Meeting of the Conference of the Ministers of Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Agreement

Agreement

10 May 2000, Sarajevo

At a meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. the Federal Minister, the Deputy Federal Minister of Education and the Minister of Education of the Republika Srpska, on 10 May 2000 at the Office of the High Representative, Sarajevo co- chaired by Ambassador Dr. Matei Hoffmann, Senior Deputy High Representative, and Mr Gabriele Mazza, Council of Europe, and in the presence of representatives of UNESCO and other international partner organisations, an agreement was reached on the modalities and time frame of a far – reaching harmonisation of the present segregated, parallel education systems. The following items, which all aim at eliminating any forms of segregation from the existing systems, were agreed upon:

1. The work of the next phase of the process of textbook review, undertaken with the objective of removing all objectionable material used in schools in BiH, will be accelerated. Experts from all constituent peoples are required to work together to improve the quality of textbooks in use.
   All objectionable material already identified by the Independent Commission for Textbook Review will be removed by June 30, 2000, in time for the new school year. The operation of substantially improving the

quality of textbooks will be completed by 31December 2000.

2. A Curriculum Harmonisation Board, comprised of one representative of the Ministry, one representative from a Pedagogical Institute for each community – whose members have already been appointed and representatives of the International Community will be in charge of the coordination of curricula, the mutual exchange of information on the existing systems and the changes/ developments which affect them.
   It will also make recommendations aiming at dramatically reducing the present pervasive overload of subjects throughout all curricula.

   This body will hold its first meeting in May 2000 and report the first results of its work to the Conference of Ministers of Education in June 2000

3. Each constituent people will develop curricular modules with regard to its culture and language/literature to be integrated in the curricula of the other two constituent peoples, without further overloading present curricula. In addition, attention will be paid to the needs of the Roma/Sinti minority, and other minorities present on the territory of BiH.
   This measure will be implemented as from the beginning of the 2000 – 2001 school year

4. Both the Cyrillic and Latinic alphabets, as well as the shared linguistic, literary and cultural heritage of the three communities, will be taught throughout BiH at the relevant levels, in a balanced, meaningful way. Teaching about all major religions practised in the country will also be introduced into all schools.
   This measure will be implemented as from the beginning of the 2000 2001 school year.

5. Shared, core elements will be introduced in all curricula in order to enable today’ s school age generation to grow up with a sense of common identity and citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina. European experience and practice will be drawn upon in this process.
   A new course in Human Rights and Civic Education will replace the current subject of civic defense/social studies under their various denominations. It will draw upon the materials, expertise and networks of international organisations such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO, and specialised international networks such as Civitas International.

   Work towards the implementation of this measure will be undertaken immediately, and completed in time for the introduction of the course at the beginning of the 2001/2002 school year.

6. Measures will be taken to ensure that the teaching and administrative staff is well informed about the changing educational environment. In order to further intercultural understanding and mutual respect and confidence, teachers from other constituent peoples will be gradually hired in order to teach all subjects, and in particular the new curricular modules which are designed to meet the rights and needs of all returnee pupils in BiH in terms of cultural and linguistic/literary distinctiveness.
   Ministers will submit by 30 May 2000 a specific action plan of steps to be undertaken to promote the integration of teachers from other ethnic groups, report on steps already undertaken at the monthly Conference of Ministers of Education, and they will produce regular statistics to monitor the effectiveness of implementation.

7. Pupils’ school certificates and records, as well as the

professional qualifications of teachers and teacher trainers will be mutually recognised throughout BiH. Progress will be made at once, particularly with regard to the mutual recognition of school certificates and records, and full realisation of this measure will be completed by the beginning of the 2000 2001 school year.

8. National subjects textbooks which do not refer to BiH are unsuitable for use in BiH, as was recognised in the Agreement on the Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks to be used in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1999 2000 school year signed in Mostar on 19 July 1999; those textbooks imported from Zagreb and Belgrade, which have Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as their reference, will be phased out within a period of two years, and not beyond the end of June 2002.
   In the interim period, the supplemental annexes which concern those imported textbooks and which were agreed to at the same meeting of 19 July 1999, will be finalised and disseminated for use in all relevant schools as from September 2000.

9. As concerns the Federation, its authorities agree to negotiate in a responsible way, and for the benefit of the pupils and parents concerned, the peaceful resolution of all outstanding school crisis cases, as well as to preventively defuse other potential crisis cases throughout the Federation before the beginning of the 2000 – 2001 school year. The measures outlined above, if they are implemented in good faith, are designed to offer proper solutions for such cases.

Fahrudin Rizvanbegovic nister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports deration of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Nenad Suzic nister of Education publika Srpska	Ivo Miro Jovic puty Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports deration of Bosnia and Herzegovina

OHR Human Rights/ Rule of Law Department