

National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM

Belgrade, Serbia
November 27, 2010

A national consultation with educators was organized by the Humanitarian Law Center. The gathering was attended by 21 participants and the discussion was moderated by Nataša Kandić (Humanitarian Law Center). Key note speakers were Maja Mičić, (Youth Initiative for Human Rights), Živica Tucić (Religious Information Agency), and Marijana Toma (member of the Draft RECOM Statute Working Group). Radio Television Serbia, Tanjug, and Fonet reported from the consultation.

Opinions, Suggestions, and Recommendations of the Participants

Religious communities will support ideas of the Initiative for RECOM.

All those who thought that religious communities would not support the ideas of the Initiative for RECOM are very wrong. Principal ideas of the Initiative for RECOM are the essence of religion and humanism. (Živica Tucić, Religious Information Agency, National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM, Belgrade, Serbia, November 27, 2010).

Ideas of the Initiative for RECOM can be included in official seminars organized by the Ministry of Education.

(...) what you just said about informal education models, the entire concept you have and the things that need to be done, all that should be included in seminars organized for educators or it should be included in the list of seminars approved by the Ministry of Education and marked as high priority seminars (...) because you can't just enter a school unofficially, you need to be accredited, someone has to stand behind the Initiative for RECOM and say that the program of that organization or institution is in compliance with our standards and then you will find yourselves. There are two possible ways. One is to be on the list of seminar-organizing institutions of the Ministry of Education, which is a big catalogue, and the other one is to submit your candidacy for the list of seminars directly organized by the Cabinet of the Minister of Education. (Želimir Popov, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, Assistant Minister of Education, Department of Elementary Education, National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM, Belgrade, Serbia, November 27, 2010).

RECOM findings should be included in textbooks for elementary schools and high schools.

I think that as much information as possible from the scope of RECOM's findings should be included in textbooks for elementary schools and high schools. High school students already have their opinions formed on the basis of information they picked up randomly, from their parents, from the media, from their teachers whose views and personal experiences may have also been prejudiced. So, we mentioned it here today, everybody talked about it and that leads me to conclude that it is not too early to discuss this topic. We have to find an acceptable way to present these facts to them and to determine the scope of information to be included in the textbooks. I think that it should be first of all included in history books and civic and religious instruction books, but that it could also be in other books, as well. (Melita Randelović, Second

High School of Economics, civic education instructor, Belgrade, Serbia, National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM, Belgrade, Serbia, November 27, 2010).

(...) with respect to your dilemma whether to introduce the findings of the commission into the elementary school curriculum, I personally think it is not too early. Once they enter high schools, these children often have already formed very radical opinions on many issues but not only based on what their families think, but unfortunately also based on what their teachers in elementary schools taught them. For that reason I think it is important to teach them about the events of our recent past through an age-appropriate curriculum which will make it easier for them to accept the truth about what happened in this region in the recent past. (Siniša Vukadinović, Mihajlo Pupin Tenth Belgrade Grammar School, civic education instructor, Belgrade, Serbia, National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM, Belgrade, Serbia, November 27, 2010).

It is imperative to learn the circumstances that led to the conflict.

(...) I support the initiative to explore the circumstances that led to the conflict because I am sure the people in the war engulfed areas did not just start killing each other with no reason at all. I am sure that a warmongering context existed that turned them against each other. (Tatjana Matijaš, civic education instructor, Traffic and Transport Technical High School, Zemun, Serbia, National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM, Belgrade, Serbia, November 27, 2010).

RECOM should compile a list of individuals who saved lives during the conflict.

(...) a list of individuals who saved other people's lives in the conflict should also be made, just like the list of victims. (Nada Đuričić-Banjanin, Railway Technical School, civic education instructor, Belgrade, Serbia, National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM, Belgrade, Serbia, November 27, 2010).

Youth offices should also be included in the activities of the Initiative for RECOM.

(...) it seems like a good idea to include youth offices in every town in the activities of the Initiative for RECOM. Our youth office in Sombor is very active. They are very influential in schools, because their members are teachers in many high schools. (Jasmina Borić, High School of Economics, civic education instructor, Sombor, Serbia, National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM, Belgrade, Serbia, November 27, 2010).

RECOM should make a movie about its findings.

(...) I think that it would be very useful to make a movie about RECOM findings which we can play to students in class. I am not sure it should be a 45 minute long movie or three 30 minute long movies so that there is at least 15 minutes for a discussion after each part is played. (Jasmina Borić, High School of Economics, civic education instructor, Sombor, Serbia, National Consultations with Educators on the Initiative for RECOM, Belgrade, Serbia, November 27, 2010).