities. In particular, ethnic Macedonians make up 64% of the population, but 83% of higher education enrolments, while ethnic Albanians constitute 25% of the total population and only 12.72% of higher education enrolment. The contrast is even more stark among Roma, who number at least 2.66% of the total population, but only 0.2% are in higher education. Dropout rates are not only a problem with regard to Roma, but also for children from the Turkish and Albanian minorities.

## 3.8 Montenegro

### 3.8.1. Overview

In 2006 the Parliament of Montenegro passed a new Minority Rights Act and a new constitution is being

drafted to accommodate both the independence of the country and to reflect a greater commitment to human rights and democracy.



	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma
<b>Census 2003</b>	43.2% Montenegrins 32% Serbs	7.8% Bosniaks 5% Albanians 4% Muslims 1.1% Croats 0.42% Roma	3.2% (20,000)

### 3.8.2. International Standards

Montenegro has signed up to all key human rights conventions and other international obligations in areas concerning education, children and minorities. Montenegro has not yet submitted a report on its implementation of the FCNM, as the convention only came into force after the country achieved independence. The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe has found serious flaws in the human rights catalogue of the new draft constitution, but not in regard to minority rights and education in particular.

#### LINKS

Ministry of Education and Science: <http://www.vlada.cg.yu/eng/minprosv/>

Ministry for Human and Minority Rights Protection: <http://www.gom.cg.yu/eng/minmanj/>

Project on Ethnic Relations, Developing a Minority Policy in Montenegro: The Becici Roundtable, 2007: <http://www.per-usa.org/Reports/BECICI%20MEETING%20REPORT.pdf>

### 3.8.3. Policies

Government policy promotes “Education without Assimilation” and based its reforms of the education system after 2000 on the basis of decentralization, equal opportunities and the introduction of

European standards. In practice, however, this policy has not been implemented. In the case of the Albanian minority, segregation is the reality with textbooks poorly translated and small numbers of teachers (only addressed with the recent establishment of Albanian-language teacher training after years of negotiations between government and minority). Other minorities including Roma, Croats and Bosniaks/Muslims do not have the chance to learn their language and culture through education in Montenegrin schools, as there is no minority language teaching for these minorities and textbooks make limited reference to minorities.

### 3.8.4. Laws

After the beginning of educational reform in 2000, a new set of laws related to primary, secondary and university education was adopted. Problems concern not so much the legal framework *per se* as its implementation. In practice the Ministry of Education does not provide for learning minority languages at school other than Albanian. This is motivated by the explanation that the language of the other minorities (Bosniaks, Muslims, Croats) is identical to that of the majority.

The General Education Act stipulates that teaching in minority languages is compulsory if most or a significant part of the population in a municipality belongs to the minority. The law stipulates that the state language is compulsory (Art. 11). On a general level, the Primary Education Act also notes the need for education to “respect the national, historical and

cultural values, as well as to recognize the cultural and other characteristics of other nations” and promote “mutual tolerance” and “respect for differences” (Art.2).

### 3.8.5. Implementation

Implementation of laws in the sphere of education and minorities is fundamentally flawed due to the restrictive interpretation of the Ministry of Education. The lack of implementation is a consequence of the fact that the ministry takes a very narrow view of the challenges of minority languages, and focuses nearly exclusively on Albanian and less on languages which are similar to the state language. In addition, minority communities themselves are often not aware of their education rights. Finally, there is little public discussion on the matter.

### 3.8.6. Problems and Challenges

There are three key challenges in the field of education and minorities in Montenegro. Research on minority access to employment clearly indicates discrimination in the education sector on the basis of ethnicity. Significantly, 52.2% of interviewees recognize ethnic discrimination in education, 30.4% are not sure about it and 17.4% believe there is no such discrimination. This form of discrimination is recognized by more than half the interviewees in Podgorica, and more than 95% in Tivat and Bijelo Polje. Even in Cetinje, Plav and Rozaje, the prevailing opinion (60%) is that ethnic discrimination exists. This discrimination generally occurs in practice without stemming from the legal system.

A second challenge arises from the teaching of minority languages in schools. Under the 1992 Constitution, the official language in Montenegro is Serbian. In recent years, the government has been

seeking to introduce Montenegrin as subject in primary and secondary education by referring to it as a mother tongue (Bosnian, Croatian, Albanian, and Montenegrin). In reality, teaching remains predominantly Serbian and pays little attention to other languages. The Government and Ministry of Education justified this move as a form of minority rights protection, but in practice learning the official language as a mother tongue assimilates minorities, as only the Albanian minority has education in its own language. The Ministry of Education has been unwilling to recognize Croatian and Bosnian language teaching, even in the case of the Croatian minority which requested instruction in Croatian in two towns, with the Croatian Government offering financial sources.

Finally, a serious problem remains in connection with the nostrification of diplomas awarded in neighbouring countries. This particularly affects university graduates from minority communities who have studied in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania or Kosovo. While diplomas from the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and from Serbian universities have been generally recognized, degrees from other neighbours are not readily recognized. This translates into de-facto discrimination against minorities in the employment sector.

The key overall challenge for minority education in Montenegro has been the apparent lack of government commitment to effect a fundamental transformation in the provision of minority education. Legal reforms have been delayed for years and reform initiatives are often linked to broader political issues such as the referendum on independence rather than on a consistent minority and human rights policy.

## 3.9 Romania

### 3.9.1. Overview

Currently, the major strategic directions of the Romanian education system are defined by decentralization, quality assurance in education, and ensuring equal access to education for all. There are challenges related to all these strategic goals; however, if we judge in terms of education for minorities, access to education for disadvantaged groups with a focus on Roma remains the primary challenge. Important steps have been taken towards

increasing the enrolment and participation of Roma children, toward desegregation and non-discrimination in education and in providing inclusive education. However, many Roma pupils, particularly in rural areas, still attend segregated schools or classes despite a notification issued by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research in April 2004, which specifically warns against segregation and urges schools to develop and implement desegregation plans.

	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma
<b>Census 2002</b>	89.5% Romanians	6.6% Hungarian 2.5% Roma 0.3% Germans	8.4-11.7% (1,800,000-2,500,000)

### 3.9.2. International Standards

Romania ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe in 1995. According to the report prepared by the FCNM Advisory Committee in 2005, there are still shortcomings in educational provision for numerically smaller minorities. The report commends efforts made by the authorities to improve education provision for the Roma minority, especially the development of adequate teaching material and training of teaching staff necessary to ensure that the Roma children can study elements of the history and culture of their community and learn their language. However, it points out that “the education situation of the Roma remains a challenge for the authorities, as absenteeism and school failure still exist and occasional cases of Roma children isolated in the school system have been reported.”

#### LINKS

*Ministry of Education and Research:*  
[www.edu.ro](http://www.edu.ro)

*Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups:*  
<http://www.acces-la-educatie.edu.ro/>

*Equal Chances in Education:*  
<http://www.egale.ro/>

*Pro Europa League:*  
<http://www.proeuropa.ro/>

*Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma:*  
[http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/roma\\_education](http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/roma_education)

*Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, School Textbooks, Pupils' Workbook, and Teacher's Guide*

for elective courses for 3rd and 4th grade, “Multicultural education”: [www.edrc.ro](http://www.edrc.ro)

ECRI, Third report on Romania, adopted on 24 June 2005, Strasbourg, 21 February 2006: [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/ecri/1-ecri/2-country-by-country\\_approach/romania/Romania%20third%20report%20-%20cri06-3%20romanian.pdf#search=%22ECRI%20%2B%20Romania%22](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri/1-ecri/2-country-by-country_approach/romania/Romania%20third%20report%20-%20cri06-3%20romanian.pdf#search=%22ECRI%20%2B%20Romania%22)

Multiannual Programme for Training Non-Roma Teachers, <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c419/>

### 3.9.3. Policies

The most significant institutional measure against racism and discrimination in education taken by the Ministry of Education and Research, in collaboration with the 42 County School Inspectorates in Romania, is to develop and periodically revise county strategies to ensure equal access to education for all children. Furthermore, schools are expected to develop inclusive policies and school development plans that target the emergence of an inclusive ethos and inclusive practices. These measures aim to encourage the enrolment of children in preschool education, to reduce dropout and encourage the completion of compulsory education and to provide second chance type education for persons who have not completed compulsory education. A chapter of these strategies refers to desegregating schools and tightening relations between the school and the community, especially by using school mediators. Among the new positive policies and measures aimed at raising awareness among the mainstream population about the history and culture of the Roma, training courses entitled Managing Inter-

Ethnic Relations in the Education System have been organized by the Ministry of Education and Research for 11 groups of school directors of schools with Roma pupils and for non-Roma teachers who teach Roma pupils. The assumption is that teachers who participate in these courses not only know better how to teach Roma children, but are also better able to share elements of Roma culture with all pupils. The Ministry of Education and Research funded the production of three new school manuals on Romani language and literature, including two alternative manuals for the 4th grade, and one for the 9th grade. The ministry also funded the production of new editions of five manuals that were first published in 2005 (four on Romani language and literature and one on Roma history and traditions).

### 3.9.4. Laws

In absolute numbers, according to official data provided by the Ministry of Education and Research, the total number of schools and sections for minorities dropped from 1,772 in the 2004-5 school year to 1,730 in the 2005-6 school year. In the PHARE 2003/005-551.01.02 project Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups, implemented by the Ministry of Education and Research in 15 counties, cases of segregation of Roma children were identified in 37 schools. By May 2006, 22 of the schools mentioned above had recorded significant progress in implementing desegregation measures. By order of the Minister of Education for the 2006-7 academic year, 415 places have been granted for ethnic Roma candidates in universities, which means 17 places more than in the previous academic year. The Education Act (1999) provides the opportunity for members of national minorities to complete a system of education in their mother tongue: “Persons belonging to national minorities have the right to study and receive instruction in their mother tongue

at all levels and in all forms of education, as well as in all types of education for which there is enough demand, under the conditions of law” (Art.118). The only unfulfilled demand of the Hungarian community was the right to have public universities in Hungarian. The law only permits departments and sections: in public university education sections and groups, colleges and faculties with tuition in mother tongues may be established on request and in compliance with this law. In such cases, knowledge of Romanian technical terms must be ensured. Multicultural universities may be established on request under other laws. “The law establishing these universities shall regulate the teaching language thereof.” (Art.123, para. 1). On the other hand the law does provide for private universities: “persons belonging to national minorities have the right to establish and organize their own higher education institutions” (Art. 123, para. 2).

Acting on the initiative of a group of mostly Roma non-governmental organizations, the Minister of Education, Research and Youth issued three significant orders in July 2007:

a) Order 1529/18 July 2007 of the Minister of Education, Research and Youth, referring to the issue of diversity in the national school curriculum. It stipulates that new school curricula, syllabi, textbooks and other teaching materials include issues related to ethnic, linguistic, religious and other forms of diversity; textbook evaluators should include criteria related to the reflection of ethnic, linguistic, religious and other forms of diversity when judging the suitability of textbooks; and teacher training institutions should provide training courses in ethnic, linguistic, religious and other forms of diversity.

b) Order N° 1539/19 July 2007 of the Minister of Education, Research and Youth, referring to the use of school mediators. The methodology which sets criteria

for employing school mediators is presented in Annexe 1 to the Order, while aspects concerning payment of the school mediators are detailed in its Annexe 2.

c) Order N° 1540/19 July 2007 of the Minister of Education, Research and Youth, referring to the prohibition of segregation of Roma children in schools and to the methodology for preventing and eliminating the segregation of Roma children at school. The Order is accompanied by three Annexes: Annexe 1 details the methodology for the prevention and elimination of segregation, including a definition of what counts as segregation; Annexe 2 lists the domestic and international legal framework on which the Order is based; and Annexe 3 includes a checklist of inclusive schools.

### 3.9.5. Implementation

In Romania, the County School Inspectorates, which are the county level institutions under the MoE, are responsible for translating the MoE’s policies into practice. Though education from grade 1 to grade 10 was made compulsory in Romania in 2005, there are children who do not enrol in schools or drop out before completing compulsory education. There is no legal action against parents who do not enrol their children.

The Ministry of Education and Research is continuing its PHARE project Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups, which is currently in its fourth phase, reaching out to all the 42 counties. Under this project, in addition to training for teachers, school management and school mediators and in addition to emphasis on school desegregation, an important initiative is the generalization of “A Doua Sansa” (second chance) education.

### 3.9.6. Problems and Challenges

The Roma minority is by far the most disadvantaged in education as it is in other fields. In severely under-

resourced all-Roma or ghetto-type schools, few Roma pupils manage to complete compulsory education and move to upper secondary or higher education. In addition to their problems related to poverty, the Roma community is subjected to discrimination on the part of the majority Romanian population and other ethnic groups.

Efforts have been made by the MoE to ensure better education provision for disadvantaged Roma pupils in a clearly targeted manner since 2003, when the currently ongoing multi-cycle PHARE project entitled Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups started. This project combines its efforts with the Rural Education Project funded by the World Bank and other smaller school improvement projects of the MoE and of NGOs. As the impact of such projects on pupils' school performance is slow to appear, few specific improvements can be brought up as examples. However, it seems that providing snacks and extra educational support for pupils, especially in the primary grades, combined with professional development for teachers and involvement of parents and other stakeholders from the community in school activities do make a difference in attendance, especially considering that dropout rates for Roma are over 10 times higher than for the majority and other population groups.

A report produced in 2005 by the Liga Pro Europa based on a survey carried out in 5 counties concludes that in addition to indirect discrimination against minority pupils in the

counties surveyed, there has also been direct discrimination especially against Roma pupils. The report notes that although special places are set aside for Roma pupils and students in secondary schools and universities, these children have difficulty completing primary education. The report also accuses school textbooks of creating and enforcing negative stereotypes about minorities.

According to a 2005 report by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Holocaust and genocide of the Roma during World War II are taught to 7th grade pupils. Furthermore, the Romanian authorities have informed ECRI that as of 2006, these topics would also be included in the curriculum for 10th and 11th graders. Two hundred schools offered an optional course on the Holocaust in 2004-5, and textbooks on the Holocaust and on the history of the Jews and Roma are currently being written, which the Ministry of Education and Research intends to publish. However, according to the same report, NGOs still deplore the fact that Romanian school textbooks contain stereotypes and prejudices against minority groups, that the history textbooks teach the history of Romanians rather than that of Romania, and that although derogatory references to the Roma have been deleted, textbooks pay little attention to the contributions of Roma to Romanian society. In general, ECRI finds that Romania does not have a clear policy of including the culture and identity of minority groups in school curricula.

# 3.10

## Serbia

### 3.10.1. Overview

Reform of the education system in Serbia was initiated following the overthrow of the Milošević regime in October 2000. Directions of education reform were defined in line with the general reform objectives at the state level, including reorganization and modernization of the school system to ensure more efficient support for the economic recovery of the state, the development of democracy and the integration of the state into the international community.

The changes in government since 2000 have led to a lack of coherence and consistency in education reforms and reforms in the field of minority rights.

Nevertheless, between 2000-2007 changes were implemented in 1. legislation; 2. curricula; 3. international cooperation; 4. vocational training of teachers; 5. liberalisation of the textbook market; and 6. evaluation of pupil performance. In these areas, reform was based on the principles of democratization, depoliticization and decentralization. Similarly in the field of minority rights, new laws and legal protection have been passed since 2000, resulting in significant improvements. Nevertheless, much of the change has been confined to the level of legislation, whereas implementation has been slow and continues to lag behind.

	Majority	Minorities	Est. Number of Roma (UNDP)
<b>Census 2002</b>	82.9% Serbs	3.9% Hungarians 1.8% Bosniaks 1.4% Roma 0.9% Montenegrins 0.8% Albanians	6-6.7% (450,000-500,000)

### 3.10.2. International Standards

Like other countries in the region, Serbia has ratified all relevant international conventions, including the FCNM and the Charter on Regional or Minority Languages. The state has incorporated international recommendations into the Constitution and the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities Act. International standards and recommendations have also been incorporated into the general Education Act and in many by-laws, such as the Curriculum Rule Books.

In its 2003 report, the FCNM Advisory Committee noted that despite the incorporation of these standards, major shortcomings exist in issues such as negative

stereotypes in Serbian textbooks, special classes which are attended by 50-80% Roma, and inadequate teacher training for some smaller minorities.

#### LINKS

Ministry of Education: <http://www.mps.sr.gov.yu>

Institute for Improvement of Education:  
<http://www.zuov.sr.gov.yu/>

Pedagogical Institute of Vojvodina:  
<http://www.pzv.org.yu/>

*Provincial Secretariat for Education and Culture:*  
<http://www.psok.org.yu/>

*Coordination of National Councils of National Minorities (the National Council of the Hungarian Ethnic Minority is in charge at the moment):* [http://www.mnt.org.yu/en/frame.php?content=1\\_cimoldal](http://www.mnt.org.yu/en/frame.php?content=1_cimoldal)

*Voivodina Centre for Human Rights:* [http://www.vojvodina-hrc.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=40&Itemid=27&lang=eng](http://www.vojvodina-hrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=40&Itemid=27&lang=eng)

*Preparing for Europe: Education for National Minorities in Serbia and Montenegro, Wilton Park Conference, 2005,* <http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/documents/conferences/WPS05-17/pdfs/WPS05-17.pdf>

### 3.10.3. Policies

In the field of education, the State promotes diversity policies and aims to introduce children to diversity in culture, language, customs, and beliefs. While in the first years of the democratic transition, education reform was pursued on the basis of a comprehensive reform policy, subsequent reforms have been more ad-hoc and less coherent.

In primary and secondary education children are divided to a certain extent according to the teaching language. In fact, in its 2003 report the FCNM Advisory Committee criticized the fact that teaching in Serbian in some minority schools is inadequate or problematic as an additional subject, rather than being fully incorporated into the curriculum.

Official textbooks rarely contain material on national minorities living in Serbia. These national minorities study from textbooks translated into their original languages, or import textbooks from

their countries of origin, in line with the legal framework following the approval of the Ministry of Education. The import of textbooks is not always a good solution, since the books are often not in line with the Serbian curriculum.

### 3.10.4. Laws

In its objectives stated in Article 3 and several other articles, the Education System Act defines education in minority languages. The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia also regulates the right to education in the mother tongue of pupils. The Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities Act, passed as a Federal Law in 2001 but implemented in Serbia after the dissolution of the State Union (as the sole legal successor of the state union) similarly establishes the right to minority language education. The specific requirements and mechanisms of education in minority languages are defined by specific laws: The Primary Schools Act, the Secondary Schools Act, the Rights and Jurisdictions of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina Act and the Textbooks Act.

Important partners in education policy related to the languages of national minorities include the National Councils of National Minorities, especially their committees responsible for education of the respective national communities. These National Councils were established by the 2001 Minorities Act. They represent minority communities and have to be consulted in matters pertaining to minority issues.

According to existing legislation, classes in minority language have to be formed if more than 15 pupils request such a class. However, the law also allows for the establishment of classes when the number of requests is lower. In practice, there are even classes taught in minority languages with only a few pupils.



### 3.10.5. Implementation

In terms of minority language education, three different practices are in use depending on the minority community and their geographic distribution. Complete teaching curricula exist in the mother tongues of the Albanian, Hungarian, Croat (from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade), Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian minorities. Bilingual teaching in Bulgarian and Serbian takes place for members of the Bulgarian national minority in the Pcinjski District (Dimitrovgrad and Bosilevgrad). Finally, most smaller minorities are taught mainly in Serbian along with an optional subject referred to as mother tongue with elements of the national culture. This limited form of minority language education exists for Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, Croatian, Bosniak, Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Roma minorities.

In general the laws relevant to minority education are duly enforced, but certain factors still narrow down the inclusion of all pupils and students into the teaching performed in their mother tongue. These include insufficient development of the network of educational institutions and the dispersion of members of national minorities such that the required number of pupils required for teaching in their mother tongue cannot be attained. Further factors include a lack of capacity of further education at secondary and higher levels; problems related to the provision of textbooks and literature for teaching in national minority languages, out of which some can be printed in the country, while the remainder must be imported from abroad when low circulation figures make printing costs prohibitive; the absence of qualified teaching staff for all subjects; and the absence of a monitoring system.

### 3.10.6. Problems and Challenges

Four major challenges arise from the status of minority education in Serbia today. Firstly, the fact that minority languages are only taught in optional

courses limits the ability of some minorities to preserve their mother tongue more than others. In some cases, as with the Bosniak minority, limited minority language teaching might be primarily a source of political contention, considering the similarity of Bosniak/Bosnian and Serbian, but also reflects the problem of unequal treatment of minorities in Serbia, in particular the differences between the higher degree of protection in Vojvodina as opposed to the rest of Serbia. The second challenge derives from the need to include national minorities in the process of minority education. Serbia has National Councils which legally represent their respective minorities. This institution articulates minority interests, but is frequently not fully included. Whereas in Vojvodina, National Councils have been more systematically consulted, in Serbia proper, the councils are often neglected. In particular, the Education Board of the National Councils of National Minorities needs to be included in consultations in the textbook selection process, as well as in the preparation of teaching contents for subjects of national significance. A third challenge derives from the education difficulties which Roma face. There is a clear need for more efficient implementation of affirmative action regarding the enrolment of Roma into primary and secondary schools. Finally, a key problem has been the nationalist legacy of the 1990s, which is reflected in textbooks. Even some written after 2000 contain stereotypical images of Serbia's neighbours and minorities. More significantly, most of the population is not being educated about national minorities and awareness of minorities remains low. A number of projects in recent years, however, have sought to address this challenge, including by the Secretariat for National Minorities in Vojvodina.





## 4. Regional Challenges

Education systems in South-East Europe face common challenges. This chapter will look at five of these regional themes: Challenges of bilingualism and providing for multilingual environments, the opportunities and risks of decentralization, problems with numerical minimum numbers for minority language classes, Romani language teaching in particular and finally the issue of ethnocentric textbooks.

## 4.1 Minority Teachers and Bilingualism

A key regional challenge is how to teach minority children and occasionally majority children the different languages they need to master in their society, i.e. their mother tongue and the language of their social context. Generally speaking, across the region, there are two types of teaching with regard to languages. A largely monolingual teaching environment can take place in the majority language, with limited and optional minority language and culture classes. Conversely, in locations where the minority population is numerous or has a traditional presence, teaching may also be conducted only in the minority language. In this case, majority language classes (as a second language) are provided.

A frequent problem when largely monolingual education is provided for minorities is the lack of knowledge of the dominant language, which can negatively affect job prospects. In Macedonia, for example, school pupils receive two Macedonian language lessons per week, which does not ensure the appropriate proficiency in the state language. Attempts have been made to improve Macedonian language skills among minority school pupils through various projects which helped minority community pupils to prepare for entrance examinations to some higher education institutions. Although monolingual education includes teaching in both a minority and majority language, students must choose one at the beginning of their studies. This means that while students may benefit from increased socialization with other cultures and languages, they receive their education in only one language. In bilingual schools with bilingual education, some subjects are interpreted in the language of a particular national minority while others are taught in the majority language. As explained in the Hague Recommendations of the

OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, bilingual education “can be seen as the most effective way to meet the objectives of international instruments related to the protection of national minorities as well as to their integration.”<sup>8</sup>

A related challenge in most countries is the lack of teachers from minority communities. In the case of Roma and some other minorities, this is due to the long history of neglect and marginalization of the community in the education sector. Other communities suffered particularly under the repressive regional environment of the 1990s, such as Albanians in Serbia who lacked formal teacher training after the closure of the Albanian language section at the University of Prishtina/Pristina. Since the opening of borders in the region, minority teachers are often trained at education institutions abroad (in the kin state) with the obligation to return and teach in minority schools. While not ideal, considering that the teachers will not receive training in teaching the state curriculum, it has been practical for smaller minorities, such as the Italian minority in Croatia and Slovenia whose schools have survived for decades despite diminishing numbers of minority students. In other countries, such as in Montenegro, the nostrification of university degrees from neighbouring countries has been difficult, effectively preventing such an approach.

### **Example: Bulgaria**

*In order to improve the quality of teaching for minority children and to improve their level of education achievements, there has been a need to train bilingual teachers from minority groups. Earlier efforts resulted in the first Roma students*

8. Based on text written by Milena Isakovic and Marija Nikolova.

*graduating from studies in a new subject entitled Teaching with the Roma Language at Veliko Turnovo University in 2006, but numbers remain rather limited.*

*It is disturbing that the intake of students in the Primary School Pedagogy and Romani Language department at Veliko Turnovo university has been discontinued for the forthcoming 2007-2008 academy year for an indefinite period. According to Roma experts, this is the first step towards the closure of this department after all the students enrolled to date have qualified. The obstacles placed before the only teacher training department in a Bulgarian university providing Romani language and Roma culture*

*teaching are evidence of insensitivity in the education administration and education establishments, including in higher education, about the importance of providing well-trained bilingual teachers.*

*There is a continuing absence of ethnic Bulgarian teachers who have a command of minority languages and can work in a bilingual environment. This problem can only be addressed by introducing requirements which require a certain level of bilingualism as one of the employment conditions for all teachers in ethnically mixed regions, including ethnic Bulgarian teachers, especially for primary school classes. (Author: Kalina Bozeva)*

## 4.2 Decentralization

Next to education reform, decentralization has been one of the key trends in public governance reforms in South-East Europe over the past decade. This has been a response to the centralizing tendencies of most governments in the early 1990s. In particular in Serbia, Macedonia and Croatia, the state became highly centralized with little autonomy at the local level. The trend towards decentralization was thus to undo the legacy of the early 1990s, but also to follow broader European trends of governance reform which favour a higher degree of local autonomy.

Decentralization has brought both opportunities and risks for minority education. On the one hand, decentralization can bring education close to minority communities and allow for minority inclusion where centralization might not. This can range from allowing municipalities to name or at least be consulted in the naming of school directors (as in Macedonia, see below) to granting flexibility with parts of the curriculum (as in Bulgaria, see

### **Example: Macedonia**

*In the case of Macedonia, decentralization was an aspect of the state reforms set out in the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001 to overcome the tensions between the state and the Albanian minority. Thus decentralization, although presented as a governance issue, was widely perceived as a minority rights/conflict management issue. Decentralization also entailed the redrawing of municipal boundaries, a particularly controversial aspect in the eyes of many majority citizens. A referendum against decentralization was defeated, however, in late 2004. The process thus raised the question of who benefits from decentralization? If municipalities are dominated by one particular ethnic group, what mechanisms exist to protect the interests of other minorities? While local voting mechanisms replicate the state-wide double majorities in sensitive areas of decision-making,*

*there are indications that the respectively dominant group – be it majority or minority – often dominate local government with little consultation with others.*

*Education was one of the key areas in which municipalities gained additional powers. Thus, the mayor appoints school principals (based on recommendations of the school assembly) and the municipality can decide on opening and closing schools. It is thus is the main port of call for securing children's access to schools. There are, however, no clear provisions to ensure that the concerns of local minorities are taken into account. In the framework of the parallel process of fiscal decentralization, municipalities were given financial responsibility for the maintenance of schools in 2005 and in 2007 for paying the salaries of teachers and other school staff.*

*As the Macedonian NGO named Association for Democratic Initiatives notes, decentralization without clear protection of local minorities can be problematic as this lack of protection mechanisms might lead to a decrease in minority rights protection, unless, of course, the minority is a local majority.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, delegating potentially contested issues to the local level does not necessarily result in a decrease in its potency. In particular the symbolic issue of naming schools has been highly controversial and contested between municipalities and parents from the local minority.*

below). Decentralization in education also poses a number of challenges. Firstly, minorities at the local level, be they the state majority or smaller minority groups, might be neglected if no adequate protection mechanisms exist locally. Secondly, abuse at a local level is harder to monitor and correct than neglect of minority

education on a central level. Thus minorities on a state and local level might not benefit from decentralization. This affects Roma in particular. Finally, local authorities lack the courage or capacity in terms of human resources and funding to take their own initiative.

### **Example: Bulgaria**

*The state education requirements for curricular content comprise a compulsory part of the curriculum of every school. Outside the compulsory part of the curriculum, however, schools may decide to add additional elements depending on the needs of their pupils and the resources available. Currently, however, there is still an absence of diverse curricula (including bilingual) which are adequate to meet the large variety of pupils' education needs, including those of minority children, in various types of schools and to provide diverse combinations of subjects, methods and teaching methodologies.*

*The removal of all obstacles to the decentralization of schools in all the dimensions of this process (organisational, educational and financial), would allow for the creation of a competitive educational environment and a diversity of choices for children and young people.*

*By means of relevant legislative amendments and appropriate training, schools should be encouraged to create their own curricula on the basis of state education requirements which are flexible in taking into account the specific nature of the environment, the preferences of parents (including those from minorities) and other factors relating to the choice of intercultural, bilingual, support and other programmes which correspond best to their school policies.*

9. Mirjana Maleska, Lidija Hristova, Jovan Ananiev, Powersharing. New Concept of Decision Making Process in Multicultural Municipalities, Skopje: ADI, 2006, p. 47-48.

## 4.3 Requirements for Teaching in Minority Languages

Teaching in minority languages requires clear criteria for the establishment of minority language classes. Such criteria can be established by a municipal language requirement which introduces a minority language on the basis of a certain percentage of minority members in a municipality. A more common approach is to set a minimum number of children per class for whom the parents request minority language teaching. Such requirements need to be reasonable so as not to prevent children from minorities from receiving minority language education. A clear numerical requirement is needed, as vague qualifiers such as ‘significant’ allow abuse and the denial of minority languages. At the same time, there is a need for flexibility to make sure that groups of minority children which might just not meet numerical thresholds to also receive teaching in their language at the discretion of the school. Thus a clear numerical requirement should be linked with the necessary flexibility so as not to prevent teaching in minority language to smaller groups. A further challenge arises from majority parents requesting their children to attend minority schools. State authorities often consider such requests negatively, while in minority regions, such requests can be relatively frequent.

### **Example: Bosnia and Herzegovina**

*The framework of the law on primary and secondary education in BiH lays out the basic principles which govern education on the whole territory of BiH. The law stipulates that all children have the same rights of access to the educational process and the same opportunities for involvement, with no discrimination whatsoever. Confirming the obligation of schools to enhance respect for human rights, the law determines the norms by which they are obliged to “contribute to a culture which respects the human rights and basic freedoms of all citizens”. With this aim it is specifically determined that “the language and the culture of each significant national minority group that lives in BiH should be respected and included in schools to the maximum extent, in accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities”. But the term “significant national minorities” in the above provision is not only poorly determined, it can also result in differing interpretations. This weakness should be removed by more precise explanation in entity and cantonal laws on primary and secondary education. (Author: Adimir Biberovic)*

## 4.4 Romani Language Teaching

Teaching in Romani is a regional challenge. While all countries provide legal guarantees for minority language teaching, teaching in Romani remains exceptional and rare. The key arguments given by state authorities are often related to the supposed lack of written Romani. However, while Romani does exist as a written language, there has been a lack of tradition of

written Romani, which has been an obstacle to Romani language training.

### **LINK**

*Minority Rights Group, Roma in Serbia: Introducing Romany Language and Culture into Primary Schools, 2003. <http://www.mrg.webbler.co.uk/?lid=944>*

Thus, advancing teaching in Romani cannot be addressed by focusing on legal requirements alone. Instead, this issue is linked to both teacher training and the advancement of Romani textbooks. A further argument often employed by state authorities is a lack of funds. While scarce resources are a general problem in the education sector of the countries of South-East Europe, a lack of funds indicates a lack of priority given to the particular issue rather than the absence of financial resources altogether.

### **Example: Macedonia**

*In recent years, the Macedonian authorities with the support of Roma NGOs have undertaken new Romani teaching initiatives in elementary and secondary schools as well as in universities.*

*The idea of planning Romani Language development and including it in the education system is mainly held by NGOs and the Improvement of Minority Languages Department of the Ministry of Education*

*and Science. In planning the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 in 2004-2005, Action and Operation Plans for Roma education were drafted as follows:*

- *Commencement of regular education in Romani Language in Macedonia until 2010 for elementary school pupils from 0-4 grade;*
- *Establishment of a Romani Language Study Group at the Pedagogical Faculties;*
- *Providing easy access to scholarships for Roma students studying at teacher training faculties in the country as well as for students studying abroad on study groups that do not exist in Macedonia;*
- *Continuous education and training of the existing group of Roma teachers for the use of Romani language in the teaching process;*
- *Establishment of a Department of Romani Language and Studies at university level.*

*(Author: Ljatif M. Demir)*

## 4.5 Stereotypes and Textbooks

Stereotypes and sometimes even hate speech in textbooks and curricula are a recurrent regional theme. While in most countries the excessive stereotyping and negative portrayal of others of the 1990s or earlier have been gradually eliminated, there is still a strong regional bias in favour of the concept of the nation state and the respective majority. Frequently, it is the absence of minorities from the textbooks, rather than their stereotypical portrayal, which constitutes a problem. Textbooks in South-East Europe not only routinely ignore the history of the respective

country's neighbours (except when at war), but also give little attention to the countries' minorities. In addition, textbooks and curricula often take a dated view of history, based on an antagonistic and ethnocentric world view. As Nenad Sebek of the Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation for South East Europe has noted, textbooks are also "unbelievably dull and dogmatic."<sup>10</sup>

This focus might not be explicitly directed against minorities, but ignores minorities as part of society and often contains stereotypical views

<sup>10</sup>. <http://www.epc.eu/en/er.asp?TYP=ER&IV=293&see=y&t=2&PG=ER/EN/detail&l=&Al=704>



of their kin states. Thus existing negative images of the Ottoman Empire or Austria-Hungary might not only be problematic in historical terms, it also compounds a harmful view of Hungarians, Turks or Muslims.

**Example: Supplementary History Workbooks**

*A regional initiative to address the ethnocentric perspective in many textbooks has been the workbooks published by the Thessaloniki-based Centre for Reconciliation and Democracy in South-East Europe. In the framework of this project, a group of historians from South-East Europe compiled a series of workbooks on the most controversial episodes of Balkan history (Ottoman Empire, Nations and States in South-East Europe, Balkan Wars, World War II). These books contain original documents on these historical periods which highlight the different regional perspectives and are intended to be used in parallel with national curricula. Not surprisingly, the project elicited considerable controversy. In Serbia, where the workbooks were planned to be used in classrooms, accusations of anti-Serb bias by some historians resulted in such plans being shelved. The workbooks can be downloaded from the centre's website:*

*<http://www.cdsee.org/jhp/index.html>*

*For other similar projects see: <http://www.historytextbook.org/similarprojects/main.html>*



## 5. Implementing Education Rights and Advancing Intercultural Learning: Good Practices, Regional and European Experience

Efforts to address the regional, country and minority-specific challenges have been undertaken both by states and non-governmental actors in recent years. This chapter will examine six case studies on two key aspects of challenges for education in South-East Europe when it comes to minority-majority relations. The first aspect is the inclusion of Roma into the education system and the second is on mechanisms to promote intercultural education.

As the country surveys highlight, besides the implementation of existing minority rights standards, the key challenges are bringing Roma into the mainstream educational system, in fact improving the education system so that it becomes inclusive of Roma children, ending the deeply engrained discrimination and overcoming the

nationalist legacy of the 1990s by bridging the gap between minorities and majorities.

The second set of cases look at civic and intercultural education methods. The country studies highlight that in most countries in the region little attention is paid to educating both minorities and majorities on diversity in their country.

## 5.1 The Decade of Roma Inclusion<sup>11</sup>

The Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) is an initiative initially adopted by 8 governments (now 9 including Montenegro) in Central and South-East Europe, and supported by the international community. It represents the first co-operative effort to change the lives of Roma in Europe. An action framework for governments, the Decade will monitor progress in accelerating social inclusion and improving the economic and social status of Roma across the region.

The Decade initiative emerged from the first high-level regional conference on Roma held in Budapest, Hungary in July 2003. At that event, prime ministers and senior government officials from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovakia announced their intention to launch the Decade. The Decade is a political commitment by countries to reduce disparities in key economic and human development outcomes for Roma by implementing policy reforms and programmes designed to break the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion.

In preparation for the Decade, each country has identified a limited number of measurable national goals for improvement. Planning for the Decade has been guided by an International Steering Committee

made up of representatives of governments, Roma, international donors, and other international organizations, which established four priority areas for the Decade: education, employment, health, and housing. The Steering Committee also determined three cross-cutting themes: income poverty, discrimination and gender. Each country has developed an action plan that specifies the goals and indicators in these areas.

### LINKS

Roma Decade:

<http://www.romadecade.org/>

EU Map:

<http://www.eumap.org/journal/features/2005/romadec>

World Bank Roma Decade Website:

<http://go.worldbank.org/DHZL3ABDL0>

Soros Roma Initiative:

<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/roma>

11. Written by Dimitrina Petrova.

### 5.1.1. The educational component of the

#### Decade: purpose and specific goals

One of the overarching goals of the Decade is to close the gap between Roma and non-Roma in the sphere of education.

*The main aspects of this goal are:*

#### A) ENSURING ACCESS TO COMPULSORY EDUCATION THROUGH THE FOLLOWING APPROACHES:

- introducing Roma teachers' assistants into classrooms (Serbia, Montenegro);
- involving parents in education and initiatives to prevent dropouts and work with those who do drop out (Bulgaria, Croatia);
- providing free textbooks (Macedonia).

#### B) IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION THROUGH:

- increasing the capacity of teachers to work in a multicultural environment (Czech Republic);
- curriculum reform, including introduction of Roma language teaching (Bulgaria);
- anti-bias and tolerance teaching (Bulgaria);
- training of school mediators (Romania).

#### C) IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATION AND DESEGREGATION:

Integration of Roma pupils from segregated schools and classrooms and from schools for the mentally disabled to mainstream schools is a priority issue across the countries of South-East Europe. Measures include:

- reassessing the testing methodology for entrance into special schools (Serbia);
- desegregation of schools, including kindergartens;
- enforcing legal regulations for desegregation (Bulgaria);
- eliminating all segregated classes and schools (Hungary and Romania);
- anti-discrimination measures and media campaigns to support desegregation (Macedonia).

#### D) EXPANDING ACCESS TO PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION:

All countries include expanding pre-school attendance for Roma in their action plans. It is acknowledged that free and mandatory pre-school preparation for all children is an important step to ensuring equal opportunities.

#### E) INCREASING ACCESS TO SECONDARY, POST-SECONDARY AND ADULT EDUCATION:

At the secondary education level many countries have included extracurricular programmes to keep pupils at school. Scholarships at secondary and university levels are also common.

### 5.1.2. The Roma Education Fund

A high-level conference in Budapest (July 2003) resolved to establish the Roma Education Fund (REF) with a mission to work towards the goals of the Decade in education. The World Bank committed to undertake the technical work necessary to establish the REF. The Open Society Institute pledged financial and professional support. In December 2004, based on this technical work, an international donor conference was held in Paris which marked the establishment of the Fund. Over 30 million Euro have been pledged by Gorge Soros, 6 million Euro by the World Bank, and smaller amounts by a variety of governments and others.

REF is designed to provide additional assistance to countries to push forward improvements in the educational outcomes of Roma. The REF is designed to spur changes in government policies and programmes, to build the lessons of successful interventions into systemic policy reforms, to pilot programmes and to disseminate knowledge on Roma issues and successful approaches. The REF is not designed as a substitute for Government resources, but rather to supplement and push ahead efforts by governments, NGOs and other organizations.

*The main goals of the REF are:***EXPANDING ACCESS TO PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION**

Providing increased access to pre-school education for Roma children will help to increase the proportion of Roma children entering school ready to learn, thereby increasing the likelihood that they enrol in basic education and do well once there. Pre-school programmes can help to ameliorate language issues for Roma and the negative effects of low parental education and income. In developing the Decade goals for education, the working group on education encouraged free pre-school preparation for all children at risk, including Roma.

**ENSURING FULL ROMA PARTICIPATION IN BASIC EDUCATION**

Full participation of Roma children in primary education is essential to improve educational outcomes for Roma at all levels. Full participation includes attention to initial enrolment, attendance once enrolled, completion of basic education and successful learning outcomes.

**EXPANDING ACCESS TO SECONDARY, HIGHER EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

Participation in secondary and higher education is especially limited for Roma as so few of them complete primary schooling or, if they do, the quality of the education received is low. Improvements in participation in secondary and higher education will occur slowly and will be most successful once Roma have universal access to high quality primary schooling. The single most effective intervention is to improve the outcomes of basic education through changes in government policies and programmes of mentoring, tutoring and remedial work. REF activities for pre-school and basic education will make a big difference in secondary and higher education but changes will be gradual over time.

**OVERCOMING ECONOMIC OBSTACLES TO ATTENDANCE**

As the Roma population is very poor, some families and children find the costs of school attendance too high and keep their children at home even when there is a school nearby. These economic obstacles to school include the opportunity cost of children not working, the direct costs of school fees and materials and the additional costs of clothes, food and transportation to attend school. Demand-side interventions at the primary and secondary levels can help to address these concerns, especially if coupled with high-quality schooling.

**ENSURING DESEGREGATION AND INTEGRATION OF ROMA IN EDUCATION**

The REF can help to support changes in government policies and implementation practices on a local level to eliminate segregated schools and classrooms. Addressing these issues requires clear government policies and processes to enforce desegregation and integration as well as changes in perceptions, attitudes and actions by many players in the education system and the public. Changing perceptions and attitudes is difficult and takes time but is absolutely necessary for the full integration of Roma into schools. The REF could help through support on a local level, support for policy changes and information from other countries on the many steps needed to bring about full integration.

**5.1.3. Lessons learned from the Roma Education Initiative**

A lasting optimal set of strategies has not yet been arrived at by the REF and similar reformist initiatives which address the issue of Roma education. Nevertheless, very substantial lessons can be derived from past experience, in particular that of the Roma

Education Initiative (REI), a funding programme inside the OSI. The REI was the predecessor of the REF and was a laboratory where the strategy of promoting Roma education was elaborated. The REF is building on the funding principles developed by the REI and incorporates the lessons learned there. The Roma Education Initiative (REI) was established by the Open Society Institute (OSI) as an effort to pilot a new comprehensive model of how to target Roma children and youth of the 0-18 age group by involving Roma parents, communities and NGOs, promoting close collaboration with schools and local authorities and introducing inclusive and multicultural teaching in classroom practice. REI was an exceptional initiative designed to work both on an international and national level, combining grants, technical assistance and networking. All projects implemented by a consortium of local partners were encouraged to have an implementation period of at least three years, the minimum amount of time considered necessary for a project to have a systemic impact.

On the basis of the experience of the REI, any strategy for achieving these goals must take the following into account:

- Firstly, these goals must be reached in ways that are sensitive to and respectful of Roma culture and language and informed choices made by Roma individuals, especially parents. Simply forcing minorities into the dominant culture will not work.
- Secondly, a comprehensive approach should be pursued. School reform must comprise not only enrolment of Roma, but a set of measures associated with social policy and attitudes, including measures to prohibit discrimination.
- Thirdly, the contexts in which Roma children are educated vary greatly and these will require various combinations of measures to achieve the same goals.
- Fourthly, the right policies are important but they are not enough. Lasting educational change depends not only on policy but also on sustained support for change at all levels of the system, and especially in local schools and communities. Policies must be accompanied by appropriate implementation plans and resources, including effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to demonstrate how these have been achieved successfully.

#### 5.1.4. Segregation

Segregation is the most serious challenge in Roma education. It is a violation of the right to non-discrimination and equal treatment. Most Roma children in Europe met the 21st century in a de facto segregated education system. In terms of funding, infrastructure, teaching quality and even curriculum, segregated schools with over 80 percent Roma enrolment are not simply worse than majority schools. They perpetuate racial walls even if they are otherwise good, even if they are “elite”. They teach Roma students to “know their place””, and ultimately discourage or directly disqualify them from duly fulfilling their role as citizens.

However, this understanding is not (yet) shared by all Roma themselves, and no coherent de-segregation movement has emerged. Many simply prefer the comfort of their children being left out of a school system which humiliates them, and many hope to build a separate education system based on cultural specificity.

Racial segregation of Roma in education exists in a variety of forms. The various patterns of segregated schooling in Europe can be divided into two main types: (a) Roma studying in “special schools” or “special classes” for the mentally handicapped, where the official curricula are based on inferior academic standards, and (b) Roma studying in separate or predominantly Roma schools and classes

where the quality of education is lower, even in those cases where the official curriculum is supposedly being applied in full. Both types of segregation are an expression of serious social alienation and constitute racial segregation in violation of international anti-discrimination law.

### 5.1.5. The need for adequate legislation

In order to achieve Roma integration in education, there is a need to develop a legal framework and detailed legislation generating positive obligations of the authorities to integrate Roma.

Segregated education of Roma children in all countries where Roma form a substantial minority is perpetuated by the absence of action on a central and local level of government to implement a comprehensive desegregation policy based on a sound legal basis. In Bulgaria, for example, a number of policy documents (Strategies, Action Plans) adopted by central government and by some local authorities between 1999-2004 have formulated the goal of educational integration of minority/Roma children but have not resulted in action to

desegregate education. A major obstacle is the absence of a legislative basis which generates positive duties for the authorities on various levels to undertake targeted action to desegregate education and provide the necessary financial resources for such action to be implemented. Government policy documents do not impose duties on central and local authorities, and respectively do not require any allocation of funds for the realization of the goals formulated in them.

The policy of financial incentives implemented in some countries (e.g. Hungary; also planned to be implemented in Bulgaria through the establishment of a special fund at the Ministry of Education) for local authorities which choose to implement school integration action has proved inefficient as local governments are free to opt out of such programmes. In the course of six years, since the first desegregation projects in the region began, the experience of those advocating desegregation has indicated that in the absence of legally binding obligations on public authorities, desegregation is unlikely to be undertaken by the state.

## 5.2 Romania: Academic Success for Roma Children – Early Interventions in Developing Literacy Skills<sup>12</sup>

According to recent reports issued in preparation of the launch of the Roma Education Fund, out of the total Roma population, over 25% are illiterate, which is 10 times higher than the illiteracy rate for the overall population of Romania. In addition, a high percentage of Roma children – even if enrolled in schools – drop out particularly after completing primary school, though until the 2005-2006 academic year, the duration of compulsory education in

Romania was 8 years<sup>13</sup>. The same studies show that dropout rates in the Romanian education system are almost double in primary schools with over 50% Roma children as opposed to schools where Roma children constitute under 50% of pupils.

In the last decade, numerous efforts on the part of the Ministry of Education and Research, educational non-governmental organizations and Roma NGOs have targeted the improvement of educational

12. Written by Maria Kovacs.

13. Beginning with the 2006-2007 academic year, compulsory education in Romania will be extended to 10 years.



provision for Roma children. This case study will discuss four projects, each aiming to enhance Roma children's chances of academic success. These were all pilot projects which were subsequently scaled up to a national level or included into local components of national projects (especially under the PHARE co-funded project of the Romanian Government entitled Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups).

Since all these projects aimed to enhance Roma children's literacy skills, we will first briefly explain why literacy matters. In our knowledge-based society, the ability to read and write and make sense of printed matter is more important than ever. From a wealth of research reports related to the importance of literacy skills, prepared mostly by North American scholars, we learn the following: people with lower levels of literacy are more likely to be unemployed and earn less; people who report poor physical health have lower literacy skills than those who report better health; higher literacy skills are associated with higher levels of involvement in community life, including volunteer activities, and especially decision-making; use of information technology is lowest among those with low literacy. In conclusion, reading and writing raise awareness of who we are and what we can and should do, and thus increase our chances to know the world better and act in and upon it.

In addition to the importance of literacy, early interventions in developing literacy skills are crucial. Studies conducted in the US and New Zealand show that nearly 90% of first grade children who do not make a good start in learning to read never catch up. Although there is evidence that early interventions make a huge difference, governments seem slow to act on the recommendations of educationalists.

## LINKS

Ministry of Education: [www.edu.ro](http://www.edu.ro)  
Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center (EDRC):  
[www.edrc.ro](http://www.edrc.ro)  
Romanian Reading and Writing for Critical  
Thinking Association (RWCT Romania): [www.alsdgc.ro](http://www.alsdgc.ro)  
Resource Center for Roma Communities (RCRC)  
[www.romacenter.ro](http://www.romacenter.ro)  
RWCT training: [www.rwct.net](http://www.rwct.net)

### 5.2.1. Support for the Academic Success of Disadvantaged Children

This project was initiated by educationalists and implemented by the Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center (EDRC) in 2002 with support from the PHARE Access programme and a budget of 30,000 Euros. It set off to develop and field-test models and materials for 'dropout-proofing' of Roma children in the primary grades. The project included two major components: production of culturally relevant reading materials for children, especially of Roma ethnicity, and a mentoring-tutoring module.

It was considered important to produce reading materials because educationalists have demonstrated that children make rapid progress when they learn by reading colorful and interesting books graded according to the level of challenge. Children also identify with school when given learning materials featuring people and customs they recognize as their own. The aim of the production of culturally relevant materials was to accomplish the so-called mirror and window effect (Simms Bishop), i.e. on the one hand, to provide printed matter for Roma children in which they recognize themselves, thus developing self-confidence and better identifying

with schools where such printed material is used, and on the other hand, to create a window to the culture of Roma people for children from other ethnic groups to become more familiar with Roma culture. Teachers who teach Roma children were recruited and trained in writers' workshops led by children's book authors who are knowledgeable about instructional design and multicultural education. Together they produced six so-called little books, some of which were published in hard copy, and others electronically on the International Step-by-Step Association's Reading Corner.

In addition, the project recruited 12 master teachers from four villages in four different Romanian counties and trained them in methods of assessing the reading abilities of young pupils and designing instruction to enhance their literacy. The master teachers learnt to tutor children using a carefully planned lesson format and to adjust their instruction to the pupils' progress and needs. They then recruited, trained, and supervised a total of 51 tutors who worked on a one-to-one basis with 51 under-achieving 7-10 year-old Roma pupils. The master teachers determined the instructional needs of the tutored children, planned the initial lessons to be taught by the tutors, and supervised the tutors' lesson plans thereafter on a weekly basis. Thus, relatively inexperienced tutors managed to offer the advantage of companionship and their lack of pedagogical knowledge (they were recruited from literate members of the community) was compensated for by expert supervision. Tutors met with their assigned pupils twice a week for 60-minute sessions. The meetings took place in community centres or even at tutors' homes.

As a result, in addition to the fact that all the beneficiary children improved their reading and writing skills, demonstrated by improved results obtained in repeated testing by means of so-called 3-minute tests, consisting of words in isolation

(Lemeni, 1999) and by improved marks at school, relations between the Roma and non-Roma members of the community improved and the master teachers gained knowledge and abilities to teach literacy which were transferable to classroom work.

### 5.2.2. Fighting Marginalization by Promoting Problem-Solving Skills

The objective of this social project (PHARE Access, 60,000 Euros), implemented by EDRC in December 2003-August 2004 in partnership with the Romanian Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association (RWCT Romania), was to fight the marginalization of socially disadvantaged groups by involving them in learning activities (adult education, parents' education, education of young children, health education) that would help develop the adults' ability to play an active role in solving their own problems, and to contribute to their children's success in life. The idea for this project sprang from the realization during the implementation of the Support for the Academic Success of Disadvantaged Children project that parents must be involved in targeting the improvement of children's literacy skills.

Under this project educators and NGO leaders from six villages were trained to plan, organize and carry out learning activities in community centres established during the project using the voluntary work of community members. These centres became a gathering place for local people, parents and young children aged 3-7. During the project, the community centres hosted weekly meetings of adults and children who had joint activities meant to improve parenting skills, as well as age-specific activities.

The young children involved in the project managed to overcome setbacks in their education arising from poverty. The activities carried out in the community centres involved socializing in a learning environment, and in this way the children were

better able to integrate in group activities in the kindergarten. Later they had a better start at school and thus fewer reasons to drop out. The children's parents improved their communication skills both with their children and with each other.

Educators who were not directly involved in the project also benefited from it to the extent that the children they worked with performed better at school.

Project activities included interior repairs in the community centres by local volunteers (mostly by adults in the target groups) and furnishing of the centres; training for 12 educators to plan, organize and carry out education activities for young children and their parents; training in project writing and project management for 18 NGO leaders, school directors and educators in rural areas; designing and piloting community education activities for a total of 65-70 families; preparation of simple education materials (charts, posters, puppets, etc) with the involvement of parents. The project activities represented a first in the life of each of the communities, but a good start in developing closer links between school, parents and community.

### 5.2.3. Academic Success for Roma Children

This project funded under REF (September 2005-August 2007) is implemented by a consortium of 7 organizations from 6 countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), under the leadership of EDRC. The goal of this project is to build on expertise and investments made in previous years of education project implementation by developing testing and teaching procedures that have a high likelihood of success with Roma children and which will be relatively easy to disseminate to several other projects across CEE concerned with the education of Roma children, both within the public education systems and NGOs.

The specific aims of this project are:

1. to develop diagnostic instruments in the languages of the participating countries which can be used to assess children's emergent literacy concepts;
2. to develop tutoring procedures related to the diagnostic information revealed by the assessments;
3. to field test the assessments and tutoring strategies with at least 12 pupils in each of the 6 participating countries;
4. to disseminate the findings, including all training materials, to groups concerned with the education of Roma children in each country, including Step by Step, Roma centres and Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT) programmes.

Reading assessment instruments have been developed in Bulgarian, Croatian, Romanian, Slovakian, and Slovenian. Local teams of master teachers from the partner countries started to train primary school teachers who teach Roma children in how to use the reading assessment instruments and develop remedial strategies to help Roma children to improve their reading skills. By March 2007, a total of 118 teachers working with Roma children received an average 20 hours of training, and 746 mostly Roma children from 26 schools were assessed for their reading skills. All assessed children were tutored with the suggested teaching methods. After reassessment, they scored significantly higher than on the pre-test. A case study conducted on a Roma first grader in Romania indicates that after an 8-week tutoring programme (240 minutes), the student scored over 50% higher than before.

### 5.2.4. Empowering Roma Teachers

This project (December 2005-May 2007) initiated by the Resource Centre for Roma Communities (RCRC), in partnership with RWCT Romania, the

University of Bucharest, and the “Impreuna” Community Development Agency, aims to train Roma teachers and teachers of Romani language to use active and cooperative learning strategies with their pupils and to develop their pupils’ critical (higher order) thinking skills. This project was initiated for two major reasons:

1. In most education projects for Roma, the aim is to train Roma pupils to get jobs. However, the initiators believe that Roma children – like other children – need to be taught how to think, and how to make informed decisions. For this to happen, their teachers need to be taught how to teach so as to develop the pupils’ higher order thinking skills;
2. In nationwide education projects targeting the Roma community in Romania, there are hardly any Roma teacher trainers available. It is important to have a pool of well-trained ethnic Roma teachers with excellent teaching knowledge and skills so that they can serve as models for other teachers (Roma or non-Roma).

During the project, out of the 50 teachers participating in the 80 hours of RWCT training, at least 10 (based on abilities demonstrated during the workshops and during the visits to their classrooms) are trained as RWCT trainers.

When the training is completed, all the Roma RWCT teachers and trainers are invited to join RWCT Romania (currently including over 150 members), thus connecting them to a professional association and helping them become part of an international network of educators. In addition, RWCT Romania will promote these teachers and trainers to the Teacher Training House in each county. In the Teacher Training Houses, the Roma teachers will be able to train other teachers (Roma and non-Roma)

how to use active and cooperative learning strategies.

Last, but not least, the Roma teachers will be invited to contribute to the RWCT Association’s professional journal (*Scoala Reflexiva – The Reflexive School*), where they can share their professional experience with other teachers in Romania, at the same time improving their writing skills.

In conclusion, in order to improve educational provision for Roma children, one needs to take into account not only the children’s needs, but also those of the parents and teachers. Ideally, the community should be actively involved and the school can play an important part in such initiatives. These are the major actors that define the chances of educational success of every child.

There were both successful and unsuccessful elements in the four projects described above. However, important lessons could be drawn from all of them and efforts were made to avoid repeating mistakes in subsequent projects. For instance, it emerged that the length of the intervention is crucial when pursuing educational goals either directly targeting children or targeting their educators and parents. A significant impact cannot be expected from one-year projects. Accordingly, when financial constraints dictated short interventions, efforts were always made to involve the various actors and communities in several projects in succession in order to build on previous achievements.

Another important lesson is that the goals and objectives of the project and possible follow-ups must be made very clear to the target groups from the very beginning. This will ensure that the direct beneficiaries stay with the project and remain as active and involved at the end as they were at the

beginning. It is preferable to target fewer people or small groups and work with them to test whether an approach is appropriate rather than waste resources on large numbers of beneficiaries who may be highly mobile.

Careful evaluation of the project outcomes can provide vital information for subsequent projects. Unfortunately, funding and other constraints

prevented proper external evaluations and no impact evaluation was carried out. In the case of educational projects, this is also partly due to the characteristics of the academic culture and lack of collaboration between non-governmental organizations and academic circles. True commitment to ensuring access to quality education for disadvantaged groups is yet to be assumed by the average educator and citizen in Romania.

## 5.3 Bulgaria: Desegregating the Education System<sup>14</sup>

### 5.3.1. The current educational situation with regard to Roma children in Bulgaria

The laws in the Republic of Bulgaria, including the Public Education Act (PEA), ensure equal access for all children to education regardless of ethnic identity, religion or sex. However, in reality, due to historic factors and neighbourhoods separated along ethnic lines, 65 schools at various levels and 24 kindergartens throughout the country currently function in segregated Roma neighbourhoods, in which Roma children are educated.

According to data from Regional Education Inspectorates (REI), during the 2004/2005 school year, the public education system encompassed a total of 970,000 pupils from the first preparatory class to 12th grade. Among those pupils the total percentage of Roma is around 10% or about 100,000 children. During the 2004/2005 school year a total 30,421 children and pupils of Roma origin were taught in kindergartens and schools located in large separate Roma urban neighbourhoods, as acknowledged by REI employees and local municipalities. Of these, 2,464 were children in 24 kindergartens, and the remaining 27,957 were pupils in 65 schools at

various levels. According to expert data, some 45,000 Roma children attend ethnically mixed schools in rural regions. A characteristic of these rural regions, however, is that due to widespread migration of the ethnic Bulgarian population to big cities and to a lesser degree abroad, they are left with a predominately Roma population and schools often have a predominant number of Roma children. The remaining 25,000 to 30,000 Roma children attend ethnically mixed schools in larger settlements and belong to families that are well integrated in Bulgarian society.

### 5.3.2. Political and Administrative Steps towards Desegregation

In order to improve the educational level of children of Roma origin and to ensure their access to mixed schools outside the Roma neighbourhoods, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) has taken a broad range of measures<sup>15</sup>. At the end of 2003, the National Assembly adopted the Protection against Discrimination Act. For the first time Bulgarian legislation obliges the Minister of Education and Science and local government authorities to not allow racial (ethnic) segregation

14. Written by Iossif Nounev, official Expert at the Ministry of Education and Science. Accordingly sections 6.3.1., 6.3.2 and 6.3.3. reflect the standpoint of the Ministry of Education and Science.

15. At the time of the Belgrade meeting on which this publication is based, the National Programme for the Development of School Education and Pre-School Learning 2006-2015 had not yet been adopted. This document backtracks on a number of measures mentioned here. Now the situation is much less favourable as a result.

in educational institutions and the heads of these institutions to take effective measures to prevent all forms of discrimination at the place of study. The MES developed and adopted a long-term strategy and action plan for the gradual and complete elimination of segregated schools in the Roma neighbourhoods and for not allowing the segregation of Roma children in separate classes in the mixed schools. In order to ensure real access for Roma children to all schools in any settlement by residence, the compulsory division of children into districts on their enrolment at school was eliminated. At the moment Article 9 (1) of the Public Education Act is in force which gives parents/guardians the right to choose the school which their child will attend. An amendment to the Public Education Act to better prepare Roma and Turkish children for school introduced compulsory one-year preparatory pre-school training at kindergartens or schools for all children before enrolling in first grade.

In segregated schools, teachers without the necessary education qualifications were removed and kindergartens and schools with a segregation problem, and hence subject to desegregation, were identified. Specially trained so-called “assistant teachers” from the Roma community, who assist in the adaptation of Roma children in mixed schools, were introduced in the education system.

In order to assist poor children, all children in preparatory classes at kindergartens or schools through to 4th grade receive free textbooks and free meals at school.

At the same time, host schools were identified outside the Roma neighbourhoods in which Roma children are gradually being placed. The MES developed models for the desegregation of separate schools for Roma children in Roma neighbourhoods and recommended them to

municipalities. In accordance with state policy, municipalities with schools attended only by Roma children were obliged to develop their own plans on the basis of the national plans for gradual desegregation and situating Roma children in mixed schools outside Roma neighbourhoods. The first segregated school for Roma in Pleven was closed in the framework of these initiatives.

The regional education inspectorates selected their own experts to deal directly with the integration of Roma children and to be responsible for the implementation of the annual plans in this respect<sup>16</sup>. The MES and REI directly advise the mayors and representatives of municipal authorities which lag behind in the implementation of state policy, including to ensure compliance with the Protection against Discrimination Act [Article 29 (1)].

Universities with teacher training faculties introduced Bachelor and Master degree courses on intercultural education with a focus on the adaptation of Roma children in a mixed school environment<sup>17</sup>. At Veliko Turnovo University, a specialization named “Primary Pedagogy and Romani Language” for training teachers in their Roma mother tongue has been functioning for 3 years<sup>18</sup>.

### 5.3.3. Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities

Since 2000 the MES and REI have engaged NGOs and municipalities actively in the process of desegregation of schools for Roma children in Vidin, Stara Zagora, Montana, Pleven, Sofia, Plovdiv, Sliven, Haskovo and other towns across the country. More than 3,500 children of Roma origin were transferred from segregated schools and placed together with their Bulgarian peers to study in mixed schools. A total of 106 assistant

16. In fact, each inspectorate has only one expert dealing with this issue amongst many other duties.

17. NGOs note that little attention is paid to the opposite need: adaptation of the school environment to the mix of children.

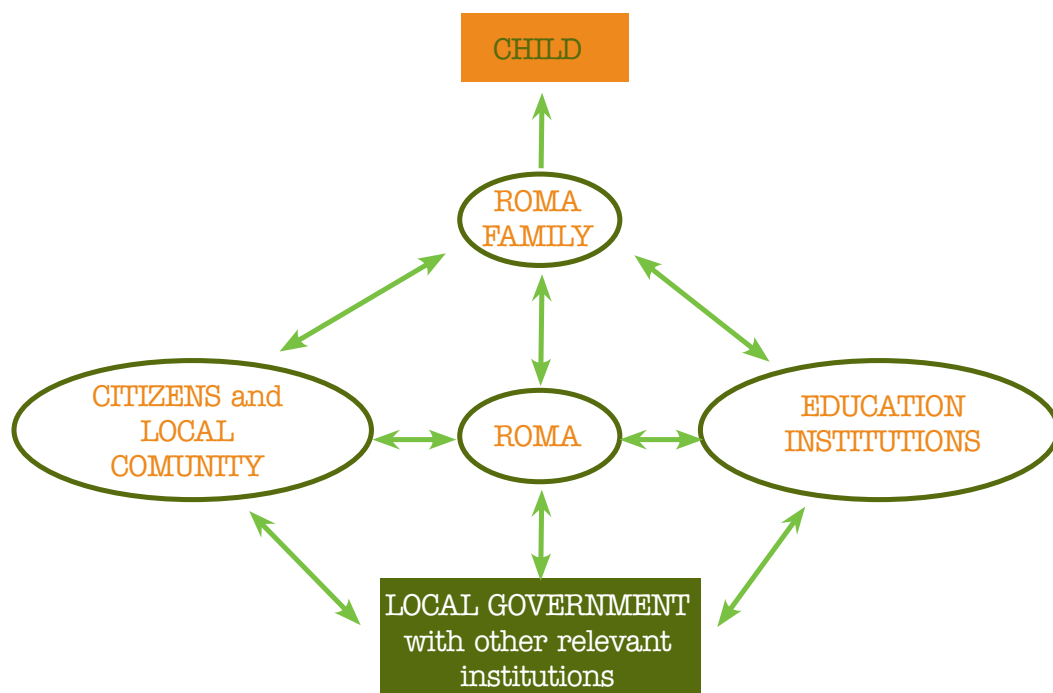
18. Largely due to pressure from nationalist parties the intake of students to this specialisation has been stopped.

teachers assist the integration of the Roma children in mainstream education schools. Over 2,000 teachers have undergone various forms of training to assist Roma children to adapt in an ethnically mixed environment. A deputy minister has been appointed in the MES to deal especially with the educational integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities, including the process of desegregation. There is a specialized directorate in the MES whose employees work on the integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities. In 2003 the MES established a Advisory Council on Education of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities. This council has 31 members including

representatives of education-based and minority NGOs; representatives of the main school trade unions; rectors of the universities which train teachers and employees of MES responsible for the study of mother tongue, the desegregation process and the overall integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities<sup>19</sup>.

The main task of this Council is to develop draft documents and decisions on the educational integration of ethnic minority children, focusing on Roma, and submit them to the Minister of Education and Science. This Council have been largely responsible for the development of the reforms mentioned above.

## 5.4 Serbia: Needs-Based Education of Roma Children in Subotica<sup>20</sup>



19. This council was convened only once in 2006 and once in January 2007. This is interpreted by numerous NGOs as a perfunctory measure to ostensibly cover EU accession requirements. The council has not been convened since January 2007 until the time of writing of this report.

20. Written by Stevan Nikoli .

In the context of social transition, education has been struggling to transform itself and define its position in society. In particular Roma, as an integral part of the society, have been neglected in terms of education for a long time. Tackling this situation more rapidly requires a specific, complex approach. The data presented here are related to the education of Roma children in Subotica (Serbia) which the Roma Education Centre (REC), carried out in co-operation with parents, educational institutions and local government.

The elements of successful inclusion of a Roma child in the education system are closely linked to establishing multilateral communication between the following:

1. Roma families
2. the social environment
3. the educational system
4. local government
5. the Roma NGO sector as a mediator and intermediary in inter-sectoral communication

#### LINK

Roma Education Centre: [www.ec-roma.org.yu](http://www.ec-roma.org.yu)

#### 5.4.1. Roma families

The Roma family is the initial and the most responsible link in the chain of education in which the child is included. Raising the awareness of Roma parents of the need to educate their child is carried out through a set of activities named the Roma Café by REC. During the school year, social gatherings are organized in the school facilities or in individual homes to maintain dialogue and the discuss challenges facing parents in the process of educating their children. The guests invited to

these meetings include school guidance counsellors, teachers, representatives of Roma NGOs and successful individuals from the Roma community.

#### 5.4.2. The Social Environment

Acceptance of the Roma family by the surrounding community is the basic condition for living in this environment. Bilateral communication between the Roma community and local government bodies (here the Local Community Centre), is essential. Practice shows that self-organization among the Roma community and communication with Community Centre representatives may act as a preventive measure as well as a tool for resolving possible misunderstandings and problems. If members of the Roma community are unable to organise themselves, they receive assistance from Roma NGO activists in this

#### Example

*The population living in the Pešcara Local Community includes a settlement of about 500 Kosovo Roma who came there as displaced persons. The REC is involved in the implementation of school curricula on this territory and the inclusion of Roma children in education institutions, i.e. nursery and elementary school. The programme activities include the formation of a Parent Council comprising parents living in the settlement. In this way, the Roma community has its own appointed representatives who can advocate for their interests both at school and in the community. This body has participated in organizing and motivating Roma and non-Roma communities to participate actively in the search for a solution to the joint priority area of road building in the territory of the Local Community. This was a key tool for establishing better cooperation and communication between the Roma and non-Roma populations.*



process.

Activities related to community development can create conditions necessary for people to become involved in each other's lives rather than merely living adjacent to one other.

### 5.4.3. The Education System

#### PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

From the experience of the REC, it is essential to include Roma children into education institutions on time, primarily in order for them to receive the necessary preparation for enrolment in schools in state pre-school educational facilities. Roma NGOs once again appear as a mediator between parents and the pre-school educational institutions.

They have a multiple role in this segment:

- working as a mediator between the managing bodies of pre-school institutions and Roma parents;
- promoting pre-school education among parents and co-operating with them.

Practice shows that the presence of education assistants from the Roma community, who fulfil the minimum criterion of having completed secondary school and speaking Romani, is essential for continuous attendance, overcoming the language barrier between the children and teachers, establishing communication with parents and assisting teachers in their work.

Opening opportunities to include assistant educators from the Roma community into pre-school education provides new perspectives for this community and a chance for training educational staff to specialize in work with these children. The presence of education assistants is frequently a component of NGO activities.

#### SCHOOL SYSTEM

The following step in a child's education is inclusion in the school system. It is essential to establish communication between Roma NGOs and schools where Roma children are to be tested together with other children. One of the outcomes of this relationship is an opportunity for a representative of the Roma community to be included in the testing boards when the Roma children are being tested. This will help children to cope with the initial stress and prevent them from ending up in schools for children with special needs merely because they are unfamiliar with certain notions. In the case of Subotica, only 12 Roma children attend the school for children with special needs, suggesting less problems with Roma segregation than elsewhere. For example, in some places in Serbia, the proportion of Roma children in this type of schools is from 40% to 80%. Further experience has shown that day care facilities provided in the school building can provide considerable support to Roma children from poor families without proper conditions for studying at home (such as their own room and parental help with homework). In addition to help with homework, such a facility provides opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Workshops conducted by teaching assistants enable the children to get to know each other better and overcome their differences. The role of teaching assistants contributes to better results in the form of higher academic performance and work with parents.

This approach is conducted on a project basis, but it is essential to tackle this issue systematically, i.e. within the scope of responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Sport.

In addition to providing facilities, the school system needs to address the specific needs of educators working with Roma and teaching in Romani.

Persons involved in work with Roma children have to meet a number of criteria to be effective: in addition to having adequate formal qualifications for a certain job, one of the most important personal characteristics required of teachers and assistants is a manifest sensitivity in working with children in general, including those from the Roma population. It is essential to be familiar with Roma culture and establish relations to all its aspects. This requires innovative thinking patterns as this is an area without clear methodological guidelines.

Nurturing mother tongue in schools under the control of the Ministry of Education and Sport is essential for the Roma population in order to raise awareness of their ethnic origins, to establish equality with other ethnic minorities and to prevent assimilation. In the 2005/06 academic year, courses in this subject were attended by 104 Roma students.

Finally, logistical and financial difficulties are frequent obstacles to successful performance by Roma children:

1. large numbers of pupils in classes, preventing teachers from establishing an adequate individual approach to children;

2. lack of free textbooks and stationery;
3. lack of free meals; this is a problem particularly for children attending day care centres immediately after regular classes.

#### 5.4.4. Local government

Local government responsiveness is crucial in facilitating the integration of Roma children into the education system. In particular, local governments need to adopt regulations facilitating the inclusion of Roma children into the education system easier and faster. Local government in Subotica, for example, has established a Team for the Inclusion of Roma Children into the Education System. The team's work provided the basis for adopting a Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma Children into the Education System. This team has been working under the guidance of a coordinator from the Roma community.

The local government, however, has not accepted the Local Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma Children in the Education System. The eventual goal of the project is to secure local authority support and designate budget funds for the education of Roma children.

## 5.5 Minorities and Education: The Role of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC)<sup>21</sup>

How can schools contribute to the development of more equal and inclusive societies – societies in which all citizens enjoy the same rights and opportunities, are able to realize their full potential and relate to each other in a spirit of equality and mutual respect, regardless of ethnicity, religion or other differences? The idea that the public education system has a key role to play in the

reform of society – socially, economically, politically and culturally – has long been accepted. The question is not whether schools have a role in furthering minority rights and improving minority-majority relations in society. The outstanding issue is the precise nature of this role and to what extent are schools as they currently exist able, empowered and willing to fulfil it?

21. Written by Ted Huddleston.

This case study will consider this question from the perspective of recent developments in EDC (Education for Democratic Citizenship) as they are emerging across Europe. A particular focus will be on EDC rather than on other education initiatives and on its potential contribution to improvements in minority rights and minority-majority relations rather than to democratic reforms in general.

### 5.5.1. What is Education for Democratic Citizenship?

The concept of EDC was launched by the Council of Europe following the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government in 1997. As well as an education initiative in its own right, the concept was intended to encompass a range of other education practices and principles associated with social and political reform, e.g., peace education, multicultural education, intercultural education, human rights education, citizenship education, etc.

***It may best be defined as:***

*a set of practices and principles aimed at making young people and adults better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society.*

The idea of EDC and its implications for European education policies and reforms have been endorsed in two major Council of Europe policy documents:

- Resolution adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education (Cracow, October, 2000);
- Recommendation (2002) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on education for democratic citizenship (adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in October 2002).

Whereas the main vehicle for EDC in many education systems so far has been the formal curriculum, it is also evident that a more diversified approach is beginning to emerge, which goes beyond the formal curriculum and building partnerships between community and other stakeholders and practitioners. The implication is that EDC is not just an added element in the formal curriculum, but also a whole-school approach, exploiting learning opportunities not only in the classroom but also in the culture of school life and the school's links with its local community. As such, it seeks to re-define the relationship between pupils, teachers, schools and their communities.

From the beginning, EDC was seen as having an important contribution to make to the development of minority rights in Europe. The resolution adopted by the ministers of education in 2000 established draft guidelines identifying the core elements of EDC, noting, inter alia, that EDC:

- *is based on the fundamental principles of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law; refers in particular to rights and responsibilities, empowerment, participation and belonging and respect for diversity;*
- *is instrumental in the fight against violence, xenophobia, racism, aggressive nationalism and intolerance;*
- *contributes to social cohesion, social justice and the common good.*

These are impressive aims, but how realistic are they? If they are realistic, exactly how are they to be achieved and what would this imply in practice? What EDC has to offer in this area will be considered below more precisely in practical terms.

### 5.5.2. How can EDC contribute to minority rights and minority-majority relations?

Considering the nature in which EDC is currently emerging across Europe as both an element in the formal curriculum and as a whole-school approach, there would seem to be a number of ways in which, in principle at least, EDC might contribute to society-wide improvements in minority rights and minority-majority relations.

#### 1. Cultivating a sense of belonging

EDC can cultivate in young people a sense of belonging to a community and a feeling that they are members of a society of equals, regardless of current background or positions in society. Feeling that one is a member of society with equal rights and responsibilities and as much right to participate in and influence life in your society as the next person is fundamental to the idea of democratic citizenship and a pre-requisite for actual involvement. It is thus a key objective in EDC.

#### 2. Developing a feeling of empowerment

EDC can help to develop a sense of empowerment in young people: that is to say, the feeling that not only are they equal members of society but that they have the knowledge and skills needed to participate in society on an equal basis, e.g., to uphold their rights, etc., as well as the personal qualities needed to do this, such as confidence and a sense of personal efficiency.

#### 3. Promoting democratic values and attitudes

As well as helping to create this sense of 'citizenship identity', EDC can develop the kinds of values and personal dispositions in young people that – ideally at least – accompany the establishment of a more equal and inclusive society, e.g., tolerance, openness, mutual respect, solidarity and the confidence to challenge prejudice and discrimination.

#### 4. Teaching collaboration and conflict resolution skills

EDC can help to teach young people the kinds of skills needed to deal with conflict, prejudice and discrimination, both on an individual and on a group level, in particular skills in peaceful conflict resolution, dialogue and debate.

#### 5. Providing opportunities to research minority rights issues

EDC can provide opportunities for pupils and students to study specific problems of prejudice and discrimination currently affecting them and their communities, learning more about the legal, political, economic and cultural factors that underlie and ultimately provide the solutions to these problems.

#### 6. Providing tools for understanding the roots of discrimination and social exclusion

As well as finding out more about the background to specific problems of discrimination and exclusion in their communities, EDC can provide young people with the intellectual and analytical tools that help them to make sense of problems of this type though a deeper understanding of the nature of group processes and social psychology.

#### 7. Providing opportunities for pupils and students to exercise their human rights

EDC can promote opportunities for students from differing backgrounds and groups in society to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and participation in decisions affecting them. This is because EDC regards school pupils not just as citizens-in-waiting but as actual citizens who have as much right to contribute to decisions affecting their schools and communities as their elders.

## 8. Helping to unite local communities

By encouraging schools to work with other schools and with their local communities on issues relating to democratic citizenship, EDC is able to provide opportunities for different ethnic, religious and other groups to meet and talk with each other.

Having identified a number of different ways in which EDC, in principle at least, has the potential to contribute to the development of a more equal and inclusive society, this chapter will now consider what would be involved in achieving these sorts of goals in schools in reality.

### 5.5.3. What does this suggest in practice?

The above possibilities for EDC suggest that issues relating to minorities and minority rights have implications for all aspects of a school's work: its informal and its formal curriculum. For convenience, this will be examined in terms of three areas: school culture, school curriculum and school links with the community.

#### SCHOOL CULTURE

Learning values and character formation are not things that can be taught directly by instruction in the classroom. They are learned primarily from the way teachers act and behave, rather than from the content of their lessons (although naming and pointing to examples can also have a part to play). For this reason, the ethos or culture of school has a central role to play in the development both of pupils' sense of empowerment as equal citizens and in the attitudes they take towards issues of discrimination and exclusion in society.

Creating an ethos in which every individual is valued equally and in which high standards of social justice and human rights are expected involves more than just drawing up a statement of school values and

expectations. It means embedding these in specific practices and procedures: in rules and codes of behaviour, in structures and procedures and in the opportunities young people are given to contribute to the life of their school and the management of their learning. An ethos that encourages pupils to see themselves as valued and participant members of society will include, at the very least, genuine opportunities for them to:

- have a role in decision-making, e.g., pupil parliaments, consultations;
- take on positions of responsibility, e.g., pupils as researchers, peer mediators;
- have an active part to play in their learning, e.g., self-assessment, lesson observations.

While school ethos is in the first place the responsibility of the school leader or principal, it is also the responsibility of all the other adults involved – teaching and non-teaching. In fact, if it is to help students to acquire the attitudes and qualities of character that go with the development of more equal and inclusive society, there are arguments for saying that the school should model this sort of society corporately. After all, the school is probably the first and most salient public institution a young person encounters. It is therefore important that it models the general type of society it is aiming to achieve and prepare its pupils for, among other things.

#### SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The formal curriculum would also seem to have an important part to play in a school's contribution to minority rights and minority-majority relations. Firstly, it suggests the importance of including certain types of skills, knowledge and understanding as content for study in the formal curriculum, including:

- collaborative working, dialogue and conflict resolution skills;
- knowledge about current minority rights issues;
- understanding the roots of discrimination and exclusion.

Secondly, it suggests non-traditional teaching methods focusing on problem-solving through group work and enquiry-based learning. An emphasis on these forms of ‘active learning’ would seem to be important, not only because they are effective forms of learning, but also because they give pupils a sense of involvement and power over their learning and help them to develop skills that are important for them as citizens as well as learners.

#### SCHOOL LINKS WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Finally, it suggests a particular form of relationship between the school and its local community. Conventionally, schools have seen their local neighbourhood as a source of learning. On the one hand, public figures such as local politicians or members of the legal profession, etc., have been invited into schools as visiting speakers. On the other

hand, pupils have gone out into the community, developing their sense of social responsibility by helping in old people’s homes, working on environmental projects, etc., or learning about local society and issues by so doing.

If, however, local groups and organisations are seen as ‘community partners’ with a more active role to play in school policy and practice rather than simply as passive sources of learning, different possibilities begin to emerge. There is potential for various community groups to come together to help to solve local problems with the school, its students and its EDC programme acting as the catalyst. In this way the school is able to contribute more directly to community relations beyond its own confines.

#### 5.5.4 Conclusion

It is clear that EDC has significant potential to contribute to the development of improved minority rights and minority-majority relations both in schools and in the wider society. However, in order to achieve this potential a rich concept of EDC is required: one which combines specific teaching in the classroom with a whole-school approach to democratic learning.

## 5.6 Romania: Multicultural Education in Schools<sup>22</sup>

### 5.6.1. Objectives of Multicultural Education

Multicultural Education in Schools is a curriculum development project for an optional course on multicultural education to be offered to 3rd and 4th grade students.

The objective of this initiative of the Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center is to promote understanding of multiculturalism and intercultural

dialogue in schools and to increase the visibility of ethnocultural minorities in the curriculum.’

The initiative is the first of its kind, as multicultural education is only marginally addressed in schools and only as disparate lessons in the curricula of other subjects. Thus some topics relevant to multicultural education are taught in civic education lessons. Furthermore, the national curriculum includes a

22. Written by Monica Caluser.

discipline called “The history and culture of...” the Bulgarian, Croat, Czech, German, Hungarian, Pole, Serb, Turk-Tatar and Ukrainian minorities. These classes, however, are only taught to children from the respective ethnic groups. Thus, majority children do not learn about ethnic minorities in Romania at school and are consequently unaware of the diversity of the country from this point of view.

In addition to the lack of information about other cultures in Romania in the school curriculum, there is also no reference to intercultural approaches in the education process. Responding to the need for intercultural education and the lack of provision for it in formal education, several civil society initiatives have been undertaken to provide intercultural education. Such initiatives are generally promoted by NGOs and take place out of school, or at best in a school setting but as extracurricular activities. The initiative of the Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center brings both information on ethnic diversity in Romania and the intercultural approach into the school curriculum.

The objective of the Multicultural Education course is to inform pupils on the characteristics of the various ethnic groups who live in Romania, to explore the cultural similarities and differences between these groups and to promote a school climate which values and encourages openness towards diversity.

#### LINKS

*Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center:*  
<http://www.edrc.ro/>

*Divers:* [www.divers.ro](http://www.divers.ro)

*Liga Pro Europe:* <http://www.proeuropa.ro/>

#### 5.6.2. Topics for Multicultural Education

Topics covered by the curriculum include descriptions of each of the ethnic groups in Romania and lessons about intercultural topics such as diversity in the family, religion, community, friends and colleagues, heroes in different cultures or gastronomic traditions. One other novelty involves bringing together the 20 national historically recognized minorities with new minorities not acknowledged yet by the Romanian state. This approach does not emphasize the majority-minority distinction, since each lesson dedicated to an ethnic group contains the same information: representative pictures (most of them part of the Alter Image album); a few words in the native language with a phonetic transcription, a map showing the group's geographical distribution in Romania, data on the numerical size of the group and its presence on the territory and a story or legend representative of the group. All groups, including the Romanians, are presented in alphabetical order.

Besides the textbook, the project outcomes include a guidebook for teachers and a pupil's workbook. The teacher guidebook offers not only additional information for the teacher on each of the lessons included in the textbook, but also appropriate methods for teaching these lessons.

Intercultural education is not only about learning about different groups, about different traditions or ways of life. The methods recommended for teaching these lessons are in themselves a method of promoting intercultural education because they encourage openness, cooperation, and respect towards others, empathy and awareness of the complexity of a human being and on various aspects of diversity. Developing communication skills and responsibility for one's actions constitute further objectives of the teaching methods.

Recommended teaching methods include heuristic conversation, explanation, debate, prediction, mosaic, brainstorming, case-studies, etc.

The curriculum and the additional materials are used in 10 schools in Romania as part of the optional school curriculum, both in monoethnic Romanian and in ethnically mixed classrooms. The teachers benefited from three training sessions to help them acquire the methodology and skills required to use the materials and to sensitize them about all ethnic groups, not only the ones with which they work, to understand and become aware of their own prejudice towards others and to promote an inclusive approach in the classroom.

Twenty teachers including Romanian language teachers and those teaching in minority languages or in mixed classrooms (Hungarian, German, Ukrainian, Serb, Slovak, Italian, Roma) have implemented the course since September 2005. County school inspectorates were also involved in supporting the preparation and implementation of the project.

The initiative was well received by teachers, schools and local school inspectorates. The project focuses on obtaining recognition from the Ministry of Education of the relevance of the curriculum and a recommendation to schools to adopt the outcomes of this project in order to promote the use of the curriculum in as many places as possible. Since no other method is available to provide accreditation of such a course on a national level, advocating for the need and relevance of such a curriculum is the main method used to promote its broad introduction into schools.

The impact of this project will only be apparent in the long term and the curriculum should be repeated at each phase of education, adapted to the respective education level in order to ensure a sustained impact.

### 5.6.3. Results

The materials produced under this project were used successfully in schools, especially in rural areas. The success of the package was largely due to the variety of suggestions for exercises and class games in the guide for teachers and the diversity of teaching methods.

The materials developed were tested in several classes during the drafting process. The teachers received mentoring throughout the teaching process, evaluating the impact of the materials. The evaluations revealed that further work is needed to increase awareness among the teachers of their own stereotypical views and prejudices so as not to allow these to influence the teaching process. This is particularly important in connection with Roma.

The multicultural education teaching package is an attempt to touch on the issue of curricular reform, since one of advantages which make the materials recommendable is that they can be used in classes such as literature, social science, geography, history, etc. Since the materials are designed for all types of classes and for majority and minorities alike, they promote an integrative approach.







## 6. Guidelines for Addressing Minority Needs in the Educational Systems of South-East Europe

This guide has highlighted both the key challenges in the countries of South-East Europe and efforts across the region to overcome some of the key problems which both minorities and majorities face in the field of education in their diverse environment. Although there is considerable variation across the region in terms of the needs of minorities and the efforts undertaken by states over the past decade to meet them, many similarities can be identified between countries. In addition to shortcomings in implementation, countries in SEE need to make further efforts to comply with minority education standards in terms of legislation and regulation.



Bulgaria is a clear example in terms of its official resistance to the introduction of provisions for using mother tongues as a teaching medium, despite numerous recommendations to this effect from European monitoring bodies.

The following guidelines draw from the previous chapters in highlighting some key aspects which need to be addressed by policy makers in the field. While NGOs and minority organizations have and will play a substantial role in advancing educational reform and in addressing the educational needs of minorities, it is to a large extent the states and the ministries of education which need to pursue these guidelines, often with the support or in partnership with NGOs and minorities. As the guidelines suggest, there is no single solution or approach to the issues facing the region, but rather a multitude of different measures. These can be summarized into three categories:

1. Policies which transform the education system as a whole and promote a greater degree of tolerance between minorities and majorities;
2. Policies which secure the participation of minorities and civil society in the education system;
3. Policies which overcome the marginalization of minorities, in particular Roma, in the education system.

### **BROAD EDUCATION REFORM**

Minority-specific education can only be effective if embedded in a broader reform of the education sector. While all countries in South-East Europe have engaged in education system reforms, these have often been on an ad hoc basis and unsystematic. Hierarchical and authoritarian attitudes are still widespread in education institutions and the education provided is often inadequate for today's needs. Consequently, the brain drain has become a

problem for the whole region. Addressing minority needs and a more open approach towards diversity can only be accomplished as part of a broader reform process. If this is not the case, they will merely amount to awkward add-ons to an underperforming system.

### **MINORITY PARTICIPATION**

Minority education can only be effective through the effective involvement of minorities themselves. This is required on a state level, such as through consultation with the National Councils of National Minorities in Serbia with regard to curricula and textbooks. Similarly, inclusion of minority representatives on a local level is crucial to overcome residual hostilities of majorities towards minorities and the reservations of minorities towards the educational system. This process of minority participation cannot be reduced to consultation alone, but must be active in providing decision-making authority to minorities.

### **NGO-STATE PARTNERSHIPS**

NGOs have undertaken significant initiatives over the past 20 years in providing innovative educational programmes where the state has failed. At the same time, real and sustainable reform must be directed at the mainstream education system. As national and local education authorities have generally become more receptive, there is additional room for state-NGO partnerships. In particular, innovative pilot projects can be more flexibly established by NGOs, but can be included in state education policy if successful.

### **EDUCATION FOR MAJORITIES**

Improving education in a diverse environment cannot be accomplished by minority education alone. All countries of the region need to provide

more teaching on the diversity of the respective society and the value of diversity. All too often the ethnocentric perspective of the majority is merely replicated by minorities, which does little to build trust and cohesion in society. Diversity initiatives include both specific education programmes such as civic and intercultural education and new approaches to existing subjects, history in particular.

#### **REGIONAL COOPERATION ON TEXTBOOKS**

History textbooks across the region still pay scant attention to neighbours and minorities. Supplementing national history textbooks with regional perspectives is thus an important means to overcome ethnocentric teaching content. While numerous initiatives have sought to promote either regional textbooks or at least coordination and cooperation in the field of curricula and textbooks, results have so far been limited due to reservations and lack of interest on the part of governments. Considering that historical disputes and the conflicting views of the past not only concern aspects of majority-minority relations, but are indeed transnational, only a regional approach can address the inadequacies of many textbooks for majorities, rather than merely supplementing them with equally biased textbooks for minorities.

#### **CIVIC EDUCATION**

Civic education which prepares pupils to be citizens of a democratic society is crucial to the effective improvement of inter-ethnic relations. Rather than just adding issues of diversity and inter-ethnic relations as an afterthought to existing curricula, they must be embedded into a different understanding of society and the way it is governed. Civic education can be a key tool in providing the framework to communicate broad concepts to

pupils, such as democracy, human rights and tolerance, concepts without which minority rights or inter-ethnic co-existence are unlikely to have much impact.

#### **ACTIVE DESEGREGATION**

Roma pupils in most countries continue to go to schools which give them little contact with majority children. This segregation might be less based on special classes than previously, but is often the result of settlement patterns. In order to offer Roma children educational opportunities on a par with the majority, active steps must be taken to dismantle this segregation and replace it with integrated schools.

#### **ROMANI LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

Throughout South-East Europe, education in Romani remains the exception. While other minorities enjoy varying degrees of education in their mother tongue, such an option remains non-existent for most Roma children. Frequently cited obstacles, such as the lack of a standardized language and lack of funding, are often spurious explanations offered by states for not undertaking more concerted efforts to overcome this weakness. As the Roma community suffers disproportionately from exclusion in the education sector, teaching in Romani mother tongue has to be one of the pillars of educational reform.

## Civic Initiatives

[www.gradjanske.org](http://www.gradjanske.org)



**Background** - Civic Initiatives was founded in 1996, with a vision of society based on equal and active citizens who are able to decide the future of their own lives in a civil and democratic country that is governed by the rule of law and respect for human rights.

**Mission** - Civic Initiatives' mission is to empower civil society through education, the promotion of democracy and the provision of active support for its citizens.

**Position** - Civic Initiatives has positioned itself through its activities in five fields: young people, minority rights, educational reform, democracy development and the support of a national NGO network.

### Objectives

- To encourage and empower young people to become citizens who are actively involved in the process of creating positive change in towns throughout Serbia, thereby improving their own position and that of their fellow citizens;
- To provide advocacy training to further develop legal regulations in the field of national minorities and to improve implementation of existing legislation;
- To empower social stakeholders to acquire better knowledge about human and minority rights and their implementation;
- To create conditions to empower the Roma to organize themselves and develop their capacities for improving their living conditions;
- To prepare schools, local authorities and national government to carry out their functions effectively within the newly decentralised framework;
- To instigate civic educational programmes that enable citizens to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills and values necessary for individual development as well as their responsible participation in a modern, democratic society;
- To provide support for the national NGO network, the Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations of Serbia (FENS).

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Working together for a better society

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The King Baudouin Foundation supports projects and citizens with a commitment to build a better society. We look for sustainable ways of bringing about justice, democracy and respect for diversity. The King Baudouin Foundation is independent and pluralistic. Working from our base in Brussels, we are engaged in activities in Belgium, in Europe and internationally. In Belgium the Foundation has local, regional and federal projects. The King Baudouin Foundation was founded in 1976 to mark the 25th anniversary of King Baudouin's reign.

To achieve our aim we use a number of different working methods. We support third party projects, develop our own projects, organise workshops and round-table discussions with experts and citizens, set up groups to reflect on current and future issues, bring together people with very different perspectives to sit around the table, distribute the results through (free) publications etc. The King Baudouin Foundation works with government bodies, associations, non-governmental organisations, research centres, businesses and other foundations. We have a strategic partnership with the European Policy Centre, a thinktank in Brussels.

Our activities are focused on the following issues:

**Migration & a multicultural society** - promoting integration and a multicultural society in Belgium and Europe

**Poverty & social justice** - identifying new forms of social injustice and poverty; supporting projects that build greater solidarity between the generations

**Civil society & social commitment** - encouraging social commitment; promoting democratic values among young people; supporting neighbourhood and local projects

**Health** - promoting a healthy way of life; helping to build an accessible and socially acceptable healthcare system

**Philanthropy** - helping to make philanthropy more efficient in Belgium and Europe

**The Balkans** - protecting the rights of minorities and the victims of human trafficking; setting up a visa system for students

**Central Africa** - supporting projects in the field of AIDS prevention and offering guidance to AIDS patients

The Board of Governors of the King Baudouin Foundation outlines the main areas of policy. A staff of sixty - men and women, Belgian natives and ethnic minorities - is in charge of the implementation.

We have total annual expenditures of some 40 million euro. In addition to our own capital and the significant grant from the National Lottery there are also Funds set up by individuals, associations and companies. The King Baudouin Foundation is happy to accept donations and legacies.

You can find more information on our projects and publications at [www.kbs-frb.be](http://www.kbs-frb.be)  
An e-newsletter will keep you informed. If you have any questions,  
please contact us at [info@kbs-frb.be](mailto:info@kbs-frb.be) or on 070-233 728.

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Donations made to our account number 000-0000004-04 are tax deductible from 30 euro.







