



## Beograna Youth Conference

The Challenges of Education for Albania and Serbia, seen from the perspective of youths

Results and Recommendations

Albania Serbia

Leart Kola  
Mariola Qesaraku  
Jolea Kola  
Jona Majstorovic  
Arnold Grabocka  
Aleksandra Bozic  
Romildo Kokhi  
Predrag Stanovic

Denada Male  
Stefan Josimov  
Sonil Frasheri  
Stefan Simic  
Alban Nako  
Milica Glisic  
Alban Adullai  
Boris Popovic



**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**

# Beograna Youth Conference

The Challenges of Education for Albania and Serbia, seen from the perspective of youths

Results and Recommendations  
from the Beograna Youth Conference  
(5th – 7th of July, 2014)



Results and Recommendations from the Beograna Youth Conference

**The challenges of Education for Albania and Serbia, seen from the perspective of youths.**

Publikimi i kësaj broshure u mundësua nga:

**“Friedrich Ebert” Foundation**

Tirana office

Rr: “Abdi Toptani”, Torre Drin, Kati 3-të, Kutia Postare 1418

Tiranë, Shqipëri

Tel: +355 04 2250986 / 2273306; Fax: +355 04 2262067

[www.fes-tirana.org](http://www.fes-tirana.org)

Year of Publication: 2014

Translated by: Arnold Grabocka, Xhoi Malësia

Edited by: Arnold Grabocka

*FES publications cannot be used for commercial purposes without a written approval!*

**Table of Contents**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Foreword: Leart Kola<br>Vice secretary of Youth, Socialist Party          | 4  |
| Mariola Qesaraku<br>Program Coordinator                                   | 8  |
| Joleza Koka<br>Chair. Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania               | 10 |
| Jovana Majstorovic<br>International Relations, Democratic Youth of Serbia | 12 |
| Arnold Grabocka<br>Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania                  | 13 |
| Aleksandra Božić<br>Democratic Youth of Serbia                            | 15 |
| Romildo Kokthi<br>Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania                   | 17 |
| Predrag Stankovic<br>Democratic Youth of Serbia                           | 20 |
| Denada Male<br>Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania                      | 22 |
| Stefan Josimov<br>Democratic Youth of Serbia                              | 24 |
| Sonil Frashëri<br>Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania                   | 26 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Stefan Simic<br>Democratic Youth of Serbia              | 29 |
| Alban Nako<br>Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania     | 31 |
| Milica Glisic<br>Democratic Youth of Serbia             | 34 |
| Alban Avdullai<br>Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania | 36 |
| Boris Popovic<br>Democratic Youth of Serbia             | 38 |

## FOREWORD

**Leart Kola**

**Vice secretary of Youth,  
Socialist Party**



The bilateral conference of July 2014 between the Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania and the Democratic Youth Forum of Serbia (supported by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) was the parenthesis of a new beginning between the two countries. It has been many years now that both parties communicate with one-another through the Socialist International. Such institutional communication has lacked for more than 68 years.

The main topic of this youth conference, also reflected in the conception of this material, was imminent and inevitable. In this light it can be said that we were not the ones to choose such a topic; it chose us, dictated by the conditions of our time and by the aspiration of both countries to be full-time members of the European Union.

Education and the challenges that arise concerning the educational

system were analyzed and deconstructed in a common effort by the youths of both countries, using the instruments of critique and the social-democratic theory and practice. This common effort was organized and disciplined in a three-days-work.

Can the actual educational system in the Balkan Peninsula be seen as a bridge towards steady development, or as an obstacle which needs to be overcome? Are we ready to be part of a common European labor market, or do we lack the educational skills to resist fair and meritocratic labor competition in the “big game”?

This publication does not as much offer straight and dogmatic answers to these questions. It does something more practical: it illustrates the first step towards the creation of a new generation in the Balkan Peninsula. The two most important points of

the Beograna Conference and the following publication are:

- The opportunity of getting to know the problems and circumstances of the educational system in both countries.

- The opportunity of transforming the respective youth forums in governmental lobbying forces; big youth organizations which give serious policy advice. Beograna is the best example of such an effort, because the ideas proposed in this material have been submitted and proposed to the respective governments.

In a Bergsonian fashion, where space and time cannot be ultimately specified, you will notice that most of the texts written by the students who took part in the Beograna Conference give the impression of being written/spoken after the historic meeting between the Prime Minister of Albania and Serbia. In fact, Beograna was held 4 months before this meeting. This means that we have more in common than we think; we are progressive left-wing minds with ideas which do not come as result of political influence. We create and catalyze.

One of the positive outcomes of the meeting between the Prime Ministers of both countries has to do with the agreement concerning youths.

From now on diplomas from both countries will be recognized. Student exchanges will be facilitated. Students from both countries will create for the first time the Balkan Youth Forum, where common cultural projects and an efficient localization of youth addressed funds will be aimed. This big project serves us as a moral stimulus and obligation towards constructive cooperation between youths and political forums in the Balkan Peninsula.

This historic agreement between both countries gives us the political power and moral incentive to act. It serves us not only as a signal to continue lobbying in every structural level, but also as catalysis towards a new better future. We proved that youths are a most solid bridge of communication between the Balkan countries. Such a remark becomes important when, in historical perspective, we have witnessed so many times the plague of racism and xenophobia.

Youths and political forums (even the ones not presented in this material) serve not only as a guarantee of peace as a precondition for economic development, but also as a final disconnection from the paranoia of the whole region. Such an act of liberation cannot be a hostage of partisans, their

victims, medieval wars or medieval leaders.

We will be engaged in developing an integrated and prosperous educational system. Integrated in the sense of being connected and updated to the European labor market, while constantly warring against the marginalization of youths. Prosperous

in the sense of strengthening the state instruments which channel youths and their talents. We believe that these steps can challenge any dark vision of our future. They serve as orientation towards building a European perspective in the Balkan Peninsula

We are ready.

**Mariola Qesaraku**  
**Program Coordinator**



One of the main working areas of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in the Balkan countries has been regional cooperation. From the 90ies, the support has consisted in building a good neighborhood and continuous collaboration. Regional cooperation has been also a priority for different actors, where one of the most important is European Union. Considered a cornerstone for the integration of the region, regional cooperation in the case of the Western Balkans has been mainly driven by outside actors. Local ownership of its own affairs and finding solutions for common challenges would reflect political maturity of these countries and bring them closer to the EU family. However, while regional co-operation in different fields like trade, energy, infrastructure, justice and home affairs, cross-border co-

operation etc. is progressing steadily, political cooperation especially at the bilateral level has been going through oscillations. Especially problematic has been the case between Albania and Serbia.

Considering this background, cooperation among youth of political parties' forums is an excellent starting point for increasing partnership. BEOGRANA project, an initiative of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Tirana in cooperation with FES Belgrade, provided a forum of discussion for youth to exchange ideas, recognize common interests and how to become agents of change.

The conference explored mutual challenges of Albanian and Serbian youths in the field of labour market, national education and training systems, mutual recognition of diplomas and upgrading of research

---

The Challenges of Education for Albania and Serbia, seen from the perspective of youths

---

and innovation capacities in the region.

This conference improved intercultural dialogue among young people from Albania and Serbia, contributed in overcoming the existing stereotypes and identified fields of cooperation and joint initiatives for further exchanges. Youngsters realized that they face the same problems and challenges, and what unites them is more than what separates them.

The publication resulted from the conference provides a better

understanding of the common challenges that youth in both countries face. One of the highlights of their discussions was the importance of regional cooperation in the very interest of both countries in general and particularly for the youth. Constructing the region is an inside-out process; it has to be based on initiatives of actors from within the region, and youth could be a crucial actor. Through a shared understanding participants emphasized the need for more harmony and dignity in the Balkans.

**Joleza Koka**

**Chair, Euro-Socialist Youth Forum  
of Albania**



The Beograna Youth Conference was conceived as a joint activity between the Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania and the Democratic Youth of Serbia, with a big helping hand by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. When we thought about organizing such a conference, we didn't do it out of thin air. Some very specific conditions led us here. First of all, we saw a general need for better relations between the two countries, as driving forces in the Balkan Peninsula. History has plagued this region and politics usually remember. We have to change that.

Second, we know the main rule of Kantian peace: democratic countries tend to be pacific to other democratic countries. As a left-wing forum we saw such an international relations rule fall to pieces when we talk about Albania and Serbia. We had to come to something new, because we need a solution. So we thought that social-democratic countries have a far better

chance of being pacific to other social-democratic countries; social-democratic parties and youth forums have the best chance of being pacific to other social-democratic parties and youth forums. The solution came simple: if we want to build up some kind of durable friendship with our neighboring country, we need to have a good relationship with our twin youth forum.

So, creating the Beograna Conference was, firstly, a general and ideological need.

Our main topic of discussion, the challenges of education, came as a practical necessity. When we discussed about creating Beograna, in a matter of minutes we knew that education in both countries struggles by similar symptoms. Our vision is to have many points of view from youths concerning education, and build a corpus of thought which will serve as a lobbying instrument in both

our governments.

These theoretical and practical reasons inspired Beograna. As a final note, I welcome and thank everybody.

Nothing would have been possible without your participation and ideas. Let the conference begin!

**Jovana Majstorovic**

**International Relations –  
Democratic Youth of Serbia**



We are living in times, when relationship between Serbia and Albania are, I can freely say, in challenge. Even when we think that some progress has been made, new provocations from both sides happen and confuse us.

I believe in better future of our countries only if we work together. This is the reason this project “Beograna” was made.

My friend Joleza and I were sitting in Brighton, UK, discussing our country issues, points of views and problems of young people in our countries. You can imagine that we have more things in common than any other people sitting next to us that time.

Our idea is that if we work together, if we meet people if we try to create

policies for our problems together, we could overcome prejudices that for sure have been imposed to all of us, by media and society.

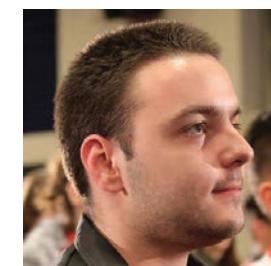
I believe in better future of our region, better cooperation between our countries and better life for all of us in the EU one day.

I believe that communication, sincere talk, exchange of knowledge and skills are the only way we could all succeed.

We are the ones who are having the future of our countries in our hands, and I am sure that we will be persistent and persuasive enough to respect the past and differences, but impose tolerance and solidarity as main values of our common fight for better future.

**Arnold Grabocka**

**Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of  
Albania**



According to American President Lincoln, today's students will eventually become tomorrow's rulers. This, in a simplistic way, illustrates the dynamism and flow from generation to generation, or as the transformation of morality through education. Such transformation can pervert or improve morality, hence the quality of future governments.

Adapting President Lincoln's simplistic statement to new globalist and internationalist trends, we can say that *“Today's students may or may not be tomorrow's Commissioners.”* Through the term “commissioners” I am referring through symbolism not only to the whole structure of the European Union, but also to internationalism as a doctrine and adaption. Such transformation through internationalism and globalism shifts the traditional dynamics of local labor markets. New markets appear, and

they tangle through direct and indirect regulations to the existing local labor market.

This new exposure between common labor market and local labor market can be of two kinds:

a. Shock-therapeutic; b. Gradualist

Shock-therapeutic exposure of both markets to one-another can vary in effects. It can be either revolutionary or chaotic. When all of a sudden common labor market is presented to a community/state which has had no previous experience in that matter, two reactions may arise: if the local labor market has been steady and meritocratic, shock-therapeutic contact with the common labor market will be complementary; performance will increase, students will get better, there will be a good in-and-out flow of ideas.

When the local labor market has been

purged by nepotism, a corrupt state administration and inefficiency, the shock-therapeutic approach will be disastrous. This may be the case of Albania.

Albanian education is marred by nepotism and inefficiency. European Integration and the EU Candidate Status bring up the risk of shock-therapy for the common labor market. That is why we need to act as soon as we can.

#### What do we need to do?

Firstly, we need to acknowledge that our local labor market is ineffective, ill, corrupted. We need to make peace with that.

Second, we need to understand that the shock-therapeutic impact with such a bad local labor market will bring about disastrous results.

Third, we need to start a transition from shock-therapeutic impact to gradualist impact. How can this be done? Through systematic bringing of symptoms from the common labor market, to the local labor market. Each month and year we need to bring to our educational system some new feature which will help come to natural terms with the common labor market. Only in that way can we avert the risk of disaster through internationalism.

**Aleksandra Božić**

**Democratic Youth of Serbia**



Today, we are going to talk about the main issues in Serbia when it comes about education and the main challenges at labor market and competitiveness of students coming from different faculties and universities. Literacy in Serbia is around 97% according to data we have from 2010. And national budget for education is 4,7% of Gross domestic product. Serbia is struggling with the brain drain since graduates are trying to find better working conditions in some other country. At the moment in Serbia we have mandatory primary education, and one of the main proposals of our party at previous elections was that the secondary education should be mandatory as well. Due to the election results, we didn't have opportunity to implement this proposal.

Last year Ministry of education, Science and Technological Develop-

ment has created a Strategy that sets goals until 2020. "Strategy 2020" has defined goals that should be accomplished by 2020 and through this process one of two mottos Lifelong learning. At the moment Serbia and our educational system is facing with a huge problem, and that problem refers to bought PhD, plagiarism and so-called universities and faculties that have been serving only to provide diploma with no knowledge in return.

In Serbia, there is a big difference between private and public universities, at the moment we are having 8 public universities located in 6 different cities and 12 private universities. According to the constitution, public and private sector should be treated as equal but in Serbia that is not the case. According to the Commission for the Accreditation all of these universities

have fulfilled all requirements and it that sense they are all equal. If we put that in the current situation with plenty of speculations, students coming from these universities have been put in awful situation since reputation that university is bearing because some decisions that have been made. Some of reforms have been already made but still those efforts were not enough, according to Bologna process some of faculties have adopted some of procedures but there are still big differences between faculties even though they are from the same university.

After their graduation students are facing with problem such is lack of experience since the internships were not mandatory during their studies. From the perspective of student that attends both private and public faculty

I can say that, at least in my field of studies, there is no such difference when I compare knowledge but definitely the main difference is the approach that professors have. Faculties are commonly willing to find an internship but companies in Serbia are not yet prepared to admit that number of students. For instance, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Economics, admit 3000 students per year. The number of perspective students is not harmonized with needs on the labor market and this problem is part of the Strategy 2020 that I mentioned before. Since 2012 Serbia has implemented a project called "Second Chance". This project was build for those that don't have primary education in order to improve their chances at the labor market. Half of attendants were Roma people.

**Romildo Kokthi**

**Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania**



I would say that education is the prerogative of the very existence of a democratic society.

What unites our two countries is the sudden change of system that occurred within a few months or a few years, in this period of time men and women, born and raised in a communist system have been thrown into the sea without a compass, without an adequate preparation for the challenges that would have been faced and we all know how it has ended: migration, poverty and wars, issues on which I will not dwell because we know the reasons for their existence.

I want to emphasize the inadequacy of the socio-economic system of my country. Inadequacy not only due to the policies of previous governments but because of the low societal engagement. A society that in many aspects is still tied to the history of the last 50 years. A society that didn't

know how to renew itself. A society where the culture is stuck since 23 years in the past with such an old-fashioned mentality we claim to hug the capitalist system.

I think it's clear by now that change can not 'be sharp and quick'. This is because we are facing the generational stratification of ideas.

It would be too easy to say that young people are the future and that the society could change by leaving them the right spaces. However, the right solution is to guarantee the young generation with a qualitative education. We know that without a good education not only you can't face the labor market, but even more important, you can not expect to be a young men or women to participate in an active way to social matters.

With proper education i don't only mean the type of training and

postgraduate university, which aims to train high-level professionals but especially the compulsory schooling education. Exactly here we want to focus the action of the responsible government.

The best high school graduates will become the best collage graduates, and the other student who won't attend university will still have an appropriated and specialized education to compete in the labor market.

Therefore it is necessary not only investing in education or "throwing" millions and millions in the school system but it is essential to do so with a clear and responsible purpose and if these plan will be developed, will lead to positive and important results within a few years. Emphasis should be given to professional and technical education because not everyone has the same vocation, the talents are numerous and span a variety of fields.

My country, Albania has an unemployment rate of 14%, such a fact should alarm everyone because there is a real risk of increasing the social polarization, which till now has been partly stemmed from the family system. If we won't do anything this reality could lead to reassert of social conflicts which are a danger to the

estate of any democratic regime.

Over the past 20 years the previous political forces has invested little amounts in the education system, and even worse, it had a total lack of any reform, no matter how small it was. This politics brought us to this situation, today we have a huge amount of graduates, often less competent, thanks to the enlightened attitude of the previous government.

What I want to forcefully reiterate is that not everyone can be doctors, lawyers, economists or engineers, someone will have to be even the plumber, a mechanic, a mason, a craftsman, we have to make clear to people the importance of work as a means of participation in social life as well as a mean of personal achievement. It's better to be a good carpenter than a bad doctor.

I would like to point out the fact that in other European countries, members of the union, in recent years there has been a smaller availability of certain professionals (those mentioned above) and it isn't necessary saying that those who have a professional and technical preparation are sometimes in advantage to achieve the labor market.

Albania and Serbia are official candidates to join the European Union, probably this admission will happen in

different time and modalities but the final result is already clear. What we have to do, in my opinion, is to adopt the European perspective.

Compared to the most developed European countries such as France, England and Germany with GDP respectively of \$ 3.048 billion, of \$ 2.204 billion, \$ 2.330 billion, our two countries GDP of \$ 24 billion for Albania and \$ 83 billions for Serbia are clearly marginal from an economic standpoint.

Adopting the European perspective means to start cooperating since now, so creating a single Balkanic market and eliminating barriers to the movement of goods, this way we can approach UE as economic partners,

overrunning the difficulties arising from small economies, inside a large market such as Europe.

Even our governments must be oriented towards the school system. We must ask what are and what will be in the most requested professions in the future. The labor market is flexible and you can blend in if you have the proper education. We know that lately we are gaining new professional figures such as web producer, quality expert, tourism marketing expert, custom expert etc.

To conclude I would say that adopting a mindset prospective in the education sector and sometimes anticipating the developments of the market are the key of success.

**Predrag Stankovic**

**Democratic Youth of Serbia**



Dear friends, dear comrades in the past two days we heard a lot of common problems bought from Albanian and Serbian side. Now is the time for acting for finding solution to solve these problem in best metter we can. My idea is to form groups made of Serbian and Albanian participants with a common goal with jut one idea to build trust.

Trust is a fascinating element of every relationships.

Where trust exists, all that's needed to manage most work is a brief conversation to ensure understanding and a handshake

Relationships can work with remarkably low levels of trust, as long as both people have a common objective, and at the beginning of any new relationship there is little to base trust upon.

But it's still very important if u

planning to build bridges between two different peoples

trust is built on three behaviours:

- Transparency: Tell the truth in ways people can verify and validate for themselves.
- Keeping commitments: Do what you say you will do.
- Trusting others: Extend trust to your team and they will trust you in return.

Trust that has taken years to build can be destroyed in minutes and rebuilding trust is far harder once it has been lost.

The first challenge facing project teams and their stakeholders is to identify a pragmatic level of trust that will allow the work of the project to proceed effectively.

After we became friends and start to trust each other, we need to determine common goals

To have common goals, you first need to define what those goals are. Goals generally can be divided into short term and long term. Short-term goals might include reaching a certain percent of understanding between two peoples. Long-term goals may include entering EU. Short-term goals should be in support of the larger long-term goals.

If goals are set high and participants never hear if they have been achieved, the entire idea of goal setting loses its credibility in building new relationship.

So first we need to determine some

achievable goals so our morale would go up.

Let say most obvious problem that pop out from our debate is missmeatching labor and job offer. So goul can be finding a ways how to solve that problem.

Labour mobility — both geographical and occupational definitions — is one way of tackling these mismatches by better matching the labour supply (with the right skills/educational qualifications/location) and labour demand.

**Denada Male****Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania**

I am here today to address to a matter that concerns us all, public education, for it is in my beliefs that an educated people creates the most certain path ahead itself. This path naturally goes towards the future and hopefully towards a bright one.

Time has come for Albanians not to ask anymore what their country can do for them, but what they can do for their country. In these terms, progressive steps are being made. Social justice and social welfare stand no longer as mere notions that one hears in the media. Instead I stand before you today dear fellows to connect these notions with our public education, which serves in fact as their respective guarantor.

For fair reasons social welfare is *strongly* linked to our educational system.

So far education remains the best means we use as a society to cultivate ourselves with a sense of responsibility in being a citizen, a citizen of Albania, a

citizen of Europe, a citizen of the world. Through education one learns that one has obligations towards the society, such as the consistent persistence in trying to improve the way we live as well as broaden our horizons. Education induces us to finally accept what is different. Education strengthens our communicational skills and the will to communicate in order for us to solve the common problems.

Problems. Here is a not-so-fancy word. It takes courage to acknowledge them let alone to face them. Albania has problems. Our current educational system is a problem.

We see injustice in it. We see disappointment with it. We see far too many bright students that miss opportunities simply because they don't live in the capital. We see and today we speak.

A youth that isn't being well-educated doesn't promise much. A nation who lacks access in a fair system of public

**The Challenges of Education for Albania and Serbia, seen from the perspective of youths**

education loses its will to improve itself.

They become voiceless. But again, here we are today; to see and to speak.

Hence it is through education that Albania, currently in its way of becoming a member of the European Union shall become a decent competitor in the free markets of the Union, which we all know that is united despite their differences.

For example, a novelty we can present is related to a simple tradition that has been carried from father to son throughout the years. Artisanal pieces, masterfully crafted and entirely original. They are much sought after because of these qualities, yet our high-schools and universities seem to lack interest in classes that could teach Albanians a form of art that can prove to be quite profitable. A form of art used not only as a souvenir but as a mean to advertise. The possibilities are endless.

Then again we have an issue with our diplomas. So hard to obtain one at times, and yet so useless once you decide to apply for a position in a firm that doesn't operate in Albania. Unrecognizable diplomas despite the fact that our universities have adapted to the same system used in the European universities. Aren't our universities then credible enough?

We demand social welfare yet we

risk the futures of the generations to come. Reforming the system is a start. Adapting our ways of thinking to what our futures should be like is another.

Social welfare means a healthier society, an improved nation. Economically speaking, the gap between the richest ten percent and the poorest ten percent is on levels that are supportable. The lowering of the gap doesn't necessarily come by making the poor, poorer and the rich, less rich. The main idea here is for the poorest ten percent not to find themselves living with less than 2\$ a day, which has been the case of many Albanian families these years. Therefore in terms of equity social welfare remains a must and public education will remain the surest guarantor of welfare as it seeks its way of improvement.

I say this to you, improvements in our respective educational systems wait for our full attention. This conference itself is proof that the matters have our interest and devotion. It won't take long for the action to come. And as it ought to start from somewhere, I invite you all to begin everything in your respective communities, by being more acceptant towards what is different, more willing to listen, understand and collaborate. But most importantly to be consent that development shall be achieved once you know that this country is not yours, it's not mine. It's ours.

**Stefan Josimov**

**Democratic Youth of Serbia**



The education system is essential component in any society, so it is needed here and the most investment. Namely, Serbia in the last 20 years, poorly invested in education, primarily due to the poor economic situation in which a country is located. I can say that they are responsible for it and the people who have to deal with high-level education. Our country needs a radical change in the entire education system - from primary school to university. But when we talk about higher education, the first and one of the biggest problems that young people face, is just tuition fee. First, the average young person in Serbia, you must first allocate funds for primary teaching in colleges, then you pay only the entrance exam (additional costs are: forms, verification of documents ...), and after passing the entrance exam, he had to pay tuition that ranges from 1.000 to 2.500 euros to the state and up

to 3.300 euros to private schools. The average salary in Serbia amounted to RSD 45.000, the unemployment rate is above 30%, so that the conditions of study virtually impossible. The solution of these problems would certainly be a free education, but as we are all aware of the economic situation, it might be logical to in the Law on higher education, reduce the amount of tuition and allow all students equal studies.

As for the quality of education, we are proud that we are in some segments at a high level. However, on the other hand, we can say that a large number of young people studying for professions that are on the market a long time ago not looking. In order to raise the level of quality, it is necessary to introduce the directions in high schools and colleges, which will be about the basics of entrepreneurship, as well as placing greater emphasis on technical sciences.

Education in Serbia may be the main engine to run economic stability. If we were to educational processes comply with the requirements of the market, for 5-10 years to get experts in key areas, and therefore run better production, which suggests that the region and the EU. This kind of reform

we would have guaranteed a better social position of young people who would immediately after completion of the education process, first started working relationship and could count on starting a family, as was the case at the time of Yugoslavia.

**Sonil Frashëri**

**Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of  
Albania**



Education as creating bridges of collaboration and removing prejudices between two countries.

Hello Everyone. First of all, I want to thank our serbian friends for their presence here in Albania. I am very happy regarding the initiative by albanian youth forum and serbian

youth forum to have this conference and I hope that this could be a good start for such organisations, why not, with all left wing forums in Balkans. This conference is about strengthen of collaboration between youth of a political side through education. This conference, according to me, will serve to create a new era on the way people of our political side today, and people of our countries tomorrow, will face problems that will be caused by many many reasons and will require a common solution, in a way that our perspective moves forward. By holding this conference, we can say

that this is already an added brick to the bridge of the collaboration between us. Education is a very important process on creating basis of a sane society and capable to face challenges. Challenges that have and always will need open minds, collaborative and not prejudicial. I am not trying to say that it's up to us to face all that but everything starts from something little, like today.

Balkan is always called a powder bag, and this even because the history. Here, around 100 years ago, started the world war; many people are being killed between themselves.

So it has been a region where open minds doesn't speak. This year is the first year of the balkan history that noone has a gun on his hands aiming his neighbour. Finally peace is being installed and this is the possibility where open minds can discuss. We, as balkans have to understand

**The Challenges of Education for Albania and Serbia, seen from the perspective of youths**

---

that together, we are stronger than alone and separated, in economical aspect, number of population etc. We are round 50 million people, a considerable figure on the market for every serious company. 50 million consumers, 50 million people of a region that collaborate. We should understand that. Education can do it very well. We are a region with thousands years of history and we strongly need an exchange of cultural expos. We shall know each-other. It is time that universities of our countries work on this direction. I would be very glad, for example, if my serbian friends realize the distance between Belgrade and Tirana by dividing velocity of the vehicle with time they spend traveling. It would be more interesting to learn physics like this than just read it in the book. I would be very happy if I could guess the age of a characteristic serbian wearing just by seeing it. We have a lot cultural elements that we can share. We have to be proud of them.

On the other hand we have to operate as one market unit in order to be more powerful. We must collaborate in everything. Creating bridges of collaboration means that we have to deal with a river. And more we have to deal everything that separate us. What does separate us? This is not a simple

question. I am not trying to say, we speak different languages, different cultures etc. We are separated by a strong, old and stupid mentality of nationalism. We prejudice each other not because school told us so. But someone who is blinded by thinking about his national superiority or thinking that some neighbours will grab the gun and shoot his country. This someone speak to his child to hate, teach him about racism etc. Some hundred kilometers from here, these days, for this reason many people are injured. This is wrong. It has to be changed. We must see each other as humans in the first place. We have different cultures but we are one region, one market.

This is not the invention of the year. This is to copy from Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg (Benelux). So, through the right mechanisms it has to be worked to raise the selfconsciousness of the society that stereotypes are a black holes and they are not a characteristic of a developed societies. Fighting this is the best way to raise an open and sane society. Universities should organize exchanges of groups of young people between countries and to transfer the experience to other young people through discussions and debates. We should stimulate implementing of the

projects with multi-ethical goals by giving a chance to the young people to communicate with each other, so prejudices can be broken. To do that it should be created a strong mechanism to inform people for this case and for creating a sane culture on our land. A university, as an educational institution, should be a place to meet students from other countries to exchange knowledge and experience. Its role is to create an ambience where students of all nationalities can communicate.

For example it is a good project to create a network of students from various countries who speak different languages and belong to different cultures. By promoting human values and stability and development in the region, universities are a basis for the beginning of the development processes. There is no doubt that regional development depends on good relations between neighbours in the region.

Multicultural education must permeate a broad range of activities and beliefs with an eye toward fostering and implementing democratic values such as social justice, equality, tolerance, prejudice reduction and appreciation of diversity.

Prejudice reduction is a constant

concern. Systemic changes can only occur when prejudice reduction and knowledge transformation are extended to social activism.

Schools have the potential to be the effective agents of social change. By providing model environments where democratic ideals are valued and implemented, students are able to see the reification of democratic ideals and at the same time they are empowered to construct the knowledge necessary to combat social injustices.

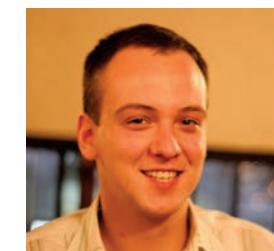
Multicultural education enables students to critically examine traditional mainstream and hegemonic narratives across subject areas. In doing so, students develop the critical faculties necessary to challenge the hierarchies that serve as tools for prejudice construction and social injustice.

While tensions will always arise in communities with members from different ethnic, national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, dialogue is possible and provides students with enormously valuable opportunities for learning.

We are all about to be together one day in the United Europe.

**Stefan Simic**

**Democratic Youth of Serbia**



In a modern society it is not possible to achieve Social Welfare without high percentage of the population included in the education system. In Serbia the situation is not promising. According to the population census from 2012, there is some progress comparing with the situation from 10 years before, but the results are still far from satisfying. In Serbia there is about 14% of the population without any education, 11% of population had not finished elementary school, and only about 11% of population has high (school) education, over the 50% of population don't use computers, and the low score on PISA tests is happening from year to year. High school education is still not obligatory in Serbia. The percentage of population with a college degree is far from 40% which is the goal that EU wants to achieve in year of 2020. Reaction of the part of the responsible officials on low score on PISA tests

is humiliating – the problem is not in education system, the problem is in the tests themselves! Reform of the high education system is process without ending. Lack of tradition in private education makes impossible complete including of private schools and universities in education system. The only result of all changes and reforms in education system is increase of educational costs!

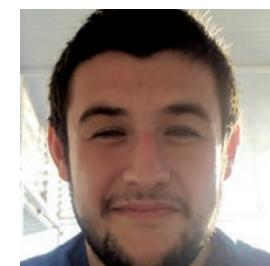
Obviously Serbia as former socialistic country has tradition in Public Education, and it needs to use existing resources and try to stabilize the situation in education system, and try to develop private education step by step, to make high school education obligatory, which as the result should have higher rate of population included in education system. If the education structure among population is better, then there are higher chances to achieve the Social Welfare. On the other side,

the present situation in Serbia serves to develop populist and nationalist ideologies, and right-oriented political ideas. Progressive politics, politics of conciliation and good relations with neighbors and introduction of the

clear rules in internal functioning of state – those are the ideas that finds low support among people of Serbia, that subsequently makes it harder for our society to achieve Social Welfare.

**Alban Nako**

**Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of Albania**



I believe in Education. Without a good education I could not be here tonight, speaking to you in English.

Learning is a life-long process. The entire process of social life means that individuals and social groups learn consciously to develop their personal qualities, abilities and knowledge for the benefit of the national and international communities.

Today we face a challenge!

A challenge for good education and better universities.

A challenge our generation must Win. Obviously, change in our educational institutions is required.

I am glad to inform you, my friends that a Reform in the education system is going to take place in Albania, and this is a good thing.

Students, finally, are thinking, gathering, lobbying their pro and

against arguments;

Teachers, professors are publicly discussing their pro and against arguments;

Our parents seek more and more information, and this is a good thing.

Another good thing about this Reform is that, education is starting to set aside the meaning of the traditional division in state universities and private universities, converging towards the notion of “public universities”.

Higher education in Albania, as in all developed states, is considered a public service and a public good, and therefore a major goal of this reform is to safeguard the basic principles of this education such as: the principle of equal opportunities, free competition, and above all, being a public service, therefore accessible to all in base of meritocracy.

It is very important to think about a unified and standardized higher education in Albania, which will create opportunities for a co measurable and competitive higher education, in regional and European “markets”.

Higher education must respond, fit and anticipate the changes of the labor market and even the developments of the state. By creating premises for a higher education that responds to the demands of the labor market, as well as to the strategic development of Albania.

One of the goals of The Education Reform is to create a higher education based on financial grounds durable to withstand changes and economic cycles.

Therefore I am convinced that the way this reform is going to re-formulate the notion of public education will guarantee the Social Welfare.

Now that we have understood in what the Reform consists, let's put this knowledge in practice.

When discussing the ways and forms of financing, today the world is starting to loose the meaning of the traditional division in state universities and private universities, converging towards the notion of “public universities”.

So it is reasonable first to create a new status - public universities, a foundation type, which will include both state and private universities.

In this phase, the conversion will encourage universities towards “a center” in terms of their status. So to achieve the transition from autonomy to independence, public universities will change to foundations with the state as their “founder”. Even private universities will have this opportunity, if they wish, to change their status to non-profit universities, but in this case, the “founder” of the university will remain the original creator.

Funds from the state's budget will only be given to the universities with the same status.

Here should be noted that universities which are attached to the group (status) must apply the same rules in their operation, as well as for good organization. In cases where private universities may want to get the new status, the owner gives up the ownership and takes the merit of the founder, just as the state gives up the ownership and takes the merit of the founder.

Now that we have a better understanding of the new concept, let me share with you what is going to

happen in the next generations.

Higher education in Albania must remain a public service and as such the state is the main guarantor of this principle, based on current constitutional disposition. Although the state will be the main guarantor of public education and will define the main directions of development, it does not mean necessarily that the state will be his only sponsor.

Public institutions of higher education do not have the Constitutional autonomy, which should be guaranteed under the current legislation in force.

The constitutional disposition does not guarantee effective mechanisms of successful management in order to offer a quality in education in the current development of society. On the other hand, the non-public higher

education brought no expectations related to the quality improvement in higher education, although positively influenced on the growth of the number of students in Albania.

The new concept of “Public universities” should not be interpreted that the existing forms of education will not be anymore allowed, on the contrary they will be.

This is due to the diversity and allowing expansion of the area for education and scientific research.

We face a challenge. We are consciously aware of the importance of our decisions. The solution that we offer may not be the perfect one, but we believe in what we have learned so far. And one thing we have learned for sure. We believe in education.

**Milica Glisic**

**Democratic Youth of Serbia**



The education system is the most complete picture of a society and in particular points to the process of overall development of country.

The modern education system, provided that is an overall system, that is, a system, under which all youth categories are encompassed by equal conditions, regardless of their financial and social status, is the greatest guarantee of the rapid socio-economic, cultural, scientific, spiritual and any other development.

The transition from the field of higher education to the labor market is crucial for the reproduction of social inequality, especially education as a basic mechanism and channel of socially mobility. Differences between young people derive from their social position and they are in connection with different starting options, different channel of mobility

in transition and also different aspirations and achievements.

The transition from centralized economy to an open market, leading up to the opening of a large number of private universities. Also at state universities field of education is no longer free. Putting university on the market meant the transformation of the learning center to the service provider. Students cannot influence the price of tuition and they are growing every year. Tuition fee in Serbia costs from 450 euro to 2500 euro and student living costs exceed 3000 euro, while we live in society where people have income over 400 euro monthly per household. Tuition fees are a significant discriminatory factor according to descent, given that among the budget students, an above average proportion of them are of better socioeconomic status. As a result students from poor families

cannot afford it studying. Studying become luxury and opportunities only for rich people. Poor education is one of the key factors of reproduction of social inequality, as well as barriers into the labor market, and beyond- adequate information and realization civil rights. Low-educated people are exposed to higher risks of unemployment and unfavorable condition of employment, why they are exposed to higher risks of poverty. Therefore the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills becomes a necessary precondition to the better employment and out of poverty.

An important indicator of international quality and efficiency of the education system is availability and quality of education for vulnerable categories

of children (especially children in villages, poor, children with disabilities and special needs...) Starting from the human approach "equal opportunity for all" and realizing that in the current situation we must not "give up" any talent and ambitious member of our community that is ready and able to make a contribution to the development, we have just a chance to view education as a process of optimization and not just economic rationalization education and school resource. For example, innovative approach of using school resources in rural areas should give new impulse to the development of these areas and the entire countries (the concept of rural school as a multifunctional center and as a center of development of rural communities).

**Alban Avdullai**

**Euro-Socialist Youth Forum of  
Albania**



Education is the core to progress of society and as such it's quite important for every country around the globe.

In many places overall education is considered to be of the highest investments one can make and keeping this in mind these places put a high focus on education in the political arena and other such aspects. Education is perceived as the key to solving many problems that a nation may have and as being seen as such it allows that furthering education can become the solution that is being searched for.

Education is also seen as a key ingredient in cooperation between countries, which would also be a way to bring forth sensibility and understanding between neighboring countries and those that are farther apart.

In these moments we are before

an important cooperation between our two countries, because of this I hope to contribute so as to make this cooperation as healthy and successful as can be.

Focusing on our educational system I would have to say that for many years Albania hasn't given it the importance it needs to have in order for our society to get the results that it is looking for in our progress as a country, and so I shall list a few problems that have come from this not respecting of the educational system.

Problems:

1. For many years Albania has put more importance on quantity over quality- During the governance of the Democratic Party in our country, every passing day, the education system suffered a great blow in function and law obedience for education. This means that throughout the years

**The Challenges of Education for Albania and Serbia, seen from the perspective of youths**

---

the number of students attending universities was more important than the quality and work that these students put forward and so blocking the process of reaching certain goals set by the educational system.

2. The lack of orientation of the students for important school branches that the labor market most needed. The right to study is a basic right for everyone, but close to these rights the government must act in accordance to them and together they can stimulate economic progress. These last years there has been a great lack of orientation of these students to pick those important school branches that are extremely important for the labour market, therefore most of the students choose those three major school branches which are: Criminal justice, medicine, economy and consequently it overloads the mentioned universities.

3. The absence of professionals in different areas and unemployment- The neglect shown towards the educational system has made it so

that furthering your studies was seen as an opportunity to get a diploma and not as an opportunity to grow professionally, because of this today we have an absence of people with the professional abilities to do certain duties. Also we lack professionals that are needed in the labour market because students weren't oriented towards those branches and so a small number of the students who have graduated have been able to be employed, the rest are confronted with unemployment because the market can't fulfill their needs for work when it is over populated with the same professions

By focusing on these problematic situations created in our country I would like to stimulate this cooperation so that we can come up with some common solutions, for these issues that worry the societies of our countries, to put us on a more productive line of education and a more productive educational system as a whole.

**Boris Popovic**

**Democratic Youth of Serbia**



There are three key issues that Serbia is facing regarding education and the labor market:

1. Educational system is not harmonized with the requirements of the labor market

Serbia must invest in the educational system reforms because graduates instead of finding jobs end up waiting for a job at the employment agency.

Examples of non-compliance of the education system to the labor market are numerous, such as:

- The discrepancy between the requirements of the labor market and the University enrollment policies

As a result of that discrepancy we have great disproportion between the number of graduates and the job opportunities. The enrolment policies of the University are concerned with the financial aspects. The Universities

tend to enroll as many students as possible in order gain profit because the fees per year and per students are very high. As a result of that the quality of the studies is not very high and the students cannot benefit from their studies. Graduates educated for certain vocations cannot find employment many years after graduation and are obliged to seek job opportunities elsewhere for example within a different industry or even abroad (the so called brain drain).

- A large number of Universities does not provide students with internship opportunities during their studies

Such situation reflects on students in the way that they are not prepared to undertake their job responsibilities and this makes it hard for them to find a job. Employers seek employees with experiences because they do not want to invest into their training.

What are the possible solutions to these issues?

- Changing the enrollment policies
- Introducing mandatory internship for students (at both high school and university levels)

2. The educational system is outdated and produces graduates with inadequate skills and abilities

This means that both high school and university students lack skills and abilities much required by employers and because of that they find it difficult to find a job. Students acquire diplomas that were needed 20 years ago and have very little to do with the business requirements of today.

There have been many technical changes as well as changes in the society. Some old vocations have disappeared and there is a need for new vocations.

For example: In the wood processing industry employers need workers capable of working on modern machines, however during their education students never get the chance to acquire any practice on those machines. So for employers within the wood industry the skills

and abilities of their future employees are not very useful.

3. The educational system and industry sectors are out of line

It seems that Serbia has not yet decided which industry sectors it's going to be its primary industry sector.

In order to improve its economy Serbia should work on strengthening a primary industry (for example either the automobile industry, the agricultural sector, the oil industry or some other industry at its choice).

For example: In Croatia tourism is the main industry so they have larger investments in the education of students who will work in that specific industry.

It should be mentioned that political parties although speak a lot about education in the election campaigns don't do much afterwards. The Country needs a clear plan, not just a list of wishes, to overcome these issues. It is very important to systematically monitor market trends and the educational system and the institutions and the decisions makers are responsible for that.