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EDITORIAL

Over the past two months, Školegijum published several articles on its website about malversations in the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Education, Science and Youth. The total of the non-transparently and, odds are, illicitly spent budgetary funds amounts to millions. Whether it was the skis, adult education, fire alarm system, futsal goals or educational platforms, the facts show that the ruling party, with the tacit approval of its coalition partners (SDA and SBB) has been using public education as a resource from which the funds are diverted to their private accounts (the party accounts, their own or the accounts of their business friends?) to the detriment of the quality of the teaching process.

Unfortunately, the tacit approval extends even beyond the assembly majority – it goes to the school principals, and further to the teachers themselves. The best example of the great moral crisis of the primary school education is the equipment procurement for the so-called ski school. The total of 65 school principals received an unlawful instruction to sign the contract with the company called Intersport, and every single one of them did it; no one, not one, not a single one of them, reported it to the relevant inspectorate or the media, thus defending the school's and their personal and professional integrity.

The heads of public institutions in which more or less all the children of the BiH capital are educated and **raised** gave us an example of what to do when faced with the force of law(lessness): be obedient and subservient.

The majority of them wish that nobody noticed what happened; that no one added up the number of skis bought by the end of the winter; that no one wondered how the money was diverted to some *ski* school we didn't know anything about then and we don't know anything about now, that they were not criticised for agreeing so easily and so quickly to be errand boys to a person utterly inadequate for the office and responsibilities of a minister of education. But that question has to be asked.

In the complex endeavour of running a school, every one of them invokes the law every day. What gives them the right now to ask teachers, parents and students to abide by the law, if they themselves failed to do it, when they could have, should have, and had to abide by it? What kind of role models are they to the children if they teach them to blindly obey despotic superiors? Is the price of their office always putting the interest of their party before that of their pupils? Is a pair of Intersport skis really a better value than an assistant in the inclusive education? Is the phony website osnovna.ba more useful than supplementary classes for which the teachers would be paid decently?

Is it really possible that everything that the Sarajevo children need to know in the 21st century can be distilled into a few old *sayings*:

No sword cuts off a bowed head... If you can't beat them, join them ... The hero dies first... Once bitten, twice shy ... If God had wanted man to fly, He would have given him wings? ●



Empty Phrases for Europe

A Masterpiece of Bizarre Disunity

Ines Haskić

A brief analysis of the BiH answers to the 38 questions posed in Chapter 26 (Education and Culture) of the Questionnaire of the European Commission as a part of our country's EU accession process.

In early December 2016, the European Commission officially started with the preparation of the Opinion on the Application of Bosnia and Herzegovina for membership of the European Union (from February of the same year) by delivering the European Commission Questionnaire consisting of 3,242 questions grouped in 33 chapters to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The expected timeframe for submitting the answers in English was six months (this deadline was observed by all the neighbouring countries – submitting the answers within the period of two to five months). However, the representatives of BiH government submitted the answers as late as February 2018, a little over a year after it had been received, to the President of the European Commission. The explanation for this delay in all the media was that 1,100 different institutions at thirteen government levels (state,

entity, cantonal and Brčko District) in Bosnia and Herzegovina took part in answering the Questionnaire, and that they had to reach consensus on the content of each of the answers to the Questionnaire, while the answers of the neighbouring countries came from a single – state – level of government. There were 38 questions on education in Chapter 26, which were answered on 400 pages. The answers show that there was no central expert body to integrate the answers of the lower levels of government, harmonize and *polish* them, and that the final result is a mix of different approaches, policies, and authorities. The answers provided are contradictory, full of empty phrases and they show the numerous absurdities of BiH education, to the point where Latin and Cyrillic scripts are both used in a single sentence. How will the European reader find his way in this masterpiece of bizarre disunity? Below is a brief overview of 400 pages of a picture of BiH education, composed by joint efforts of many anonymous clerks. (N.B. The level of government that gave the particular answer is given in the brackets at the end of each quotation. The titles reflect the reader's exasperation over the clichés, empty claims and false statements. All the highlights are added.)

A. Examples of Contradictions

1. Statistics

Statistical researches are conducted on pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education, as well as the education finance statistics. The collected data are published in annual periodicals. (BiH)

vs.

The Agency for Statistics of BiH is currently unable to project development for the next ten years, does not have the relevant data on education finance statistics, does not have relevant information on vocational education and training, but the Agency could in the future make evaluations for certain indicators. *We do not possess statistical data on the transition of students from one level of education to another, as well as on the transition from school to work, and on the role of educational institutions, social partners and enterprises, as complete data at the level of BiH, for the reason that not all competent institutions have the instruments and methods to collect these data. (BiH)*

2. Access for the Persons with Special Needs

In the Sarajevo Canton the standards and norms for performing higher education activities prescribe the obligation of higher education institutions to eliminate architectural and urban barriers, or to ensure access to facilities of high-

er education institutions as well as movement within the facility to persons with special needs. vs.

In the Sarajevo Canton all educational institutions have eliminated the architectural barriers to access to buildings (horizontal movement). The largest number of educational institutions in the Sarajevo Canton has not systematically resolved the issue of infrastructure, i.e. adaptation of facilities for students with developmental disabilities (vertical movement – elevator).

3. Vertical Zig-Zag Mobility

With the aim of modernising the education system and labour mobility, great attention is paid to strengthening the vertical and horizontal mobility of the vocational secondary school students on all levels, both inside and outside the country. (RS)

vs.

If the students wish to continue their education at a higher education institution, they may enrol in the fourth grade of a secondary technical school of the same vocation, if their previous overall performance was very good and their conduct was exemplary, and if so approved by the Teachers' Council, thus creating for them a possibility of vertical mobility to continue education. (RS)

4. Student in the Centre of Nothing

Professional development programmes for teachers at all levels of Una-Sana Canton are ready to train teachers for student-based teaching and competence-based learning to the highest degree. (USC)

vs.

Study programmes are not evaluated: therefore, it cannot be determined to what degree the programmes are suitable for student-based teaching and competence-based learning. (USC)

5. Everything Is Ready for Changes

It is anticipated that the system of education should provide all necessary conditions for students and adults to start and readily accept changes, take responsibility and have an entrepreneurial approach and a clear orientation towards achieving goals and success. (BiH)

vs.

Adapting education and training to the needs of knowledge society and industrial and technological changes in the Una-Sana Canton is not sufficient. The reform process is slow. Compared to EU standards, the educational level of the population is low, very small percentage of adults participating in lifelong learning programmes, and the education system dropout rate is great. (USC)

6. A Lot of Work with Unemployment

The Ministry performs a series of activities such as: professional orientation of students; profes-

Photo
Before page: Answer to
the Questionnaire: A
basket full of rotten eggs

sional informing of students in cooperation with the Employment Service; conducting a survey for the 9th grade elementary school students; conducting Public consultations with businessmen, parents, teachers and others; holding meetings with the tripartite council; performs secondary school presentations; visit to companies and businessmen in the Cantonal area; media presentation of secondary schools. (ZDC)

vs.

There are recognisable elements of structural unemployment as a result of the lack of consistency of the labour force structure and its demand, thus upon completing the education an unemployed person cannot meet the demands of the vacancies. This type of unemployment, among other things, occurs as a result of changes in technology, such changes are not followed by adequate changes in the structure of occupations and the labour force education. (...) Very small percentage of adults are participating in lifelong learning programmes. (ZDC)

7. Someone Else's Children, Our Backs

As for the children of EU nationals aged between 6 and 14, which is the primary-school age, i.e. the age of compulsory school attendance for BiH citizens, currently there are 35 such children in BiH all of which were granted temporary residence on grounds of family reunification. **None of the children of EU Member-State nationals at the above age has been granted residence on grounds of education.** (BiH)

vs.

In 2016, there were 35 children from the Republic of Croatia, Republic of Italy, Republic of Slovenia, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Luxembourg. (SC)

B. Different Educational Policies at the State Level

or

The Educational Systems with and without the Empty Phrases

1. Disorientation in the Professional Orientation

Primary schools keep lists of professional orientation for each student during the course of education, which contains registered competencies and interests of students as per certain fields. Professional orientation sheets are issued to students together with certificate of completion of the primary school. (TC)

vs.

There is no adequate systemic support in terms of continuous monitoring of students, their competencies, preferences and interests, which would provide students with recommendations

for professional guidance, or for enrolment in a particular type of school. Students do not receive adequate support from the system through secondary education and higher education systems, in terms of their guidance and inclusions in the labour market. High schools rarely carry out local market research concerning the staff demands. This is also rarely done by higher education institutions. (USC)

2. Professional Training

Knowledge, skills and competences are transferred by way of continuous training and education of teaching staff and through good practice examples. (BPC) Supervision includes continuing and professional supervision of professional and educational activities of educational institutions, their bodies, principals, educational workers, teachers and associates, as well as of accomplishment of curricula and annual school work programmes. (RS) Transfer of innovation and good practice in training in the regular system of education and training is carried out through continuous training and education of the teaching staff, and by way of the best practices the knowledge, skills and competences are being transferred. (...) Cooperation with the economic sector ensures the raising of the quality of the teaching level, but also the continuous improvement of teachers. (ZDC)

vs.

The Law on Secondary Education prescribes that the Ministry shall adopt the Rulebook on evaluation of employees' work. However, such a rulebook has not been adopted yet. Schools do not perform self-evaluation. (...) There are no mechanisms in place to impose any consequences on the school for the presented result of the educational work. External monitoring – External evaluation of students' achievement is not performed in secondary schools. There is no externally organised school-leaving examination – Matura. No testing is performed at the cantonal level for individual teaching areas. Regulations on introducing the mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of educational institutions are not in process of adoption. (...) All this results in the fact that the standards of achievement after completing secondary and higher education have not been defined, that there are no established programmes to modernise the skills of teachers, and that there are no programmes for the inclusion of vulnerable groups. (USC)

3. Cjeloživotno učenje

Kao cilj osnovnog obrazovanja postavljeno je osposobljavanje učenika da razvije sposobnosti samostalnog učenja i da uči tokom cijelog života, a kao cilj srednjeg obrazovanja podsticanje učenika na cjeloživotno učenje. (KS)

vs.

Informalno učenje nije zaživjelo na području Unsko-sanskog kantona (...) Cjeloživotno učenje kao kontinuiran proces još uvijek izostaje. (USK)

3. Lifelong Learning

The aim of the primary education has been determined as enabling students to gain the abilities needed for individual learning and to learn throughout their lives, and the aim of secondary education has been determined as motivating students for lifelong studying. (SC)

vs.

Informal learning has not taken root in the Una-Sana Canton (...) Lifelong learning as a continuous process is still missing. (USC)

4. Job Training

The grounds for curricula adoption for all types of schools include general and vocational contents based on the achievements of science, technology, culture, and arts, necessary to perform tasks of certain level of complexity within the scope of work, or necessary for further education. (RS) The Ministry ensures that labour market demands and requirements are in line with the need to establish and organise the work of secondary vocational schools, via employment services, professional orientation and providing information on the choice of profession and organizing a public debate on student enrolment plan for secondary schools. The introduction of new curricula in secondary schools, i.e. new occupations in line with the labour market demands is one of the ways of meeting needs for a particular type of occupation. (TC)

vs.

Curricula are not aligned with the labour market demands and for this reason nowadays there is a need for additional professional qualification, requalification and additional training... (ZDC) As far as skills development is concerned, it is also noteworthy that educated people do not have the required skills upon studies completion but acquire them during work in the enterprises. (...) In USC, there are issues in harmonisation of the educational system with the labour market demands for many years now. Considering that the USC labour market has not been sufficiently developed, the process of connecting schools and higher education institutions with the labour market is practically insignificant. (USC) There is no either developed cantonal strategy for increasing the number of employees, or any other document that would indicate a lack of necessary labour force for a particular branch, i.e. manufacturing and service activity. (C10)

C. Tell Me Lies, Tell Me Sweet Little Lies...

1. Politics? No way.

(...) Expert committees give their expert opinions and recommendations about the higher education institutions and study programmes with clear statements on the level of fulfilment of prescribed standards and quality criteria, entirely independently of competent educational authorities, political structures, higher education institutions and the Agency.

2. Freedom Is All Around

Academic staff have the freedom of examining and testing the acquired knowledge and offering new ideas and opinions, without exposing themselves to the risk of losing their job or any other privileges... (RS)

3 A Diploma for Every Poor Individual

With support of social partners, programmes of additional qualifications obtaining are implemented for socially vulnerable groups without charge and under more favourable conditions. (SC)

4. Full-Blown Feminism

The contents which promote gender equality are an integral part of the syllabus. (USC)

5. The Practical Theory

There are specialised classrooms for the realisation of practical teaching in schools, depending on the occupation, in accordance with pedagogical standards and norms. (RS)

6. Knowledge Transplantation

In schools, teachers have the possibility to organise demonstration classes in which they have a chance to introduce colleagues to the innovations in the teaching process. Activities of panels of experts, particularly by way of demonstration classes and various round tables, allows the exchange of good practices at the school level or between schools.

7. To Minorities and Beyond...

(...) The Ministry must provide for funds, recourses for training the teachers who will deliver the instruction in the language of the national minority, premises, and other conditions for delivering the instruction and printing of school books in the languages of national minorities. (USC)

8. Partnership of Modernisation and Access

Additional support for learning modernisation is an established partnership between companies and adult education providers enabling adult education teachers and teachers to access modern technology used in the work. (BiH)

D. The Absurdity of BiH Education

1. Ah, the Needs

Private preschool institutions are founded for the need for young people to provide themselves with



a job, but also for the actual need to provide such services in areas that either lack a preschool institution in the public sector or public kindergartens do not have the capacity to receive all children and “waiting lists” are being created with the children waiting even for several years. (RS)

2. Good Job!

The International University Brčko provided the information on its IT systems by e-mail in which they stated that they possess adequate IT equipment that ensures quality teaching. (BD)

3. Developing Relationships and Feelings

Article 32 paragraph 4 of the Law on Primary Education of the Tuzla Canton (and ZDC) sets forth that Common core curricula: a) ensures that a feeling of commitment and belonging to BiH is developed in the educational process, b) guarantees and ensures good quality education (...)

4. Religion – Obligation with the Possibility of Choice

The curriculum for the subject of religious education in primary schools is adopted by the minister at the proposal of the competent authority of the corresponding church or religious community. (RS) The religious education curricula are adopted by the religious community and verified by the Ministry. (USC, BPC, RS...) Exceptionally, in the religious schools, the specific contents may exceed 30% in relation to the established curriculum, but no more than 35%. (TC) **The subject religious education is compulsory-optional subject.** (BPC) The subject of religious

education is a compulsory subject with the right of choice; hence it does not belong to the optional but to compulsory subjects and is a part of regular classes. (SC) Students who do not wish to attend religious education classes may not be in any manner brought into an unfavourable position compared to other students. Students learn about other beliefs and religions, especially those present in BiH. For students who do not attend religious education classes, the school will deliver **religious culture** as an alternative subject. (USC) The primary school pupils belonging to other religions can have access, if their parents choose so, to a different kind of religious education, whereas in secondary schools there is an additional option to choose the alternative subject of Ethics. (WHC) A school may not take any measures or activities that could restrict the freedom of expression of one's own religious convictions and the learning about different religious convictions. (USC) It is the primary school's responsibility to work towards creating a culture of **respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the area where it operates**, as laid down by the Constitution and international human rights instruments signed by BiH. (USC)

5. You Got Your Armchair, Now Bring the Membership Card Back

While giving consent for their appointment, all principals appointed to primary and secondary schools, as well as their vice principals, must submit a certified statement proving they are not members of any political party body. (ZDC)

6. LoHE, Check This Out!

The State's obligation to finance the work of private institutions of higher education is not prescribed. However, the Law on Higher Education foresees the possibility of establishing a cooperation between the public and private sectors, in accordance with the Law on Public Private Partnership and the regulations governing public-private partnership. (RS)

7. How in the World?!

The composition of the school board has to reflect the national structure of the parents and students, the school staff and the local community according to the valid census. (TC)

8. Examining to Perceive by Applying Surveys

Cantonal employment services, in cooperation with the FBiH Employment Bureau, periodically examine the labour market to perceive the labour market needs. The job of examining the labour market is conducted by applying surveys by employment services for the area they cover. (TC)

9. Lisbon, My Poor Son, Where Are You Going?

Uneven criteria and (diploma) recognition procedures are evident, and the practice of recognition based on the principles of degree validation instead of formal recognition as foreseen by the Lisbon Convention is still present. (...) The fee for recognition of foreign higher education qualification for the purpose of further education is not regulated by the law, and the prices differ from institution to institution. (RS)

10. Regulating the Issue of Acquiring Knowledge

Since the Rulebook on use of academic titles and obtaining of scientific and professional titles at the level of BiH has not been adopted, competent education institutions govern the issue of obtaining academic titles, science and professional occupations, by adopting their own laws or regulations.

11. Inspectors, Where Art Thou?

The Inspectorate for Education controls the legality of operation, and the Pedagogical Institute which has not been founded yet is supposed to be responsible for expert pedagogical supervision. The higher education inspector does not exist. (WHC)

12. Equal Opportunities for the Rich

In private schools, tuition fees are paid in accordance with the founder's decision and there is no need for the Ministry's approval of the amount. (...) These schools must ensure equal opportunities for the enrolment of all candidates. (USC)

13 What Tendency?

In RS the number of graduates from the private higher education institutions increased until the academic year 2013/14 compared to the public higher education institutions, although the number of students studying at public higher education institutions was twice as high as in private higher education institutions. Following the 2013/14 this tendency has turned the course (...) (RS)

14. Resistance against a Greater Step Forward

The major difficulties (for the reform implementation) are unpreparedness or even resistance of certain administrative and school structures to changes (system ossification) and the lack of funds in order to create prerequisites through professional development for a greater step forward towards ensuring quality in education (planning and quality management, evaluation of achievements). (PC)

15. I Have an Awesome Plan

Procedure concerning establishment of the said bodies is on-going for two years, i.e. since the adoption of the Action Plan, due to the absence of consent regarding further implementation of the Action Plan (i.e. absence of involvement of all relevant partners from all government levels).

Therefore, the timeframe is extended for establishment and implementation of the Qualification Framework defined by the Action Plan, i.e. from 2014 to 2020. (BiH)

16. The Acts have not been Adopted, and may not be for a While

The Law on Higher Education foresees the drafting of the Rulebook on generally accepted standards in the profession for the University of Sarajevo, so that the Government, on the proposal of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, could determine the criteria for financing the University of Sarajevo, as a public institution of higher education and the methodology for allocating budget funds for educational, scientific-educational, artistic, artistic-educational and scientific research work. These acts have not been adopted, but a new Law on Higher Education is being drafted, which does not foresee the adoption of the new aforementioned rulebook. (SC)

The Law on Primary School stipulates that the Ministry, in addition to the Pedagogical standards, will also adopt the Standards for school premises, equipment and teaching materials. Standards for the equipment and teaching equipment have not been adopted, except for the basic equipment for the school as an institution and for space, which is prescribed by the Pedagogical standards. (CBC)

Conclusion

It took 400 pages to answer 38 questions of Chapter 26 of the EU Questionnaire on education. The answers, unfortunately, are not much different from the usual type of reports and information given by the educational institutions in BiH: unsubstantiated claims, citing laws and strategies instead of describing the practice and reporting on implementation and performance of those laws and strategies, vague answers, going off-topic... There is clearly no cohesion between sectors resulting in poor cooperation of educational institutions at the state level. In short, the answers are partial, vague, confusing, contradictory, superficial, politically motivated, improper, and have not been proofread. The Questionnaire has been completely harmonised using coordination mechanisms, and that is a proof that harmonisation system in BiH is also well-established, lied Dragan Čović while he was submitting the answers, without even batting an eyelid. ●

I AGREED WITH MY MOTHER. I TOO TRIED TO THINK ONLY OF LIFE. HOWEVER, IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY:
AT SCHOOL, THEY LINED US UP TWICE A DAY TO MOURN THE WAR DEAD. THEY PUT ON FUNERAL MARCHES,
AND WE HAD TO BEAT OUR BREASTS.

A Rock & A Hard Place

Right to Indoctrination



What would be a teacher's answer should his students ask him whether the Swiss court was right when it sentenced Emir Tahirović to four months in prison because, as a parent, he refused to abide by the rules of the school his fourteen-year-old daughter was attending?

Anes Osmić

As teachers, we get asked all sorts of questions. Often ones about life outside the classroom or school. It means that students trust us, but it also means that we have to give them honest answers. In order to form an opinion, we have to find all the information and have the knowledge to interpret them and determine their interrelation. When the case of a parent who forbade his daughter from swimming for religious reasons recently caught the public eye, I wondered what I would tell my students if they asked me who was right: the school insisting that the girl attends swimming classes or the father not allowing it. Emir Tahirović, a Bosnian living in Switzerland, was sentenced to four months in prison because he prevented his daughter from participating in the swimming program organised by her school, even with the full-body swimming costume. *When my daughter gets wet, the shape of her body becomes visible, for example her breasts.* The school management in St Margrethen warned Tahirović that he has to allow his daughter to be treated the same as other children or face the consequences. Or, to quote Reto Friedauer, the Mayor, the father was warned *not to put the Sharia law above the Swiss legal system, and not to refuse all forms of cooperation with the female teaching staff.* In the end, the court of St Gallen Canton sentenced Tahirović to four months in prison for *preventing his daughter from integrating into the society and refusing her the right to follow the school curriculum.*

In the interview for the SRF (*Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen*), a Swiss TV Channel, Tahirović said that he regularly received hate mail telling

him to go back to where he came from. Such letters, in the opinion of Mike Egger, an SVP – a right-wing populist party – representative, are not a solution, although he can understand the anger of those who send them. *Tahirović refuses everything to do with integration, everything we consider normal and then he uses his religion as an excuse.* If it was up to Mayor Friedauer, Tahirović would have been deported a long time ago. Reimann and Egger share this opinion: *Whoever lives in Switzerland should live by our rules. And if they don't like the rules, they should leave.*

This is how the fourteen-year-old girl found herself between a rock and a hard place: her father's radicalism on one side, and the institutional bigotry on the other. It's a situation millions of children worldwide find themselves in. And this is why I think that a teacher should have an answer ready, should his students ever ask him: *Who has the last word when it comes to raising a child?*

In this particular case, the girl chose the rock. She voiced her opinion in the letter she wrote to the school which was published by the SRF: *All I could have achieved in school is worthless without my mother. I will not attend swimming classes. I want to prove that no one can force me into anything in school. Neither my parents nor the school. Allah's help is all I need. I pray to Allah to awaken the desire in Muslims for Muslim schools. I would like to be respected for my religion and the way I dress.*

The readers' comments on the Internet portals were also greatly conflicting and narrow-minded. Some see Tahirović as a radical Islamist and a fanatic who is imposing Saudi Arabian customs on Switzerland, telling him to *go live on state benefits in a country with Sharia law.* Others, and there are far fewer of them, feel that Emir Tahirović is protecting his daughter from the male gaze, moral corruption and selling her body and beauty to others. They see no problem in the fact that Tahirović *respects God more than he respects the man.* They perceive the verdict as the state's interference into private sphere. *It's his child, it's up to him to raise her. No teacher can tell me how I should raise my child. They can send their daughters naked to school if they want to, and I will do with my child what I feel is right.*

The largest number of comments take the ideological or cultural perspective, roughly defined as Western/European or Eastern/Islamic. It is obvious that cultural relativism cannot solve this conflict, except with the use of violence, and such solutions are temporary and often tragic. However, if we ask ourselves what is the

Photos

Before page Above: A frame from the comic *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi

Before page Below: A frame from the film *Madeline* (1998), directed by Daisy Von Scherler Mayer, and based on the novel by the same name by Ludwig Bemelmans

best interest of the child, instead of which culture is better, it would be much easier to navigate this kind of conflict. And it is precisely the interest of the child that *the Convention on the Rights of the Child* puts in the foreground. A child is a human being, and as a human being, he or she has all human rights, but since children do not, in the early stages of their life, possess the knowledge necessary for making their own decisions, adults make them on their behalf. But they have to do it in the best interest of the child, and not in their own best interest. Zdenko Kodolja describes it in his book *The Lay School: Pros and Cons* as follows:

As children are not born under the reign of laws of the mind, since they are not their own rulers, they are not free; they have to be under the reign of their representatives: parents or their deputies who fill the void of the child's mind (p.75).

Zdenko Kodolja's book was published in Slovenia in 1995, at the time when the debates and heated discussions on education that had been going on for years, especially on religious education and non-confessional education on religions and ethics in public schools, carried over to Parliament.

Kodolja devotes a large section of his book to indoctrination:

A child's belief is to a great extent a consequence of the child-rearing process in which the parents took their own wishes into consideration and exercised their own right. It is important that the result of this process is acceptable for their children too, since they consciously accept it as their own. Since they accept it, they acknowledge the accuracy of the retroactively reached decision of their parents to raise their children according to their own beliefs, while simultaneously undermining any doubts in the possible forced indoctrination of children by their parents (pp. 81-82). Analysing the *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* Zdenko Kodolja concludes that it protects the children from the indoctrination by the state, but that it does not protect them from the indoctrination by their parents whatsoever:

What is more, that which is prohibited to the state is allowed to the parents as their right granted to them in Article 5. (The parents or, as the case may be, the legal guardians of the child have the right to organize the life within the family in accordance with their religion or belief and bearing in mind the moral education in which they believe the child should be brought up.) (p.79).

Based on this analysis the quoted excerpt from the girl's letter can be recognised as the result

of parental indoctrination. The letter conveys the child's words and the parent's beliefs. Why would a fourteen-year-old girl ask Allah to awaken the desire in Muslims for Muslim schools, instead of asking Him to make school more fun, to grant her fewer lessons in subjects she does not like, more of those she does like, or that classes last less, for instance. That she has more opportunities to play and interact with her peers, and fewer learning materials she does not understand and which make the school boring. Play, fun and joy are the children's wishes, while Muslim, Orthodox or Catholic schools are the parents' wishes.

This is why I am quite certain that in this case and all the similar cases that result from the conflict of the right to indoctrination between the state and parents (belonging to a minority culture) the decisions should be made on the basis of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Article' 2. 2 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

In the Tahirović case, the school is protecting the child from the misguided (radical) belief of her parents that looking at her body would cause more harm than the sport activities (particularly, swimming and skiing) would be beneficial. This conviction is based on prejudice and is against the contemporary scientific findings² on the importance of physical activities for children's health. It is just a milder version of the opinion that female children should not

1 Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>

2 Andrija Štampar Teaching Institute of Public Health points out that "swimming has extremely beneficial effects on one's health. Swimming realises aerobic effects of physical activity, while simultaneously strengthening all muscle groups in our bodies. Swimming strengthens the cardiovascular system, stabilises blood pressure, makes breathing deeper, increases lung capacity and increases oxygenation. Additionally, it has a positive effect on joints; it increases their movability and elasticity, and has a positive effect on the coordination of movements. Deep breathing, as we are "forced" to do while swimming is actually the type of breathing which is recommended when we want to relax, decrease anxiety or reduce stress levels, since deep breathing reduces the levels of cortisol – "stress hormone" responsible for our agitation. Swimming strengthens the entire musculature of a body: arms, shoulders, back, chest, behind and legs, it helps us be more fit and increase our endurance. Through swimming, we also burn a significant number of calories, and it has a positive effect on high blood pressure, asthma, back pain, injuries to the bone system." Available at: <http://www.stampar.hr/hr/jav-nozdravstveni-kutak-plivanje-i-zdravlje>

receive education at all, or that they should be educated only briefly, before they are married at a young age.

Article 5 States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

The school showed the respect for the local custom of the parents by allowing the student to attend the swimming lessons dressed in accordance with her religion.

Article 13. 1 The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

The father presented the girl only with those information that support his belief system, while he left out the ones about the benefits and importance of swimming and skiing. Of course, swimming and skiing are of secondary importance here. What matters is that parents who indoctrinate their children by forcing their (radical) beliefs on them are always doing it in a way in which the children are denied the right and the chance to find out about other ways of thinking and believing, so that they can make the decision free from prejudices instilled in them in the early childhood. School is just the place for providing children with alternatives. But these alternatives must not be simply a different form of indoctrination. School as an ideological state apparatus, as seen by Althusser, has no credibility to counter the indoctrination done by the family.

Article 19. 1 States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.

In this particular case, Switzerland took steps to protect the girl from negligent treatment. First it tried doing so by employing educational and social measures, and when that failed, it employed legal measures. Negligence is here reflected in the lack of parents' willingness to cooperate with the school.

Article 24. 1 States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.

By forbidding swimming and skiing, the parent in question prevented the child from enjoying the highest attainable standard possible, which was what the school was aiming at when they had introduced these sport activities. And again, this is not only about swimming and skiing, but about the way in which a female child is treated by her parents – they are preventing her or making it more difficult for her to gain access to social resources which can have different benefits for her, including, among others, the health benefits.

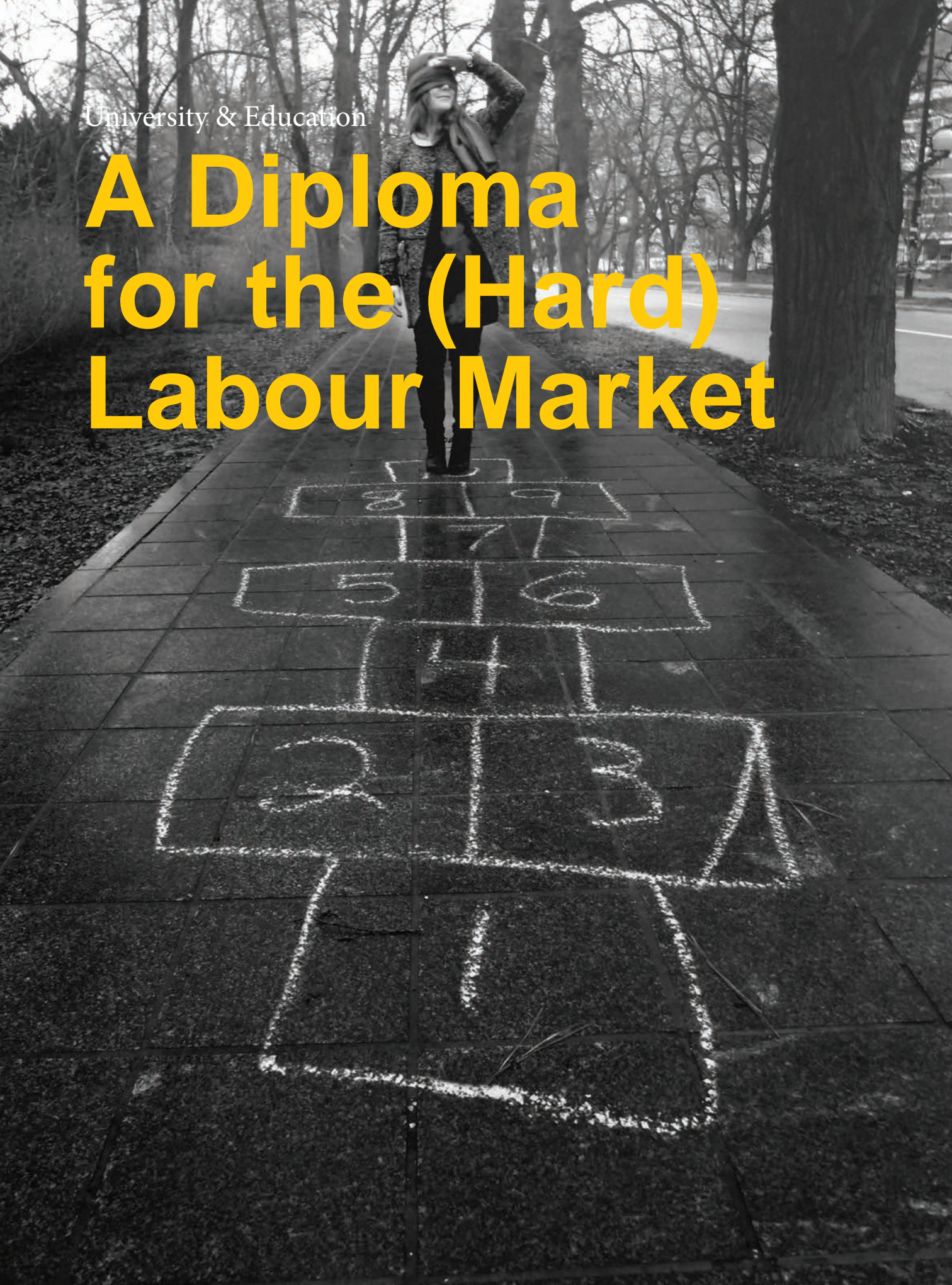
Article 29. 1 States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

The Swiss school has, as far as we know, reached high standards in achieving these aims. It succeeded in doing so because it functions as a part of a society which acknowledges the contemporary findings in the area of child psychology, human rights, and science in general. But as such it still remains, since it is Swiss – therefore national – the one that also indoctrinates in the ways that can be analysed in some other article. As for Tahirović, I am absolutely certain that he does not know the meaning of the sentence: *for the child's personality to be developed to its full potential*.

That is why, invoking Kodelja's analysis of indoctrination and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, I would answer the question from the beginning of this article as follows: *Parents, very often unwittingly, and with the best possible intentions, mislead their children about the world they live in. In doing so, they are guided by their parents' prejudices and without sufficient knowledge on the matter they are speaking about. As a teacher, my duty is to be on the side that respects knowledge and fights against prejudice. And to be on that side means to be on the child's side.* In the ideal world, we would all be on that side – the parents, the government, the school, and the pedagogues. But the world, even in Switzerland, is not ideal. ●

University & Education

A Diploma for the (Hard) Labour Market



What kind of education do the future teachers get at Sarajevo University? What is the practice in developed European countries with this type of education? Why is the theological approach to education more efficient than the strictly scientific one, why is such situation unacceptable, what type of reform is needed, and what type is possible?

Keyword: Reform (lat. *reformare, transform, reshape*) – an expression used in politics to label all efforts to change the laws or mode of operation of public administration in order to improve the general situation in a society, or a state, without calling the foundations of social, political or economic order into question. The aim of reforms is to improve the efficiency of public administration, thus, a country can have a health reform, education reform, police reform, army reform, etc. Reforms can also aim at improving the economic circumstances of certain segments of population as an effort to reduce social tensions and crime levels.

Photo
Before page: Maja
Abadžija, looking back at
education

Initial Subject Teachers Education at Sarajevo University, a research conducted by the Centre for Policy and Governance (CPU), focuses, unlike the CPU's previous research in education¹, on the process of gaining the initial teaching competences at Sarajevo University. We have spoken with Maja Abadžija, the author of the research paper, about the research methods and findings.

Školegijum: One of the opinions you voiced very clearly and very categorically is this one: *Pedagogical education is marginalized, as is the methodological/pedagogical practice*. How did you reach this conclusion and why is it a problem?

Abadžija: Years of growing dissatisfaction with the studies I had chosen, which, in my opinion, are completely unjustifiably called teaching studies, compelled me to conduct a research into the organisation of other studies of the same type. I wanted to find out what the teaching programmes are like in Europe, whether there was a clear link between the quality of a programme and the achievements of the teachers who attended it. I wondered if my own dissatisfaction and the experiences of the people I studied with would be confirmed in the other teaching departments at Sarajevo University. In the meantime, I realized that the area of ini-

¹ *Primary Education in BiH – Quality, Creativity and Innovation, Analysis of Policies in the Area of Connection between the Education System and Labour Market in BiH (2010) and Analysis of Key Factors and Recommendations for the Increase of Efficiency of Primary Education in BiH (2013)*

tial teaching competences is complex and wide and, why not say it, beyond my expertise, since I am neither an andragogue nor an expert in adult education. For this reason, I limited myself to Sarajevo University and I carefully read the curricula of the teaching departments to check whether the situation was just as bad outside of Faculty of Philosophy. I concluded that it was.

It seems completely natural that the studies of, let's say, German, Biology or Music, are called precisely that, since the majority of the content studied is devoted to the chosen subject itself. But if a programme is called teaching programme, then it is also natural to expect that a large portion of this content also refers to pedagogical sciences (which we call pedagogical-psychological- and didactic-methodical group of subjects), where the students talented for languages, natural sciences, art or something else would learn both *how* and *who* to teach this subject, which is a completely new study area. Our higher education institutions are (I believe this refers to all of them, although I studied in detail only the Sarajevo University), under the pressure of labour market mechanisms, founding teaching departments where the ratio of these two groups of teaching content is certainly disproportionate (on average 38 ECTS points in 5-year study programme out of 300 ECTS points, unlike the European standard which stipulates a minimum of 60 ECTS points). This is insufficient for preparing a student for future work in a classroom. The situation with methodical practice – classes in authentic school setting – is even more disastrous. Some students hardly teach a class in a school during their three-year or five-year education for the teaching profession – does this not tell us enough?

In the experience of some of the students I spoke with in the course of the research, there are attempts of fixing the flaws of higher education during the teacher internship, *the initiation* to the education system where a novice teacher should gain his/her first professional experience under the guidance of a mentor. I would like to reiterate the results of the survey of educational experts who, when asked about the biggest problems of the current organization of teacher internship, pointed out **the lack of financial and any other form of mentor's motivation to work with the novice teachers**. Other problematic issues are **oversight, the duration of the internship, the procedure of nominating a mentor, evaluating the men-**

The main point of this paper is actually very simple – educational reform must start with the teachers' education.

A novice teacher, it seems, is forced to spend more time cramming the law on education and pedagogical standards he/she has to pass as a part of the professional examination, than on the students he/she will stand before for the next 30 or 40 years.

tor's ability to oversee the novice teacher, no possibility of the novice teacher to appraise the work of the mentor, separating novice teachers preventing them from joint reflection on the practice, insufficient amount of time for the novice teacher to get relevant and useful advice from their mentor, and finally, insufficient adaptability to the individual needs of novice teachers.

Our system – that is, 11 of them – of gaining this teaching license can be a research subject on its own, maybe even of a more comprehensive one than the research we are currently discussing, there are so many deficiencies and inconsistencies, and there is even more bureaucratic red tape. Officially, a novice teacher or a volunteer has to teach 10 classes and observe 10 classes in order to be eligible for the professional examination – if we add the pitiful number of practical classes taught while studying at the university, we can hardly reach the weekly quota of an employed teacher! There is hardly any room for the mentor to introduce the novice teacher to the profession, let alone for greater joint efforts, reflections about the practice, exchange of experiences. A novice teacher, it seems, is forced to spend more time cramming the law on education and pedagogical standards he/she has to pass as a part of the professional examination, than on the students he/she will stand before for the next 30 or 40 years.

Školegijum: You compared the practice of teacher education in some European countries (England, the Netherlands, and Norway) with the practice in our country. What do the results of that comparison show?

Abadžija: We are used to seeing Finland as an educational utopia and we look up to, at least that's what we say, the innovations of their educational system. As a part of this research, I wanted to see whether there were other, more realistic examples of teacher education that could serve as models for Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially considering the principles and aims of the Bologna Convention and the gener-

ally accepted European direction of educational reform. The conclusion is that we are greatly falling behind the European educational role models in terms of standards of pedagogical education and practical classes, but that was not the only aim of this review. I wanted to show how the models can be different, yet functional: in Great Britain there is a lot of effort put into recruiting new teachers beyond the university setting, the Irish highlight the need for the teachers themselves to jointly set the standards and come up with joint demands regarding the initial education, while the Norwegians and the Dutch insist on integrating practice within the higher education teaching curriculum. None of these models is flawless, or fully applicable to BiH setting, but all of them can help us think about the model of teacher education we want in BiH.

Školegijum: At one point, you write that *teacher education is jealously guarded national territory*. Whose territory should it be, *except national*? Or rather, whose should it be, *instead of national*?

Abadžija: I gained the impression that education is jealously guarded national territory from the literature in this field: many experts are disappointed with the results of the Bologna process within the common European Higher Education Area (EHEA) when it comes to teacher education. Unlike other studies, which do not have the problem of ratio of subject and professional content (for example, medicine or engineering), teaching programmes are still struggling with the tradition of teaching theoretical knowledge over practical, and these traditions are, as a rule, national traditions. We are well aware of the connection between education and state/official ideology: in the context of BiH, the national – the ethnic, patronage over education has a darker connotation. Although I did not explore this issue further within my research, I have to emphasise that education in general, and within that teacher education too, is a strictly national territory, which is more evident in the areas of humanistic and social sciences, and less evident, although still present, in the areas of natural and technical sciences. Some faculties educate teachers for a specific national curriculum, but the majority is actually refusing to deal with the issue of teacher education and in this way they are just supporting such segregated education by remaining silent. We must not forget that incompetent teachers, unversed in critical think-



Photo
Above: Maja Abadžija

ing, prone to taking an easy way out and other *blessings* of the current educational system make very good lackeys of the ruling regime.

Školegijum: You are implicitly saying that the guardians of this territory are the faculties that educate the aforementioned future teachers. How do they do it, and what should be changed in their practice?

Abadžija: The subject departments at the faculties are refusing to forgo their *autonomy*, i.e. they aspire to use the subject content (for example, teaching content in biology) to push out and marginalize pedagogical and methodical content (how to teach biology). This is basically the result of their selfish desire to keep their positions and meet their quotas, and also of general refusal of the faculties themselves to consciously choose whom they are educating and for what market, in other words, to take social responsibility for their work. On paper, faculties educate teachers, but *bachelor's* graduates, in some cases even *master's* graduates, are not prepared for work in education, and the

tiny portion of them that manage to survive the corrupt recruiting procedures and points awarding is deemed incompetent and unprepared for work with students. This problem is also related to the deterioration of the scientific standards and institutions in the country, since the faculties are educating the staff which is neither quite ready for scientific work (the fact that there are no institutes they could work in as scientists is a whole other issue), nor for teaching, especially during the undergraduate studies.

Only when faculties recognise that the majority of people with higher education they produced is signing on (the sceptics can check the data of employment agencies where the number of teachers seeking employment is regularly the highest), it would be possible to initiate a public debate as to which model of teacher education we want. We are still very far from being able to choose whether teacher education programmes would be completely adapted to the demands of the labour market, the way it was done in Great Britain, or the selection of students would be more strict as is the case in the Finnish universities, in cooperation with the institutions which will improve the working conditions of existing teachers.

Teaching departments must be *reinforced* in terms of both theoretical content and practice; we should strive to have the teachers themselves being educated in pedagogical conditions where they would have actual professional benefit from what are now general subjects (pedagogy, didactics and so forth), while they would be able to spend a part of their studies – observing but also teaching – in a school environment under the supervision of their mentors and methodics professors. Subject departments must give up their aspirations of *authority* and offer their students the education that corresponds to what is written on their diplomas.

Školegijum: At one point, you claim that the quality of curricula is higher at the Faculty of Islamic Sciences and Faculty of Catholic Theology than at the other faculties within the University. What are the arguments supporting this claim and how do you explain this difference?

Abadžija: The aforementioned faculties have modelled their teaching departments on the Faculty of Pedagogy which educates class teachers and certain primary school subject teachers (which I had used during my research as a basis of comparison for the subject teach-

In Great Britain, there is an increased effort to recruit new teachers beyond the university setting; the Irish highlight the need for the teachers themselves to jointly set the standards and come up with joint demands regarding the initial education, while the Norwegians and the Dutch insist on integrating practice into the higher education teaching curriculum.

No faculties, except for the Faculty of Science in Sarajevo (Chemistry Department) and Faculty of Pedagogy, offer courses in the area of inclusive education, which is disastrous.

Many teachers feel that their profession has been devalued and that it has become extremely underrated, financially speaking, and in many other ways, which can only contribute further to the devaluation and deterioration of the educational system.

ing programmes), with a strong component of child rearing and a multitude of elective courses from various pedagogical, psychological, didactical, and methodical disciplines. I believe that this is the result of the clear *mission* of the faculties themselves, which, while striving to teach religion also very clearly want to bring up the students in the religious spirit, so they are creating competent nurturers and teachers, compared to those who graduate in *secular* teaching departments. In practical terms, the students at these faculties have a wider range of professional options once they graduate – not just schools, but also religious institutions, dorms, boarding schools, and so on, and hence the *market* has set certain demands before them which they need to complete. The subject teaching programmes responsible for the education of teachers of subjects other than religious classes do not have such a *mission* or social responsibility, which is unacceptable.

Školegijum: You recommend, based on the comparison with the European models, a strict selection of students enrolled in the teaching departments. Which criteria would be crucial there? And what other changes in practice should follow this strict selection?

Abadžija: Selection itself will not change much. Apart from the need to define **universal** selection procedures (entrance exams in the subject area together with pedagogy/psychology, essay, interview, grading, practice or something else) for all the teaching depart-

ments, a great effort in this area needs to be put into making sure that there is no room for corruption. The European countries have made the teaching profession more respectable; they have reduced the number of graduates and, with many other changes in the entire educational system, they have accomplished that the prestige of the profession is achieved through the actually improved salaries and teachers' working conditions – Finland is a typical example of a society where all the social segments had worked together to improve the position of teachers. In our situation, therefore, selection itself would not amount to much, but it would definitely be a step in the right direction since it would reduce the number of students who, after graduating, incompetent and ill prepared for work, languish in the employment agencies' records. In the course of conducting my research, I encountered very interesting examples of selection. For example, it was brought to my attention that some German institutions of higher education, which educate teachers, offer secondary school graduates a short practice before enrolling in their programme, during which they can decide whether they can and want to do that job. I believe that people with more expertise than me can find a suitable mode of evaluating a candidate for a future teacher, but I repeat, the selection on its own in these circumstances will not bring much improvement.

Školegijum: Where is the ministry of education in all that? What do they do, or don't do, and what could and should they do?

Abadžija: Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Sarajevo Canton has not shown any particular interest in becoming a partner in this research and because of that I drew a conclusion that teacher education is not their priority. The delay in publishing the complete version has partially been a result of poor communication with the institutions (government institutions, but also higher education institutions) which were not ready to offer the needed information and approvals for the continuation of this work. For example, the aforementioned Ministry gave us an oral consent when we had asked them for permission to interview the expert associates of Pedagogical Institutes, only to deny us their consent three months after our written inquiry, although the research summary had already been published. This is a clear sign that this institution does not recognize teacher education as important and that

Some of the faculty teachers have offered very interesting options of practical classes for future teachers, the emphasis during which is put on their long-term nature which enables for reflection (e.g. a student must spend at least one class a week in school as a part of his/her examination), mentor's availability, control by the methodics teacher, and so on.

A product of teaching studies myself, within the educational system whose shortcomings I was noticing at every corner (at the same time wasting the opportunities to do – or write – anything more substantial about this issue), I used my time working in CPU to try to say at least some of the things which need to be said about the BiH education.

they do not want to deal with this issue. We encountered a similar situation with certain faculties, whose employees refused to pick up the telephone, even after their deans gave us their written consent. Additionally, the Ministry has no department that would be in charge of professional training and additional teacher education, so Pedagogical Institute and possibly higher education partners who are willing (and financially able) to organize such a programme then take on that role. Due to the abovementioned *white noise* in communication, I was not able to get clear information on what types of professional training are organized; I can only say that I was under the impression that there are not many of them, and that there is not much variety in their organization. In one of the interviews I conducted, I was told that a large number of these seminars are organized in a very non-transparent way, *internally*, meaning that even the teachers who want to continue with their training are not able to get the necessary information. All this is a result of poor control of the ministry of education that does not see this issue as relevant, and who do not try to determine the mechanisms for evaluating and measuring professional progress. Just like faculties, ministries of education must, before all else, become aware of the importance of teaching profession and devote adequate attention to teacher training and additional education, and to work together on the possible reform of teaching departments. The ministries and relevant institutions in general should implement this process and support it, without bringing the university's independence into question. Institutions can determine which schools are suitable for *experimental* classes or student practice, while it is the faculties' re-

sponsibility to organize such form of teacher education. Some of the faculty teachers have offered very interesting options of practical classes for the future teachers, with the emphasis on their long-term nature which would enable reflection (e.g. a student must spend at least one class a week in school as a part of his/her examination), access to the mentor, methodics teacher's oversight, and so on. There is something else I have to mention: the experts I interviewed unanimously agree that the biggest priority now is finding models for educating teachers for work in inclusive classes. Based on my research I concluded that no faculty, apart from the Faculty of Science in Sarajevo (Chemistry Department) and Faculty of Pedagogy, offers courses in this area, which is disappointing, considering that inclusive education has been a practice for a number of years, and is also prescribed by law. Pedagogical Institute or some other executive institution of ministries of education will also have to respond with much more professional programmes of additional education in this area, and also in other areas (e.g. IT literacy).

Školegijum: Who does this situation benefit and why? In other words, where will the strongest resistance to reforms come from?

Abadžija: Poor teacher education benefits, primarily, the existing national curricula and all those who have some financial or ideological benefit from it. Resistance is to be expected from the institutions that do not recognize the problem, or are not willing to solve it. I expect the biggest opposition if the experts demand the unifications of teaching departments in all faculties throughout the country, regardless of *whose* curriculum they are educating teachers for. I am sceptical that a fruitful collaboration between the government institutions and higher education institutions will happen, since I realized conducting my research that there is no constructive communication between them. The faculties will try to keep their positions and a steady flow of students, unaware of what awaits them after graduating, while the institutions will strive to keep the education in *the pocket* of ideologies, while schools will keep producing their minions. The fans of status quo will always see a good teacher as their greatest enemy. ●