Peacebuilding Strategy

Starting points

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Peacebuilding Strategy

Introduction

Serbia has the status of a candidate country in the process of EU accession. The process is mostly conducted by meeting formal standards, adopting laws and aligning the legal system to fulfil EU requirements. This social transformation should involve not just changing the political/institutional and economic system, but also changing modes of behaviour in all social spheres that support violence and discrimination, as well as intensifying the search for alternatives to dominant models that create conflict both within society and in the neighbourhood. Although often only correlated to Serbia's desire to join the EU, the scope of social transformation in Serbia will determine the quality of life for its citizens and the perspective of its future social development.

After all the wars in which it participated either directly or indirectly, peacebuilding is a priority for Serbia, because sustainable peace is so much more than the absence of armed conflict. Peacebuilding refers to a wide range of activities whose aim is to reduce social injustice, achieve transformation and resolve conflicts, all to create a society that would be sensitive to the initial indicators for the potential of escalating violence.

Therefore, peacebuilding must not be relegated to the individual enthusiasm of civil society organisations, because it requires the engagement of various levels of legislative and executive government.

Systemic peacebuilding activities could be organised by adopting a National Peacebuilding Strategy. The Strategy would oblige Serbia to be active in peacebuilding processes, thereby demonstrating its focus on and commitment to lasting peace.

The drafting of the Peacebuilding Strategy began in August 2010. During the first year, some 30 interviews were conducted with activists from across the former Yugoslavia and with a number of scholars from Germany who brought a wealth of experience in peacebuilding work and nonviolent conflict resolution. The methodology was conceived as a two-way communication process among people from the region working on peace and civil society in Serbia, as the initiators of the Strategy, with public dialogues providing the avenues towards systemic solutions. The proposed solutions included in the Strategy rely on:

- International standards and states' obligations with respect to protecting human rights

- Positions of participants in the consultation process for the drafting of the Peacebuilding Strategy

- Existing capacities and systems in the country

The initiative to draft and implement a national peacebuilding strategy relies not just on "national" capacities, but also the essentially more difficult aspect of cross-border cooperation, because despite differences in social context between the countries in the region, there are also great similarities and the situation in each country affects the developments in neighbouring countries.

Normative Framework of the Peacebuilding Strategy

The Peacebuilding Strategy takes as its starting point the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, which stipulates that any inciting of racial, ethnic, religious or other inequality or hatred shall be prohibited and punishable, and relies on existing laws and objectives defined in strategic documents adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia: **the Resolution on the Access of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union** (Official Gazette of RS, 112/04) and the **National Strategy of Serbia for the Accession of Serbia and Montenegro to the EU** - June 2005; the **National Strategy for the Accession of Serbia to the EU** (2005), the **National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Republic of Serbia up to 2017** (Official Gazette of RS, 55/05, 71/05-corrigendum and 101/07); the **Development Strategy for Adult Education in the Republic of Serbia** (Official Gazette of RS, 1/2007); the **National Strategy to Improve the Position of Women and Enhance Gender Equality for the period from 2009 to 2015** (Official Gazette of RS, 27115/09), the **National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Domestic and Partner Violence against Women** (Official Gazette of RS, 27/11), the **National Strategy for the Prosecution of War Crimes** (Official Gazette of RS, 19/2016), the National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Serbia (2010-2015) (Official Gazette of RS, 102/10), the **Strategic Framework of the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of Serbia for the period from 2011 to 2014**; the **Development Strategy of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia up to 2016** (Official Gazette of RS, 75/2011), the **National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia** (Official Gazette of RS, 88/09), the Defence Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of RS, 88/09), the **Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities** (Official Gazette of RS, 72/2009), the Law on the Foundations of the Education System (Official Gazette of RS, 72/2009 and 52/2011), the **Law on Public Information** (Official Gazette of RS, 43/2003, 61/2005, 71/2009, 89/2010 - Constitutional C decision, and 41/2011 - Constitutional Court Decision), the **Criminal Code** (Official Gazette of RS, 85/05, 88/05 – corrigendum, 107/05 – corrigendum, 72/09 and 111/09), the **Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination** (Official

Gazette of RS, 22/2009), the **Law Ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (Official Gazette of SFRY – International Treaties, 11/81), the **Law on Gender Equality** (Official Gazette of RS, 104/09), the Law on Local Self-Governance (Official Gazette of RS, 129/2007).

The development of this Strategy also relied on international documents, given that the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia explicitly stipulates that generally accepted rules of international law and ratified international treaties shall be an integral part of the legal system in the Republic of Serbia and applied directly[1]. The following international documents were taken as starting points for the development of this Peacebuilding Strategy: the **Universal Declaration on Human Rights** (Official Gazette of FPRY, 0/1948), the **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (Official Gazette of SCG – International Treaties, 9/03, 5/05 and 7/05 – corrigendum), the **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities** (Official Gazette of SRY - International Treaties, 6/98), the **United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (2004), the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (Official Gazette of SFRY – International Treaties, 11/81); the **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (Official Gazette of SRY – International Treaties, 13/02); the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**; **Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (Official Gazette of SRY – International Treaties, 4/01), the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (Official Gazette of SFRY - International Treaties, 7/71), **UN Millennium Development Goals** adopted at the UN Millennium Summit (2000), **UN SC Resolution 1325** (2000), the **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**, Council of Europe, 1950, as amended by Protocol 11 (Official Gazette of SCG – International Treaties, 9/03, 5/05 and 7/05 – corrigendum), the **Declaration on Equality of Women and Men as a fundamental criterion of democracy**, Council of Europe (1997), the **Charter for European Security** (1999), the **Universal Declaration on Democracy** (1997), the **European Parliament's resolution 2025 "On the participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution"** (2000), the **United Nations Sustainable Development Report** (1994), the **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** (Official Gazette of SFRY – International Treaties, 16/78), the **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** (Official Gazette of FPRY, 2/50). Ž

The concept of human security is an official UN paradigm. The broadest normative framework for its achievement is provided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The Millennium Development Goals are the platform of the United Nations Development Programme

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1   Article 16, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of RS, 98/2006).

(UNDP). They were adopted by 191 countries (including Serbia and countries of the region). As opposed to the traditional notion of security as a matter for the army and police, human security focuses on the security of the individual. Issues of inequality in the availability of resources, unequal access to higher education, inequality in the ability to meet basic vital needs and enjoy fundamental human rights become central issues of security. The main characteristics of the concept of human security are:

1) Focus on people;

2) Human security is viewed as a universal problem – an issue relevant for people throughout the world, a struggle against threats common to all;

3) Components of human security are interlinked and interdependent – security threats are no longer limited to national territories, but have wider implications;

4) It is easier to ensure human security through preventive measures than through later interventions.

Baseline and Needs Analysis for the Peacebuilding Strategy

Serbia's recent history has been marked by the wars of 1991-2001, the destruction during the NATO bombing, multiple years of international community sanctions, hyperinflation, and large-scale demographic changes resulting from human casualties, the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons from the countries of the former Yugoslavia and a parallel process of young and educated people leaving the country.

The political crisis and breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia resulted in six international and internal armed conflicts – in Slovenia (June-July 1991), Croatia (1991-1995), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), Kosovo (1998-1999), Southern Serbia (January 2000 - May 2001), and Macedonia (February-August 2001). Even areas free of armed conflict were sites of grave international humanitarian law and human rights violations (Sandžak and Vojvodina in Serbia, Montenegro). The conflicts themselves were marked by grave, systematic and large-scale violations of international humanitarian law. More than 130,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed in the conflicts. More than 11,000 people are still missing. Tens of thousands of people were imprisoned in camps and collection centres where they were subject to torture, sexual violence, inhuman treatment and other forms of violence and humiliation. Some 4.5 million people were forced to leave their homes. The conflicts were marked by large-scale destruction and theft of private and public property, economic goods, cultural and religious buildings, etc.

Although there are databases on the victims of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights standards, collected and maintained by civil society organisations and government institutions, they are rarely compiled or compatible. Civil society organisations

have initiated the establishment of a Regional Commission to establish facts on war crimes that received the support of the Republic of Serbia with the delegation of a representative of the President to the working group developing the Commission's Statute.

In Serbia, the effects of the global economic model on impoverished societies are further exacerbated in contact with the reality of Serbia as a post-war society with a decimated economy and high unemployment rates, the crushing legacy of wars and war crimes, collapsed institutions and the corruption of the state apparatus, the dissolution of community and the destruction of even basic solidarity. A high degree of authoritarianism, years of systemically induced xenophobia and intolerance of diversity have combined with the inability of most of the population to meet basic needs. Social inequalities are not merely economic, they are also discernible in the political and cultural sphere, and are most often marked by some form of discrimination (ethnic, religious, gender, political, against sexual minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.). We can talk about the *social exclusion*[2] of a significant portion of the population. For large groups of citizens, social exclusion is permanent. There is great diversity of those that are socially excluded, including different age, gender and ethnic groups, regions and levels of education. Many of them suffer from multiple deprivation[3], low levels of education, unemployment, poverty and discrimination at the same time[4].

Numerous national and international reports on the state of human rights in Serbia, apart from clearly observed progress, continue to point out discrimination against minorities (especially Roma and LGBT), restrictions of media freedom and freedom of speech, violence against women and children, the vulnerable position of veterans and their human rights, corruption in the justice system, the executive and judicial branch of government, including law enforcement, inefficient and drawn-out trials and insufficient progress in prosecuting war crimes before national courts.[5]

Victims of war crimes and grave human rights violations are not sufficiently recognised as a

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2   Social exclusion is conceived as failing to recognise basic rights or as preventing access to the legal and political system necessary for the enjoyment of rights. The rights derived from citizen status are an important precondition for ensuring healthcare, basic education and material standards. The effects of the labour market and the available material goods determine the deficits in other areas of social life. The concept of social exclusion is a key concept of both European and domestic social policy.

3   In sociological terms, deprivation includes unequal access to social goods. Poverty may be viewed as a type or form of deprivation.

4   See: Slobodan Cvejić, "Izvori i ishodi siromaštva i socijalnog isključivanja u Srbiji".

5   See, for example: 2015 Annual Report of the Ombudsman; European Commission Progress Report for Serbia, October 2015; Human Rights Watch/ World Report 2012: Serbia; Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011 United States Department of State; 2015 Report of the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights on the State of Human Rights and Minority Rights in Serbia.

social category or provided sufficient care from institutions, which worsens their already difficult position.[6]

When it comes to the direct participants in wars (war veterans[7]), reliable records on how many people from Serbia participated in the wars in the former Yugoslavia have not been established to date, and there is also no reliable data on the number of killed and wounded from among the armed formations. Official data have not been published to date, and no organised or systemic care is provided to the direct participants in wartime combat. According to unofficial estimates, there are some 400,000 to 800,000 war veterans in Serbia.[8] The problem of war veterans in Serbia is mentioned only in connection to incidents; beyond that, the direct participants in wartime combat are almost completely invisible. The problems they face are still not being properly addressed at the national level, not as social problems, but as expressions of individual pathology. These range from the medical, related to the consequences of sustained injury and physical trauma and/or disability, to the inability of adapting to life in peacetime and severe mental difficulties and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Given the impact of the media and their reporting on shaping public opinion, it is safe to assume that the media can either contribute to truth seeking and reconciliation processes or be one of the biggest obstacles on this path. With few exceptions, in the past decades the media have had an inglorious role in fuelling conflict by demonising "the others", conveying (and creating) narratives of eternal threats to the national collective and national martyrdom. This discourse has to a large extent persisted to date. This is particularly visible in reporting on war crimes where media coverage usually falls in line with ethnic divisions between "our" victims and "theirs, and "our" criminals and "their criminals". The attitude towards the criminals is primarily determined by the ethnic prefix of the victims and criminals, which results, on the one hand, in the marginalisation and invisibility of facts about crimes committed against people

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6   Due to the risk of stereotyping war victims under rigid social definitions of a war victim as a person with predefined characteristics and beliefs, for the purposes of this document, victims shall be defined as persons who "individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights." This definition includes "the immediate family or dependants of the direct victim and persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimization." (According to UNGA Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crimes and Abuse of Power. 1985. A/RES/40/34.)

7   The fact that the term 'veteran' has become a way to refer to participants of wars (primarily the most recent wars in the former Yugoslavia) can be inferred both from the names of associations independently established by participants of wars, and from the use of this term in public discourse to refer to citizens who had participated in the wars of the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia. The legal regulations of Serbia use the official term (retained from the time of socialist Yugoslavia) of 'fighters' to refer to those that participated in wars or armed operations (Law on the Rights of Fighters, Military Disabled and Members of Their Families, Official Gazette of SRS, 54/89 and Official Gazette of RS, 137/04 of 24 December 2004). The current Constitution mentions the category of "war veterans" for this first time, in the section on Social Protection, so we can also say that the term is in official use.

8   See, Beara V. and Miljanović P. "Gde si to bio, sine moj?". 2006. Novi Sad: Društvo za zaštitu mentalnog zdravlja ratnih veterana i žrtava ratova 1991-1999. godine.

perceived as belonging to the enemy collective, minimising their suffering and relativizing the committed crimes.[9]

Constructive media reporting, in the context of dealing with the past, would entail overcoming simplified black-and-white explanations characteristic of the dominant nationalist discourse, opening up and initiating topics that constitute taboos in society (because they question that discourse), including suppressed facts and creating space for public dialogue by including different perspectives and placing the events in context. The media would also need to have a regional perspective because the wars themselves and their consequences were regional in nature and shape the fate of entire region today. An event in any one of the countries causes a chain reaction that reverberates throughout other parts of the region.

Viewing wartime circumstances from different perspectives, especially from the point of view of diverse opinions and introducing excluded or neglected perspectives and facts is necessary in order to open up dialogue about the wartime past as a topic of public interest. An important role in that process is played by civil society organisations, informal groups and initiatives in the region working on dealing with the past. Their programmes and activities are different and range from documenting victims and loss of life, direct work with persons with experiences from the war, proposing institutional reforms and public policies and monitoring the implementation of existing reforms and policies, to raising awareness about the causes and consequences of war and establishing a dialogue about the past.

A regional approach to researching the history of relations between groups in the Balkans and interpreting the causes, course and consequences of wars, as well as the way wars are remembered, seems particularly important because it is precisely the different interpretations of past wars that often played a crucial role in fuelling new conflicts. On the one hand, a regional approach to research provides opportunities for closer cooperation among historians and with researchers from other disciplines looking at these issues. On the other, it opens up dialogue about the past and policies of memory, different interpretations of historical facts and introducing excluded or neglected perspectives and facts while maintaining the standards of history as a scholarly discipline. This manner of establishing dialogue necessitates also discussing the causes of conflicts, not just their outcomes.

A culture of democracy requires the participation of citizens, their readiness to initiate and participate in public discussions, oversight and control over the measures and activities of the authorities as a way to ensure accountability for political decisions made and implemented by political and public institutions. Improving this dialogue and the culture of democracy helps create a society of active citizens that take on and hold responsibility for political processes and for solving social problems. In the context of trust building and overcoming the legacy of the 1990s in the region, this means opening up spaces for dialogue and questioning simplified *local versions* of the causes, course and consequences of war, and the way wars are remembered.

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9   For more, see: Katarina Ristić, "Medijski diskursi o suđenjima za ratne zločine u Srbiji, 2003-2013". 2014. Fond za humanitarno pravo.

As a consequence of the wars, suffering and post-war policies, distrust has grown between members of different ethnic groups in the Balkans, as can be seen from surveys conducted in these countries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the relations between its three constitutive peoples are complex and tense.[10] In Croatia, the majority finds it unacceptable for members of minorities to hold leadership roles in Croatian politics and the economy. This indicates a high degree of politicisation of ethnicity, because key functions in politics and the economy are of strategic importance for controlling the major resources in a society. Given that the legitimating model of the Croatian political elite during the 1990s was *liberation from foreign rule*, this indicates that Croatian citizens belong to other nationalities are still largely considered "foreign bodies" of questionable loyalties or too *culturally different*. In terms of unacceptability, leadership roles are closely followed by marriage to members of minorities. Three groups are deemed particularly unacceptable: Serbs, Albanians and Roma.[11]

In Serbia, the sense of reservation based on ethnicity that increased suddenly before and during the wars of the 1990s, was steadily decreasing, with some oscillation, in the initial years following October 5th. As of 2004, that trend was interrupted and reservations started slowly, but constantly increasing. Reservations were expressed towards Hungarians, Roma, Bosniaks and Croats. Close to a third of citizens not belonging to these groups would not want them for neighbours, and the majority would oppose marriage to a member of these groups. A significant number of citizens – from 20% to 30% – would not even accept them as citizens of Serbia. The greatest sense of reservation is expressed towards Albanians. As many as 40% of citizens are not eager to see them as citizens of Serbia, almost one half would not want them for neighbours, over a half would not want an Albanian boss, and as many as 70% would not be open to marrying an Albanian.[12]

If young people are viewed as a separate social group, the rules tend to hold up. The tendency to idealise the group you belong to and consider it superior to other groups that are then vilified is even more pronounced. Every fourth respondent admitted that, if it were up to him, he would discriminate in employment; almost every fifth respondent believes in the intellectual superiority of his own nation, every seventh opposes ethnically mixed marriages.[13]

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10   Croats express an equal degree of reservation about both Serbs and Bosniaks. Bosniaks express a somewhat greater degree of reservation than Croats, and somewhat more towards Serbs than Croats. Serbs express a significantly greater degree of reservation than both Bosniaks and Croats, and somewhat more towards Bosniaks than towards Croats.

11   Deviations are seen only for Roma and Albanians because these groups are viewed with greater reservation when it comes to marriage than when it comes to taking leadership roles in society. See: Željko Boneta, Boris Banovac, "Etnička distance i socijalna (de)zintegracija lokalnih zajednica", Revija za Sociologiju, Vol XXXVII, No 1–2, Zagreb, 2006, p. 21 – 46.

12   See: Dragan Popadić, "Put iz bratstva i jedinstva – Etnička distance građana Srbije" in Srećko Mihajlović (Ed), „Kako građani vide tranziciju – Istraživanje javnog mnjenja tranzicije", Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Beograd, 2010, p. 107 – 121; and the article „Istraživanje: Građani Srbije ne žele Albance i Rome u porodici", Blic, 20. 04. 2016.

13   See: Dragan Popadić, "Koreni etnocentrizma" in Srećko Mihajlović (Ed.), "Mladi zagubljeni u tranziciji", Centar za proučavanje alternative, Belgrade, 2004, p. 95 - 103.

This construct of identity is necessarily gendered according to the patriarchal model. The model has been long standing, but society overcame it in the progressive emancipation since the Second World War, only to have it revive in the wars fought on the territory of the former Yugoslavia in the past decades, when gender identities and gender roles were polarised to the extreme. Men were perceived as warriors and women as mothers and victims, thereby contributing to strengthening traditional power relations, social and cultural roles and norms. Even after the wars were over, attitudes towards women reveal a return to rigid patriarchal concepts of male-female relations, which contributes to an overall worsening of the position of women[14].

Making use of the full potential of a society for development, political cohesion and stability is closely linked to the ability of that society to enable full integration of its citizens, a higher degree of participation and a higher degree of openness, irrespective of any differences in religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, sex and/or material status. Presupposing the existence of an institutional and normative framework and relevant public policies, the ability to enjoy human rights is closely linked to changing cultural models and values based on a belief in the existence of a hierarchy among human beings that, on the one hand, supports servility and obedience towards those in power, and on the other, supports, justifies and takes for granted the exertion of power towards those who have less of it (usually women, children and various minority groups – religious, ethnic, sexual, persons with disabilities, etc.). This also includes rejecting violence as a norm in conflict resolution, accepting diversity as an essential expression of humanity and tolerance towards identities that deviate from traditionalist models.

Given that politics is inextricable from education, because the agenda in educational institutions is not determined within the classroom, but by political and socio-economic factors, it is hardly surprising that representations of the world, others, history, relations between people offered by textbooks mostly correspond to the stereotypes about one's own nation and its historical place within the traditionalist, authoritarian and ethno-nationalist model existing in the public sphere. Messages about the historical destiny of one's own nation and the desirable characteristics of national identity conveyed through textbooks (through variously used and interpreted historical facts) often coincide with abuses of history used in the public sphere for the purpose of propaganda. They are primarily based on the idea of one's own superiority,

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14   *(According to the results of a survey conducted in 2009 on a sample of 2500 secondary school pupils under the programme "Young Men Initiative to Prevent Gender Based Violence in the Northwestern Balkans", as many as 72% of the respondents agreed that a man must determine when sexual relations should start in a relationship, and 46% that a man needs other women even when he gets along with the woman he is with. The same percentage believed that there were situations when a girl deserved to be hit, and 25% believed that women should tolerate violence in order to keep the family together. Ten percent of the respondents claimed it was acceptable to hit a woman if she refused sexual relations. It is interesting that 76% of young men believed that changing nappies, bathing and feeding children was the sole responsibility of the mother. And they considered women's primary role to be that of home-maker.) As in many post-war societies, strategies of political, social and economic reconstruction have become/ remained a male domain.*

historical correctness and the historical wrongdoing of the other[15]. Textbooks mostly promote models of identity based on hierarchies (between nations, social groups, men and women, etc.), intolerance towards diversity, ignoring the existence of identities that deviate from traditionalist models and insisting on conformity as the only correct choice[16].

The outcome of the characteristics described above in combination with violent cultural models[17] is widespread violence (from the most manifest direct forms of violence to structural and cultural violence) towards all who are perceived as weaker, less worthy or different. As shown by various research, in the past ten years, different forms of violence (bullying[18], violence against national and religious minorities[19], women and children[20], LGBT persons[21], etc.) have been constantly increasing. Violence is not just a legitimate, but a desirable model of behaviour.

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15   See: Dubravka Stojanović, „Ulje na vodi: ogledi iz istorije sadašnjosti Srbije", Poglavlje II:" Na tihoj vatri. Udžbenici istorije kao izvor konflikta", Peščanik, Čigoja, 2010, p. 87 - 157.

16   See: Ivan Grahek (Ed.), "Šta je pisac hteo da kaže – Analiza čitanki za predmet Srpski jezik za sedmi i osmi razred", Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, Kragujevac, 2009; Also see: Dragana Stjepanović – Zaharijevski, Danijela Gavrilović, Nevena Petrušić, "Obrazovanje za rodnu ravnopravnost – Analiza nastavnog materijala za osnovnu i srednju školu", Program Ujedinjenih nacija za razvoj (UNDP), 2010.

17   The characteristics of violent cultural models include: using aggression as a norm in resolving conflicts; conflict orientation based on the presumption of intolerance towards the "Other" who is perceived as a threat; an ideology of superiority relying on a history of dehumanisation, including long-lasting institutionalisation of prejudice and an aversion to accepting diversity. See: Linda M.Woolf, Michael Rhulsizer, „Psychosocial roots of genocide: risk, prevention, and intervention" in Journal of Genocide Research, 2005, p. 101-128.

18   According to research on violence in primary schools in Serbia conducted from 2005 to 2009 by the Institute for Psychology in 165 schools throughout Serbia with over 70,000 respondents, 74% of primary school pupils had experienced some form of peer violence in the previous three months, and 25% were subject to some form of violence from school staff. See: Dragan Popadić, "Nasilje u školama", Unicef, Institut za psihologiju, Belgrade, 2009.

Similar findings are also cited in the 2011 report of the Ombudsman and Panel of Young Advisors "Protecting Children from Violence in Schools". Research results have shown that as many as 73% of children report that peer violence in school is frequent, sporadic or rare. Since peer violence is much more pronounced in primary than in secondary schools, almost 90% of primary school respondents reported direct or indirect experiences with peer violence compared to only 60% of secondary school pupils.

19   The comprehensive reports of the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights on the state of human rights and rights of minorities in Serbia that have been published since 1998 are available here.

20   According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, every second woman in Serbia has experienced some form of violence, either sexual, physical, psychological or economic, and the violence often remains socially invisible. Available here.

In 2011, the Office of the Ombudsman published a "Special Report on Domestic Violence against Women in Serbia". The report indicates an alarming increase in domestic violence. It also identifies a lack of cooperation between centres for social work, the police and healthcare institutions. Practice has also shown that violence is often justified and minimised, and that activities by competent authorities are only undertaken after the violence escalates. Preventive measures of protection against violence are sporadic, haphazard, unplanned and most often uncoordinated.

21   According to the 2011 report of the Gay Straight Alliance, physical violence against members of the LGBT population in Serbia is on the increase. The number of cases reported in 2011 increased by 30% compared to the year before.

Sustainable development is a process that includes economic growth accompanied by a reduction in poverty and environmental protection, as well as enhancing democratic rights and freedoms. Achieving sustainable development and peacebuilding are tightly connected in their basic values: respect for life, ending violence and promoting and practicing nonviolence through education, dialogue and cooperation.

This means that peacebuilding is closely linked to issues of identity and difference, discrimination, human rights and violence, by opening up spaces for overcoming violence and rigid and reductionist concepts of identity in favour of developing a culture of nonviolence and plural, inclusive identities. It is also a way to overcome the legacy of the wars from the 1990s with their deep rifts and distrust not only among, but also within the societies of the region. Protecting others' rights is always an aspect of protecting one's own. This is not a matter of abstract humanism, but a rational interest and responsibility with a view to developing society as a whole, all of its potential and the quality of life and security of every person living in it.

The basic preconditions for the effective implementation of the Peacebuilding Strategy is public political support to its implementation and the cooperation of all the relevant institutions, organisations and interested individuals.

This necessitates the cooperation of state bodies and civil society organisations. Adopting and applying the Strategy is a key guarantee of the state bodies' commitment to this important social process, to fulfilling the legal and civilizational obligation of the Republic of Serbia towards its citizens.

Aim and Objective of the Peacebuilding Strategy

Peacebuilding is a permanent interest of the Republic of Serbia that requires the involvement of all segments of society. The Strategy also takes into account the views of various stakeholders from other countries and societies in the region with whom Serbia shares a common past and the fraught legacy of conflict. The Strategy starts from the premise that peacebuilding is important for developing relations at all social levels, from interpersonal to relationships between institutions and countries.

In this narrower sense, peacebuilding is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation[22]. In that respect, peacebuilding does not only mean working to prevent a return to conflict following wars, but is focused on the real causes not only of past wars, but also of all potential conflicts[23].

Peacebuilding requires transformation on the individual, interpersonal, cultural and structural level, as well as shaping a wider security concept of peacebuilding through the concept of human security[24]. Personal changes refer to creating new attitudes, behaviours and knowledge in the existing context. Interpersonal changes refer to improving or establishing new relations between sides in the existing context. Cultural changes refer to establishing values conducive to peace. Structural changes refer to establishing new institutions and policies[25].

The general aim of the *Peacebuilding Strategy* is to create effective mechanisms and activities to help create *sustainable peace*, a stable social balance in which conflicts do not escalate into violence and war, including changes in social relations that are at the root of the conflict, as well as creating space to fairly resolve conflicts through cooperation and trust building.

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22   Michelle Maiese, „What it Means to Build a Lasting Peace", 2003.

23   See: John Paul Lederach, "Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies", United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, 1997.

24   See the introduction for more on the concept of human security.

25   John Paul Lederach, "Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies", United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, 1997, p. 80 - 83.

This Strategy relies on already adopted strategies, laws and regulations, and it regulates hitherto unregulated areas.

The Strategy focuses on the following areas: reconciliation, dealing with the past and peace education.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation in society is a process of overcoming hostility and building trust, renewing and improving social relations and relations between political communities in conflict.

Reconciliation is a future-oriented process that aims to create a sense of security and certainty that past violence will not be repeated. It must necessarily consider and include regional aspects as a central component of peacebuilding[26].

The general public has numerous dilemmas about the meaning of the term reconciliation, the aspects and processes it entails, and about its stakeholders. It is most often confused with forgiveness and/or forgetting, and its primary stakeholders are mostly identified as being representatives of the state(s), state institutions and/or civil society organisations. This kind of confusion results in reconciliation efforts remaining unsystematic and fragmented. Public promotion and awareness raising campaigns on reconciliation and peacebuilding could contribute to a better understanding of this term and indirectly encourage large swathes of society to become involved in these processes in a way that best suits their experiences and needs.

Reconciliation requires the transformation of the legislative and institutional framework, away from hatred, distrust, discrimination and prejudice, as well as the violence and social injustices that give rise to them. Reconciliation means standing up to a system of blaming whole groups or peoples.

Reconciliation must include the following processes:

Establishing and improving relations with others, who are seen as enemies, based on mutual respect, cooperation and nonviolence. The following is needed in order to achieve this change:

- Cross-border cooperation in the former SFRY - the greatest outpourings of hatred and the most horrific crimes took place in the context of inter-national (inter-ethnic)

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26   John Paul Lederach, „Building Peace, Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies", United Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, 1997.

conflict[27], which is why establishing the facts, building relations and reconciliation must also take place at this level.

- Removing double standards - in condemning crimes, injustices and human rights violations. In practice, this means overcoming divisions into "our" and "their" victims and not dividing perpetrators of crimes into "our heroes" and "their criminals", i.e. condemning crimes without relativizing or justifying them, irrespective of the group to which the perpetrators and victims belonged. This also includes condemning and abandoning the kind of public discourse that supported such crimes or served to justify them. This would mean a true recognition of the suffering of all victims, establishing the moral principle whereby suffering is not made relative, and violence is not justified, where faith in justice is restored. At the same time, this would convey a message to the "Others" about accepting responsibility for what happened in the past.

Transforming the structures and circumstances of everyday life that reflect and reproduce narratives of superiority and inferiority, morality and immorality, the civilised and the uncivilised, i.e. the old divisions into "us" and "them", perpetrators and victims, those that reproduce violence[28]. We most often call this:

- Deconstructing *enemy images* – a new, more balanced view of the "opponent group" as no longer monolith, homogeneous and *malicious*, but as made up of various subgroups and individuals with different characteristics and opinions. This process also requires seeing one's own group in more complex and objective terms, especially when it comes to the actions and events related to the conflict, and includes the readiness to view the contribution of one's own group to starting and maintaining the conflict, as well as its responsibility for the crimes that took place. This is only possible through encounters, a dialogue in which the sides in the conflict recognise similarities, both similarities in their injuries and suffering, as well as similarities in recognising their own patterns of violence. This is how space is created to establish new relations based on acceptance, cooperation and understanding the needs of others.

A multi-perspective understanding of the past and present – a simple determination of the facts will not prevent violence from recurring, it is necessary to question its justification, most often based on ethno-national interpretations of a tragic past. Dialogue needs to be opened about conflictual interpretations of the past in order for it to finally cease being a generator of some future violence. This requires:

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27   Vojin Dimitrijević, „Izgledi za utvrđivanje istine i postizanje pomirenja u Srbiji", REČ, 62.8 (June 2001): 69-74.

28   John Paul Lederach, „Building Peace, Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies", United Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, 1997.

- Accepting that there are other interpretations and views of the events, efforts to understand them and include them in how the war(s) are remembered (*multi-perspectivity in the approach*). This means establishing a dialogue where the sides to the conflict are able to recognise both similarities in suffering, but also in their own patterns of violence. It leads to former enemies giving up on hatred, desires for retribution, distrust and pain, and to them building trust and relationships.

- Bringing complexity into the history of relations between groups and interpretations of the causes, course and effects of the war in the way that the war(s) are remembered – this is a way to establish a dialogue that makes it possible to talk about the roots of the conflict, not just its outcome.

- The challenge of the present is also to view complex problems from the perspective of the opposing side and try to understand, not necessarily accept, but use this as a basis for dialogue and efforts to build trust, understanding that it is in our interest to make sure that both the interests of our society and of the neighbouring society are met.

- Including memory of acts of resistance to violence and war, dissension and civic courage from "the other side" – establishing discontinuity with the past

Regional cooperation among historians on preparing history textbooks and teaching aids would enable multi-perspectivity in the approach to interpreting historical events (especially those from the recent past), abandoning the dominant monoculture, ethnocentrist and exclusive perspectives, and would establish the basis for history teaching not to be used as a launching ground for new conflicts in the future (the way it mostly functions today).

The basic precondition for a multi-perspectivity approach to history teaching is for the objective of history teaching and textbooks to be encouraging pupils to know and understand the differences in the interpretations of historical events and to view them from different angles, understanding the context of historical developments, as well as the motivations and needs that influence diverse perspectives.[29]

Art, as any other symbolical expression, is inevitably influenced by the culture and society in which it is created. Socially engaged art reflects the ethical plane of personality and community, but it also problematizes it by opening up questions that are undesirable or difficult to discuss. In that sense, art functions as a place of exchange, dialogue, questioning of values and pushing of boundaries. In the context of peacebuilding, support to art initiatives and production (especially

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29 Regional cooperation among historians on preparing history textbooks and teaching aids contributes to developing tolerance of diversity in general, precisely because multi-perspectivity can be discussed as a process and an understanding where, in addition to our own, we also respect the perceptions of others. In that sense, multi-perspectivity is not merely a process, but also a predisposition or ability and desire to view a situation from a different perspective. The necessary preconditions for this approach include the readiness to accept the possibility of other points of view being equally valid; the readiness to identify with others and try to view the world through their eyes, which denotes an ability to feel empathy.

those with a regional or cross-border approach) opens up spaces, through artistic expression, for different perspectives and interpretations and examinations of hegemonic representations of the past, posing questions that are important both for the past and for the future.

Given that what society remembers and how is inseparable from the nature of that society, its foundations and core values, a special role in creating collective memory, and consequently collective identities, is played by sites of suffering that are turned into sites of memory in various ways in order to foster memory of events important for collective history.

Processes of memorialisation and commemoration must include diverse perspectives, enable the suffering of victims to be marked and recognised irrespective of the group to which they belong and encourage dialogue about cultural models, social mechanisms and structures that led to violence and suffering, as well as discussions of common history and civic responsibility. Their aim is to establish a culture of memory where there is room for memories about the injustices suffered by all people, but also room to remember acts of resistance against violence and war, acts of dissent and civic courage. This new culture of memory would put in place the conditions for mutual understanding, empathy and solidarity.

Visits to execution grounds and unmarked and marked sites of crimes by those who were on opposing sides during the war is a way to come together in order to honour victims, both civilian and military, irrespective of their ethnic or religious belonging. The very presence of "others", those that are seen as part of the homogeneous group of the enemy, and their expression of respect towards victims, whatever their ethnic, religious or other belonging, is a powerful message about compassion and grief over what happened that creates a space where empathy can be developed beyond ethnic and religious boundaries. On the other hand, the presence of "others" at these (by and large monoethnic) events that, as a rule, come with prominent nationalist iconography, allows for those marking the site of suffering of members of their collective to temper their rhetoric and question it, thereby contributing to deconstructing the image of the enemy and to building trust.

Visits to memorials can also be organised through study visits combined with cross-border meetings, intended for different stakeholders (scholars and researchers, experts in memorial sites, documentation centres and museums, as well as artists, educators, teachers, pupils and students, and others). This facilitates familiarity with historical facts and encourages active participation of citizens in a dialogue about the legacies of the past and contemporary social processes tied to certain events or phenomena that are commemorated at sites of memory.

Respecting the fundamental values of human rights, solidarity, nonviolence and democracy should be the main criteria when judging proposals for memorials and preparing commemorations. Organising an open and inclusive consultation process with experts and the wider public, as well as with representatives of state institutions, should make this process transparent and participatory. The consultation process should also have an informative-educational function centred on the fundamental values of nonviolence and democracy, as well as the process of memorialisation itself and its importance in terms of peacebuilding.

A regional portal for information on commemorations and marking sites of suffering could offer information about the time and place of commemorations and marking sites of suffering. On the other hand, by collecting this information and data all in one place, it could also open up space for different views and interpretations, for establishing dialogue and initiating public debate on current memorial culture and commemorative practices. In the future, it could also develop into a space for creating a public archive of documentation and photographs, texts and research on these issues, and provide a valuable source for all those interested in these topics. This presents an opportunity to include the experiences and memories of different collectives into the mainstream of historical memory of the entire society (as well as societies in the region), spanning ethnic boundaries in perspectives of events from the past.

Another important segment of memorialisation and the culture of memory is remembering resistance to the war. Supporting initiatives for memorialising resistance to the war in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s and their introduction into the existing culture of memory helps raise awareness about history as the result of human actions and choices which entail responsibility and opens space for deconstructing the image of the enemy. It also introduces discontinuity with the wartime past by promoting nonviolence and civic action as desirable models of behaviour.

Dealing with the past

Dealing with the past (DwP) is a key factor in peacebuilding and a necessary precondition for profoundly democratising society. DwP is a multi-layered and complex process of countries and societies dealing with the legacy of war crimes and human rights violations from the past. The attitude taken towards past violence is closely linked to attitudes towards violence, injustice and exclusion in the present. In that respect, this attitude is not related to something that is over and done with, but will have a strong influence on the future. The future will also be determined by the capacity for critically approaching the past and the ability to understand it in all its complexity. At the same time, DwP is a process of learning how to remember the past and how to examine your views about the past and the future through dialogue with others.

A constructive process of dealing with the past requires determining what happened in the past (the facts), efforts to punish wrongdoing (justice), social distancing from the wrongdoings committed, recognition of the social position of victims, and cooperation in seeking out views of the past that include and accommodate different perspectives and interpretations[30].

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30   John Paul Lederach, "Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies", U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, 1997.

The aim of developing and strengthening cooperation and exchange in peacebuilding on the local, national and regional level is familiarising different persons and groups with the idea and concept of reconciliation and peacebuilding. Regional and cross-border cooperation and exchange encourage dialogue, the inclusion of different perspectives and the exchange of experiences and knowledge relevant to peacebuilding, as well as strengthening capacities for better quality and more effective action in peacebuilding in the societies of the region. The effects it can have are diverse and range from integrating the peace perspective into professional activity to encouraging an active relationship towards social developments and activist actions.

Media reporting based on the values of nonviolence, democracy and respect for the human rights of individual and groups entails knowing and understanding the key characteristics of phenomena relevant to reconciliation and peacebuilding in the region. It also requires having a socially responsible attitude towards violence and past wars, in order to avoid new escalations of violence, in order to exclude from the reporting any stereotyping, simplification, one-sidedness, misrepresentation or discriminatory characterisation or comment on events and phenomena. Socially responsible media reporting entails presenting and viewing events from multiple perspectives.

Well founded and constructive criticism by experts, i.e. respected reporters, associations and researchers, is a basis for improving the quality of socially responsible reporting. Cross-border cooperation in this segment offers a supportive framework for self-correction.

Building trust in the aftermath of wars and conflicts is closely linked to recognising victims and their suffering irrespective of what group they belonged to. Overcoming trauma and personal and social healing only becomes possible when victims are individualised, divisions into "ours" and "theirs" are overcome, all facts on casualties and suffering are consistently and unambiguously established and documented, and facts on crimes are gradually accepted[31]. Part of that process is punishing the perpetrators of crimes irrespective of their ethnicity and/or the ethnicity of the victims.

At the social level, this means a critical distancing from the crimes, restoring faith in justice and an indication of the desire to build society on different foundations. Accepting facts on the violence and injustice committed in the past and accepting responsibility for that past is part of the process of citizens taking responsibility for the society they live in now and the state structures they finance.

Victims and war veterans and their associations are often the key bearers of dominant post-war narratives. Greater inclusion of victims' associations and war veterans' associations in the peacebuilding process can help overcome and constructively integrate difficult experiences for those that were directly involved.

Group identities are often constructed around the role of the victim and memory of an

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31   See: Vesna Teršelič, "Pamćenje žrtava i ostvarivanje prava mladih generacija na učenje povijesti utemeljene na činjenicama", u Emina Bužinkić, "Rad na suočavanju s prošlošću – Priručnik za organizacije civilnog društva", Documenta – Centar za suočavanje s prošlošću, Zagreb, 2012/ 2013, p. 16 - 20.

actual common experience of marginalisation, suffering and injustice from the past. Memories of past victimisation can be passed on from one generation to the next, preventing individuals or whole groups from overcoming trauma and transforming conflicts related to that trauma. Namely, even though the original experience is real, it is most often passed on as a black-and-white image of the conflict to which a simplified image of the enemy as a collective is central. When victimisation from the past becomes a central social topic, it can serve to justify current violence ("righteous" vengeance) towards members of the group considered/seen as responsible for the victimisation from the past.

Deconstructing the victimisation narrative means engaging in dialogue about the past and determining facts about events from the war, overcoming silence and silencing in society (silence about wrongdoings and perpetrators, about the suffering and shame of victims, sometimes even silence about those that helped the victims) which is easily passed on to new generations and becomes a basis for new conflicts. It is only by deconstructing the victimisation narrative that it becomes possible for the suffering of victims on all sides to come to the forefront (and not just the wrongdoings of the enemy), reducing the distance between people victimised in different ways, at different times and to a different degree, but as part of the same or similar social context.

What society remembers and how is inseparable from what that society is like, what it is built on and what values lie in its foundations. A constructive relationship towards the past would, on the one hand, represent a deconstruction of dominant national narratives, the image of the enemy, the discourse of national martyrdom, vulnerability and victimisation; and on the other, an effort to "introduce into the already existing discourse aspects and facts that have been left out and neglected"[32].

Dialogue about the past opens up space for de-mythologizing the collective in whose name wars were waged and understanding that history is the result of human actions. In other words, that history is neither inexorable or inevitable, but the result of choices that everyone is responsible for[33].

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32 Nenad Vukosavljević, "Dealing with the Past in former Yugoslavia" in: Ivana Franović, Nenad Vukosavljević, Tamara Šmidling, "Reconciliation?! Training Handbook for Dealing with the Past", Centar za nenasilnu akciju, Belgrade – Sarajevo, 2012, p. 13.

33 For more on dealing with the past, see: Ivana Franović, "Dealing with the Past in the Context of Ethnonationalism. The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia", Berghof Occasional Paper No. 29, October 2008.

Peace education

An important function of peace education[34] is understanding that conflicts are an integral part of social life that result from differences in needs and perceptions, and that they do not necessarily lead to violence. On the contrary, constructively resolving conflicts can be an opportunity for progress and development. Education conceived in this way contributes to resolving and overcoming conflicts between individuals, groups and/or societies through cooperation before they escalate and result in violence.

By critically re-examining the foundations of society, peace education enables its transformation. Important segments of that transformation include:

- *(Re)defining injustice*, i.e. recognising violence, and not just the most manifest – direct violence, but also the way it is embedded in institutional and social structures and aspects of the culture that make it possible and acceptable (structural and cultural violence)[35]*;*

- *(Re)defining identity*, i.e. empowering people to develop and accept plural, inclusive identities based on respect for others, their difference, needs, rights and freedoms;

- *Supporting action and change*, i.e. empowering people to take on an active role in and responsibility for changing society and building peace through nonviolent action, civic organisation, human rights protection, resistance to xenophobia, nationalism, prejudice and labelling, and to establish dialogue with those that are often seen as the enemy Other;

- *Constructive dealing with the past and building trust* through a more complex and multi-perspective approach to violence from the past, re-examining mutual ethno-historical stereotypes and deconstructing dominant national narratives.

  An important part of a constructive relationship to the past is establishing knowledge about what was left out of history and memory about actual, lived coexistence, contained in a host of everyday practices and relations between people in the region.

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34   For more on peace education, see: Nenad Vukosavljević, "Preparing for Nonviolence - Experiences in the Western Balkan", In: B. Austin, M. Fischer & Hans J. Gießmann (ur.), Advancing Conflict Transformation. The Berghof Handbook II. Opladen/Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publ., 2011. Also see: Ivana Franović, „Peace Education as an Initiator of Social Change" in: Helena Rill, Tamara Šmidling, Ana Bitoljanu (Eds), „20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change. Peacebuilding in the Region of the Former Yugoslavia", Centar za nenasilnu akciju Belgrade – Sarajevo, 2007, p. 110-123.

35   For more, see: John Galtung, „Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization", Sage Publications Ltd, London, 1996.

Education for peace is a way to achieve better understanding of social realities and encourage solidarity in learning together on an individual and collective level. However, it cannot be reduced to the mere acquisition of knowledge and skills, but relies significantly on experiential learning that is not only cognitive, but also has an emotional dimension. In this way it can facilitate a change of personal attitudes and behaviours by bringing awareness to the effects they can have on others and on society as a whole. It also contributes to forming a sense of responsibility for them and their effects.

Particularly important in the context of peacebuilding is the establishment of closer links with the social environment at the local, national and regional level through planned cooperation and exchange with other educational, cultural and academic institutions from Serbia and the region. Although exchanges of young people at all levels of education (pupils and students) exist, they are sporadic and more likely the result of the enthusiasm of individual teachers than any planned cooperation with a set programme, objectives, working methods and mechanisms for implementation. For young people who are pupils or students, this is an opportunity to better understand the environment in which they live, develop and awareness of social responsibility, solidarity and the importance of civic participation. Also, meetings and exchanges with "those others" are an opportunity to deconstruct prejudice and stereotypes, critically re-evaluate one's own beliefs and attitudes, as well as the beliefs and views of one's own community about the past and the present, and for developing competences for dialogue with those who hold different opinions.

Education for peace is aimed at better understanding of the social reality, transfer of knowledge, attitudes, values and improving competences for resolving conflicts without resorting to violence, as well as encouraging solidarity and cooperation at the individual and collective level. In order for education to fulfil this function, the process must, on the one hand, eliminate contents supporting or justifying violence from existing curricula and textbooks, and on the other, introduce new content related to this area into school curricula. In that sense, the contents of the curricula must enable, on the one hand, the development of critical and self-critical thinking, empathy and sensitivity to various forms of violence and discrimination, an ability to recognise the social mechanisms, ideologies and structures that lead to violence (in the past and in the present); and on the other, the development of knowledge and skills. such as communication and teamwork, needed for creative conflict transformation, nonviolent action and active peacebuilding, promotion of human rights, civic participation and organisation. Civil society organisations from Serbia and the region with experience in peacebuilding should be involved in curriculum development.

A precondition for developing peace education is a fundamental review of existing textbooks and teaching materials to identify content that incites violence, discrimination and hatred. In the interest of lasting peace, it is particularly important to review history textbooks, because they are powerful tools for maintaining a conflict frozen in time and producing hatred and grounds for future conflicts. Although reviews of history textbooks and teaching materials have been conducted in the past, it seems that they resulted from the personal interest and enthusiasm of

the researchers, rather than a continuous and systematic approach of relevant state institutions. Continuously monitoring history textbooks and teaching materials from a peacebuilding perspective would leave less room for using history to respond to momentary political needs, for cherry-picking topics and historical facts, and for reproducing ethno-historical stereotypes and myths.

One outcome of the review of history textbooks and teaching materials would be history textbooks that provide a more complex and multi-perspective approach to the past (especially to controversial and sensitive issues from the common history of the peoples in the post-Yugoslav region) and that encourage discussing and re-examining not only what happened in the past, but also why it happened and what the possible alternatives may have been. History textbooks should also reflect the understanding of history as a plural discipline, one that recognises and takes into account different perspectives and interpretations, as well as the fact that it results from the choices people make between various possibilities.

In order to fully integrate the principles of a peace perspective into education which is also important as a starting point for changing awareness and rejecting war and violence as conflict resolution models, peacebuilding topics must be incorporated at all levels of education, and this in turn requires capacity building for peace studies and research. The direct measures that are meant to contribute to developing the education system in this direction entail providing financial, institutional and technical support.

In order to ensure a regional perspective, civil society organisations and other stakeholders from the region with experience in this area should also be included in the consultations on curriculum development.

Given the importance of pre-school education for personal development and its social and pedagogical function, peacebuilding topics should be incorporated already into pre-school curricula. These topics should be introduced in ways that are suited to the developmental characteristics of children, through contents on nonviolent conflict transformation and communication based on respect for diversity and equality, dialogue and cooperation.

An important means of changing the current social paradigm and ensuring conditions for lasting peace is establishing peace studies. Peace studies are an interdisciplinary academic discipline that relies on political science, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, economics, international relations, gender studies and other disciplines in order to understand and explain the causes of armed conflict and large-scale violence, develop methods to overcome their consequences and constructively transform conflicts in order to identify ways and directions of development leading to lasting peace, a stable social balance where conflicts do not escalate into violence and war. Peace studies deal with transforming individual behaviours, national policies, social institutions and relations and cover a wide range of fields related to peace, such as conflict, violence, justice, inequality, social change and human rights. Introducing Peace Studies as an academic discipline into the higher education system would open an important channel for interaction between the theoretical underpinnings of peace and practical activities to ensure it.

In order to implement reforms in the education system that would lead to abandoning the traditionalist-patriarchal model and integrating the peace perspective into education, it is necessary to strengthen capacities in the system itself, by training teachers at all levels, in order to achieve understanding and ensure support for this new concept. Preparing teachers would also entail developing competencies for educational work through an understanding of the social and cultural context in which education processes take place and successfully linking curriculum content with real-life situations. This also includes developing competencies for encouraging pupils towards creativity, empathy and critical thinking.

Apart from changing the behaviours and attitudes of people directly involved in education, transforming the education system and creating one based on the values of nonviolence, cooperation and dialogue would also require establishing an institutional/structural basis to support and reinforce that change. That is why it is necessary to continue improving the development of a democratic environment in education, by strengthening the participation of all interested groups and by developing democratic structures and procedures at all levels of education. Particularly important in this context is further strengthening of the mechanism of pupil participation at educational institutions as part of education for democracy. In this process, pupils are taught skills to differentiate between genuine participation and manipulation, regardless of whether it is being implemented by grown-ups or their peers, and become ready to take on active roles in society.

In post-war societies such as those in the region, where, on the one hand, education coverage does not extend to a significant proportion of people or they drop out of schooling early, while on the other, the education systems themselves encourage simple reproduction of information without critical thinking and often support exclusivity, intolerance and selectivity in approaching topics depending on the political requirements of the moment, programmes of non-formal peace education are an important corrective and supplement. Through various forms of non-formal education based on experiential learning and the transfer of knowledge and skills relevant to peacebuilding, non-formal peace education programmes contribute not just to the personal development of individuals, but to society as a whole, opening up space for democratic consolidation of the societies in the region, the development of interpersonal and inter-ethnic relations, solidarity and mutual trust building (both within and beyond state borders).

Non-formal peace education programmes have an important role in raising awareness among employees in these sectors about how through daily professional engagement they can contribute to peacebuilding and changing society by recognising violence and discrimination in its diverse incarnations and applying their knowledge and skills in their everyday work. They must also contain information on relevant domestic legal documents and current regulations enshrining peacebuilding in order to ensure more efficient implementation of measures issuing from such documents and help enhance the existing legal framework.

Regional and cross-border peacebuilding trainings that bring together people from the former Yugoslavia of different professions, levels of education, social status, age and experience contribute to developing sensitivity to different forms of violence and discrimination, the

mechanisms and dynamics of how conflicts develop and how they can be resolved. They focus on connections and communication between people from different places, thereby supporting processes aimed at removing prejudice, building mutual trust and constructively dealing with the past. As a space for exchange, reflection and self-reflection, critical examination, disagreements about values and ideas, practising dialogue with those who hold different opinions, regional peacebuilding trainings are a space where the personal and the social are linked. They are an opportunity to work on personal development in order to contribute to social change through active participation in resolving political and social problems.

Peacebuilding Measures

Reconciliation

Objective 1: Promoting reconciliation and peacebuilding in the region

Activities:

- Support to greater inclusion of victims' association and veterans' associations into the peacebuilding process;

- Support to spreading cooperation and networking organizations, informal groups and initiatives in the region active in peacebuilding;

- Developing and strengthening cross-border and regional cooperation programmes and exchanges at the local and national level related to topics relevant to reconciliation and peacebuilding;

- Organising cross-border dialogue gatherings such as forums, seminars, exchange seminars and other events to discuss topics relevant to the peacebuilding programme;

- Establishing institutional mechanisms for closer cross-border cooperation between state and academic institutions, civil society organisations, the media, professional associations and other segments of society;

- Public campaigns to promote and raise awareness about the importance of reconciliation and peacebuilding in the region.

Objective 2: Establishing a culture of dialogue and cooperation in seeking views of the past that include and respect the existence of different perspectives and interpretations of the past

Activities:

- Support to cross-border, regional and international expert cooperation and exchange programmes for historians and experts from related disciplines;

- Establishing institutional cooperation mechanisms for jointly developing history textbooks and teaching materials to be used in schools throughout the region;

- Support to art initiatives and productions supporting and affirming peace and dialogue about the past at the regional level.

Objective 3: Establishing a systemic and non-discriminatory memory policy

Activities:

- Support to creating forms of memorialisation and commemoration that promote peace and support dialogue about the past;

- Support to "former enemies" in joint visits to sites of suffering;

- Study visits to sites of suffering and sites of memory;

- Organising regional and cross-border dialogue gatherings such as forums, seminars, exchange seminars on memorial culture and commemorative practices in the former Yugoslavia;

- Establishing standards and criteria for memorials and commemorative activities based on the values of respect for human rights, solidarity and respect for the values of nonviolence and democracy;

- Organising public information and education campaigns on the importance of the memorialisation and commemoration processes and their aims in the context of peacebuilding;

- Organising public information and education campaigns on defined standards and criteria for memorials;

- Establishing a Regional Portal for information about commemorations and marking sites of suffering;

- Support to regional initiatives aimed at marking resistance to war in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s and their incorporation into the existing culture of memory;

- Support to regional research about the anti-war movement and resistance to war in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

Dealing with the past

Objective 1: Determining facts on war crimes and other grave human rights violations from the armed conflicts in the former SFRY

Activities:

- Support to establishing a regional commission for determining facts on the armed conflicts in the former SFRY through active involvement in the existing Working Group drafting the Commission's Statute[36];

- Unifying existing databases on victims, from the registers of state bodies and civil society organisations, as well as international organisations, with a view to facilitate gathering, documenting and maintaining all existing data until the regional commission is established;

- Adopting the relevant legislation to regulate unifying existing databases, define how they are to be used, access and data protection, as well as the body responsible for these activities;

- Adopting regulations to define the obligation of all state bodies to maintain records on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and actions in line with the above-mentioned legislation;

- Establishing an institutional, independent body made up of representatives of the state and civil society organisations with the mandate and authorisation to monitor and control data and documentation processes, as well as the conditions and ways of using the data.

Objective 2: Reintegration and social support for war victims and direct participants in the wars of 1991-2001

Activities:

- Including victims' associations and veterans' and disabled veterans' associations in all processes to identify the needs of victims and participants in the wars of 1991-2001 when adopting new laws, regulations and other state policy measures;

- Adopting new laws on the rights of civilian war victims and war veterans in order to remedy current shortcomings, ensure alignment with the international commitments of the Republic of Serbia and fill up the existing lacuna related to the rights of war veterans;

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36 The President of the Republic of Serbia delegated a member to the Working Group, and the Presidents/Presidency Members of other countries established after the break-up of SFRY are expected to do the same.

- Creating suitable programmes of psycho-social support for victims and war veterans in cooperation with civil society organisations active in this field;

- Information and education campaigns to raise awareness about the consequences of exposure to wartime violence, as well as about wartime trauma, its manifestations and effects.

Objective 3: Critical examination of the history of relations and conflicts in the Balkans, including dialogue on the causes, course and consequences of armed conflict in the former SFRY

Activities:

- Support (financial and political) to establishing a regional network of researchers working on the history of inter-group relations, the causes, course and consequences of war, and the way war(s) is(are) remembered;

- Support to creating regional interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary study programmes in the history of inter-group relations, the causes, course and consequences of war, and the way war(s) is(are) remembered;

- Creating a system of support, within the Ministry responsible for education and science, for the participation of researchers in regional and international research projects dealing with the history of inter-group relations, the causes, course and consequences of war and the way war(s) is(are) remembered;

- Support (financial and political) to media content familiarising the public with facts about crimes from the past and wartime events.

Objective 4: Actions to combat hate speech and inciting violence in public spaces;

Activities:

- Active and consistent application of legal norms on sanctions for hate speech and inciting violence in society;

- Reform of judicial statistics to facilitate the monitoring and analysis of prosecution of hate speech;

- Support to public broadcasters of Serbia and Vojvodina in developing special programme content to combat hate speech and violence;

- Introducing continuous education for reporters through non-formal education programmes such as seminars, trainings, study visits to deepen knowledge needed to recognise hate speech, its consequences, the glorification of violence and incitement to hostility towards others;

- Support (financial and political) to the organisation of dialogue gatherings such as study visits, forums, seminars, exchange seminars and other events for reporters and civil society organisations active in this field;

- Introducing continuous accredited education for staff at the Public Prosecutor's Office through non-formal education programmes such as seminars, trainings, study visits to deepen knowledge needed to recognise hate speech, its consequences, the glorification of violence and incitement to hostility towards others.

Peace education

Objective 1: Reforming formal education in order to develop knowledge and skills needed to analyse and constructively transform conflicts, nonviolent action and active peacebuilding

Activities:

- Developing educational content needed to analyse and constructively transform conflicts, nonviolent action and active peacebuilding in cooperation with the National Education Council;

- Analysis of school subjects and curricula from a peacebuilding perspective and eliminating contents that promote hatred, discrimination and violence;

- Analysis of history textbooks and teaching materials from a peacebuilding perspective;

- Integrating peacebuilding topics into school curricula at all levels of education;

- Integrating peacebuilding topics into pre-school curricula.

Objective 2: Developing a culture of nonviolence, dialogue, cooperation, social justice and solidarity

Activities:

- Developing institutional mechanisms for regional and cross-border exchanges of young people through peacebuilding workshops, summer camps, seminars, study visits and other activities at all levels of education;

- Establishing programmes for full-time Peace Studies at interested higher education institutions and support for incorporating Peace Studies into the higher education system;

- Continuous education of teachers for integrating a peacebuilding perspective into education;

- Creating programmes of accredited non-formal peace education adapted to the needs of staff in the state administration and public services (healthcare, police, judiciary, social care institutions);

- Introducing accredited non-formal peace education for staff in the state administration and public services (healthcare, police, judiciary, social care institutions) through programmes of non-formal peace education such as seminars, trainings, study visits to expand knowledge;

- Organising dialogue gatherings such as study visits, forums, seminars, exchange seminars and other activities bringing together staff from the state administration and public services, and civil society organisations working in peacebuilding;

- Support to regional and cross-border peace education programmes and violence sensitivity training (trainings, workshops, dialogue gatherings, etc.) intended for reporters.

Strategy Implementation Monitoring and Review

Objective: monitoring the efficiency and quality of implementation of measures from the Strategy and evaluation of achieved results

Measure 1: This Strategy should be published on the websites of relevant state bodies and in the media. Familiarise the public, responsible institutions, bodies and organisations, including citizens' associations specialised for these issues, with the Strategy.

Measure 2: The body responsible for the Strategy shall set up an institutional body responsible for coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the impact of this Strategy. The work and competences of the intersector coordination body shall be regulated by a special act (rules) after the body is established.

Measure 3: The intersector body responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the impact of this Strategy shall periodically report the results of implementation of the Strategy to the interested public.