



THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL CURRICULA

**OUTCOMES OF THE 2005 ETF PEER REVIEWS
IN BULGARIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA,
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF
MACEDONIA, AND SERBIA**

**THE EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION IS THE
EUROPEAN UNION'S CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
SUPPORTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
REFORM IN THIRD COUNTRIES IN THE CONTEXT OF
THE EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS PROGRAMMES**

HOW TO CONTACT US

Further information on our activities, calls for tender and job opportunities can be found on our web site: www.etf.europa.eu

For any additional information please contact:

External Communication Unit
European Training Foundation
Villa Gualino

Viale Settimio Severo 65

I – 10133 Torino

T +39 011 630 2222

F +39 011 630 2200

E info@etf.europa.eu

THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL CURRICULA

**OUTCOMES OF THE 2005 ETF PEER REVIEWS
IN BULGARIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA,
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF
MACEDONIA, AND SERBIA**

*David Parkes and Søren Nielsen
European Training Foundation
2006*

***Europe Direct is a service to help you
find answers to your questions
about the European Union***

**Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11**

(*) Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access to 00 800 numbers or these calls may be billed.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://www.europa.eu>).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2006.

ISBN: 92-9157-483-X

© European Communities, 2006.

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Italy

CONTENTS

1. RATIONALE	5
2. METHOD	9
3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND KEY LESSONS	13
3.1 Context	13
3.2 Curriculum policy and practice	14
3.3 The labour market	15
3.4 Institutional homes	16
3.5 Missing elements in reform or project support structures	16
3.6 Managing change	18
4. CURRICULUM POLICY	19
4.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina	20
4.2 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	21
4.3 Serbia	23
4.4 Bulgaria	24
5. THE LABOUR MARKET	27
5.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina	27
5.2 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	28
5.3 Serbia	28
5.4 Bulgaria	29
6. INSTITUTIONAL HOMES	31
6.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina	32
6.2 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	32
6.3 Serbia	33
6.4 Bulgaria	34
7. LEGISLATION	37
7.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina	38
7.2 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	38
7.3 Serbia	39
7.4 Bulgaria	39

THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL CURRICULA

8. FINANCE	41
8.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina	42
8.2 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	42
8.3 Serbia	42
8.4 Bulgaria	43
9. DECENTRALISATION	45
9.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina	46
9.2 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	46
9.3 Serbia	47
9.4 Bulgaria	47
10. CURRICULUM PRACTICE	49
10.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina	50
10.2 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	51
10.3 Serbia	53
10.4 Bulgaria	54
ACRONYMS	57
REFERENCES	59

1. RATIONALE

The ETF Peer Review is an initiative that was launched in the South Eastern European countries in 2002. It combines policy advice to individual countries with a regional dimension.

The key objectives for the peer reviews are to:

- provide an external assessment of VET reform policy initiatives for national policymakers;
- improve mutual knowledge and understanding of VET systems, issues and developments in the South Eastern European countries;
- promote regional networking, the exchange of experience, and cooperation among VET experts, stakeholders and policymakers;
- increase awareness and facilitate transfer of VET reform experience from EU member states and future member states;
- contribute to the CARDS and Phare programming cycle;
- intensify cooperation between the ETF and national authorities/experts from the region.

The peer review model developed by the ETF for 2005 is a cross-country approach with a regional focus on VET reform implementation in four South Eastern European countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia.

The methodology has the following dimensions.

- The topic is closely linked with the EC programming cycle.
- A common background paper including methodology was drawn up.
- Country reviews have been synthesised in this cross-country report. This will be followed by regional dissemination activities.

This approach has been inspired by two overall purposes. The first is that the European Agency for Reconstruction and the EC Delegations in these countries need to monitor the impact of project implementation more closely. The second is the added value for the countries of establishing policy-learning opportunities

THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL CURRICULA

with a clear focus and within a regional context.

The common topic selected is curriculum reform, in its broader sense, a topic which is of paramount importance in all four countries.

A national coordinator has been responsible for producing national background materials. A short briefing note was prepared by the ETF country manager setting out the focal points for review and steering the peer teams into some of the areas in need of particular attention. Each peer review team comprised five members representing South Eastern Europe and future member states from the region. A rapporteur has been appointed by the ETF, and the ETF country manager has usually been the team leader. A site visit plan was drawn up by the national coordinator and the ETF, with country visits lasting one week. A report was made after each review was undertaken. A dialogue with national partners followed, and all peer reviews had follow-up seminars in the host countries. A

high-level regional conference in Spring 2006 disseminated findings and discussed good practice and the potential for knowledge transfer.

This cross-country report, which synthesises analyses, findings and recommendations, has been formulated on the basis of individual country reviews. The national peer reviews have followed a common structure defined by the ETF, though review teams have been free to adapt their reports to actual observations and findings in the countries.

With a view to establishing consistency in approach and methodology, the ETF organised a two-day workshop for peers and national coordinators in June 2005, to agree on a concept and methodology paper, to set up review teams based on criteria, and to define timescales and activity plans.

The compositions of the four peer review teams were as follows.

Bosnia and Herzegovina peer review team (country visit: 1–7 October 2005)

Iskra Maksimovic	South Eastern Europe VET expert	Serbia	Country rapporteur
Konstantin Petkovski	South Eastern Europe VET expert	FYR Macedonia	Team member
David Parkes	Methodological expert	EU (France)	Team member
Yochka Atanasova-Cekova	Candidate country VET expert	Bulgaria	Team member
Selveta Hot	National VET expert	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Local coordinator
Margareta Nikolovska	VET expert on secondment	ETF	Team leader

Bulgaria peer review team (country visit: 16–21 October 2005)

Adela Rogojinaru	Candidate country VET expert	Romania	Country rapporteur
Iskra Maksimovic	South Eastern Europe VET expert	Serbia	Team member
David Parkes	Methodological expert	EU (France)	Team member
Konstantin Petkovski	South Eastern Europe VET expert	FYR Macedonia	Team member
Yochka Atanasova-Cekova	National VET expert	Bulgaria	Local coordinator
Margareta Nikolovska	VET expert on secondment	ETF	Team leader

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia peer review team (country visit: 18–23 September 2005)

Selveta Hot	South Eastern Europe VET expert	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Country rapporteur ¹
Alqi Mustafai	South Eastern Europe VET expert	Albania	Team member
Søren Nielsen	VET expert	ETF	Team member
Konstantin Petkovski	National VET expert	FYR Macedonia	Local coordinator
Helmut Zelloth	Country manager	ETF	Team leader

Serbia peer review team (country visit: 24–30 September 2005)

Alqi Mustafai	South Eastern Europe VET expert	Albania	Country rapporteur
Adela Rogojinaru	Candidate country VET expert	Romania	Team member
Yochka Atanasova-Cekova	Candidate country VET expert	Bulgaria	Team member
Søren Nielsen	VET expert	ETF	Team member
Iskra Maksimovic	National VET expert	Serbia	Local coordinator
Francesco Panzica	Country manager	ETF	Team leader

The documentation and results of the peer review activities are published on the ETF website.

¹ A rapporteur from Bulgaria, Mr Tzako Pantaleev, had been appointed but had to withdraw on the eve of the mission because of an appointment by the new government in Bulgaria. The ETF is very grateful to Ms Selveta Hot who, on the first day of the visit, agreed to take over this responsibility.

2. METHOD

2

The curriculum concept is quite complicated, and for this peer review activity a broader concept than the one often used has been defined. The standard definition of 'curriculum' given by Cedefop (Tissot, 2004) is as follows:

'A set of actions followed when setting up a training course: it includes defining goals, content, methods (including assessment) and material, as well as arrangements for training teachers and trainers.'

This understanding of the curriculum is in fact very close to the definition of 'programme'. Cedefop defines this as follows:

'An inventory of activities, learning content and/or methods implemented to achieve education or training objectives (acquiring knowledge, skills or competences), organised in a logical sequence over a specific period of time.'

Both definitions have been found to be too narrow for the current analytical purposes, for the following reasons.

All the evidence indicates that for the transition period of the economic and social transformation process, a mix of education, labour market and social policy measures has to be developed, in order to cope with the challenge of combining short- and medium-term perspectives. VET mission statements make no sense if economic and social priorities have not been established.

Modernisation of the curriculum model for vocational education, as described below, cannot on its own solve the education and labour market problems of the transition period, but may be, under certain conditions, a necessary if not sufficient step towards installing a sound VET system for the medium and long term. (What is VET for?)

The challenge is to make VET sufficiently responsive during the transition period, and supportive of the transformation of the economy, and to set up a VET system that can be built upon for the future, including having the ability to deal with EU competition, technological and organisational changes and lifelong learning. (What is the regional challenge?)

How do we define the curriculum?

In both the overall peer review activity and this report, 'curriculum' is perceived as a balanced relationship between the potentials and interests of individuals and the requirements of society. From the individual point of view it can be seen as the totality of measures, interactions and experiences that will influence the future life of a person. But individuals can make up their curricula only within patterns laid down by organised bodies and social institutions within society. These institutional frameworks are anchored in the specific social system of a society.

The main actions, actors and institutions involved in the development of a curriculum are part of institution building, which involves developing 'institutional homes' for key functions and activities. In the current analysis the interdependence between changes in society and changes in the institutional framework is recognised as being the organisational context of curriculum design.

The focus of the review is therefore on the national capacity to:

- define occupational sector priorities;
- identify the appropriate occupational sector competences and skills required, and construct the institutions and tools to do this;
- turn these into curricular profiles and programmes and measurable standards;
- deliver these at school level (including the capacity to transfer from pilot to system level);
- help make the processes attractive to students and teachers (transferability, visibility and portability of qualifications for students, and working conditions for teachers);
- provide timely and effective feedback through evaluation, monitoring, quality control and tracer studies of school leavers.

These elements have to be undertaken in the context of establishing the balance between general and vocational provision, and in the context of transparent and

accepted approaches to standards, certification and qualification. They also have to be related to the context of financing mechanisms; changes in the location of decision-making; a credible research base; the development of management capacity; and the acquisition of appropriate tools in management, as well as curriculum development per se.

For the purposes of structuring data collection and interpretation, assessments and reporting, this definition of process has been transformed architecturally with an introduction and then a report on each country under the headings of:

- mission and curriculum policy;
- the labour market and social partnership;
- the development of institutional homes to house key functions;
- legislation;
- finance;
- location of decision-making/ decentralisation;
- curriculum implementation in practice, including teacher and management development.

The questions and issues specific to the peer review topic are as follows.

- General: Is there a coherent philosophy and set of values? If so, how are these formulated strategically?
- Practice: How is curriculum policy expressed in practice?
- Organisation: How do students and teachers approach the subject matter, and what are the organisational and resource consequences? The curriculum can be constructed on a subject base, a course or programme base or a modular base.
- Pedagogy: An underlying theme for the reports is that curriculum reform is as much about changes in methods and processes as it is about changes in content.
- Capacity: In all of the above areas, what capacity exists and is foreseen for strategic implementation, especially for teacher, management and organisational development?

- Qualification: Are frameworks and structures in place to support reformed curriculum development and implementation?
- Management of change: What organisational and change-management concepts and tools are being applied?

Furthermore, the peer review teams must at least bear in mind the following questions when considering the VET reform context.

- Where is the actual or intended location of, and capacity for, labour market intelligence and skill needs analysis (national, regional, or local)?
- Who does or will classify and prioritise occupational sectors?
- What are the bridging mechanisms between skill needs and curriculum/pedagogic response? In other words, how are supply and demand joined or to be joined?
- What impact will a modular approach have on curriculum development, management and assessment?
- In all of the above areas, what capacity exists and is foreseen for strategic implementation, especially for teacher, management and organisational development?
- What is the financial, management and administrative capacity at each level (from government, through municipality to school)?
- Are the main institutions in place, or at least designated, that will house the functions prescribed by the intended government reforms for VET? Are their statutes clear?
- Is there separate or integrated legislation for general education, adult and continuing provision and initial VET?
- Is there already an agreed policy and strategy paper for VET reform?
- Can VET reform take place without a comprehensive review of the financing of the system?

This report will look at how far each system has progressed in establishing a curriculum

policy and implementing it in an effective VET subsystem within its transformation context. The elements together represent the path along which strategy and policy have to travel. Initially, the question will be asked to what extent these four countries have established the above concepts and issues, and what point they have reached in strategic implementation at national, local, and school or training centre levels.

A number of general questions or comments are posed before each heading (Curriculum policy, The labour market etc.). Responses have been extracted, in turn, from each of the country reports. Where these responses are very similar or overlap they have been used selectively. For example, under Decentralisation the focus in one country is on geographical decentralisation, in another on school autonomy, in a third on social partnership and in a fourth on separation of functions between technical and policy considerations.

The overall approach to the exercise, influenced by the methodology of OECD country reports, does have an implicit intellectual underpinning. The explicit theoretical background can be found in the paper 'From project to policy evaluation in vocational education and training – possible concepts and tools. Evidence from countries in transition' (Viertel et al., 2004).

Key lessons, findings and conclusions are presented below. These are followed by a more detailed analysis in the main body of the text.

In the 2005 stage of the ETF's development of its approach to peer review, it was still intended that policy analysis and advice should be offered by the local experts (the peers) to their policymakers. The 2006 exercise is intended to build on this experience, but to move more closely to the direct sharing of expertise among key policymakers by involving them in the exercise – hence policy learning.

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND KEY LESSONS

3

The key issues can be summarised as follows.

1. The outcomes of EU-donor-funded VET projects are difficult to sustain given that they are of short duration and uncertain continuity, and touch only a minority of students in the appropriate age cohorts.
2. For VET reform in general the integration of initial and continuing VET is much discussed and little implemented.
3. The case for a modularised approach to the organisation of the curriculum requires more careful scrutiny and more professional justification.
4. VET project terms of reference continue to lack support elements, financial in particular, to sustain curriculum and pedagogic innovation.
5. The need for technical support institutions is great and much discussed, but little implemented.
6. Near accession to the EU brings with it a strengthened level of political will but also a greater opportunity for local policy determination.

7. The imposition of external donor-led criteria may be counterproductive to local-led development (despite the paradoxical impact of the *acquis communautaire*).

In bringing these seven issues together there is a critical need for actors (local and external) to have some understanding of the underpinning elements of managing change.

3.1 CONTEXT

A primary issue is one of convergence and divergence. Tom Leney and Andy Green argue that 'although there may be some convergence arising from common underlying pressures, national, regional and sectoral aspects of VET are still likely to drive national VET systems in different directions' (Leney and Green, 2005). This article is based on the conclusions of the Maastricht study (Leney et al., 2004). This study across 31 countries suggests that VET systems are unlikely to be drawn into

convergence through the European process.

This is perhaps a first lesson for Brussels, the EU Delegations, the European Agency for Reconstruction and the ETF. Although most EU VET project terms of reference have common goals, approaches and methodology (this despite countries having different transition contexts), outcomes are very variable. The tendency to apply a common formula (the 'EC package', to use a cliché) to countries with different contexts very often ignores the institutional logic of the individual country.

The specific curriculum package (in terms of such elements as curriculum values, modular organisation and competence-based approach) derives more from the English-speaking approach than from the French or particularly German or Scandinavian organisation of VET. Hence in the chosen countries there is tension everywhere between the EU-funded projects and the GTZ approach. In short, there is a danger of an EU VET model which does not reflect the diversity of even member state practice.

The four countries chosen have their own specific contexts. Three of them are post-conflict (Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia), and one is an accession country (Bulgaria). In all four there is a weak labour market, though there are signs of developing economies in at least Serbia and Bulgaria. Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have unsteady political stability. Bosnia and Herzegovina still has 12 ministries of education, a separate jurisdiction for Brčko District and a department of education within the state-level Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Nevertheless, a more or less common reform or curriculum development model has been applied in each (Scottish in the case of Bulgaria and Serbia; English in the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Irish in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina – all with a broadly similar approach). It is perhaps telling that Bulgaria brought its Phare-funded project

to a halt in 1997 and developed its own approach.

This suggests a possible second lesson. Are EU-donor-inspired models more of a hindrance than a help to VET reform development? Bulgaria's VET institutional development is way ahead of that in the other three countries, though admittedly much of its progress is a result of its accession (and non-conflict) status. Donor funding is directed to the support of local development rather than providing a formula roadmap.

Nevertheless, current elements of the terms of reference are an improvement on those of the late 1990s (Parkes et al., 1999), with policy and strategy components supporting the development of green and white papers which in turn enable consensus to be reached on subsequent strategy. Labour market and institutional development components, however fragile, are beginning to construct the support framework necessary for curriculum and pedagogic change.

3.2 CURRICULUM POLICY AND PRACTICE

The expression of curriculum values is mixed in all four countries. It is a combination of donor-led documentation (EC, GTZ, World Bank, NGOs, specific national aid); continuity from pre-transition values; fresh government initiatives; and internal constituent group differences.

Phare or CARDS externally led expressions of curriculum mission and values are mostly clear, though application is restricted to a small minority of students in pilot or ex-pilot experimental schools. In Serbia, for example, VET curriculum values and documents are exemplary, but practice has yet to catch up. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia four EU-funded project phases of local experimentation have yet to be expressed in a clear statement of values. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Phare/CARDS values have been adopted in principle, but different practices exist among the three constituent peoples. In Bulgaria there is not yet a

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND KEY LESSONS

coherent philosophy towards integrating initial and continuing VET, but there is a pragmatic application of the *acquis communautaire*, and a bringing together of different approaches to the curriculum by the application of standards and evaluation.

In all four countries a fully fledged qualification and certification system is absent; this is a current preoccupation of EU-funded VET terms of reference.

There are two major questions for future EU support: modularisation and sustainability.

For ten years Phare/CARDS programmes have been driven by the concept of modular organisation of the curriculum (applied to all four of these countries) and the issues it brings relating to content, outcomes and their evaluation, and learning strategies. Whether the period is ten years or two years, in none of the countries is a modular curriculum affecting more than a small minority of students in initial VET. Whatever the perceived advantages by students or staff, the funding, effort, motivation, equipment and other resources have not been, or are not, available. Hence, by far the greatest percentage of students follow a modified conventional curriculum. In the case of initial VET in Bulgaria, the curriculum is driven by standards (State Education Requirements) and evaluation. In all four countries initial and continuing VET have yet to be integrated, and a tension exists for the provision of general education components of VET courses within a modular framework.

Sustainability is a major donor criterion, though one set within narrow limits. In Bulgaria the 1995–97 Phare-induced curricula have ‘withered on the vine’, with rapidly outdated, unmaintained equipment and broken-down photocopiers. In Serbia, CARDS II (2006 onwards) will support pilot institutional development (at national and local levels) for another two years, but the resource implications for the country of further systemic development (including equipment, teacher training and institutional development) are exponential.

There are two questions for EU-derived terms of reference and funding.

1. Is modularisation a worthwhile approach given the need for developing from a local organisational logic?
2. Are the expectations of the EU, the EC Delegation and the European Agency for Reconstruction regarding sustainability unrealistic, given the small amounts of seeding money against the national need for a forest to be planted?

3.3 THE LABOUR MARKET

The links between VET and the labour market (supply and demand) in all four countries suffer from classic problems: weak local labour market conditions; undeveloped social partner infrastructures at local and national levels; lack of occupational sector classification and priorities; a lack of labour market intelligence and skill needs analysis; poor collaboration between ministries of education and labour; and the consequent lack of integration between provision for initial and continuing VET and provision for unemployed people.

Bulgaria (again, as a result of the *acquis communautaire*) has the most developed infrastructures for ministry collaboration and social partner involvement, though it has poor labour market mechanisms at local (school) level. The labour market could even be described as a ‘fictitious abstract’.

In all four countries the EU (on its own or with the World Bank) has funded labour market projects that are complementary to VET on issues such as legislation, regional development and qualification frameworks, albeit with poor communication between them. Bulgaria is a partial exception. Phare/CARDS projects have labour market components, usually the development of labour market intelligence mechanisms and the evolution of social partner involvement.

The problem is that of chicken and egg. Is VET to be developed for the medium term against a future recovery of the economy and the labour market? Is VET seen as a

stimulant for economic recovery? Does VET simply follow labour market developments, so that in the meantime it is best to concentrate on general education provision (often the World Bank position)?

EU VET terms of reference usually have no real answer to these questions, based as they usually are on a small component geared to social partner involvement and labour market intelligence mechanisms with a rationale of 'helping to develop tools'.

3.4 INSTITUTIONAL HOMES

VET systems require institutional homes to support functions and functional development, whether in terms of the complexity of labour market intelligence and social partner involvement; occupational sector analysis and labour market intelligence; or standards, curriculum development, quality, teacher and capacity development.

OECD countries tend to divorce technical support services from ministries with a ring of coordinated institutions serving the differing functions (keeping evaluation and quality separate from curriculum development, for example).

In short, at the point of delivery in schools or training centres or via IT, students respond to subjects, modules or courses. The resources, frameworks and capacity development to sustain the point of delivery need to be institutionalised.

Bulgaria, with its National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) directed by the Council of Ministers, and its Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES) institutions in such areas as quality, pedagogic coordination, ICT and policy development, comes closest to this ideal. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are still struggling with the very early stages of establishing 'all singing, all dancing' single agencies or VET centres to fulfil all functions simultaneously, and as yet without the policy support (VET Council, for example) to back up

under-resourced executive and technical functions.

Recent terms of reference for EU-funded projects have given attention to the interdependence of curriculum and teacher development with institutional and technical support functions. But two difficulties arise:

1. both low priority and lack of grasp on the part of national governments;
2. short, two-year cycle project funding with varying donor and consortia priorities.

As a result, (sometimes erratic) project priorities very often serve as the coordinating and information base for VET reform. In the case of Bulgaria the disappearance of 'the VET project' provided a base for local ownership and development (albeit initiated by project activity).

3.5 MISSING ELEMENTS IN REFORM OR PROJECT SUPPORT STRUCTURES

As suggested above, curriculum and teacher development impact directly on schools and student learning, but exist in a context of policy determination and strategic implementation. The latter requires that reform mission and practice are in harmony, as well as that demand and supply are coordinated. Alongside institutional development, attention also needs to be given to legislation, financial mechanisms and decentralisation.

Legislation

Legislation in transition countries has a tendency to be formulated in advance of, rather than as a result of, a concept paper determined by agreed policy and strategy. It is a strength of current EU-funded projects that a policy and strategy component is a critical ingredient of providing green/white papers to give a framework for legislation and a consensus for a critical mass of key policymakers.

For specific VET legislation, three key questions require a specific answer.

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND KEY LESSONS

1. Should there be separate or integrated legislation for general education and VET?
2. Should there be clear, new legislation – indeed a VET Reform Act?
3. If new legislation is required, should it be short, simple and transparent, leaving the detail to regulation?

For Bulgaria the enabling legislation is largely in place, although initial and continuing VET have yet to be integrated. In the other three countries there are problems that require specific project assistance. Bosnia and Herzegovina has yet to have the state-level assembly approve its VET legislation. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has taken three years to provide legislation for initial VET, though this leaves continuing VET trailing, and has too few cross-references to general education, labour and local government legislation. Serbia has recently revised its education legislation with reduced reference to VET, its infrastructure and financing.

Finance

Can VET and curriculum reform take place without a comprehensive review of the financing of the systems? A major weakness of EU-funded VET project terms of reference has been, and is, a lack of analysis of financial means and mechanisms.

The key questions are:

1. What are the current and future sources of finance?
2. How will they be collected and by whom?
3. How will they be dispersed, by whom and using what criteria?

Mostly because of external consultant insistence (or because of green/white paper chapters), small components relating to financial analysis now exist (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) in current CARDS VET projects. The Bulgarian MoES admits that funding for schools has been modest during the transition period, but there are negotiations

towards greater flexibility (with the Ministry of Finance).

It is a weakness of EU-funded VET projects that relatively small sums of money for relatively short periods of time have too high expectations attached to them by EC Delegations or the European Agency for Reconstruction. Given the low priority attached to financial analysis, there is too little awareness of the prospective exponential growth in costs for systemic implementation.

Decentralisation

There is a long section devoted to decentralisation in the main body of the text which deals (in the four countries) with the issue of local labour markets and social partnership; municipal and regional responsibilities; and technical functions separate from ministries. Thus, both functional and geographical decentralisations are considered.

In each of the countries the case for decentralisation is complicated. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the question is one of making sense of the Dayton Agreement with a centralised administration in the Republika Srpska and a fragmented one in the Federation. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, attempts at decentralisation are a consequence of the post-conflict Ohrid Agreement with the international community. In Serbia the question mixes municipal and social partner aspirations that are as yet unrealised. In Bulgaria regional responsibilities are mixed with relatively little school autonomy. In all four countries there is confusion between decentralisation and deconcentration.

In general, decentralisation in OECD countries has been a vehicle by which central government transfers unwanted costs to the regional level or to the private sector with retrospective rationalisation in terms of democracy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In the four peer review countries there is also a question of size. For example, the whole population of the former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia is equivalent to the level to which decentralisation is applied in countries such as the UK or France.

Two problems that require resolution stand out.

1. The case for and the impact of a decentralised approach are mostly not fully understood by politicians and policymakers.
2. The very strong case for greater school autonomy especially (finance and curriculum) is much discussed (and even agreed), but little implemented.

3.6 MANAGING CHANGE

How do VET systems change, and what are the driving forces behind change processes? Even if we get right the description and understanding of the components in VET sector assessments (as above), it is not clear whether we have established the capacity to prognosticate change or to formulate the right intervention strategies to achieve it. VET sector analyses are normally undertaken in order to develop quality, relevance and productivity in VET systems (the mantra of the terms of reference). They lead to policy proposals and reform designs with a view to changing practice on the ground. What is brought to bear, both empirically and theoretically, in an assessment of the

dynamic forces and catalysts for change, and in determining the 'right' balance between top-down (politics) and bottom-up (market) approaches? The classification of issues above has to be accompanied by a deep insight into organisational and institutional processes of change.

The ability of the VET system to play a crucial role in society depends on whether its VET institutions respond to change. This again critically depends first of all on whether teachers are prepared to incorporate the complex reform measures into their daily work. A major challenge for reforming VET systems, therefore, is to choose an approach in which strategic objectives include the development of human resources.

This tension comes out very clearly in the contrast between the two main sections of the report: the policymaker perspective of 'curriculum policy' on the one hand and the school perspective of 'practice' on the other. In short:

- it is exceedingly difficult for policy to change practice;
- it is just as difficult for pilot projects to change policy.

With honourable exceptions it is not clear that EU-funded VET programme managers, beneficiaries and contracted consortia have such insight.

4. CURRICULUM POLICY

4

INTRODUCTION

The overall mission and curriculum policy is a starting point for the focus of this report. This section is subdivided into context and constraints, policy, and sustainability. At the outset it is important to pick up the comments of Tom Leney and Andy Green that VET systems are unlikely to be drawn into convergence through the European process because 'national, regional and sector aspects of VET are still likely to drive national VET systems in different directions' (Leney and Green, 2005).

Countries are in different transition contexts and the common terms of reference formula (Phare or CARDS) will have to be adapted to those contexts.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina still has the Dayton constitution, although the tenth anniversary of the Dayton Agreement prompted much activity, with attempts to move to a new constitution.
- Bulgaria has an economy that is still developing from a low base, but it is an accession country and is therefore driven by the EC policy framework – the

acquis communautaire (VET Phare finished in the late 1990s).

- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a post-conflict society with a weak economy. Its EU-funded VET projects were practice- rather than policy-orientated up to 2004, with four project phases.
- Serbia is a post-conflict country with an evolving economy (also from a low base), but has only completed one VET CARDS phase.

While each of the countries has a different economy, they all have relatively weak labour markets, developing at different speeds. Three of them are post-conflict countries. These three have very similar EU CARDS VET terms of reference and philosophy. Bulgaria is both an accession country and one with an alternative VET reform programme, having dropped VET Phare in the late 1990s.

In almost all cases, modularisation as a driving organisation form for curriculum change affects only a minority of students (Republika Srpska is the exception in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but that case will not be discussed here).

In the case of curriculum policy, it is important to be clear as to whether it is the aims and objectives of government (largely ministries) that are being discussed or the overlay of different donor projects (from EU VET to GTZ).

How far there is convergence of different approaches into a common set of values sets up the debate on curriculum policy versus actual practice.

4.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Context and constraints

It must be always borne in mind that, post-Dayton, there are 12 ministries of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska, the Federation and the ten cantons). There is also a Department of Education in the Ministry of Civil Affairs at state level and a separate jurisdiction for Brčko District.

In addition – through the Office of the High Representative (which has the power to remove presidents and ministers) and international bodies such as OSCE (which was given a coordinating role for education between 2001 and 2005), UNESCO, and the Council of Europe – the international community has put considerable pressure on politicians for reform in all domains, including education. Major donors such as the EU and the World Bank, plus NGOs such as Soros and bilaterals have all had varying, though not always compatible, influences.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the midst of a number of recommended reforms (2005) of the public administration of education (encompassing a state-level Agency for Curriculum, Standards and Assessment with a VET Department, an enhanced Department of Education in the Ministry of Civil Affairs, modernised pedagogic institutes, more efficient ministries of education, and independent inspectorates).

There is also an ongoing 'Dayton 10 years on' negotiation between the USA and EU and representative local politicians towards a post-Dayton constitution.

In this context it is remarkable to have achieved green and white papers on VET with consensus from all parties and to have local actor groups from all relevant constituencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina still working together on VET policy and strategy.

The constraints and obstacles that have surfaced during peer group discussions and that are related to the implementation of the VET mission throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina are as follows.

- VET reform processes in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which are implemented in the pilot schools cover only segments of the whole system, while in Republika Srpska the implementation is related to the whole VET system (but only in the first and second grade).
- There is a lack of coordination in the VET reform process.
- There is a lack of relevant institutions to coordinate development and reform processes at national level.
- Economies are undeveloped and links with the labour market are poor.
- There is an absence of common standards in VET quality implementation.
- Uncertainty exists over the continuity of VET reform processes (which have been initiated within pilot projects) and the transfer of good practice and experience from the pilot to the education system level (reform dependence on international projects and donations).

Policy

There is mission coherence in relation to the standard EU VET reform designs, with shared concepts across the entities and within the pilot schools. But questions of critical mass and sustainability remain, given the small percentage of students actually involved in the piloting. Despite limitations and constraints in the implementation process, most participants in discussions with the peer review team have been able to articulate clearly the mission of VET reform, the philosophy of the new curriculum and the understanding of future VET developments.

The Federal Ministry of Education states clearly that the curriculum policy emanating from EU VET programmes is seen by them as an overriding one, with which all other (donor) programmes should be compatible.

In the Republika Srpska, in the 2004/05 academic year the Ministry of Education and Culture introduced a new modular curriculum approach in all first grades of VET schools that was parallel to the experience of EU VET pilot programmes. But the process of implementation of new modular curriculum approaches for all schools has raised a number of questions and problems regarding compatibility both with EU VET policy pilots and compatibility with curriculum reform elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ministry of Education in Mostar Canton considers that reform processes in VET are moving slowly; the classification of occupations has been agreed informally throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, but there is still no idea as to who is going to implement it. According to the Minister of Education of this canton, the following steps, listed in order of priority, should be taken:

1. adopting a classification of occupations;
2. completing all curricula;
3. restructuring schools;
4. linking VET schools to the labour market;
5. strengthening teacher training.

Sustainability

According to the comments of participants from round tables between key actors and the peer review team, key obstacles and problems in development of VET reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole are as follows.

- The impact of politics is too great: even on a day-to-day basis policy is imposed by political parties.
- There are no guarantees for the sustainability of reform when projects terminate.
- EU projects are partial and do not have an overall structural approach.

- There is no real coordination at the federal level in VET.
- The proposed state-level Agency (with a VET Department) is not yet in place.
- There is no systematic mechanism for the sharing of good practice.

The EU VET Programme is in danger of being the sole coordination and information body for VET across Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consequently, the creation of the state-level Agency with a VET Department is essential for sustainability.

4.2 THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Context and constraints

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a post-conflict society with some political turbulence and two main constituent peoples (Macedonian and Albanian). There is relative political stability within a framework where development is also driven by the Ohrid Agreement (with the international community) on power distribution and decentralisation. Four VET phases have been driven mainly by bottom-up approaches, without coherent policy and strategy until recently, and with draft VET legislation still to be passed.

Since the first two phases of the reform were mainly curriculum-driven, the aim of CARDS VET III (2004/05) was to complement that approach with a policy-driven reform strategy to ensure a coherent and consistent systemic reform.

Progress has been made during the past two years. There is a new and broadly accepted National Strategy for the Development in the Republic of Macedonia 2005–2015². This is 'a framework for carrying out the activities of the Ministry of Education and Science by 2015', and specifies policy guidelines for (i) strengthening the capacities of the MoES, and (ii) reorganising central educational institutions. The National Education Inspectorate will be reformed; a National Examination Centre and a Pedagogical

² The Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2004

Institute will be set up; a Centre for Secondary Vocational Education will undertake functions in curriculum development, textbooks and teacher training; and the national VET Centre is to become a key link between educational institutions and the labour market.

Policy

There is an understanding among key actors and practitioners in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that the concept of curriculum has many dimensions. One basic aspect is that curriculum is about content (what to teach) as well as about methodology (how to teach). One very positive outcome of the CARDS VET III project is the teacher-training manual 'Partnership in progress' (July 2005). This manual contains a whole range of tools, and is a practical guide for the training of teachers as they attempt to implement the many changes advocated by the new curriculum in the VET sector. A core concept of the National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia is 'the implementation of modern teaching and learning methods on the part of the teachers', in addition to 'designing appropriate assessment'. This manual will no doubt assist the teacher in a very practical way with the implementation of the new curricula.

The teacher-training component of VET Reform III has been very successful, according to both teacher educators and schools. Its definition of curriculum is as follows: 'The curriculum, as a collection of topics and contents for a certain educational profile, is the basis for the realisation of the teaching in the schools.'

It is a narrow definition and could be sharper; for example, it could include the students and their aspirations. It is important that more in-depth conceptualisation of curriculum principles is carried out by Macedonian experts in the field, because the country is confronted with offers of different and often conflicting, even sometimes incompatible, curriculum systems from the international donor community.

One symptom of this is the clear preference articulated in the manual for modular curriculum design as against a linear occupational one. However, as the definition of a module is unclear, 'modular principles' in educational planning could mean either self-standing teaching units or a method to sequence teaching in linear programmes. It appears that the first understanding is the approach to the modular curriculum in the manual (see page 15); this discrepancy between policy and practice should be cleared up.

There is a further complication in that the GTZ project assisting the three-year VET programmes has a different (German) curriculum policy to the EU VET curriculum modernisation for the four-year programme. This has a knock-on implication for a common qualification framework and structure.

Sustainability

In the past decade (1995–2005) VET reform in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been driven to a large extent by modernisation of VET curricula in pilot schools and substantial support from a relatively high number of international and bilateral donors, compared to the size of the country. Together with political instability and changing governments, this has resulted in the lack of a strategic/policy-driven and comprehensive vision of reform, as well as a fragmented and piecemeal approach in curriculum reform and VET structure. The curriculum reform process has also been uneven, paying more attention to four-year VET programmes (EU Phare and CARDS projects) and only recently considering three-year programmes (supported by Germany, GTZ). Moreover, it followed different approaches leading to parallel (and partly incompatible) curriculum systems (modular, process-based and competence-/output-based).

At the same time, there are forgotten elements of curriculum reform, such as the two-year programmes, the VET specialist-level, post-secondary VET provision (which hardly exists at ISCED 4 level, and is not well developed at

ISCED 5b), and the supply of continuing vocational training (CVT). (There are very weak relations between initial vocational education and training (IVET) and CVT in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.)

The unreformed curricula appear to be:

- driven by market needs rather than supply;
- still oriented towards previous industry requirements;
- based on too many and too narrow profiles;
- not classified according to the occupational levels (the previous eight-level system for each occupation is formally available but not actually used in practice).

There is still also a tendency in the reformed curricula to have theory-oriented content in the vocational profiles (four-year courses in particular): these are university-oriented and not so much geared towards employment.

4.3 SERBIA

Context and constraints

Serbia is also a post-conflict country with experience of only one two-year EU-funded VET project. It is subject to political turbulence and changes of government. The most recent change of government revised the education legislation of its predecessor and modified and severely limited legislative references to the labour market, VET institutional development, qualifications and finance. VET policy exists without clear national economic and social objectives in which it can be embedded.

But taking into account the relatively short time since the Serbian VET reform started and donor support became effective (after 2001), it is considered that the transformation of the VET curriculum concept has happened very quickly and that curriculum reform has become the engine of VET reform in general. Various innovations and changes are positively

reinforced and seen as non-conflicting. The level of awareness of the overall process of change is high, at least in the schools actively involved, and people interviewed during the peer review are all committed to reform.

A number of other strategic and methodological documents have been developed specifically for VET curricula, sometimes going into technical details. The status and the impact of such documents are not yet clear. Most of them tend to be used as platforms for discussion rather than plans for concrete implementation.

Policy

In the everyday vocabulary of the main national actors in VET, as well as in the written documents, it is not difficult to grasp the changing philosophy and added values attributed to the new VET curriculum concept, in term of goals, content, structure and methodology. Terms and definitions such as curriculum standards, links with the labour market, job/task analysis, entrepreneurship, key and life skills, curriculum decentralisation, optional subjects, competence-based modules, school and teacher freedom, adaptation according to local needs, and mobility, are very familiar, and are used very frequently in the documents considered. But a detailed look at how such abstractions are materialised in terms of concrete curriculum 'products' shows that the old and traditional curriculum concepts still prevail, particularly at school level.

The move from content- towards outcome-based curricula started in 2001 through a massive internal reforming drive which has become more substantial through successive support projects. It is clearly evident in terms of curriculum documents, and the modular structure recently piloted represents the concrete instrument for this change.

Sustainability

There is a large gap between the piloting approach and systemic transformation. The 118 vocational education schools involved in the curriculum reform are still at the

experimental phase and it is difficult to collect clear and valid data on the level of success achieved. The real and sustainable moves to embrace the whole VET system have not yet started, and donor support (piloting) remains the only mechanism that promotes reform changes.

With the support of donors a team of Serbian VET experts have prepared a Methodology for Curriculum Development in VET, with the intention of guiding curriculum teams and individuals in this process. It describes the main principles and concepts relating to the VET curriculum, methodological steps recommended, and roles within the curriculum development teams. Because of the very short time since the piloting process started, it is difficult to estimate the gap between what is asked by methodological documents and what is really happening in VET curriculum development.

4.4 BULGARIA

Context and constraints

Bulgaria is currently a candidate for accession to the EU in 2007. Its reforming drive, therefore, is closely related to the need to respond to the *acquis communautaire*. Consequently, structural, legal, institutional and social developments are at a different stage to those in the three other countries in the review. The country has not seen recent conflict. While the economy is not strong, it is gathering strength.

Recent reform development in curricula originated in the Phare pilot reforms which started in the mid 1990s and continued nationwide with the endorsement of the Vocational Education and Training Act, approved by the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria in July 1999. The same VET Act establishes the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) as the main national body covering initial and continuing VET.

As Bulgaria is a future member state, which, with Romania, is seeking EU

accession in 2007, the government has launched (28 September 2005) the following political priorities for European integration, economic growth and social responsibility:

- full participation in the EU's bodies and institutions;
- enhanced judicial reform, ensuring fast, efficient, transparent, fair and accessible justice;
- economic growth that keeps pace with that in the EU, a rise in income, and cohesion in the quality of life;
- a guaranteed and accessible healthcare system;
- high and sustainable annual economic growth of 6–8%;
- modernisation of the state, the establishment of a knowledge-based economy, an increase in the employment rate, and the training of the workforce in line with the principles of the Lisbon Strategy;
- the development of the market economy, based on competition, encouraging private initiative and entrepreneurship;
- continuing the processes of privatisation, concession granting, the development of public–private partnership, encouraging competition, and liberalisation that reflects the interests of society;
- elimination of regional discrepancies, and maintenance of dynamic regional development;
- decisive measures against organised crime and corruption.

Policy

There are strong developments in relation to the curriculum process: the development of State Education Requirements that contribute to the standardisation of student outcomes and an evaluation system in both examination and licensing terms.

There are also elements of reform and curriculum policy present in legislation and in actual institutional practice; these relate to access, polyvalence of education and training provision, regional development and its rationalisation of provision, and the quality of training. VET has been

donor-driven only to the extent of limited innovation in modularisation; otherwise the system has developed elements of reform on its own, albeit in a rather incoherent, unbalanced way, according to immediate needs and pressures and not necessarily based on long-term vision.

State Education Requirements for every profession and every level of the national qualification structure are prepared within the NAVET framework by tripartite commissions, and are based on the list of professions determined by the MoES. Based on these requirements, a state-level standard is prepared for every profession, and based on the standard a framework programme for every level of qualification is constructed.

According to these framework programmes, every private VET school and all centres for CVT develop their own curricula/syllabi following the modular approach, which is approved by the MoES.

NAVET has so far produced 68 standards, 43 of which have been adopted by the MoES; for the rest of the professions the traditional curricula are in use. NAVET's functioning through standards and evaluation also allows for alternative processes in the organisation of curricula (conventional, modular, other). Since the modular approach requires a different evaluation process, the separation between IVET (largely conventional in organisation) and CVT (almost wholly modular) leaves room for doubt about the coherent development of the future national qualification framework.

According to the MoES the following main priorities apply to VET:

1. access (to VET and to CVT as an expression of lifelong learning);
2. quality (hence the new Quality Assurance Department in the MoES);
3. polyvalent schools (for between two and six occupations);
4. optimal effectiveness and efficiency (that is, rationalisation and amalgamation of schools);
5. integral regional economic planning;

6. initial and continuing VET integrated towards lifelong learning.

Nevertheless, the instruments intended to secure this philosophy are not yet embodied in an overall coherent strategy involving both initial and continuing VET. Several discussions pointed to the distinction between strategic planning and 'political' intervention, to the point that political commitment is still weak and strategic planning still not applied coherently to all levels of intervention, especially the school level.

CVT is more advanced, from the strategic point of view, than IVET, which continues to be delivered by means of parallel strategies: modular and non-modular (subject based). While most methodologists prefer a modular approach because of its greater precision, better evaluation and more student-friendly approach, managers would choose conventional or modular on the basis of which approach provided the equipment.

The target of modularisation has a long history in Bulgaria going back to 1979. For political reasons the system has never been fully implemented. A second wave of modularisation occurred in the mid 1990s in the context of VET reforms assisted by EU Phare programmes (1995–97), resulting in its pilot application by 35 VET schools from 1997.

The divergence of views seems to be institutional rather than conceptual: schools tend to be subject-based while adult providers adopt modular CVT. NAVET itself has the view that modularisation can be better applied in CVT and less so in IVET. The dualism in the system (modular/conventional and initial/continuing VET) rests on different processes, although these are based on compatible standards.

Curriculum vision is also affected by other shortcomings, such as the training of teachers, especially in new techniques and technologies, and investment. In response to shortcomings highlighted by the peer review team, the Policy Directorate for VET in the MoES indicated the following.

- There is a national plan for the involvement of the different constituencies.
- There are councils at regional level (as well as national) for labour market intelligence involving the social partners, and NAVET is tripartite.
- The job market is improving.
- While there is currently only a CVT strategy, a coherent strategy for IVET is being drafted to be approved by government and integrated into an overall strategy, including an action plan.
- The strategy will follow the EU step by step (including ISCED classification).
- The divorce of process from outcomes (modular, conventional, other) is sustained by evaluation.
- School income has been modest during the transition period, but there are negotiations (with the Ministry of Finance) towards greater flexibility.
- Excessive control by the state should be counteracted and attempts to free up the system be made, but financial issues are subject to the Currency Board's strict monitoring.

Sustainability

By 1 June 2005 the number of approved standards or State Education Requirements for vocational qualification acquisition had reached 64, and an additional 45 are being developed. At the time of the peer review mission interviews, 68 had been completed and 43 actually approved by the MoES.

As State Education Requirements are partly implemented, the coexistence of the two approaches (modular and non-modular) without clear focus and explicit alternatives creates some confusion. It is therefore difficult to assert the existence of a coherent national system, unless diversity of method is considered virtuous and non-conflicting. The existence of alternatives provides students with choice, but choice for student or for school is rather arbitrary, and in some cases there is no choice at all since the modular form for initial VET is confined to the former Phare programme schools.

5. THE LABOUR MARKET

5

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps for these four countries the labour market (even in 2005) is more an abstract concept than a realistic phenomenon. In all four countries in this review there is a perceived weak labour market at local level (although national indicators indicate economic growth, at least in Serbia and Bulgaria), and only the beginnings of a systematic approach to labour market intelligence. Social partnership mechanisms are only just beginning to be established on a serious tripartite basis. The structures are there in Bulgaria but are still developing towards mature use. Continuing VET, in terms of both activities and structures (including licensing), is a major factor in Bulgaria, with an almost common basis for standards and evaluation. In all four countries relations between the ministries of education and labour (or employment offices) are difficult, and with other ministries are weak.

The philosophy may have to be one of developing and sustaining a VET system for the medium term in the expectation of a future economy to which it can respond.

5.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

There have been technical and methodological advances in the approach to the labour market, though still mostly in an immature market context.

The greatest constraint faced by VET in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the current labour market situation and the lack of readiness by social partners and stakeholders to set up real connections with VET. Given that economic reform is an indispensable feature of a responsive VET system, at the end of the 1990s priority occupational sectors were defined by donor interventions (in such areas as infrastructure, transport and telecommunications, and construction).

The new classification of occupational profiles (initially developed by Republika Srpska) does provide a foundation for the development of new curricula in the pilot schools of both entities.

The joint conclusion of VET schools is that major problems in cooperation with

employers and social partners are related to the implementation of practical teaching activities, particularly for schools that are not involved in pilot projects. An underdeveloped economy, outdated technology and the prevalence of small established enterprises which have neither the opportunity nor the willingness to receive students for practical teaching are all factors that make the professional development of students and their appropriate preparation for employment more difficult.

5.2 THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The labour market is fragile and there are weaknesses in the provision of information on labour market developments at both national and regional level. The MoES considers that labour market analysis (at least at the central level) is not a part of its functions, and even in the Ministry of Labour (MoL) there is no clear mechanism for this. At the regional level there are general labour market assessments based on visible indicators, rather than a structured analysis of the situation. In none of the schools visited were client surveys or tracer studies carried out to collect information on the employment or further training of vocational school graduates. A good illustration is the large number of students in traditional and industry-based school profiles such as mechanical technician and electrical technician, when there are clear indicators that there are no immediate job prospects in such industries. In some cases this situation is justified by the social policy of the state not to fire mechanical and electrical teachers and not to close sometimes well-equipped workshops for such profiles.

The MoL has its own legislation and its own EU-funded project portfolio. The Employment Bureau also has a powerful role in retraining unemployed people. Relations between schools and local labour and employment offices need to be coordinated regionally. The would-be VET Council and Centre require tripartite representation, including the ministries of both education and labour. There is a need

to coordinate parallel certification initiatives from the two ministries. There is representation by the MoL on both the future VET Council and the MoES legislation working group. But historically relations have been more nominal than real.

5.3 SERBIA

Serbia's society and economy are experiencing rapid changes in the move towards democratisation and a market economy. These have caused important changes in the occupational structure and also in the content of particular occupations. Labour market transition characteristics in Serbia do not provide clear indications on future developments of the employment system. So the main challenge faced by the VET system is that of adapting to the uncertainty and unpredictability of labour market developments and the increasing flexibility of work content and organisation. This makes it difficult to forecast qualification needs exactly, and to use them as the basis for further VET curriculum development and implementation.

The institutional mechanisms for continuously analysing the occupational situation and reviewing the outdated past classifications are very weak (existing only at experimental level within CARDS VET I), as is job and task analysis for the specific occupations, as the basis for defining occupational standards. There is a trend to prepare a new nomenclature of occupations and to reduce their number according to the international classifications. Job analysis (DACUM approach) and standards compilation are undertaken by GTZ for curriculum development. Such initiatives are sporadic and isolated, and do not yet have national recognition.

There are pilot examples, such as ISOR (Identification of Sector Occupational Requirements) Committees. In principle they are tripartite bodies that have a technical composition and that deal with several aspects of VET reform, such as the content of educational profiles, priority

profiles, the structure of occupations, the list of qualifications, and participation in student examination commissions. This initiative is still very much in a pilot phase and depends totally on the financial and technical contributions of CARDS.

It is generally admitted that education systems (including VET) are rigid and slow in reacting to market changes, but the 'fluidity and anarchy' of occupational situations and the lack of investigating capacity in the system have imposed some uncertainty on the VET qualification provision in Serbia.

The Chamber of Commerce is a prospective eager contributor to the system, including the classification and establishment of occupational standards.

5.4 BULGARIA

The 2005 National Action Plan for Employment in Bulgaria formulates priorities for reducing the unemployment rate to 11.9%; reducing long-term unemployment by 15%; reducing youth unemployment by 20%; and providing training for 56,000 people.

Although it is growing stronger, the labour market (especially locally) is unstable and

unpredictable, and labour market intelligence and mechanisms are scarcely available at any level. However, instruments other than labour market intelligence are starting to become more coherent, including occupational classification, licensing, CVT mechanisms, and career guidance.

Generally speaking, social partners are aware of their role and manifest involvement in VET and curriculum issues in various forms. Although the structures of social partnership in VET are formally established through the inclusion of the social partners in the elaboration of strategies and through the institutional design of tripartite bodies, there is room for improvement in reaching an active dialogue and the participation of social partners at all levels, especially at local/school level.

Both unions and employers welcome tripartite representation principles and strengthened social dialogue, but still identify the MoES or the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP) as dominant parties in decision-making.

Even if social partners seem often to agree on policy matters concerning VET, they have yet to consider outvoting the government on VET tripartite boards.

6. INSTITUTIONAL HOMES

6

INTRODUCTION

There is no simple, ideal organisational structure for VET institutions. In essence an institutional framework works if the people working within it have developed it, and own and understand it.

Organisational structures, including technical support institutions, exist in the context of the development of an entire system or subsystem. Ideally, functions are developed (for example, curriculum policy, or agreement on an approach to qualifications), and institutional homes are then created to support the functions, rather than vice versa.

Most successful systems have an organisational framework for VET divided between three separated functions:

1. departments within ministries of education and labour managing the VET and training subsystems;
2. national advisory bodies or councils usually representing government and social or regional partners;

3. technical guidance and support structures providing services to both VET managers and providers (schools and training centres); these cover areas such as occupational standards, curriculum development, assessment, certification, qualifications, quality assurance, and teacher accreditation.

In the case of Bulgaria, NAVET occupies a pivotal role with a variety of accompanying structures (including quality, ICT and coordination of teacher training). A state-level agency for the curriculum framework, standards and assessment and with a VET department has been a long time coming in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The VET centres in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are as yet inadequately staffed and housed.

In all three cases the intermix of politics, policy, legislation and lack of priority means that a wide variety of complex functions occupying a range of institutions in EU member states are unlikely to be undertaken effectively.

Only Bulgaria fulfils the EU member state pattern of establishing a range of institutions to respond to diverse support needs. The others have as yet only a fledgling support response.

But the question can still be asked whether the institutional development of NAVET is contextualised in a coherent mission, vision or strategy, or whether it is simply a response to the *acquis communautaire*.

6.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina does have a Standards and Assessment Agency at interentity level, initially funded by the World Bank. Its establishment (agreed by the constituent peoples) was facilitated by a concentration on universal standards rather than curriculum content. It has been limited in scope (specific subsubjects at specific age cohorts), and has focused on basic education. Broad agreement on having an agency with three departments (curriculum, standards and a cross-cutting VET Department) has been achieved, but the necessary legislation, though expected, had yet to be passed in December 2005.

The goals of the VET Department in such an agency include:

- establishing and maintaining the national framework of qualifications;
- establishing, maintaining and updating a database for modernised teaching plans and programmes;
- establishing and maintaining the standards for national diplomas;
- promoting these standards;
- facilitating and encouraging approaches, transfers and improvement.

The state-level agency discussed above is likely to come into being in 2006.

For VET there are difficulties in the pedagogic institutes providing intermediate support between ministries and schools, since there is a lack of resources and specialised staff. Sarajevo pedagogic institute, for example, has only one

member of staff specialising in VET. It will take some time for an Agency VET Department to establish a coordinating role. For the moment sustainability is donor-project-led, a situation difficult to sustain in the medium and long term, especially as the CARDS EU VET project is currently the only body with an information base coordinating overall activities across the country.

The Functional Review of the Education Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina (one of a series of reviews that include six other sectors, from police to agriculture) concerns itself with ministerial efficiency, the development of the Agency, the development of the Department of Education in the Ministry of Civil Affairs, an independent inspectorate and the intermediate role between the Agency, the ministries and the schools of the present eight pedagogic institutes.

6.2 THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

With the support of the VET III project, the MoES has set up a VET Centre with an initial staff of 11 people within the Bureau for the Development of Education (BDE), with the intention of transforming it into the National VET Centre as soon as the VET Law is passed. When legislation is in place, the members of the VET Key Actors Group (established by the CARDS VET III project) will form the National VET Council.

VET III has provided some capacity building to the MoES, social partners and the VET Centre. In particular, the core staff of the future VET Centre (staff of the BDE VET unit), members of the VET Council and key social partners need to be trained in how to design, manage and implement in a routine way the continuous reform of the VET system. Under their authority professional and methodological development will take place in vocational education and training, preparing syllabi and curricula, and career development for teachers and students. The accreditation of institutions for the realisation of VET will also be the responsibility of the centre. One of its more important roles will be

inspection of the labour market at a national level and ensuring that VET education responds to changes in the labour market.

Alongside the creation of the National VET Centre there are plans for regional VET centres (based on existing VET schools) to provide for adult and continuing VET. These centres would have access to a labour market information capacity to assist with the priorities of the municipalities. Pressing ahead with the creation of these centres is an important priority.

6.3 SERBIA

The VET and Art Education Centre, established in 2003 as part of the Institute for the Development of Education under the MoES, is the body responsible for developing the central pilot VET curricula. Within the Institute for the Development of Education there is another department for curricula and textbooks that is officially responsible for curriculum development, but, in practice, it is not involved in the VET sector. The Project Implementation Unit of the CARDS and the GTZ project are directly involved in curriculum development for the educational profiles covered by their programmes, through close cooperation with the VET Centre. Actors at sector level (associations of VET schools in the respective sectors) are also involved with many aspects of curriculum design, particularly in collecting labour market information, proposing new profiles and the nomination of the central curriculum development teams. Public adult training is non-existent in Serbia and the MoL has no internal mechanisms for short-course curriculum development. In some cases the MoL has contracted the VET Centre to develop modular curricula for such courses.

The VET Centre – at the request of the MoES to develop the central curriculum (framework curriculum) for certain pilot vocational profiles – establishes contact with the association of vocational schools for the respective field for the selection of the curriculum team. The activity of such teams is moderated by one curriculum specialist from the VET and Art Education

Centre or other organisations. The framework curriculum development teams are mainly composed of teachers and instructors, but university pedagogues and representatives of social partners are also included. This is intended to enrich the information coming from the real occupational situation and to make curricula more relevant to the respective occupation. After the framework curriculum documents have been developed and edited according to the template defined in the Law for the Foundations of Education, they are sent to the MoES for official approval and distributed in vocational schools for further development and implementation.

There is a lack of national and local mechanisms for labour market information and for the development of occupational descriptions and standards. This is considered to be the main obstacle faced by the curriculum teams in bringing curricula closer to the needs of the market. Another obstacle is the methodological weakness of the curriculum teams to perform job and task analysis as the basis for further didactical analysis. Currently, there are clear indicators that show an improvement in the methodological aspects of curriculum development. There is sector-level involvement through the associations of VET schools; this takes into account regional developments and occupational requirements, the conducting of initial job and task analysis and participation of social partner representatives in the curriculum development teams. These are positive signs. The GTZ project has adopted a very similar methodological sequence, but has given more focus to occupational analysis. Such methodological innovations, even on a pilot scale, have resulted in vocational curricula that are more relevant to the respective occupations and that have broader practical vocational elements.

The major difficulty for the VET Centre is that it was established as the executive arm of a tripartite VET Council under a previous government and under legislation that no longer applies. There is no longer a VET Council, and the VET Centre is within what is basically a reconstructed pedagogic institute with an overall education council

that has little interest in VET. From being a government priority, the VET Centre is now in danger of becoming obsolete.

6.4 BULGARIA

The key role of NAVET

The establishment of this institution has its roots in the 1999 Law on VET, activating the framework of activities derived from the EU Phare VET project. NAVET performs a coordinating function in VET, and is where the efforts and interests of the MoES and the MoLSP come together. It is intended to hold the system together and provide sustainability.

It provides elaboration of State Education Requirements (common to initial and continuing VET) and evaluation and licensing (for CVT). To a certain extent it could be said that NAVET is a Bulgarian development that apparently made redundant the continuation of the Phare project in the late 1990s. By contrast, other institutions include newly formed centres of the MoES covering such areas as career guidance, quality assurance, ICT and pedagogic coordination.

NAVET has three main functions:

1. coordination of processes related to State Education Requirements and framework curriculum implementation;
2. preparation of VET documents;
3. issuing licences for centres for CVT (adult training centres).

NAVET is managed by a management board established on a tripartite basis with equal participation of representatives from the government, trade unions and the unions of employers. Although it has a tripartite governing body and answers to the Council of Ministers (not directly to either the MoES or the MoLSP), its legality appears to come from the MoES.

As NAVET is focused on the preparation and design of occupational standards, it is also the responsible body for the certification of non-formal VET short courses prepared and provided by different

CVT centres and based on the State Education Requirements. The system of certification is also established by NAVET, which manages the evaluation of licensed programmes and courses, while the MoES provides approval for the IVET curricula.

In the absence of an overall VET strategy, NAVET remains the key coordinating institution of VET and CVT in Bulgaria, connecting all key stakeholders and approaches in VET.

A number of additional points are worth mentioning.

- The *MoES Directorate for VET Policy* is responsible for policy and strategy as well as for the coordination of VET implementation at national level.
- The *MoES Unit for Quality in Education* has recently been established as a result of the pressure for more transparency towards integration for EU member state status.
- The *MoES National Pedagogical Centre* was set up in October 2004 and has created a network of 28 regional centres (a headquarters with 6 staff and 27 centres). The National Pedagogical Centre determines the need for training courses, and plans and organises them. The Centre engages trainers and providers such as the Department of Teacher Training of Sofia University (see below) to carry out the training. The Centre also plans to establish career guidance centres in 28 regions that will use the resources of the employment centres in terms of premises, equipment and information materials (currently, the employment centres have prepared brochures for 450 professions).
- The *MoES Centre for Information Technologies in Education* is a new institution resulting from EU Phare investment.
- The *Department of In-Service Training of Teachers* is part of the University of Sofia, and represents a national in-service teacher-training provider. The in-service teacher-training system includes all forms of training for teachers (part-time, evening courses, distance learning).

6. INSTITUTIONAL HOMES

Although the MoLSP has a policy unit, it has not so far been involved in the National Qualification Framework, as the fundamentals of the qualification standards are the State Education Requirements. According to the MoLSP, initial and continuing VET represent twin systems, but are artificially separated by regulations.

The question for the peer review group remains whether NAVET is a Rolls Royce or Mercedes car (perfect but exclusive and limited in reach) or an inclusive peoples' car. With only 200-plus licences issued so far, is this moving towards a critical mass?

7. LEGISLATION

7

INTRODUCTION

VET policy objectives and definitions are often, but not always, embodied in legislation, because such definitions provide parameters for public, and at times private, financing. A review of relevant legislation and regulations is one way of identifying existing government objectives before beginning or continuing policy and strategy review for VET reform.

However, evaluations of VET government objectives cannot be based entirely on existing laws and regulations, as these may not recognise informal methods of training. There can be multiple reasons for evaluating VET, including to determine if it is meeting emerging goals, which may not yet be expressed in laws and regulations.

So for each of our four countries, how far should existing laws, regulations and policies be changed to increase the effectiveness of VET?

To re-emphasise a point already made, for specific VET legislation three key questions require a specific answer:

1. Should there be separate or integrated legislation for general education and VET?
2. Should there be clear, new legislation – indeed a VET Reform Act?
3. If new legislation is required, should it be short, simple and transparent, leaving the detail to regulation?

Subsidiary questions include:

4. Will prospective legislation embrace both initial and continuing (adult) VET?
5. Has care been taken to make sure VET legislation complements other legislation (employment and local government, for example, as well as general education)?
6. Is the current legislation that includes VET based on a concept or development paper?
7. Will the enabling legislation be transparent to the public?
8. Who (what constituencies) are involved in the drafting?
9. How will the implications be disseminated to a wider public?
10. What will be the time scale for implementing the legislation?

11. Will legal instruments need to be created for the operation of specific organisations? Examples would be the membership, terms of reference and financial powers of the board of management and directors of substantially autonomous schools; the specific responsibilities for VET for the local authority; identification of new courses; and construction and maintenance of buildings. Will specific clauses enable financial transfer at local level, i.e. for schools to collect continuing training income or income derived from commercial activities?

7.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

During the past three years the process of reform has been largely focused on the reform of existing legislation in all fields and at all levels. In this context the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina approved the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which came into force on 1 July 2003, and which is implemented in both entities and in Brčko District. The framework represents both the direct fulfilment of the recommendations and conclusions stated in the two documents in the vocational education field – Green Paper: Policy and Strategy for VET, 1999; and White Paper: Strategy and Policy for Reform of Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2000 – and specifically the pressures and pledges brought about by OSCE coordination in 2001, 2002 and 2003 with the help of the Council of Europe.

The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education foresees the making of individual sector laws and the reconciliation of legislation at the entity and cantonal levels. This process is still ongoing, since not all the legislative documents have been reconciled at the entity and cantonal levels. This Framework Law also prescribes the making of a special law on vocational education. This is especially significant because the Framework Law provides for nine-year compulsory education as a common

system for both entities and Brčko District. Republika Srpska itself implemented nine-year compulsory education at the beginning of the 2003/04 school year.

Under the title 'Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina', a draft of the VET law was prepared and forwarded to the country's parliament; however, this document has yet to be approved.

7.2 THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Vocational education in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is regulated by the Law for Secondary Education, passed in 1995, which was followed by a number of amendments to ensure greater adaptability and flexibility. A separate VET law is being prepared, and is expected to be adopted, though at the time of the peer review visits it had not yet been passed. It seems that the VET law is on the agenda of all the parties involved in this sector. Most of the interviewees expressed their beliefs that the new law and the related normative regulations would create the conditions for solving most problems. As soon as the legislation is in place, the formation of the National Council for Secondary VET Education is expected, as well as the formal establishment of the National VET Centre.

The passage of the legislation has had some difficulty, drafts being deferred from 2004 to 2005 and now likely to be dealt with in 2006. There is a current problem in that it deals primarily with initial VET, with little reference to the labour market, continuing VET or lifelong learning. A number of difficulties have arisen which have delayed the passage of the legislation, because different local actors would like these elements added. The questions include the following.

- Should the present draft be integrated into a more general law for the whole education sector?
- Should the present draft include adult provision?

- Are the references to underlying values rather too weak?
- Are references to the role of the Ministry of Labour too weak, including in terms of occupational standards, its role within the future VET Centre, and ambiguity between VET (vocational education and training) and VT (vocational training)?
- Should there be reference to lifelong learning?
- Do finance, decentralisation and the role of VET institutions need strengthening?
- Do references to national institution-building need strengthening?
- Does the VET law require an explanatory concept document alongside it?

The response to these issues up to now has been to press ahead with the present draft because of the urgent need to legitimate the VET Centre and VET Council by taking on board the issues and adopting the following measures:

- to cross-refer to the appropriate general education and labour legislation;
- to build in references to future legislation for continuing VET and lifelong learning (in an integrated form) and the need for a common certification and qualification structure;
- to keep in mind the need for compatibility with financial, local government and labour legislation;
- to press on with a concept document that serves as an explanatory guide for future legislation and regulation.

The priority must be to legitimise the VET Centre and VET Council. However, care must be taken over the future integration of adult provision and lifelong learning, and compatibility with other ministerial legislation.

7.3 SERBIA

In Serbia legislation from the previous government enabling a VET Council and Centre has been replaced by the existing government. The notion of a VET Council has (for the moment) been replaced with a more general Education Council, thus

leaving the VET Centre relatively vulnerable to neglect.

The broad values and mission statements contained in the new education act are broadly in line with OECD- and EU-comparable declarations, in both social and individual terms.

However, for VET the questions are whether the act is permissive and flexible in allowing space for labour market relevance, institutional development and social partner involvement (for example), and whether it is overly biased towards general education, thus crowding out the necessary frameworks for specific VET activity, despite allowing for experimental activity.

For most but not all of these questions there is an absence of provision in the act. Four major issues stand out for which specific VET provision is missing:

1. the labour market context of VET;
2. the role and place of technical support institutions for VET;
3. certification and qualification structures;
4. financial mechanisms.

The act will need to be reconciled with complementary recommendations from the MoL (and local government and finance). In the meantime, the following are needed.

- If specific VET legislation is delayed, a subcouncil for VET (in place of the originally conceived National VET Council) is required, with a more representative range of participants from the labour market with a brief to include the above four items in its remit together with a policy role to support its executive arm, the VET Centre.
- An urgent review of the need for dedicated VET legislation associated with labour market developments is required.

7.4 BULGARIA

The Vocational Education and Training Act was adopted by the 38th General Assembly of the Republic in July 1999. It

THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL CURRICULA

represents the underpinning legislation for VET at national level, and sets out the main scope of VET in the country, stating that 'the system of vocational education and training trains citizens for a career in the economy and in other sectors of public life by creating conditions for acquiring vocational qualification and its continuous upgrading'.

According to the law, VET includes career guidance, vocational training and vocational education. The law establishes the tasks of the VET system as follows:

1. acquisition of vocational qualifications;
2. continuous upgrading of the vocational qualifications;
3. development of a motivation system for self-fulfilment in civil society;
4. acquisition of general knowledge on the basis of national and universal human values.

In addition to the 1999 VET Act, CVT provision is regulated by the 2005 Action Plan for Implementation of the National Strategy for Continuing Vocational Training in the 2005–10 Period adopted by Council of Ministers' Decision, entered in Protocol No 8 of 24 February 2005.

The National Strategy for Continuing Vocational Training in the 2005–10 Period regulates the process of training people over 16 for acquiring, extending and improving professional qualifications with a view to enhancing fitness for employment, promoting professional carriers, and individual development.

The goal of the strategy is to set the national priorities for the development of CVT within the context of lifelong learning and to identify the responsible institutions for their fulfilment.

8. FINANCE

8

INTRODUCTION

Can VET and curriculum reform take place without a comprehensive review of the financing of the systems?

We return to our three key questions.

1. What are the current and future sources of finance?
2. How will they be collected and by whom?
3. How will they be dispersed, by whom and using what criteria?

Ensuring a finance component in education reform terms of reference from the EU has, until recently, been an uphill struggle. Policy papers in the four countries, however, have been strict in assigning objectives, outcomes, timescales and costs to the different reform elements. Medium-term reform objectives (legislation, curriculum experimentation, institution building) can be sustained by donors in the short term. But in the long term, sustainability requires massive investment from the host country. If we take the case

of Serbia, EU funding can cover the scheduled reform costs laid out in the white paper because initial steps are pilot or exploratory. Subsequently they will rise exponentially for the host country (teacher development being just one example). The CARDS VET I finance expert has estimated even the initial cost of sustaining the VET Centre as being four to five times the revenue expected from the ministry, and the same has applied to the calculations for the Macedonian VET Centre.

The development and improvement of the financing system for VET should complement the vision and mission for vocational education and the basic principles for its further development as outlined in the preceding sections of the report.

Consequently a financing system should:

- enable vocational schools to deliver VET in an effective and efficient way;
- support vocational schools in cooperating with the labour market;

- secure access for each individual and provide each region equitably from the state budget.

8.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

'VET reform cannot take place without a comprehensive review of the financing of the systems. Future development programmes should make such a review a priority.' This is the view of not only the white paper but also the finance working group set up by OSCE and chaired by the World Bank. A system is required by which the budget allocated can take into account the real expenses for each student, against the availability of public resources and the commercial and other income generated by the school.

The system of finance of VET in Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to be reviewed in terms of its share of the economy; mechanisms and criteria for collection and disbursement; treasury impediments to school budgeting and flexibility; and income generation and retention from VET schools.

The current EU VET project has a small finance component. In the early 2000s the World Bank and OSCE undertook a financial analysis of education as a whole and gave recommendations. Financing, of course, is difficult to approach in terms of Dayton levels of autonomy, an overall weak economy and a centralised decision-making culture (whether by Republika Srpska or the cantons).

There is an immediate need for:

- a strengthening of the finance component, if only in terms of flexibility for more autonomous schools in future;
- market activities for marginal revenues for VET schools;
- unit costing.

There is a longer-term need to reform financing mechanisms and to cost reform objectives realistically (whether qualification structures and systems, or the more expensive continuing development of teachers).

8.2 THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

EU CARDS III set up a small financial component to begin to analyse the introductory questions and make recommendations for reformed financial mechanisms.

Preliminary recommendations are as follows.

- All secondary schools with VET training should be enabled and obliged to open and run their own commercial activities and earn additional income by selling products, services and training courses to the public. During the second stage of decentralisation the school director should be accountable to the school management board for the administration of the budget.
- VET schools should be allowed to cover the area of adult education and lifelong learning on the same basis as private training providers.
- The existing formulas for determining teachers' wage levels should be supplemented by a flexible factor depending on performance.
- Teachers should be trained to teach more than one subject.

These preliminary recommendations are the initial element of a wide-ranging analysis and of more detailed recommendations. They should be the subject of in-depth scrutiny by the MoES, the municipalities and the schools (as well as the Ministry of Finance).

8.3 SERBIA

The CARDS VET I project finance working group, assisted by discussions with other policy and strategy working groups, considered a number of possible financing models appropriate to the modernised VET system recommended in the green paper.

The finance working group recommended the upgrading of the funding and financing mechanism of the VET system in Serbia by means of a dynamic funding model. Dynamic funding is a mixed system of input and output funding, supplemented with a cofinancing scheme.

The proposed approach includes two elements to motivate VET schools to offer market-driven training programmes and additional commercial activities. The two elements are:

- output-based funding: this is based on the number and kinds of diplomas issued by the school; demand-driven diplomas will be better financed by the state budget;
- additional activities and short flexible courses: to be promoted by the cofinancing scheme.

The functioning of this model has four prerequisites in the policy/strategy context.

1. A VET school would be free to operate in the commercial market.
2. In order to improve the efficient use of their budgets, VET schools should have the opportunity to make savings on the input-based element of the budget.
3. VET schools would be required to keep records and make three-monthly financial statements.
4. The model should provide enhanced steering capacity for the MoES.

8.4 BULGARIA

Financial mechanisms as such were not reviewed, although it is clear in terms of unit costs that the schools lack equipment, materials and textbooks (hence the association of experimental projects with infrastructure or rehabilitation). Each of these was seen by the peer team through the lens of practice. Institutional budgets obviously operate better when extra funds are possible.

Although acting as a public agency overseen by the MoES, the running and development costs of NAVET come from its licensing fees.

Despite the many reform initiatives, the discussions in the sections above imply freeing the system from 'procedural centralism', that is, allowing schools to be responsive to their local environment and local employers through regulation, statutes, financial flexibility (retaining earned income) and a greater capacity for a supply response to identified local demand. Schools lack real autonomy, and decisions are taken in an arbitrary form, most of them depending on management goodwill or local connections.

9. DECENTRALISATION

9

INTRODUCTION

As already indicated in Section 6 above, three types of mechanism for governance usually exist in a VET system. These may be integrated for school-based VET in a relatively simple and transparent centralised bureaucracy, but the labour market is more complex, more subject to rapid change and more localised, and therefore requires more organisational, financial and staffing autonomy and the regulated participation of the social partners.

Alternative organisational forms being deployed in different countries (sometimes combined) include:

- support and technical functions removed from the ministries, resulting in improved focus and specialisation;
- the creation of national agencies for labour market training, with operational issues undertaken by the agencies and VET policy remaining with the ministries;

- non-governmental intermediate agencies contracted by ministries to administer public VET operations;
- public or private training providers established as independent corporations, with policy and funding provided by ministries.

Intertwined with these structures is the question of decentralisation or deconcentration to either municipal or school level. Decentralisation implies financial responsibility at local level, but it requires national uniform technical guidelines in areas such as occupational standards, vocational qualifications and core curricula. It also needs to address local/regional involvement of the social partners. Decentralisation can also signify delegation by ministries of technical responsibilities in areas such as standards, qualifications and finance, to bodies at national level.

In many countries the attempt to bring VET closer to labour markets has been an additional reason for education authorities

to grant more autonomy to schools, both in terms of letting them decide on (parts of) the curriculum to reflect local conditions, and in terms of allowing them greater freedom to organise the learning process. This has been accompanied by the introduction of a shift from traditional input control (on curriculum contents, textbooks and timetables) towards output (or competence-based) control.

Part of this development has also been the establishment of national qualification standards, often based on occupational standards elaborated with the assistance of the social partners. While English-speaking countries have tended to focus almost completely on competence-based standards, other countries – and most of the continental European ones – have tended to combine an output-oriented approach with retaining some central control over inputs (such as framework curricula, timetables and study loads) and the learning process (through definition of teacher qualifications and guidelines).

Essentially, there is a consensus on greater school autonomy, as an abstract principle. The understanding, means and implementation are mostly absent.

9.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The policy papers agreed by representatives of the three constituent peoples, the two entities and the ten cantons with Brčko District argue for the detailed control of the organisation, and control and evaluation of VET to be decentralised as much as possible to the level of the school.

The decentralisation of management powers should be reflected in the school's ability to collect and control local financing for VET, for instance the location of payroll levies directly from an individual enterprise to the school or through commercial activities.

Concerning commercial activities, if the school has greater autonomy, it needs to be spelled out either in legislation or regulation, or in the school's own statutes,

that the school can engage in commercial activities, that it can retain the income, and what the limitations are.

There should be a regulatory framework to enable schools to become more autonomous in the light of both their responsibility for income generation and their need for responsiveness to the local market and enterprises, taking into account the obligations of school boards and management committees.

In the light of decentralisation and differentiation there will need to be a review of the steering role at state and entity level on the transparency of qualifications and the application of performance indicators.

The consequences of the legislative and organisational application of the items above should be supported by government and donor-led management development. That is, responsibilities for public sector service training should be extended to the education and employment ministries, and to local and school management.

9.2 THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

One major challenge for the country is decentralisation, which was required by the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement with the international community. The municipalities traditionally have very few competences in relation to education. Traditionally local government covers the running costs of schools (such as maintenance of buildings, heating, consumable materials for theoretical and practical teaching and learning, and transportation). According to the decentralisation process, local government should take responsibility for other aspects in relation to schools, such as appointing school principals, and capital investments.

The implementation of decentralisation is progressing slowly, and not in all regions. During some interviews it was mentioned to the peer review team that central government has not been willing to delegate power, claiming that local authorities are not yet ready and have not sufficient capacity to accomplish new roles.

The impression is that local government wants to be responsible for many other aspects in relation to vocational schools, with the exception of curriculum and pedagogical issues, which should continue to be under the authority of the MoES and related bodies.

Initial steps must be taken to ensure compatibility between education legislation (including VET) and local government and labour legislation.

The issue of municipal powers is associated with the notion of greater school autonomy, which in turn is associated with finance and financial mechanisms. These issues need to be clarified at conceptual, policy and strategy levels.

9.3 SERBIA

The general governance issues outlined in the introduction are common to all VET reform programmes and require prioritisation in the Serbian VET context in terms of manageable timescales and changes in financing mechanisms.

In common with the other countries in the peer review, the concentration has been on geographical decentralisation and separating technical from policy decisions and school autonomy. Here, the issue of social partnership has been singled out for Serbia.

Social changes that occurred during transition require the broader deregulation of VET and the establishment of social partnership relations among all stakeholders. In this process social partners need to take much greater responsibility with regard to VET. Establishing new relationships among employers, trade unions, chambers and

government implies the acceptance of joint responsibility by all stakeholders for the development and improvement of VET in Serbia.

This means networking with:

1. the local community (governance, investment policy, additional types of activities, finance, planning);
2. the local and regional labour market;
3. enterprises and companies;
4. professional associations;
5. entrepreneurs and their associations;
6. institutions for informal education.

9.4 BULGARIA

In terms of the relationships between the MoES and the MoLSP as regards IVET, CVT, State Education Requirements and licensing, there are still issues to be resolved. The same is true as regards the link to municipal responsibilities and to the 28 regional inspectorates. Moreover, in respect of the State Education Requirements development, although it is clear that the NAVET board is tripartite, the MoES governs NAVET, since it has power given by legislation to sanction all decisions relating to VET.

The most critical issue relates to establishing in the future the relative freedom of the schools and positioning them better in relation to other CVT providers. The Unit for Quality under the MoES has yet to adopt a quality assurance/control/improvement role. Its current preoccupation is to better serve the system to apply EU structures, pillars and performance indicators, but the orientation towards school practice and implementation of quality assurance mechanisms is not clear for the moment.

10. CURRICULUM PRACTICE

10

INTRODUCTION

The key question is whether, given common standards and overall modernisation of the curriculum, a modular approach (as used in Phare/CARDS developments) actually matters.

As a driving force (bringing with it many other facets of curriculum reform), modularisation exists in practically all EU VET terms of reference for transition countries, from Serbia to Syria. However, in the main it is not easy to implement, and it is not part of the logic of the existing systems in transition countries. For the four peer review countries only a small minority of students fall within its experimental boundaries. Most students and teachers prefer a modular approach and all that goes with it, but it is hard work, creates more stress and is not supported by, in particular, equipment resources if there is an intention to move to systemic implementation.

The main complaint of nearly all pilot projects is the late delivery of equipment, often after a project has terminated. As one

local school director put it, 'without equipment we are obliged to build the new system on the ruins of the old'.

A second question is whether adequate strategies, institutional developments and modernised methodologies are in place, but require both greater critical mass and school flexibility to make them work.

There are a number of supplementary questions.

- Is there a system of qualifications that is relevant to young people and adults alike?
- Is there, for example, a formal system through which adults can acquire higher-level qualifications?
- Are progression routes for students opting for vocational courses to be strengthened and structured?
- Is there a vocational Matura?
- How is assessment organised?
- Are there appropriate methods for involving employers in certification development and updating?
- What cooperation exists with other ministries?

10.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The different facets of VET curriculum reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina are as follows.

- Curriculum reform for pilot VET schools is included in the PHARE EU VET programmes 1997–2005.
- The GTZ project is working in six schools and three sectors (complementary to EU VET in terms of occupational sectors, school location and modularisation).
- The Ministry of Education and Culture in Republika Srpska introduced a new modular curriculum approach in all first grades of VET schools in the 2004/05 academic year that is based upon, but not identical to, its experience of EU VET pilot programmes.
- In VET in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, schools (except for the pilots) are teaching traditional curricula for 200 narrow specialised occupational profiles according to the previous classification.

Modular approach

For the pilot schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina each curriculum is modular and outcome-based and has two parts – general and vocational education. A module is a self-contained set of learning outcomes with clearly defined assessment criteria, which can stand alone and may be taken in isolation or in conjunction with other modules. A separate document – ‘Methodology of curriculum development’ – defines curriculum goals, general approach, templates, outlines and assessment for each curriculum.

The curriculum goals and principles thus defined constitute, even today, the basis for making new curricula within the pilot schools. Visits to pilot schools and discussions with teachers and principals of these schools have confirmed their clear understanding of the goals of curriculum reform and acceptance of the modular

approach for the development of outcome-based curricula.

Certification and qualifications are a major weakness given the absence of a modernised system, framework or structure. At present, modularisation and the recognition of modules in the certification awarded provide a problem for the pilot (experimental) curriculum, especially for the schools in terms of administration, complexity, regulation and communication (how student outcomes for each module are recognised).

The GTZ staff, in discussion with the EU VET project team, have agreed that the GTZ approach should be consistent with that of the EU CARDS VET project, firstly in terms of curriculum policy and modularisation, and secondly in choosing schools and sectors complementary to those of the EU VET project. The need for this complementarity is echoed by the ministries of education in Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

If there is an hesitation, it is because the more generalised regional GTZ approach has an alternative approach to curricula, certification, social partner relations and modularisation.

The EU VET approach to curriculum development, modularisation, assessment and certification has been largely and consistently determined by an Irish model³.

Implementation has been through teacher training and the training of mentors as well as curriculum development groups. Ministries have nominated the schools for the status of pilot and for inclusion in Phare EU VET programmes.

- It is envisaged that 50% of occupations will be covered by 2009.
- The relationship between the modules and the qualifications acquired needs to be resolved.
- The curriculum for adult education remains a major question, including in

³ See: ‘A practical approach to curriculum development methodology in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Guidelines’, Working Paper Spring 2000, Phare Programme Vocational Education and Training Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2000 (<http://www.euvet.org/documents/Guidelines.pdf>)

terms of definitions of, and the application of, lifelong learning.

- Issues of non-formal and informal education remain to be clarified.
- The implementation of every project activity depends on local capacity.

The pilot schools themselves and sectors overall have a coherent understanding and are happy and satisfied with their involvement, though there are critical comments.

- Certification cannot follow exactly the modules (hours and school year).
- There is not enough teacher training.
- Social partner relations are ineffective.
- A lack of equipment and simple teaching aids is the greatest problem.
- Pedagogical institutes are irrelevant.
- Staff and students are positive, but it is important to establish systemic support to the pilot initiatives in relation to new curricula.
- A substantial effort is needed to shift the reform focus in order to widen the implementation at systemic level.
- Compartmentalisation may be a consequence of the lack of critical mass.
- Implementing the new approach entails motivation for an extended period, a greater workload and some stress.
- There is a debate on 'vocational versus general', including the perceived downgrading of general subjects within the modular approach.
- There appears to be some confusion in the minds of the teachers over the introduction of core skills.
- The positive motivation of the teachers could easily be lost without continuity and consistency in the VET reform process.
- Textbooks are lacking, especially for foreign languages. Textbooks are expensive for the students, and teachers develop their own training materials as an alternative.
- The equipment is very poor and often absent, especially in laboratories and workshops for vocational subjects.
- Training is needed, particularly for young teachers.
- The provision of professional practice is a huge problem. There is an evident

lack of real places for professional practice and the equipment is inadequate. In this situation schools are forced to develop more theoretical practice instead of actual placements.

- Teacher training is not systematic.
- Local communities are not involved enough in VET reform.
- Local employers and entrepreneurs are not connected to or involved in VET reform.

10.2 THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Characteristics of VET provision

The VET structure is rather heterogeneous, with a number of schools in which considerable reform has taken place (eight demonstration schools or regional VET centres – although it is unclear whether they still exist after the project had ended – with modern curricula and labour market orientation). Another 24 pilot schools (mainly Phare/CARDS-programme-based) have also been reformed, but to a much lesser extent. The GTZ pilot project encompasses seven schools that have piloted an apprenticeship system (though this is not mirrored in VET law). At the margins there are some 40 ordinary secondary VET schools which are following more traditional patterns and where little development has taken place; these have only recently received some equipment from CARDS, and other support from USAID. Most of the unreformed schools are likely to be still preparing too narrowly for jobs that either no longer exist or are not in high demand. Implementation and mainstreaming of new curricula in all VET schools started in 2004/05, though it faces considerable challenges, and this is expected to lessen the current fragmentation and to upgrade overall VET provision.

Information on skill needs is generally lacking, but is also difficult to obtain because of the large informal sector and volatile economy. Surveys show a need for better practical training of students and for improved core competences (such as planning, taking initiative, innovative

working and entrepreneurship). There still seems to be a considerable mismatch between VET provision and labour market demand. For example, there were still around 20 machinery schools in 2003, even though 90% of companies in this sector had already closed down.

Policymakers are now starting to pay more attention to higher VET (tertiary and, to a lesser extent, non-tertiary), presuming a need for higher qualifications in the future. Another weakness is the low capacity and weak motivation of social partners to become more proactive in formulating skill need requirements. A number of sector chambers only emerged recently (in 2004), and tripartite structures are not yet mature or effective in the field of education and employment.

Although a number of issues have been addressed by VET reform (including practical training, greater teacher involvement in curriculum planning, and cross-curricular activities), it is not yet clear to what extent the situation has been improved in reality, as evaluations of new curricula are lacking. The information base is weak even on basic issues, such as the number of clusters and profiles. Because implementation of the new curricula started in all VET schools in 2004/05, the MoES itself understands curriculum reform to have been more or less completed.

The high degree of centralisation in education and VET also relates to the curriculum and teaching or learning aspects. Earlier curricula were developed by university professors serving the needs of the nomenclature more than the needs of the labour market. The VET Centre in the Bureau for the Development of Education (BDE) is the body responsible for developing the central-level curriculum of each pilot educational profile. The VET Centre (or BDE sector), following a request from the MoES to develop the curricula for a particular profile, establishes the respective curriculum team, coordinated by one of its members. The curriculum documents are developed according to the templates developed by the BDE in 1999, but a VET curriculum development guide is still lacking. Because of the lack of occupational standards and descriptions,

the curriculum team is composed not only of teachers and university pedagogues, but also of representatives of social partners.

After the curriculum documents have been developed and edited, they are sent to the BDE for approval, and delivered to schools for further development (supported by the VET section of the BDE) and implementation. No external evaluation (validation) of curriculum documents is applied.

With regard to curriculum structure:

- All curriculum documents (especially those at central level) are composed of a mixture of objectives, contents, context description and normative information (the last of these as mandatory elements).
- There is a prevalence of mandatory and standardised elements in the curriculum (even at school level), reducing freedom for adaptation; as an example, the template of the lesson plan to be prepared by the teacher for each unit has a standardised structure.

With regard to curriculum content:

- The relatively large percentage of academic subjects and relatively low percentage of vocational practice in educational profiles still gives the impression of a 'gymnasium profile' rather than a vocational school.
- The lack of vocational (employment) skills and key skills in VET curriculum content is evident.
- The curriculum gives more freedom to schools and teachers to adapt the content (particularly in the cases when they are trained and supported by the VET Centre and donor projects).

With regard to curriculum methodology:

- There are positive attempts to fill the gap created by the absence of occupational descriptions and standards: one social partner representative is involved, though it appears that their influence within the group is low, resulting in curricula that have only around 10% practical training.

- There is no external validation of the curricula that are developed, as a mechanism for quality assurance.
- The VET curriculum is seen much more as a product than as a continuous process: there is no feedback on the implementation of curricula as the basis for further improvement; the resulting problems in the curriculum product are mainly a consequence of the defects in the curriculum development process and the actors involved.

One major advantage for the design, implementation and assessment of the national curriculum is the fact that it can more or less now build on local expertise and ownership. The emerging VET Centre has a very experienced staff of former VET pilot school coordinators; most of the 11 staff members have been involved in VET reform implementation since 1998.

10.3 SERBIA

The first reaction of teachers to the new curriculum is the initial stress caused by lack of familiarity with the new template and uncertainty of future steps. The rapid transition through this phase is facilitated by intensive training and meetings organised by the responsible bodies.

Hundreds of vocational teachers have participated in such events, and most of them are directly involved in the concrete development process in relation to framework and school curricula. This is a good foundation that helps not only the understanding of changes in the philosophy, structure and content of the pilot curricula, but what is more important, the implementation of such changes.

Positive interventions to enrich and make more flexible curriculum content, including the introduction of entrepreneurship as a subject, plus optional subjects and extracurricular activities, have resulted in difficulties during implementation. The main difficulties relate to scheduling, the lack of competent teachers in the area, the lack of textbooks and of didactic aids and equipment, and the division of classes into small groups or other normative aspects.

Lack of pre-service education for teachers and instructors in relation to pedagogical and psychological issues and the weaknesses of in-service training hinder not only the curriculum development process but also its implementation. New concepts and practices linked to the innovations in this field require a sound pedagogical and psychological basis that is not currently evident for most VET teaching staff, and the training programmes have to start from scratch, thus increasing the cost of reform and slowing down its pace. It is broadly accepted by all the interviewees (including teachers) that the 'new modular curriculum gives more freedom for methodological variations', but at the school level it was difficult to find evidence for this.

School managers are important actors in the implementation of the pilot programmes and they can easily facilitate or slow down the reform at the school level. As identified by the internal monitoring of the pilot projects, 'some principals do not show understanding of the processes necessary for the implementation and development of pilot curricula. Even if they do not hinder this process they make it more difficult than it should be'. It is recognised that an increase in the vocational school principals' awareness of pilot innovations and their involvement in appropriate training could improve the reform process.

Teacher motivation is another important factor that considerably influences the success of curriculum innovation during the implementation phase. In most cases teachers are not implementing new approaches, not because they do not know how to do it but because they lack incentives to do so.

Innovation (and the modular approach in particular) demands more effort and time than routine teaching, and without incentives there is a low chance of success. The VET teaching profession is not as well rewarded in terms of social and material position as it was in the past, and this is a major obstacle for the reform process. The pilot projects have created an optimal atmosphere for teacher motivation (group work, the opportunity to experiment,

exchange of experience with colleagues and international expertise, positive competition, appreciation of achievements, new contacts, a better teaching and learning infrastructure, and extra payment for development work). In general, teachers are very willing to participate in project activities and events, sometimes involving working on Saturdays and travelling for hours (for example, teacher forums, which have monthly meetings). This positive atmosphere is evident among the teaching and management staff of all the schools visited. It is difficult to make comparisons with the situation in non-pilot schools, but it is very clear that staff motivation currently represents a major advantage for the Serbian VET reform process that should be carefully considered and better used by decision-makers and donors in order to ensure the continuity of the process.

10.4 BULGARIA

In 2004 all schools became vocational or technical gymnasia with four- or five-year courses. VET schools provide the opportunity for students to obtain an educational diploma after finishing the 12th grade, but also to gain a professional qualification and certificate at the third level of qualification, after the 13th grade.

The modular approach in curriculum development was introduced in 1998 with EU Phare support, according to the so-called Scottish model. It was applied to 18 professions in 36 schools. But, as previously stated, there is still a set of dualities leading to a strong separation between CVT and IVET and a continuing separation between conventional and (minority) modular approaches in the organisation of the curriculum. Contents are also separated, as general subjects in VET schools are still subject-oriented.

The modular approach in curriculum development started in post-secondary VET, but continues to be almost exclusive to CVT and to be applied with no clear criteria by schools. According to the people interviewed, the modular approach is opportune and valuable, provided that appropriate funding is assured. School staff

stress that at the beginning both teachers and students were highly motivated because students were told that their diplomas would be recognised in the EU; the motivation decreased once this appeared not to be the case.

The content of the new curricula for initial VET, based on the list of professions, has three parts:

- general education – obligatory for all professions;
- the branch part – obligatory for all professions in one sector;
- the specific/specialised part (for 12th and 13th grades) in accordance with the profession.

The content of examinations seems to be adequate, though it preserves the divide between the modular and non-modular approaches. The examination programme for the final exam is given by the MoES; this helps examination commissions to prepare the assessment instruments. For the professional theoretical part there is a test with three variants. For the practical part there are corresponding areas and assignments given in the programme. In the final (13th) grade a module for entrepreneurship is offered to enhance professional mobility.

According to the Department of In-Service Training of Teachers at Sofia University, in Bulgaria there is only one school in which 100% of the students are covered by a modular curriculum, while in the rest, only around 10% of the students are included.

There are several problems for schools. These relate to the labour market, employers and the lack of institutional autonomy. At school level there is a lack of labour market intelligence, only intermittent contact with employers, and a general feeling of a poor labour market, at least at local level. There is a perception that there are not enough job places, as a result of economic transition. While the job market is variable, many students do not expect to get jobs in the occupation for which they have been trained, and only the best get jobs in specialist areas such as fashion. Job offers are available, but not in the chosen profession. Some examples from

the schools show that in the forestry field (including furniture making and design, and wood carving) there are high local market expectations. On the other hand, in the agriculture field students tend to be divided into those coming from family farms and those who could only expect to become farm labourers.

Responses from the schools

The sectors and schools that were visited by the peer review team include mechanical engineering, construction, agriculture, textiles and fashion, forestry and wood processing. Among the conclusions from the schools are the following.

- EU Phare philosophy and modular experiments in late 1990s have not been sustained by actual measures and actions. Moreover, this philosophy and its modular approach represent a minority element even in the experimental schools.
- New NAVET regulations have contributed to the updating but not the radical change of curricula.
- Where it has been adopted, the modular approach has been for single vocations.
- There are still different exams for modular and conventional learning programmes.
- No equipment has been purchased since the Phare VET investment finished. Consequently more intense paper use for modular teaching and assessment has failed as neither equipment nor consumables were subsequently provided.
- In theory, students can opt for modular or conventional programmes if the choice exists in the school, but motivation for a modular approach was highest in the early years when European recognition was promised.
- The modular approach is considered more expensive. More consumables are needed, more precision and preparation are required, and new courses need stronger support from employers.
- It is appreciated that the modular approach is closer to reality and its contents are broad. Still, some sceptics consider that modular structures and

delivery are not able to cover minimal content requirements.

- A greater focus on general subjects rather than VET is considered essential for progress to university.

As far as curriculum impact is concerned, students find that the modular curriculum is more appropriate to their needs, as they study more easily and the assessment is more objective. Furthermore, the ratio of theory to practical training is 1:2. Teachers also assess that the modular curriculum is better for the students, but that it requires more engagement on the teachers' part (especially in terms of preparation), compared with the traditional curricula. This extra time and effort is neither adequately remunerated nor encouraged. The modular curriculum covers around 10% of students.

As for the assessment of the curriculum, according to the MoES methodology exams are awarded by examination commissions including representatives of the social partners. On an ad hoc basis, if the social partner does not take part in the exams, they are replaced by a teacher. The different involvement of stakeholders and social partners in VET at the local level is evident and depends on the local environment, school authority and local authority. Some teachers proposed that social partners should be better motivated for establishing an active dialogue and cooperation, and that further incentives should be made available by the national government.

Regional disparities also constitute a critical factor. In one region, the visit to the technical gymnasium revealed a school in a particularly vulnerable position. The school operates a traditional curriculum for the four-year programme (9th to 12th grade) and works with outdated equipment that does not meet the real training needs. Students come from economically and socially poor backgrounds and cannot afford to buy textbooks. They therefore trust and rely on the notes taken in the course of classes. Practical training is carried out in companies in the town, but is one-sided, as it depends on the fluctuations of local investment and an unstable economy.

ACRONYMS

BDE	Bureau for the Development of Education
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CVT	continuing vocational training
EC	European Community
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FYR Macedonia	former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICT	information and communication technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IT	information technology
IVET	initial vocational education and training
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science (FYR Macedonia) Ministry of Education and Sport (Bulgaria)
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
NAVET	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
Phare	Community aid programme for central and east European countries
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	vocational education and training

REFERENCES

- 'A practical approach to curriculum development methodology in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Guidelines', Working Paper Spring 2000, Phare Programme Vocational Education and Training Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2000.
<http://www.euvet.org/documents/Guidelines.pdf>
- Leney, T. and Green, A., 'Achieving the Lisbon Goal: The contribution of vocational education and training', *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 40, No 3, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, pp. 261-278.
- Leney, T. et al., *Achieving the Lisbon Goal: The contribution of VET*, Final report to the European Commission – 1-11-04, 2004.
- Parkes, D. et al., *A cross-country analysis of curricular reform in vocational education and training in Central and Eastern Europe*, ETF, Turin, 1999.
- Tissot, P., *Terminology of vocational training policy – A multilingual glossary for an enlarged Europe*, Cedefop, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2004.
- Viertel, E. et al., 'From project to policy evaluation in vocational education and training – Possible concepts and tools. Evidence from countries in transition', *The foundations of evaluation and impact research: Third report on vocational training research in Europe; Background report*, Cedefop, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2004, pp. 191-236.

EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION
THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL CURRICULA
Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the
European Communities
2006 – 62 pp. – 21.0 x 29.7 cm
ISBN: 92-9157-483-X

SALES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Publications for sale produced by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities are available from our sales agents throughout the world.

You can find the list of sales agents on the Publications Office website (<http://publications.europa.eu>) or you can apply for it by fax (352) 29 29-42758.

Contact the sales agent of your choice and place your order.

