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**Abstract**

The contribution addresses the reconstruction of post-conflict societies, with a focus on the development of higher education institutions and systems. The conflicts that unfolded in the Western Balkans during the 1990s left behind societies whose institutions needed reconstruction, and whose cultural life and economic activities required resuscitation. A thorough analysis of the root causes of the tension, the dynamics within the society and a consideration of other than just inter-ethnic cleavages leads to the conclusion that higher education is a pivotal institution on the way of prosperity for a post-conflict society, such as the Kosovar. Good knowledge of the context also paves the way to sensible international assistance and prevents any recourse to simplified and patronising reconciliation attempts. The case of quality assurance as a distinctive element of the europeanisation of higher education shows how a policy transfer can succeed and offer a sustainable solution as well as how it can cause resistance and risks being counterproductive. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)