



SECTOR "EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY"

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the Sector Working Group

Venue: Conference Hall, Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Ilindenska bb

Date: 11 April 2018, Wednesday

Opening session

- In the opening session, moderated by **Ms. Carovska, Minister of Labour and Social Policy**, the Minutes of the previous meeting (held on 01.03.2018) and the proposed Agenda for the second meeting were adopted. **Ms. Deskovska, Minister of Education and Science** stressed the importance of the donor coordination meetings - strengthening of the coordination will influence the long-term effects of the investments. She also highlighted the openness and transparency for the civil society organisations and all other stakeholders who want to give their contribution in the reform process. In this regard, Minister Deskovska informed about the public consultation announced for the draft Law on Primary Education, as well as on the consultation process for the Law on Higher Education, which, upon public consultation, was amended 3 times and currently is on 2nd reading in the Parliament. She also informed that in parallel with the amendments of these laws, change of the Law on Secondary Education is ongoing, which also encompasses the vocational education and training as one of the prioritised area, taken into consideration.
- **Mr. Bertolini, Head of Cooperation in Delegation of the European Union**, addressed the aim of the meeting, which was to hear the priority areas of interventions for the 2019 financial allocations. One of the outputs of the SWG meetings is before the summer break to come out with priority areas that will be supported through IPA. Namely, apart from the multi-annual programmes in transport, environment and agriculture, in 2019 there will be annual programmes for competitiveness, agriculture and social policy. The part for the social policy will be implemented under the Sector Budget Support (SBS) modality, which is a support to the budget for the agreed priorities.
- After apology by Minister Deskovska and Minister Carovska that they must leave the meeting due to urgent matters, Ms. Sanela Shkrijelj and Ms. Marinela Marichikj Tusheva continued to moderate the meeting.

IPA Programming 2019

- **Ms. Shkrijelj, Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy** informed on the filled table for the donor interventions in the sector and invited the donors' representatives to give their consent the table to be distributed to all participants of the meeting. All received information was compiled and will be circulated after the meeting. She also informed that MLSP has established sub-working groups for each of the priorities presented in the donor coordination meeting. Each group is chaired by coordinator. The list of coordinators responsible for formulation, implementation and monitoring of the priorities would be shared after the meeting.
- The two line ministries presented the priorities indicatively considered for IPA 2019 financing under the SBS modality.

MLSP priorities:

The MLSP's priorities were presented by **Ms. Shkrijelj**. The presentation was structured around the reforms that would be implemented in the period 2018-2020 and reforms beyond 2020. Two main priority areas were proposed to be covered in the IPA 2019 programme: 1) Support the



Implementation of a Reformed Social Protection and Social Inclusion System and Services and 2) Reduction of the unemployment rate and increase of the labour market participation of youth, long-term unemployed, women and other vulnerable groups. Additionally, the list of priorities is complemented by horizontal activities in the area of gender equality and non-discrimination, which could be implemented as technical assistance. The following long-term needs were pointed out:

Continuing the reforms of social protection system and social inclusion system and services, with emphasis on:

- Monitoring and evaluation of the reformed social protection system efficiency
- Deinstitutionalisation and transformation of social care institutions accommodating elderly and persons with mental illness
- Activation and social inclusion, which includes:
 - Supporting the development of community based social services, in particular home-care services, with focus on elderly and persons with intellectual disabilities
 - Supporting the development of social enterprises (support services for development of social entrepreneurship, financial support to social enterprises and system monitoring of social enterprises)
 - Integrating the persons without ID through provision of temporary housing, education, health, labor market and housing.

Increasing the labor market participation in particular of young people and women, as well as improving the skills through access to quality education and training

- Preventing transition to long-term unemployment among young people, which encompasses:
 - Nation-wide implementation of youth guarantee
 - Implementation of the employment measures in accordance with the local labor market needs
- Support to employment of long-term unemployed persons and other vulnerable groups of unemployed persons
 - Preparing the long-term unemployed and other vulnerable groups for inclusion in the labor market, including through establishment of regional centers for professional rehabilitation
 - Encouraging their participation in the labor market services and active employment measures
- Narrowing the gender gap in the labour market
 - Development and implementation of measures for stimulating entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship among women as part of the active employment policies
 - Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services and infrastructure.

Horizontal Issues – Gender Equality, Anti-Discrimination

- Intensifying campaigns for raising public awareness for equal access of women and men to assets and services
- Implementing the conclusions and the recommendation of the evaluation of the Law on Equal Opportunities and the gender sensitive evaluation of other laws under the competence of the MLSP
- Establishing analytical and training center for gender equality and trainings of the civil servants on gender-sensitive policy and budgeting.

The presentation of the IPA 2019 priorities is provided in the *Annex 1*. It was stressed that the MLSP pursues other priorities in cooperation with the World Bank, UNICEF and other international partners and agencies.



MES priorities:

- As an introduction, **Ms. Marichikj Tusheva, special advisor of the Minister for Education and Science**, informed that in the period April-May, the testing of the teachers is being implemented and a working meeting with the local self-government on the PISA testing is scheduled.

In the process of defining the priorities for 2019, she explained that the main documents taken in consideration were the AD2017 and the Strategy for Education 2018-2025. She shortly reminded on the activities for 2017. After that, the colleagues from the different departments in the Ministry presented the priorities for the 2019.

- **Ms. Biskoska, Head of Unit for Secondary Education**, informed that high on the agenda are:
 - Involvement of the employers in all processes of preparation of the sector qualifications for the NQF.
 - Improvement of the school conditions in the secondary education for all students, including the students with special educational needs and the students from the penal-correctional homes.
 - Carrier guidance, as well as continuous trainings for the teachers and mentors in the secondary schools. Here very important is also, the immediate involvement of the employers in the work-based learning.
 - Monitoring of the students from enrolment in school, their learning achievements, university enrolments, to entering the labour market. The Skills observatory to be functional and effective.
 - Capacity building of the institutions for implementation of the validation of the prior learning (informal and non-formal)
 - Quality assurance for the process of verification of adult education programmes and occupational standards.
- **Ms. Sulejmani, State Advisor for education policies**, informed on the following priorities:
 - Stronger system for identification of out-of-school children and their monitoring
 - Capacity building of the teachers for work with students with special education needs. In this regards support is needed for the work of the school inclusive teams, as well as for the parents of the students.
 - Continuation of the Project for scholarships and mentoring/tutoring for the Roma students with wider approach and inclusion of other vulnerable groups.
- **Mr. Neziri, State advisor for educational policies**, informed on the priorities in the higher education:
 - Adequate access for the higher education students with special education needs, including adequate physical conditions in the universities.
 - Better student standard for the higher education students - improvement of the conditions of the student dormitories.

The discussion followed after the presentations.

- **Ms. Tanevska, UNFPA representative**, stressed the importance of having an interlinkage between services provided to those who live in social exclusion. Social inclusion at the level of community is impossible without participation and joint work of all relevant actors providing social, educational health services to vulnerable individuals. Without questioning the objectives and the results of the programme, she suggested to introduce protocols how, for example, the teacher in the secondary school will cooperate with the social worker and the healthcare worker when dealing with vulnerable



students. In particular, Ms. Tanevska was interested how the healthcare sector will be involved in identifying and supporting vulnerable students, especially taking into account the gender perspective.

- **Ms. Prodanova Programme Manager, Cooperation section, EUD**, referred to the Youth Guarantee as one of the priorities in the employment and social sector and asked how much help will be needed and for what. More specifically, she was interested in the plans for the youth guarantee in the next 3-year period and how it will be further extended.
- **Ms. Kondik-Mitkovska, UNICEF**, informed that UNICEF has contributed in designing a number of models of inclusive education, such as the individual educational plan. UNICEF together with Bureau for Development of Education have prepared a comprehensive guidelines for individual educational plan, which will be piloted. After the pilot phase, this intervention is planned to be implemented on national level. The next step would be to train the school staff. But, in order to be effective in nurturing the culture of inclusiveness, at least 60% of the staff in a given school needs to be trained. She also informed that together with the Resource Centre they work on support of the parents of the students with special educational needs, such as the camps for psycho-social support and other services available to the parents of the children with special educational needs. UNICEF is willing to share their experience in the area of inclusive education in the Law on Primary Education. She also stressed the importance of giving coordinated support for implementation of the legislative framework, by referring also to the EUD new project on inclusiveness and CSOs. The same applies to the pre-school education, given, the small coverage of children with special needs (0,4% of the pre-school children), on one hand, and the importance for identification of and early intervention with the developmental difficulties in the early childhood, on another.
- **Ms Jasna Mandic, Resource Center** referred to the activities that have been implemented with UNICEF. She highlighted the importance of implementing the functional profiling of the children, which guarantees a multi-sectoral, holistic approach that equally takes into account the health, educational and social aspects. She further suggested to get familiarised with the international classification of persons with disabilities that is going to be implemented in the Republic of Macedonia.
- **Ms. Sonja Bozinovska, International Organisation for Migration** recalled the need to ensure coherence of the objectives and priorities with the relevant national strategies in the area of education and social policy, including the Strategy on Human Trafficking which covers social inclusion (sustainable services and direct assistance) of the victims of human trafficking, then the Resolution on Migration Policy Resolution, which deals with education and social policy aspects, the brain drain effects as well as the Refugees and Foreigners' Integration Strategy, covering the early integration measures.
- **Mr. Kolekeski, IPA II Mechanism**, suggested avoiding overlaps between priorities of 2017 and 2019 and asked for clear identification of target groups (e.g. the NEETs), as well as interlinking the priorities between MLSP and MoES (e.g. the aspect of adaptation of work places for people with disabilities was not visible). To achieve better formulation of the priorities, he proposed further in-depth consultation with civil society organisations and other stakeholders.
- **Mr. Perks, UNICEF representative**, stressed the importance of addressing the violence against children as it was a big problem. Furthermore, he believes that the lack of innovation in the public sector across all Balkan countries is the reason why public services such as hospitals, social work centers or schools don't deliver despite all interventions in the legal framework, trainings, strategies, etc. Therefore, in terms of performance of education or generally the social sector, he pointed out the importance of identification and addressing the bottlenecks in order to see why the interventions do not lead to the desired change.



- **Ms. Ancevska, Ministry of Health**, drew attention to the fact that it was impossible to reform the social protection without provision of adequate health care. Therefore, the Action Programme 2019 must foresee health care measures for the vulnerable citizens in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the social protection reforms.

 - **Ms. Vinton, UN Resident Coordinator/ UNDP Resident Representative**, raised two questions/suggestions for the future:
 - To monitor the programme by looking into indicators that are not only of relevance to the EU accession, but also according to the UN sustainable development goals;
 - The amount of funding as soon as it becomes available.

 - **Ms. Naceva, World Bank**, pointed out that despite good addressing of the priorities, she sees challenges also in mechanisms for implementation, establishing good monitoring framework, and also to be aware for the ways of financing and channelling of funds from central to local level, especially with regards to the inclusion. She suggested improving the financing mechanisms and instead of regressive model to accept the progressive financing model in pre-school education and thus include children from poor families and children with special needs. In higher education, she explained performance-based financing and financing in accordance with the national priorities is needed.
- Ms. Serafimova-Kirkovski, SEA**, stated that IPA support cannot and should not resolve all the problems in the country, because we should also rely on other donors in the country, but also on the national budgets and capacities. She reminded on the most relevant strategic documents for the IPA Assistance 2014-2020 (such as the Indicative Country Paper, the Sector Planning Document) and said that for the sector budget support modality strong readiness and commitment of the state institutions is needed. She informed that there was an on-going work on streamlining the framework of indicators for monitoring the performance of the major reforms in this sector.
- According to **Ms. Stojanovska, UN Women** gender sensitive education, starting from the pre-school education is needed for decreasing the gender gap and segregation in the labour market. It is essential that gender mainstreaming and antidiscrimination as horizontal issues are linked to the public administration reform and public financial management reform, which go beyond the social sector. She also reminded on the need to refer to the UN sustainable development goals.

 - **Ms. Grozdanova, UNICEF** brought up the fact that, when it comes to education to all, due consideration should be paid to children in collision with the law, as they were neglected and maltreated and risk low educational attainment. For this, the most important is cooperation between the MoES and Ministry of Justice.

Comments by MLSP on the points raised by the discussants: Ms. Shkrijelj acknowledged the two line ministries will jointly prepare a single programme, detailing activities and indicators. As the funds are limited, the IPA Programme could cover limited number of selected priorities. However, the two line ministries rely on the support from the other donors and that was the reason for mapping the donors' planned interventions. Moreover, Ms. Shkrijelj spoke of the importance of the cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the different programmes jointly implemented by the two ministries. However, the IPA Action Programme 2019 will have indicators solely under competence of the MLSP and MoES. Youth Guarantee will be piloted in 2018 in three towns. The funds secured for piloting will be used for engagement of youth workers and youth organisations, while the Government will pay for the active labour market measures. In the future, there will be a need for financing the rolling-out of the youth guarantee and the MLSP currently negotiates possible involvement of other donors. The NEETs are especially in the focus of the youth guarantee. The CSO were recognised as main vehicle for delivery of the social services on local level. For this reason, the MLSP pilots centers for support of social enterprises. The MLSP in cooperation with the World Bank and other development partners will continue to include the CSO in the implementation of social services by launching a grant scheme for the municipalities and



the CSO. Finally, violence against children remains priority of the Ministry that will be pursued with the support of UNICEF.

Comments by MES: Ms. Sulejmani pointed out that educational activities for the correctional homes are planned to start in 2019. Ms. Janevska explained that NQF provides interlink between education and labour market. This also refers to the validation process and recognition of workers skills for the needs of the employers. Ms. Tusheva informed that this year PISA testing will be implemented and we hope we will get clear picture for the quality of our educational system. She also informed there are incentives in the legislative framework for start-ups and economic incubators-MoES is part of the working group lead by the Ministry of Economy.

Mr. Bertolini clarified that the health sector was absolutely important and was in need for support, but the EUD could not intervene without a clear picture of what the needs were and which needs IPA could support. EUD will support the health institutions to carry out deep assessment and it will be the basis for planning future interventions under the IPA III.

With regards to the violence against children and violence against women, it was reminded that these priorities were already financially supported by IPA, because UNICEF and UN Women have been using funds from the IPA regional programme to implement those programmes.

Mr. Bertolini explained that WG is not IPA group, but permanent platform for discussion of all reforms and investments in the sector. The performance indicators will also be discussed in the framework of this WG in the future meetings. He explained that SBS was different method for implementation of the assistance, but the substance was the same as with the project approach. SBS is a transfer of budget from the European Commission's bank account to the Ministry of Finance bank account depending on the achievement of specific targets/indicators that will be decided upon. It is deep and long process which will be happening until the end of 2018. The Government decides how the money will be used and EU would like to see the results. That is why it is crucial to know what is going to be measured and what kind indicators will be developed. He stated 8 criteria that would guide the EUD in what could be supported:

1. Clear strategies and measureable indicators (strategies that are adopted, consulted, clear and that share the same principle as those of the European Commission);
2. Inclusiveness and vulnerability (Key principle would be "Children first", in terms of ensuring that the EU child's rights policy must be respected. Additionally, vulnerable people in labour and education will be part of the EU focus);
3. Division of tasks between national budget, other donors and IPA (UN agencies are included in the platform and there is a need for efficiency and clear division of tasks to avoid any double funding);
4. Wide consultation process beyond the SWG (Teachers, students, civil society in the whole country);
5. Priorities and clear budgets (Focus on real priorities as with the limited budget it is impossible to support the strategies as a whole. There will be a need for a number of meetings in each sub-area to identify the real needs against the national budget and all planned projects);
6. Relevance of the national priorities to the EU accession process and standards involving also the UN sustainable development goals;
7. All interventions budgeted with clear timelines (for example there must be a clear picture when the outputs of IPA 2017 will be delivered and what will come under IPA 2019) and
8. Gender mainstreaming is inevitable both in the public policy and in the assistance.

Mr. Docinski, MLSP informed on the latest developments concerning the monitoring and reporting on the Employment and Social Reform Programme (ESRP) which was adopted by the Government on the 3 August 2017. The work will be coordinated by the MLSP, while the SWG will be in charge of monitoring of the ESRP. The first annual report of the implementation of the ESRP is due to the Government by the end of May 2018. There are three guiding objectives to be achieved: 1) update of the ESRP monitoring



indicators, 2) update of the status of implementation of the activities and spent funds on the basis of the ESRP matrix with objectives and activities and 3) modification (if any) of the measures, deadlines or targets. The template to be followed is based on the ESRP matrix with objectives and activities as well as the ESRP matrix with indicators and targets. The templates were shared with all relevant institutions. The deadline for collection of information is 30 April 2018 which then will be compiled and shared with all other stakeholders.

Ms. Orhideja Kaljoshevska, SEA referred to the regional IPA funds for investment projects, i.e. the Western Balkans Infrastructure Framework. The revision of the so called Single Projects Pipelines was launched and the line ministries (MLSP, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice) have submitted 15 project ideas. She invited the SWG to discuss the project ideas before their adoption by the National Investment Committee and the Government planned towards the end of April.

Conclusions:

1. The table for all donor interventions will be delivered to all and it will be updated each quarter;
2. MLSP and MES will submit List of coordinators for priority areas for the programming 2019; MLSP will also disseminate the operational matrices prepared for each priority;
3. MLSP and MES in coordination with the EUD will discuss the objectives in sub-groups of the IPA 2019 before formalising them in May 2018;
4. SWG members (institutions) will submit their inputs for the ESRP implementation report by 30 April to the MLSP;
5. The next meeting of the SWG will be indicatively held at the end of May 2018

Annexes:

Annex 1 Presentation on employment and social policy priorities

Annex 2 Presentation on education priorities

Annex 3 ESRP Annual Implementation Report

Annex 4 List of participants

Minutes taken by: Rosica Tosevska, Advisor, MES
Aleksandra Slavkoska, Head of Unit, MLSP

Minutes checked by: Danco Vodenicarski, Head of Unit, MES

Minutes agreed by: Sanela Shkrijelj, Chef of Cabinet, MLSP
Marinela Marichikj Tusheva, Chef of Cabinet, MES