



Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital (TFBHC)
of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

PROGRESS REPORT

**on recent developments regarding S&T cooperation in/with the WBC
(November 2009 - June 2010)**

1 Policy actions

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2 Development of the legal and strategic framework

Memorandum of Understanding on the Role and Organisation of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE)

As Co-Chair of the ERI SEE Governing Board, the TFBHC is involved in the steering of the ERI SEE in strategic, content-wise and organisational issues. Since June 2009 the focus was put on the development perspectives of the ERI SEE Secretariat, encompassing the renewal of the political commitment and the adjustment of the legal, organisational and thematic scope of ERI SEE. In this context the TFBHC was actively involved in the preparation of a new joint document on the future role and organisation of ERI SEE, which will serve as legal basis for transforming the ERI SEE Secretariat into an international organisation and a sustainable, regionally owned and co-financed structure under the auspices of the RCC. The proposal of this new Memorandum of Understanding has been adopted by the ERI SEE Governing Board in April 2010 and the final document was signed by high-level representatives from Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, the RCC and the TFBHC at a ceremonial signing session in Brdo, on 5 June 2010.

RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2011 – 2013

Within the scope of preparations for the new RCC strategic work programme, which will define RCC priorities and activities over the next three years, the TFBHC leadership was actively engaged in elaborating comments and amendments to the chapter “Building Human Capital and Cross Cutting Issues”. In accordance with the TFBHC mandate to formulate recommendations to the RCC Board and in line with the agreed Zagreb Plan of Action, the TFBHC leadership forwarded its feedback on the draft Strategic Work Programme to the RCC Secretary General as well as to all founding members of the TFBHC.

3 Important events, meetings, training activities, etc.

TFBHC Meeting on “Overcoming the economic crisis: The role of human capital development”

The meeting of Senior Officials from the Istanbul MoU Region took place on 18 November 2009 in Zagreb, and was hosted by the Croatian Co-Chairmanship of the TFBHC. Besides offering a platform for discussion on the identification of possible regional project ideas, the event provided detailed background information on the high-level conference under the Swedish presidency “Western Balkans: Overcoming the economic crisis - from regional cooperation to EU membership”, envisaged to take place on 9 December in Brussels.

The meeting concluded that in addition to immediate and efficient economic and financial measures, investments in human capital through education, training, science and research are of utmost importance for overcoming the economic crisis in SEE. Participants of the meeting agreed that efforts for a stronger emphasis on human capital within the Western Balkan Conference in Brussels will be crucial in view of facilitating funding for future projects of regional cooperation and that all channels of lobbying are welcome.

In the follow-up conference “Western Balkans in 2020 – Overcoming the Economic Crisis and Developing Competitive Economies” (24 – 25 February 2010, Sarajevo), the Task Force again pointed towards the fact that policy issues addressing the development of human capital have a long term impact on the competitiveness of economies and that considering issues of longer-run economic growth may be more important for the welfare of the SEE region than immediate financial measures. The two-day regional conference fortunately concluded that human capital development in the region is the key prerequisite of better competitiveness in a long run and that stimulating conditions for knowledge-based development need to be created. The fact that the priority area of building and fostering human capital was in focus at the beginning as well as at the end of the two-day debate shows that the lobbying efforts turned out well, that awareness raising for the importance of education, higher education and research has succeeded.

Regional Workshop on “Evidence Based Policy Making”

Following the International TFBHC Conference on “Fostering and Building Human Capital for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in South Eastern Europe, which highlighted the importance of evidence-based policy making in the field of education, a joint regional workshop on “Evidence Based Policy Making” took place in Vienna on 9-10 November 2009. The workshop was organised by KulturKontakt Austria, the OECD and the ERI SEE under the umbrella of the TFBHC and offered a platform to continue the discussion process initiated in Bucharest. Taking research in current key areas of education development as examples the workshop focused on the interaction between educational research and policy development in order to enhance the innovation capacity of education systems in the development towards quality, equity and efficiency. The thematic focus was on teacher evaluation (e.g. TALIS), the impact of external student assessment on education systems and the impact of international studies (e.g. PISA).

Continuation of the TFBHC Website

In view of enhancing coordination and fostering the exchange of information the Task Force continued to maintain its website (www.taskforcehumancapital.info) and its eCalendar of events. In addition to that an electronic newsletter was launched in September 2009 and has been distributed to members of the TFBHC as well as to other interested parties approximately every two months. The newsletter provides information on recent developments in the priority area Building Human Capital in SEE as well as on TFBHC activities and related events.

4 Development of international cooperation and actions on integration into ERA

Mobility Programme for Capacity Building in Regional Cooperation 2010

The success and sustainability of regional activities in the complex field of fostering and building human capital depends inter alia on the availability of capacities and know-how within the Ministries of the sectors concerned in dealing with instruments and networks of relevance for regional cooperation in education, science and research.

The Task Force therefore launched a mobility programme for capacity building in regional cooperation, with the overall objective to strengthen sustainable partnerships and to secure the continuity of regional cooperation networks in SEE. The programme is based on short-term placements at key institutions and networks in the area of cooperation for building human capital and should provide partner ministries in SEE with impulses and possibilities for a sustainable development of capacities and know-how of relevance for their obligations in regional cooperation.

The mobility programme 2010 shall be implemented in autumn and will build upon the experiences of the 2009 phase. Short-term placements will be offered in Belgrade, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Sofia, Vienna and Zagreb at key institutions and networks within the priority area building human capital. The respective call for nominations was launched in May 2010 and eligible Ministries already submitted their nominations, whereas the selection procedure is to be finished by beginning of July 2010. Further information on the programme can be obtained in the annex below.

5 Statistics - major changes / updates of relevant statistical data

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6 Assessment of the developments and outlook on the next 6 months

The third regular meeting of the TFBHC, hosted by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, will take place on 25 June 2010 in Belgrade, and shall decide upon the continuation and composition of the Task Force leadership for the second mandate for the period 2010 – 2012. The development of an updated Task Force Action Plan as well as further implementation of activities will above all depend on the commitment and resources of the future leadership as well as on the commitment of all its members.

Appendix: additional data

- Capacity Building Programme for Regional Cooperation 2010



Task Force Fostering &
Building Human Capital
of the Regional Cooperation Council

Capacity Building Programme for Regional Cooperation

2010

Supported by:



Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research



Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture



Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science



ministryofscienceeducationandsports



Montenegro
Ministry of Education and Science



Republic of Serbia
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



Republic of Serbia
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



RegionalCooperationCouncil

Background

In 2008 the Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital (TFBHC) of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) launched a mobility programme for capacity building in regional cooperation. After a pilot-phase in autumn 2008, the programme was expanded in 2009. Both times the programme was realized through grants provided by the Austrian Co-Chairmanship of the TFBHC in cooperation with several partner institutions and covered placements in Vienna, Sarajevo and Zagreb at key institutions and networks in the area of cooperation for building human capital. So far, five civil servants from South Eastern Europe (SEE) ministries responsible for education, science and research had the possibility to gain an insight into the work of ministries, institutions and networks involved in regional cooperation.

In line with the Zagreb Action Plan 2009 - 2010, partner Ministries were invited to provide 'hosting weeks' for sustaining and further developing the Capacity Building Programme into a regional exchange and mobility programme for public administrators in education, science and research.

The mobility programme 2010 builds upon the experience of previous phases and is more flexible as regards the duration of the placements and the choice of hosting institutions/cities. This should provide more intense and specialized placements and enable participants as well as hosting partners to maximally benefit from a programme, containing both an informative as well as an operative character.

Programme Overview

The Mobility Programme for Capacity Building in Regional Cooperation is designed as support measure and capacity building instrument for civil servants, who are acquainted with and capable of managing regional activities and programmes in education, science and research, and acting as contact points for the existing networks of cooperation.

Based on short-term placements at key institutions and networks in the area of cooperation for building human capital, it should provide partner ministries in SEE with ideas and expertise for sustainable development of capacities and know-how for their activities in regional cooperation.

The overall objective of this programme is to strengthen sustainable partnerships and to secure the continuity of regional cooperation networks in SEE.

As the mobility programme should include a wide range of sectors within the priority area building human capital, short-term placements lasting from 2 up to 3 weeks are foreseen in Belgrade, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Sofia, Vienna and Zagreb at institutions involved in the field of regional cooperation in education, training and research (see Annex 1). Placements in each city would last approx. 7 days, whereas participants will have the possibility to decide upon the overall duration of the programme (2 or 3 weeks) and the placement cities (2 or 3 destinations) in accordance with their field of interest/work.

The mobility programme encompasses different modalities, depending on the spheres of work, needs and intake-capacities of the respective hosting institutions. This should secure a sector-specific approach. Whereas in certain cases the mobility programme could take the form of short internships, other measures are envisaged for networks or institutions. While hosting institutions are free to design their curriculum, the regional and EU dimension should remain a common element.

Participation

All Signatory-Ministries responsible for education, science and research of the Istanbul MoU are eligible to nominate up to two candidates (staff members) for participation in the mobility programme (see Annex 2).

The programme is designed for civil servants involved in cooperation with regional activities and programmes in education, science and research and for those acting as contact points for the existing networks of cooperation.

Nominated candidates should preferably have some experience in participation in European/international fora (i.e. Steering Platform WBC, ERA.NETs, ERI SEE, CEEPUS, CoE, UNESCO, OECD, bilateral cooperation etc.) and/or related project work. Proficient knowledge of English is essential.

Grants and Support

The Austrian Co-Chairmanship of the Task Force will make available 6 - 9 grants (covering in total 18 'mobility weeks') for the implementation of the programme in 2010.

MoU Ministries of EU member states and/or represented in the Task Force leadership are not eligible for grants, but are invited to participate as self-payers. There are also no grants for placements

Grants will be allocated on a "first come, first serve" basis with the exception of institutions already having received a grant in a previous phase of the programme. Candidates, who cannot be taken into account in 2010, will be short-listed for potential participation in 2011.

The programme is cooperatively supported by the seconding and receiving partner institutions. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research, the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Serbian Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Serbian Ministry of Science and Technological Development and the RCC Secretariat will provide accommodation free of charge. Other hosting partner institutions will provide very favourable accommodation facilities.

Implementation

The Vienna Secretariat of the TFBHC in cooperation with KulturKontakt Austria is in charge of the overall implementation of the 2011 phase. A close cooperation with the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Montenegrin Ministry of Education and Science, the Serbian Ministry of Education, the Serbian Ministry of Science and Technological Development, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration of the Republic of Serbia, the RCC Secretariat and other institutions involved will be established.

Capacity-Building Programme for Regional Cooperation 2010

Annex 1. General Framework

Duration per participant	2 or 3 weeks												
Number of Grants	6 – 9 (max. 18 mobility weeks)												
Options for Placement Cycles	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>1. Two-week cycles:</td> <td>2. Three-week cycles:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>a) 20 Sept. - 3 Oct. 2010</td> <td>a) 20. Sept. - 10. Oct. 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b) 27 Sept. - 10 Oct. 2010</td> <td>b) 11 - 31. Oct. 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c) 4 - 17 Oct. 2010</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>d) 11 - 24 Oct. 2010</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>e) 18 - 31 Oct. 2010</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1. Two-week cycles:	2. Three-week cycles:	a) 20 Sept. - 3 Oct. 2010	a) 20. Sept. - 10. Oct. 2010	b) 27 Sept. - 10 Oct. 2010	b) 11 - 31. Oct. 2010	c) 4 - 17 Oct. 2010		d) 11 - 24 Oct. 2010		e) 18 - 31 Oct. 2010	
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Mobility Grant	<p>Mobility Grants include all international travel costs and a contribution towards the costs for accommodation, subsistence, local transportation, health insurance and visa (if applicable).</p> <p>Per week:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>International travel costs</td> <td>max. € 400 (*)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accommodation</td> <td>€ 210 (**)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Allowance</td> <td>€ 300 (***)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Grant</td> <td>€ 910</td> </tr> </table> <p>(*) International travel costs will be administered directly by the Task Force Secretariat in Vienna for grant recipients.</p> <p>(**) In cases where accommodation is provided free of charge by the hosting institutions (currently in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Vienna and Zagreb), no accommodation allowance will be paid to grant recipients.</p> <p>(***) Any other costs have to be borne by the recipient of the grant or his/her institution.</p>	International travel costs	max. € 400 (*)	Accommodation	€ 210 (**)	Allowance	€ 300 (***)	Total Grant	€ 910				
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Possible Placement Cities	Preliminary Selection of Hosting Institutions/Organisations
Vienna Austria	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ministry of Science and Research, Task Force Secretariat, Information Office of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries WBC-INCO.NET, KulturKontakt Austria, Central CEEPUS Office
Sarajevo Bosnia and Herzegovina	Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat, Ministry of Civil Affairs
Sofia Bulgaria	Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
Zagreb Croatia	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, University of Zagreb, Education and Teacher Training Agency, Agency for Mobility and EU programmes
Podgorica Montenegro	Ministry of Education and Science, University of Podgorica
Belgrade Serbia	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technological Development, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration

Capacity-Building Programme for Regional Cooperation 2010

Annex 2: Eligible Institutions

Eligible Institutions for participation in the programme:	Eligible Institutions for a mobility grant:
<p>Republic of Albania Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p>Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Civil Affairs</p> <p>Republic of Bulgaria Ministry of Education, Youth and Science</p> <p>Republic of Croatia Ministry of Science, Education and Sports</p> <p>UNMIK/Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</p> <p>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p>Republic of Moldova Ministry of Education</p> <p>Republic of Montenegro Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p>Republic of Romania Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports</p> <p>Republic of Serbia Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technological Development</p>	<p>Republic of Albania Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p>Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Civil Affairs</p> <p>UNMIK/Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</p> <p>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p>Republic of Moldova Ministry of Education</p> <p>Republic of Montenegro Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p>Republic of Serbia Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technological Development</p>