EQUITY AND EDUCATION

Country Notes of a Central-European Project

2009

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DEAR READER,

The Tempus Public Foundation implemented a project in 2008 with the title: *Equity in Education in Central Europe – a regional analysis* with the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Education and the European Commission. The initiative was realised within the framework of an international cooperation the Central European Cooperation for Education (CECE) among ministries responsible for education in Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. The thematic focus of the project was the identification of the most relevant equity issues at regional level in the context of lifelong learning based on the results of the OECD comparative report "No More Failures – Ten steps to equity in education".

The participating countries were asked to nominate experts competent in national policy issues, development programmes and best-practice examples in educational equity issues. They met at 2 international workshops in order to finalize country notes on the national context of the subject. At the closing phase of the initiative a synthesis report was elaborated in order to sum up important outcomes and conclusions along with policy recommendations for relevant stakeholders as a result of the project.

The publication includes 4 country notes and the final synthesis report. It aims at promoting educational reforms in the region that seek to enhance equal opportunities in education for all besides supporting equity related educational development programmes undertaken in the participating countries.

The Editor

Peter Simon
Zentrum für Innovation & Qualitätsentwicklung

Equity and Education – Country Note: AUSTRIA

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SUMMARY

Measuring learning outcomes systematically is a relatively new chapter in Austrian educational policy. Data already available is, therefore, incomplete, and information based on learning outcomes regarding equity and inequalities in the Austrian educational system referred to in this country note comes from international surveys such as PISA or PIRLS.

Apparently, Austrian society is a democratic one. Upper class and socially disadvantaged groups each represent a tiny part of the population and unemployment rate in Austria is one of the lowest in Europe. During the last decade, however, socioeconomic differences began to grow and, at the same time, international comparative studies such as PISA or PIRLS show considerable inequities in education and give evidence of a rather poor average performance of Austrian students and the educational system itself.

Among the dimensions of educational inequalities, the socio-economic background and ethnicity (especially migration) seem to be the most relevant for Austria, while the issues of special needs and gender have not ceased to play a role of some importance.
A wide range of measures have been taken to improve equity in education in Austria. The most promising in terms of learning outcomes is the implementation of educational standards, trials to establish standardised final exams and the first steps towards the establishment of comprehensive schools.

PART 1
SITUATION ANALYSIS

1.1. General introduction

Compulsory education in Austria is for a period of nine years. After four years of *primary school* (Volksschule) education (ages 6 to 10) students may either attend a *lower secondary school* (Hauptschule – HS) or the *lower cycle of a secondary academic school* (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule – AHS-Unterstufe). All of those 14-year-olds, who choose to leave compulsory education after nine years, will complete what is

known as the *pre-vocational year* (Polytechnische Schule – PTS) during which students are to be prepared for transition to vocational life. The attendance of *vocational schools* (Berufsschule – BS) is mandatory for apprentices.

Students who continue their education go on to an *upper secondary level* (ages 14 to 18/19), which includes *secondary academic schools* (AHS-Oberstufe) and a differentiated system of secondary *technical* and *vocational* schools and *colleges* (Berufsbildende Mittlere und Höhere Schulen – BMHS). Upon completion of the final year at a secondary academic or a secondary technical and vocational school or college, students take a *final exam* (Reifeprüfung). The school-leaving certificate thus acquired provides access either to university or to other forms of higher education.

The Austrian school system is regulated on a uniform basis nationwide. Attendance of public (state-run) schools is free of charge.

1.2. Equity profile of Austria

Socio-economic background

Austria		Austria		EU average		EU Benchmarks and goals
		2000	2006	2000	2006	2010
Low achieving 15-year olds in reading literacy		19,3%	21,5%	21,3%	24,1%	17%
Early school leavers (age18-24)		10,2%	9,6%	17,6%	15,3%	10%
Upper secondary completion rate (age 20-24)		85,1%	85,8%	76,6%	77,8%	85%
Tertiary graduates in Maths, Science and technology	Increase since 2000		+34,3%		+25,9%	+15%
	Share of females	19,9%	23,3%	30,8%	31,2%	Improve gender balance
Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)		8,3%	13,1% (b)	7,1%	9,6%	12,5%
Participation in pre-chool education, 4 year olds		79,5%	82,5%	82,8%	85,7%	90%
Adults with tertiary education level (age 25-64)		14,2%	17,6%	19,4%	22,9%	
Public investment in education, % of GDP		5,66%	5,45%	4,68%	5,09%	Significant increase

A connection between the socio-economic origin of students and their performance is evident in all participating countries of the 2000, 2003 and 2006 PISA studies.

The *reading* achievements of children will, for example, clearly improve with parental education. The difference between the reading achievements of the student quartile with the highest socio-economic status and those with the lowest was 80 points in Austria (Pisa 2000), which corresponds more or less exactly to the OECD average of 82 points.

This significant correlation was also obvious in 2003 when comparing the achievements in *mathematics* of learners, the difference between the highest and the lowest quartile was 93 on the OECD average and 81 points in Austria, whereas mean performance levels are significantly above the OECD average in PISA 2006.

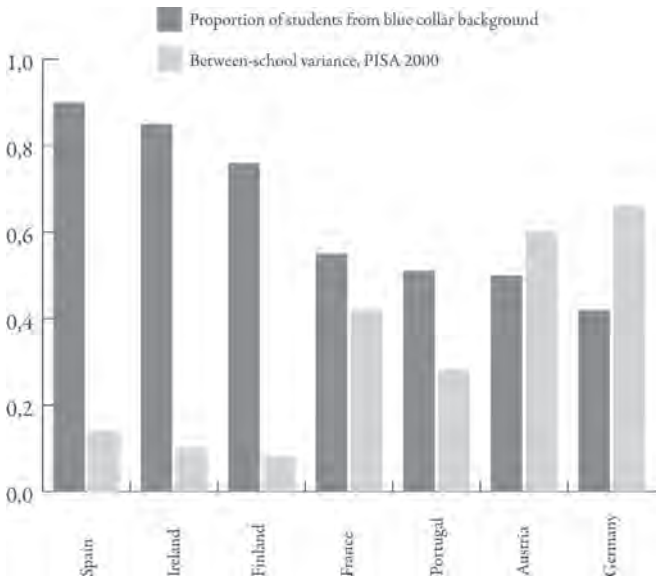
PISA 2006 takes note of a similar situation in *science*: Austria scored above the OECD average of 500 points, but socio-economic differences, just like in many other countries, accounted for a significant part of inter-school differences in Austria. A discrepancy between schools in terms of performance was over one and a half times the OECD average in Austria, where a highly differentiated system of grouping or tracking of students (starting at age 10) had an effect on this result. In Austria, the SES-gradient is considerably steeper than average, but its strength is only about average. The economic, social and cultural status of students and schools accounts for the variance on the science scale at 40.1 % of student performance between schools, whereas these factors only account for 0.6% of inter-school variance.

The impact of socio-economic background on performance in the context of science in Austrian schools is slightly above the OECD average. However, the distance from „PISA winner" Finland is considerable. In this country, the difference between the highest and lowest quartile is 61 points in mathematics and achievement differences depending on the highest educational level achieved by the mother were 35 points in mathematics, 32 in reading and 32 in science.

Apart from parental education, the support children receive at home also has an influence on academic achievement, as evidenced by PISA 2003. Above all, interaction and communication between parents and children as well as interest in their progress are additional aspects parental support. Communication of parents with their children's schools is yet another aspect to consider.

Possession of a cultural capital in classical education (e.g. literature, volumes of poems, art objects) and/or engaging in cultural activities in the parental household are also linked with the academic achievements of students. Even when the socio-economic background is accounted for, this effect continues to be significant in Austria and is in fact above the OECD average.

Chart A 7.3 Proportion of students in higher education (2003–2005) from a blue-collar background and between-school variance in PISA 2000



Note: The first bar shows the ratio of students with fathers from a blue collar background compared with men of corresponding age group (40-to-60-year-olds) in blue collar occupations. The second bar shows the between school variance in mathematics form PISA 2000 survey.
Source: OECD PISA 2000 survey, EUROSTUDENT 2005.
StatLink: http:// dx.doi.org/10.1787/068114616808

In all PISA countries, family factors have an effect on students' performance. However, the difference between these countries is huge. In Finland the relationship between the family background and the performance of students is insignificant, while in Austria this relationship is rather strong.

The Austrian average in science and reading competences in relation to the parents' highest educational levels illustrates that the children of parents with a background of higher education – on an average – are able to perform better than those with parents who only have a background of compulsory education.
In science, this difference is more than 100 points, in reading it is still 90 points.

In Austria, a clear connection between the social background (occupational situation and educational status of parents) and the education of a child is also confirmed by analyses of census data from 2001.

1.3. Pre-school education

The number of children in institutional care has risen significantly in the past 30 years. The number of children in nurseries and child care facilities has, in particular, increased in the last 10 years. The Austrian Bureau of Statistics has provided care data for (state-subsidised) institutionalised care facilities since 1995. According to this data, nearly 9% of children between 0-2 years of age (compared with 5% in 1995) and 84% among those between 3 and 5 years of age (compared with 71% in 1995) received institutionalised care in 2003. The ratio for 2003 rose to 11% for the 0-2 year-olds and to 85% for the 3-5 year-olds, including child minders and child and/or play groups.

There is no information concerning the social origin of children attending and those not attending care facilities. So far, only the professional/occupational status of parents and data on whether the father or the mother is a single parent has been published. 38% of children under 15 years of age of single, working mothers have access to care facilities, as opposed to 23% of children (0-14 years old) whose mothers do not hold down jobs and live in a partnership. The proportion of children in care facilities rises with the gainful employment of their mothers.

On average, parents paid € 145 per month (€ 200 including lunch) for children under 3 years and € 60 (€ 120 including lunch) for 3-5-year-olds attending care facilities in 2002. These expenditures vary markedly, depending on the federal province, household size, type of family and the extent of mothers' employment.

Approximately 2,400 children under 3 years of age (of altogether 232,000) and another 2,100 children between 3 and 5 years (of 256,000) are not in institutional care, although their parents would require it, as it is too expensive. In addition, approximately 1,400 children between 3 and 5 years of age are not in institutional care as there are no places available.[1]

Thus access to child care facilities is in part limited by a lack of places available. In addition, financial reasons and/or the distance from appropriate facilities are given as reasons for the non-utilisation of these facilities. These results indicate possible access problems to pre-school education for financially weak families. Due to a problematic situation regarding data available and/or the lack of studies concerning this issue, it is impossible to further specify information in this context.

1. These figures only refer to the situation of children and do not provide information on the number of non-working mothers who have given up their jobs because they appear to be no longer „profitable", when deducting the costs of child care. The mother will stay at home, which makes institutional care for the child "superfluous". This may partly account for the high response ratio as regards this item.

1.4. Primary / secondary level I

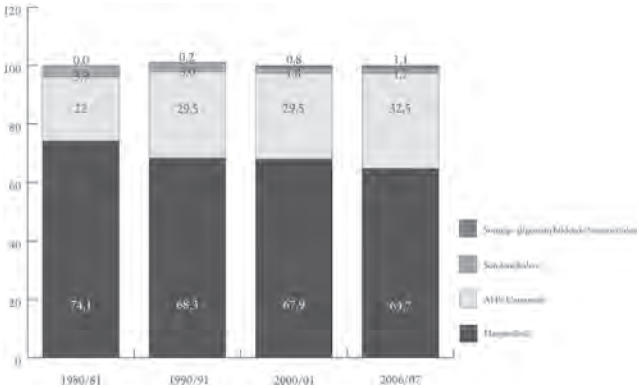
>>*Segregation*

The age of first selection in the education system varies from age 10 to 17 in individual countries. The first selection in Austria is at or below the age of 11 (PISA 2006).

By international comparison, Austrian students face an important decision at a relatively young age, i.e. after leaving primary education. The decision between attending a general secondary school or a secondary academic school (lower cycle) affects a student's further educational career significantly since „attendance of a secondary academic school (lower cycle) greatly increases the probability of a further career in a higher-level school". A multiplicity of factors beyond the student's achievement will influence and determine this choice.

In Austria the trend towards academic secondary schools (lower cycle) has increased since the 1980s. While approximately 20% of a particular age group had access the lower cycle between 1962/63 and 1982/83, this percentage rose to almost 30% in 1992/93 and 2002/03. However, there are marked differences between federal provinces and gender.

Schülerinnen und Schüler in der 5. Schulstufe nach Schultypen



Q: Statistik Austria, Schulstatistik – 1) Inkl. Oberstufe der Volkschule und Schulversuche z.B. integrierte Gesamtschule

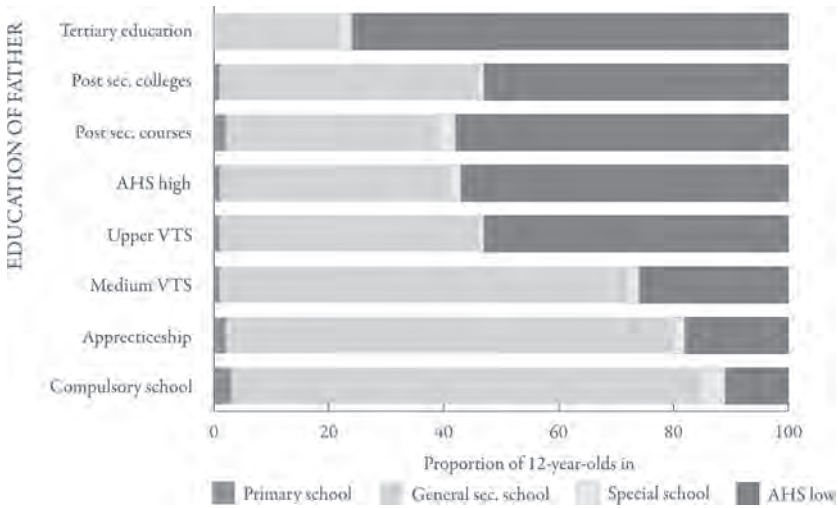
Im Schuljahr 2006/2007 besuchten 64,7 % aller Schülerinnen und Schüler der 5. Schulstufe eine Hauptschule.

The strong link between the father's (or a single mother's) highest educational level achieved and the school-type attended by a 12-year-old is apparent. While 83% of the

children of fathers with compulsory education only attend general secondary school (with more than 3% attending special school), this percentage is below one quarter for the children of fathers with higher-level education. The majority of 12-year olds whose fathers took a university entrance exam, attend academic secondary schools (lower cycle); for children of fathers who did not take a university entrance exam, that percentage varies between 12% (when a father attended compulsory school only) and 28% (when a father attended secondary technical as well as vocational school).

A similar picture is presented by the connection between social background and school attendance as influenced by the father's profession/occupation. 86% of 12-year old children of blue-collar workers attend a general secondary school, compared with a mere 27% of the children of white-collar workers or of civil servants with a higher level education. 72% of the latter attend academic secondary schools (lower cycle); the same applies to the children of self-employed individuals in engineering and science [two thirds of them attend academic secondary schools (lower cycle)]. An above-average ratio of students attending general secondary school is characteristic of the children of farmers (nearly 90%), of workers (over 80%) and of the children of civil servants with compulsory schooling or apprenticeships (over 70%).

Proportion of 12-year olds by school type and their fathers' (single mothers') education background, census 2001



Note: Only 12-year-olds who are in education and live in their parents' households. AHS low = Secondary academic school (lower cycle), AHS high = Secondary academic school (upper cycle), VTS = Vocational and technical school. Source: Bauer 2005

Based on a micro census special programme run in June 1996, the Austrian Institute for Family Research (OEIF) evaluated the answers of the 16-30-year old respondents concerning their achievements at secondary level I.

On average, 75% of the children surveyed had completed general secondary school and one quarter had finished secondary academic education (lower cycle). The educational background of parents has a particularly strong influence on the educational results of students. The higher the education of parents, the higher the rate of completion of studies at secondary academic schools (lower cycle).

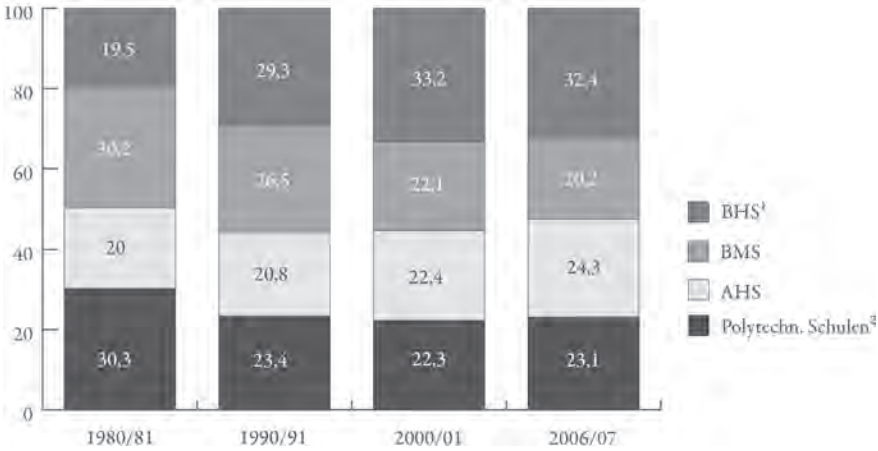
22% of children whose fathers graduated from higher education had completed general secondary school, but 78% secondary academic school (lower cycle). This distribution is reversed for children whose parents had compulsory education only. 90% of them completed general secondary education and only 10% secondary academic education (lower cycle).

The national evaluation of the PISA study 2003 shows that the difference in the achievements of 15-16-year-old students also depends on their school careers. In the reading test, graduates from academic secondary schools (lower cycle) scored approximately 100 points higher than graduates from general secondary schools. The difference in mathematics was 88 points, which corresponds to more than one competence level in PISA terms. However, performance curves partially overlap for graduates from both school types. In mathematics, 25% of general secondary school graduates achieved at competence level 4 or higher. That number has been reached by less than one third of graduates from academic secondary schools (lower cycle).

The conclusion from these results is that the separation of academic secondary schools (lower cycle) from general secondary schools does not necessarily result in homogeneous achievement groups; what can be concluded is that the individual achievement of a student is not the only criterion for the choice of a particular school type.

There are various explanations for the strong connection between the social background of students and their decision between general secondary school and secondary academic school (lower cycle). One of the reasons is the very young age (by international comparison) of the first important decision on a particular educational path – generally made when children are as young as 10 or 11 years of age. Due to their young age, these students are not capable of making decisions or are unable to understand the consequence of their choice. Therefore it is primarily a parental decision, which is strongly influenced by the parents' educational careers and the resulting knowledge of the structure of the educational system and school requirements.

Schülerinnen und Schüler in der 9. Schulstufe nach Schultypen



Q: Statistik Austria, Schulstatistik, Inkl. 1) Lehrerbildende höhere Schulen – 2) Inkl. allgemein bildende Statutschulen und Sonderschulen
Im Schuljahr 2006/07 besuchten 23,1% aller Schülerinnen und Schüler der 9. Schulstufe eine polytechnische Schule.

The core of parental influence is their legacy of cultural capital for their children. Children from privileged families have a starting advantage, which can be compensated only in part during 4 years of primary school. The early decision affecting a student's educational path at the end of the fourth year at primary school has undeniable consequences, which is apparent from the logic of the Austrian educational system, according to which the selection of the students is supposed to foster their potential in the best possible way. Particularly at this young age, the achievements of the children do, however, heavily depend on the socio-economic status of the family. Therefore this selection leads indirectly to a situation where children from less educated households are at a disadvantage. The result is a reproduction and/or a possible increase in educational inequality, since disadvantaged children become even more disadvantaged.

1.5. Secondary level II

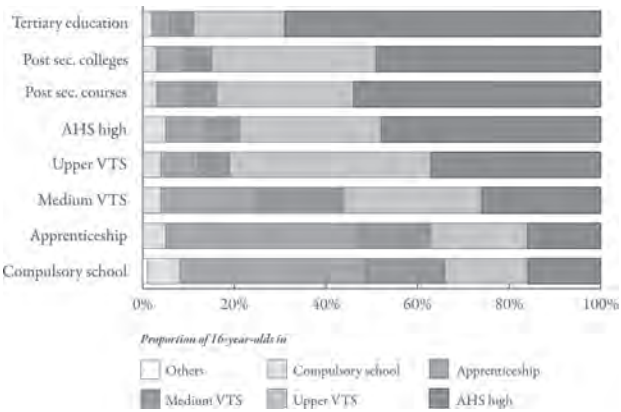
All studies indicate that at secondary level II there continues to be a correlation between the social background of students and their educational path, although its intensity seems to be somewhat lower compared with levels at primary and/or school secondary schools.

The issue of the actual number of students leaving the Austrian educational system

without a certificate at the end of their compulsory schooling is a largely unanswered question. There are only very vague estimates, which vary between 1% and 12% of an age cohort. For the second wave of the PISA study in Austria, estimates for a dropout rate were at 5.8% (for 15-year olds). According to the census of 2001, 2.3% of 15-year olds, 7.2% of 16-year-olds and 10.7% of 17-year olds had left education and training. However, the proportion of those without a formal qualification in this group remains unclear. It can be assumed that this group is the hardest hit by social selection, something which is already evident at secondary level I. However, students who terminate their compulsory schooling without obtaining any certificate are a large, unaccounted-for mass in the Austrian educational system and, since the group cannot be identified, nothing is known about its social composition.

The census of 2001 offers a good overview of the types of training embarked upon by young people (if they are still in education). The example of the 16-year olds shows that social selection in the educational system continues at secondary level II. If the father (or single mother) has only completed compulsory education, 8% of 16-year olds (continue to) attend compulsory school; 44% complete an apprenticeship; 16% attend secondary vocational and technical school and about 30% attend secondary academic school (upper cycle). The picture is completely different for 16-year olds whose fathers are HE graduates: out of this group 1% (continue their education) at compulsory school; 3% are apprentices; and 4% attend a secondary vocational and technical school; however, 91% attend a higher-level school, predominantly (70%) secondary academic school (upper cycle).

Proportion of 16-year-olds in education by school type and the education of fathers (resp. single mothers), census 2001



Note: Only 16-year-olds who are in education and live in their parents' households. AHS high = Secondary academic school (upper cycle), VTS = Vocational and technical school. Source: Bauer 2005.

Differentiation based on the father's occupation paints a similar picture. Of the 16-year-olds whose fathers are unskilled workers, 12% (continue to) attend compulsory school, while less than 9% attend secondary academic school (upper cycle) - if they are still in training at all. The proportion of apprentices in this age group varies strongly according to the occupational status of the father. More than half of 16-year old children of semi-skilled workers complete apprenticeships (the proportion of children of unskilled and skilled workers is almost just as high), although less than 5% of the children of white-collar workers or civil servants with HE graduation and less than 8% of the children of self-employed individuals in technical or scientific occupations do so. In these two groups, nearly two thirds of 16-year-old students attend secondary academic school (upper cycle). This ratio is below 10% for the children of workers and farmers.

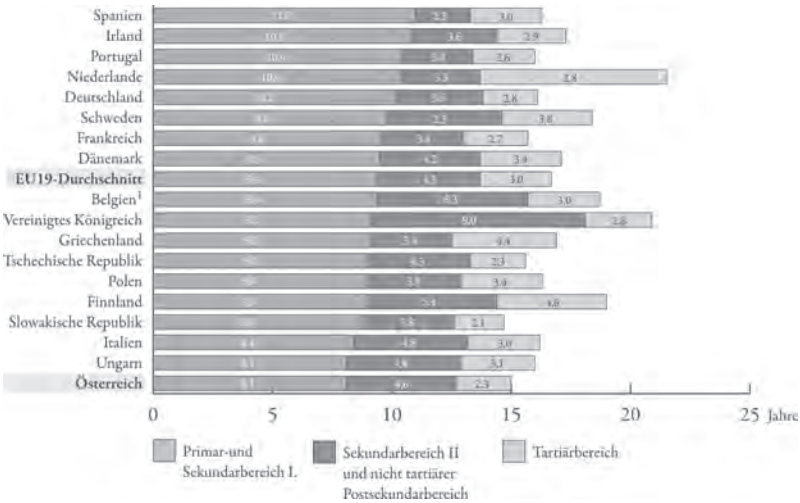
Graduation from secondary level II after finishing at secondary level I

	Upper Secondary					
Lower Secondary	No further education	Apprenticeship	Medium VTS	Upper VTS	AHS high	Total
General sec. school	17.8%	55.4%	15.6%	8.6%	2.6%	100%
AHS low	5.8%	7.8%	9.4%	22.4%	54.7%	100%

Note: AHS low = Secondary academic school (lower cycle), AHS high = Secondary academic school (upper cycle), VTS = Vocational and technical school. Source: Schwarz et al. 2002:15

Due to a combination of factors arising from the early education of students and the education of parents, it is apparent that the early education of the children has a more crucial influence on transition to secondary level II: the proportion of graduates from secondary academic school (upper cycle) or secondary technical and vocational college among students who have attended secondary academic school (lower cycle) and whose parents only attended compulsory school is approximately 63%, which is only about 44% for students with a general secondary school certificate and parents with HE graduation.

Verweildauer im Bildungssystem im internationalen Vergleich



Q: OECD, Education at a Glance 2007 (Berichtsjahr 2005) – 1) Deutschsprachiger Teil nicht inkludiert – 2) Für Luxemburg kein Wert.
Im Jahr 2005 betrug die durchschnittliche Verweildauer im Bildungssystem in Österreich 15,0 Jahre.

This is, however, largely due to the parents' influence on their initial choice, the transition from primary school to general secondary school or secondary academic school (lower cycle). A mere 10% of students whose parents only have compulsory school diploma enter secondary academic school (lower cycle). However, at the transition from lower to upper secondary education, the education of parents seems to have influenced the educational path opted for only slightly. In most cases the educational career of individuals is, apparently, decided on at the age of ten, upon transition from primary school to the next educational level, the choice having to be between 'academic school' and 'general school'. And that is when the educational background of parents plays an important role.

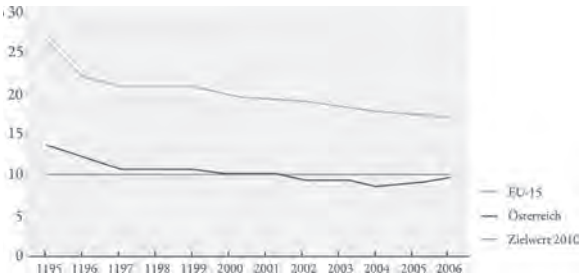
Graduation from secondary level II broken down to previous education of students at secondary level I and the highest completed education of parents

		Upper Secondary					
Lower Secondary	Education of parents	No further education	Apprenticeship	Medium VTS	Upper VTS	AHS high	Total
General sec. school	Compulsory school	23.2%	56.5%	13.2%	5.5%	1.6%	100%
	Apprenticeship	12.4%	59.7%	16.0%	9.7%	2.3%	100%
	Medium VTS	6.6%	42.3%	27.3%	18.3%	5.4%	100%
	Upper sec. final examination	4.8%	38.0%	24.6%	24.0%	8.7%	100%
	HE	11.3%	21.8%	23.4%	21.8%	21.8%	100%
	Total	17.8%	55.4%	15.6%	8.6%	2.6%	100%
AHS low	Compulsory school	9.8%	12.5%	14.9%	23.0%	39.8%	100%
	Apprenticeship	6.0%	10.6%	12.9%	26.9%	43.5%	100%
	Medium VTS	4.7%	5.5%	9.5%	28.1%	52.2%	100%
	Upper sec. final examination	5.1%	3.5%	5.3%	20.3%	65.8%	100%
	HE	1.9%	3.6%	1.9%	14.5%	78.1%	100%
	Total	5.8%	7.8%	9.4%	22.4%	54.7%	100%

Note: AHS low = Secondary academic school (lower cycle), AHS high = Secondary academic school (upper cycle), VTS = Vocational and technical school, HE = Higher education graduation. Source: Schwarz et al. 2002:17

1.6. Early school leavers

Entwicklung der Zahl der „frühen Schulabgängerinnen und -abgänger"



Q: EUROSTAT, Labour Force Survey. Daten für 1998 nicht verfügbar. 2004, 2006 Zeitreihenbruch für Österreich.

2006 haben in Österreich 9,6% der 18- bis 24- Jahrigen nur die Pflichtschule abgeschlossen und in den vergangenen vier Wochen an keiner weiteren Ausbildung teilgenommen („Frühe Schulabgängerinnen und -abgänger")

In the majority of countries the percentage of early school leavers fell between 2000 and 2007, especially in Malta (down from 54.2% in 2000 to 37.6% in 2007). Only in Denmark, Estonia, Austria, Slovakia, France and Spain did the percentage of early school leavers continue to be at previous levels or increased slightly.

The percentage of individuals in the Austrian population aged 18-24 with lower than upper secondary education or not in education or training was 10.2 in 2000 and was up at 10.9 in 2007.

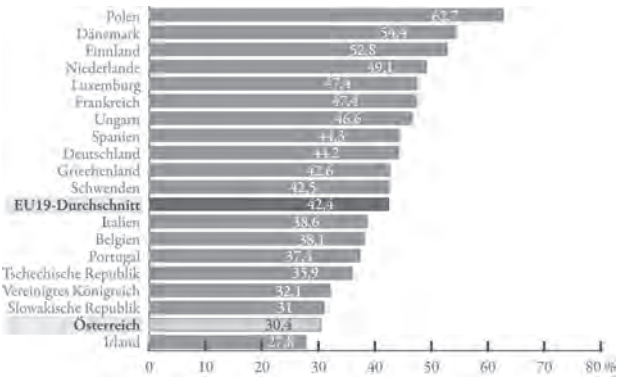
Austria is, therefore, not among the countries already having achieved the EU Benchmark 2010 of a rate lower than 10% of early school leavers.

>> *Trends in Early School Leaving*

A study in Austria reveals that young people with some form of disability tend to leave education or training at the earliest opportunity that presents itself.

In Austria programs have been established which enable young people who left school early to complete their studies at a later point in time. Initial Vocational Education Training (IVET) opportunities are offered to young people with "learning problems" after general compulsory schooling: these take the form of "Integrative Berufsausbildung" (Integrated Vocational Training) and the availabiliy of training places either in a company, a school or in a training programme of the Austrian Public Employment service.

Anteil der 20- bis 24-Jährigen in Ausbildung im internationalen Vergleich



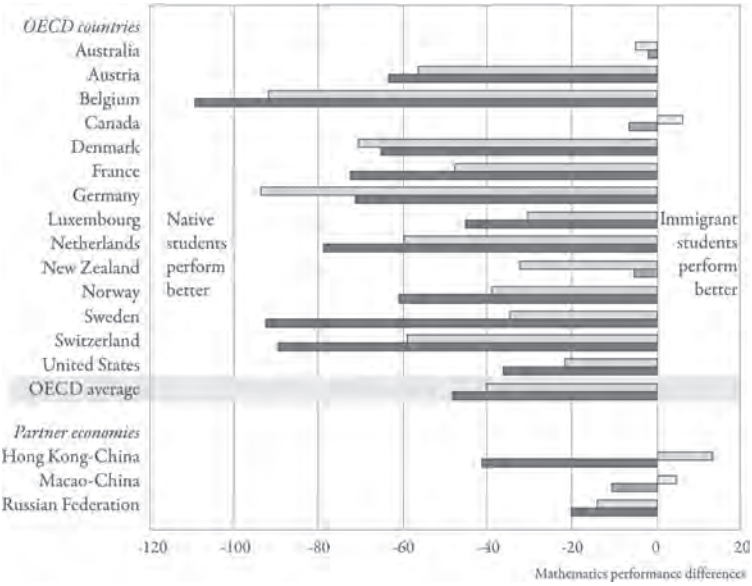
Q: OECD, Education at a Glance 2007 (Berichtsjahr 2005)

Im Jahr 2005 waren 30,4% der Bevölkerung im Alter von 20 bis 24 Jahren in Österreich noch in Ausbildung.

1.7. Ethnicity

Difference in mathematics performance by immigrant status (2003)

Among the 14 OECD countries with significant immigrant populations, first-generation students lag 48 score points behind their native counterparts on the PISA mathematics scale, equivalent to more than a school year's progress, on average. The performance disadvantage of second-generation students also remains significant, at 40 score points. The disadvantage of students with an immigrant background varies widely across countries, form insignificant amounts in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Macao-China to more than 90 score points in Belgium and Germany even for second-generation children.



Difference in mathematics performance between native and second-generation students

Difference in mathematics performance between native and first-generation students

Note: Statistically significant diffeferences are marked in darker tones.
Source: OECD PISA 2003. Table A6. 1a.
StatLink: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/068061288083

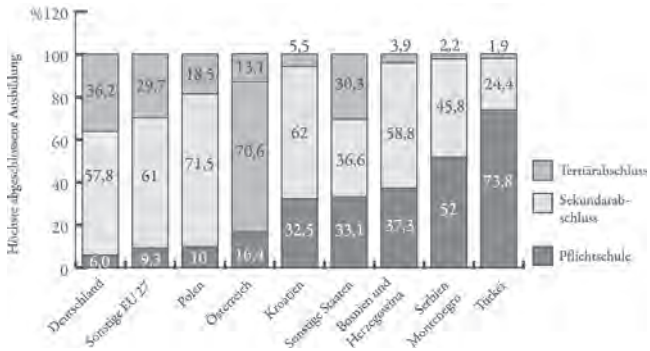
Students from an *immigrant background* are one of the great concerns affecting the public school system. In Austria they represent about 13 % of the 15-16 year old population.

Their academic performance is clearly lower than that of their Austrian colleagues. These differences are due partly to the lower social status of immigrant families.

One quality criterion in a school system is its ability to assist young people from immigration families in their integration into society. Reading skills play a crucial role in this process. In Canada, New Zealand, Ireland and Australia, there is hardly any difference between native and immigrant reading competences. One reason behind this phenomenon might be the rather strict immigration laws in these countries, based on the assumption of one's familiarity with the country's language. In Sweden, Estonia and Switzerland, the 2nd generation of immigrants shows considerably better reading competences than the 1st generation.

The third – and largest – group of countries, including Austria, is marked by the fact that both 1st and 2nd generation immigrants lag far behind native students in their reading competence. The reading competence of native Austrians is at 499 points. Immigrants of the 2nd generation are at 420 points, those of the 1st generation are at 451. Against all expectations and international trends, the reading performance of 2nd generation immigrants (born in Austria) is significantly lower than that of new immigrants. A similar phenomenon has been observed in Germany, as a possible result of a weaker linguistic integration. (PIRLS 2006)

Bildungsniveau der Bevölkerung im Alter von 25 bis 64 Jahren nach Staatsangehörigkeit



Q: Statistik Austria, Mikrozensus 2006 (Präsenz- und Zivildiener sowie Anstalten nicht enthalten, inkl. Universitätslehrgänge).
2006 hatten 73,8% der in Österreich lebenden türkischen Bevölkerung im Alter von 25 bis 64 Jahren höchstens eine Pflichtschulausbildung.

1.8. Gender

>>*Mathematics*

In 35 of the 57 countries having participated in PISA 2006 males performed significantly better than females. In 21 there was no significant difference, and in the partner country of Qatar, females outperformed males.

In 2006 overall gender differences in mathematics were less than a third as significant as for reading, at 11 points on average across OECD countries. This has not changed since 2003. In 2006 only in Austria did males outperform females by more than 20 points (23 points). In general, males performed substantially better than females when answering "Physical systems" questions – 26 points higher on average, up at 45 points in Austria PISA 2006.

Currently, more women than men have a certificate from upper secondary school while higher-level schools and universities have clearly become arenas of female success. Since the winter term 1992/1993 the majority of entrants and, since 2000 more than half of the graduates from science universities have been women.

It can be assumed that women have caught up with men in terms of access to education, and in some areas they have even outperformed them. Nevertheless, women have less opportunity of using their qualifications on the job market. This is partly due to typical female career trajectories, since career interruptions usually cause career disadvantages; it is also due to educational segregation. Women are still under-represented in technical and natural science courses and opt less often for vocational education in technical specializations.

PART 2
POLICY OVERVIEW

2.1. Making the necessary financial and human resources available

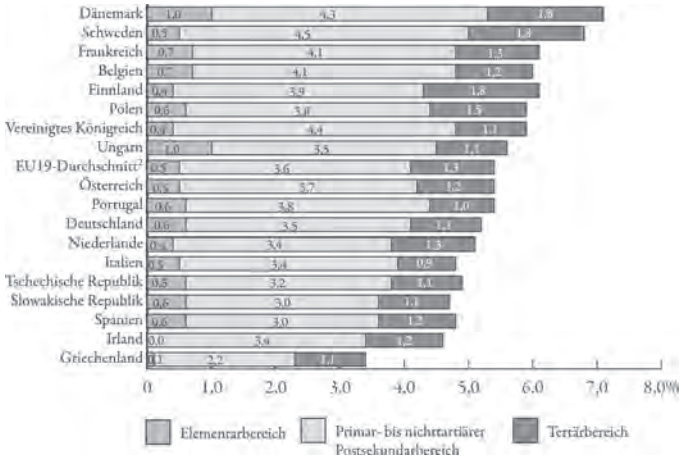
>>*Financing and costs*

The maintenance of public educational institutions is a task shared by different levels of government. Compulsory schools are maintained by the municipalities (Gemeinden), their teachers are employed by the Länder (provinces). Salaries, however, are refunded by the federal government. Vocational schools are maintained by the Länder, the federal government only refunds half of the teachers' salaries for these schools. All

other schools and all public institutions in higher education are maintained and funded by the federal government.

In 2001 public expenditure for primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education was 3.8 per cent of the GDP. Public expenditure on tertiary education was 1.2 per cent of GDP, and total spending on education accounted for 5.6 per cent of GDP.

Bildungsausgaben in % des BIP im internationalen Vergleich[1]

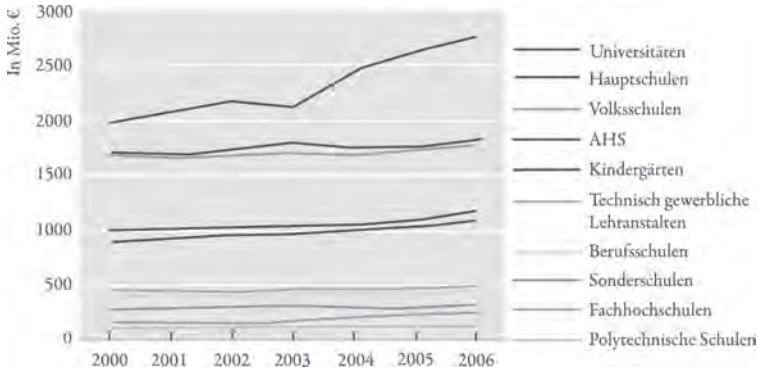


Q: OECD, Education at a Glance 2007 (Berichtsjahr 2004).
1) Staatliche und private Bildungsausgaben insgesamt, Indikatorberechnung nach OECD-Definition.
2) Für Luxemburg kein Wert.
Die Bildungsausgaben Österreichs in % des BIP betrugen im Kalenderjahr 2004 für den Tertiärbereich 1,2 %.

2.2. Allocation among levels and strands of education

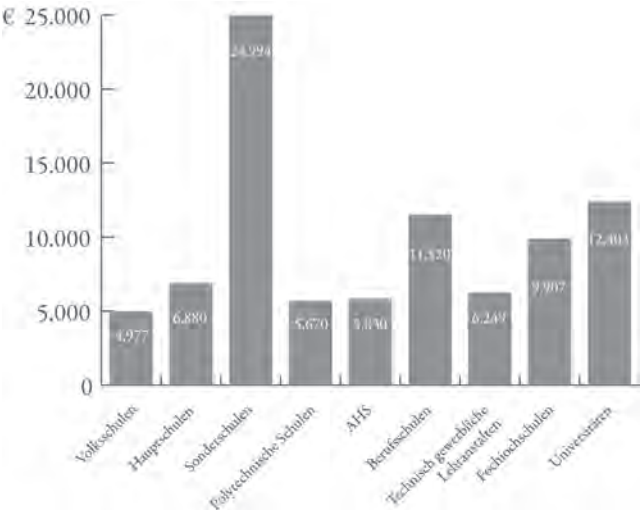
The most egalitarian systems in educational terms are, according to the EGREES study, those of Spain, Italy, Portugal and Denmark. However, Austria, Finland, France, Greece and Norway tend to spend around twice as much on a student in tertiary education than on a primary student, and the difference is even more significant in the educational systems of Germany, Belgium, the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands and Ireland. Among the countries where educational resources show a differentiated distribution, distribution itself is in favour of students at risk in Austria, Belgium and France while it does not favour them in Spain, Italy and Portugal.

Staatliche Bildungsausgaben nach ausgewählten Bildungsbereichen



Q: Statistik Austria, Bildungsausgabenstatistik
Im Kalenderjahr 2006 betrugen die Ausgaben für allgemein bildende höhere Schulen 1.173,5 Mio. €

Finanzaufwand pro Kopf[1] nach ausgewählten Bildungsbereichen



Q: Statistik Austria, Bildungsausgabenstatistik 2006.
1) Schülerin, Schüler, Studierende oder Studierender an öffentlichen und privaten Einrichtungen.

Für allgemein bildende höhere Schulen wurden im Kalenderjahr 2006 vom Staat 5.830 € pro Schülerin bzw. Schüler verausgabt.

2.3. Resource map of financing

Staatliche Bildungsausgaben nach Quellen und Bildungsbereichen

	2000				2005				2006			
Ausgewählte Bildungsbereiche (in Mio. €)	Insgesamt	Bund[1]	Länder[2]	Gemeinden[3]	Insgesamt	Bund[1]	Länder[2]	Gemeinden[3]	Insgesamt	Bund[1]	Länder[2]	Gemeinden[3]
Alle staatlichen Bildungsausgaben	10.950,6	5.606,9	3.933,3	1.410,4	12.784,6	7.002,9	4.184,9	1.596,8	13.377,3	7.339,7	4.378,2	1.659,5
Kindergärten	911,2	0,0	394,1	517,1	1.047,4	0,0	470,4	577,0	1.096,6	0,0	497,8	598,8
Volksschulen	1.654,4	0,0	1.262,0	392,3	1.709,2	0,0	1.273,4	435,7	1.774,1	0,0	1.324,1	450,1
Hauptschulen	1.673,3	0,0	1.310,6	362,7	1.761,2	0,0	1.337,5	423,7	1.818,7	0,0	1.386,2	432,4
Sonderschulen	288,6	0,0	263,5	25,1	305,0	0,0	272,1	32,9	325,5	0,0	289,5	36,0
Polytechnische Schulen	106,1	0,0	79,8	26,2	122,0	0,0	87,7	34,3	125,5	0,0	90,4	35,0
Allgemein bildende höhere Schulen	1.000,2	987,8	1,7	10,8	1.098,0	1.085,6	3,0	9,4	1.173,5	1.152,7	3,7	17,2
Berufsschulen	406,6	15,6	357,1	33,9	422,1	15,9	371,5	34,7	443,3	16,3	393,3	33,7
Handelsakademien und Handelsschulen	289,6	289,6	0,0	0,0	324,1	324,1	0,0	0,0	339,4	339,4	0,0	0,0
Technisch gewerbliche Lehranstalten	413,9	413,9	0,0	0,0	462,6	462,6	0,0	0,0	481,6	481,6	0,0	0,0
Land- und forstwirtschaftliche Bundeslehranstalten	41,1	41,1	0,0	0,0	61,2	61,2	0,0	0,0	63,5	63,5	0,0	0,0
BA für Kindergarten- und Sozialpädagogik	57,3	56,8	0,5	0,0	68,5	64,5	3,9	0,1	72,3	68,1	4,1	0,1
Pädagogische Akademien	89,3	88,7	0,6	0,0	94,8	94,0	0,8	0,0	99,6	98,8	0,8	0,0
Fachhochschulen	99,1	65,9	33,2	0,0	237,1	153,3	83,8	0,0	254,9	162,1	92,7	0,0
Universitäten	1.970,5	1.970,5	0,0	0,0	2.667,4	2.667,4	0,0	0,0	2.782,7	2.782,7	0,0	0,0
Sonstige[4]	1.949,5	1.677	230,2	42,3	2.404,0	2.074,2	280,8	49,0	2.526,1	2.174,4	295,5	56,3

Q: Statistik Austria, Bildungsausgabenstatistik, 1) Inkl. Universitäten. 2) Inkl. Wien. 3) Inkl. Schulgemeindeverbände ohne Musikschulverbände. 4) Bildungsrelevante Teile der Familienbeihilfen, Mietzahlungen an die Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft etc.
Im Kalenderjahr 2006 wurden vom Bund 481,6 Mio. € für technisch gewerbliche Lehranstalten verausgabt.

2.4. Organization and development of learning („transforming the schools")

>>*New secondary school*

One of the most ambitious but politically disputed issues in educational policy is that of pilot projects aimed to introduce comprehensive schools for all 10 to 14 years old students, avoiding an early decision and selection at the age of 10, thus improving equity, particularly for students from a socially disadvantaged background. For political reasons, there is a compromise to ensure the prolongation of the traditional, separation-based school system along with the New secondary school, which makes reference to a real comprehensive school difficult.

Around 50 schools introduced the new programme in autumn 2008 the main characteristics of which are individualisation (as an answer to increasingly heterogeneous classes), frequent team-teaching and the cooperation between teachers of both lower secondary and secondary academic schools.

>>*Measures for Gender Equality*

In recent years, special emphasis has been placed on gender-specific socialisation and segregation. In order to boost equality in Austrian education, "action plans" have been drawn up which combine existing measures and are supported by model projects.

In 1997 "action plan 2000" designed to further equality at school level and in adult education/training, was launched; it was followed by "action plan 2003 (gender mainstreaming and advancement of women at school and in adult education)".

>>*Measures to change the job choice of girls*

Some of the measures meant to expand the spectrum of job selection for girls, designed to awaken the often hidden potential of girls in the field of technology in order to expand their spectrum job choice, are:

"FIT, women in technology", "MIT, girls in technology", "MUT, girls and technology"

The "Wiener Töchtertag (Vienna Daughters' Day)" offers vocational guidance for girls between 11 and 16 who are invited to accompany their parents to their workplaces in industrial enterprises, offices etc., to gain insight into certain occupational areas and into the traditional division of labour.

>>*Gender-sensitive education*

"Education for the equality of women and men" as an educational principle and "targeted coeducation" as a didactic principle.

Coeducation – the joint teaching of boys and girls – was introduced in Austria in the 1970s in the hope of reducing the significance of gender roles and stereotypes. This expectation was not realized and the concept was modified to "targeted coeducation" with the result that in individual cases coeducation was discarded. The idea is to "choose subject content that is of interest to both girls and boys, to design class work with a view to meeting the requirements of both girls and boys and to generate a learning climate of mutual respect as well as to reflect the expectations of teachers from and responses to girls and boys".

Today the curricula for secondary level II include a note stating that on certain conditions and for specific subjects girls and boys should be taught separately.

>> *Gender mainstreaming*

Since the beginning of the new millennium, advancement of women by the Ministry of Education has been extended through the strategy of gender mainstreaming. "Gender mainstreaming" signifies that the obvious fact that gender-neutral decisions can have different results for women and men should be taken into account in policy-planning and should also lead to organisational and structural changes.

>> *Widening access and improving equity of participation, treatment and outcomes, especially for disadvantaged learners (e.g. migrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled)*

Measures for schoolchildren with a first language other than German, Curricula for German as a second language (DaZ) exist in the area of general compulsory schooling (primary schools, lower secondary schools, special schools, prevocational schools) and at AHS and schools and colleges of occupations in the business sector under the name 'German language training accompanying classroom teaching' (USD).

Depending on local conditions, schools have the option to organise special support classes in German, both in conjunction with or in addition to the teaching of the German language, or in an integrated approach. The latter form means that a team consisting of two teachers (a class teacher or subject teacher plus support teacher) works with the entire class.

Not all provinces stipulate that employment is dependent on teachers obtaining a specialist qualification in DaZ and intercultural learning. While some teachers have acquired additional qualifications in language teaching for the teaching of special support classes in German, others have not completed a relevant programme for this task. The restructuring of teacher training is expected to bring about an improved anchoring of qualifications.

Ordinances regarding curricula for the teaching of a mother tongue have been

passed for general compulsory schools and AHS. These curricula are not language-specific, they apply to all languages on offer and allow for the expansion of language teaching at any time. The objective of teaching a mother tongue is to develop and strengthen bilingualism and enhance the identity of bilingual schoolchildren.

>>*Measures at school entrance*

The first contact with school is of special importance in one's educational career. The linguistic and cultural barriers between school and families with a migration background often cause children to fear change. At registration this is frequently interpreted as a sign of immaturity. Since 1982 immaturity has no longer entailed the postponement of school attendance. Instead, it has entailed the attendance of a pre-school class. Nevertheless, there is a delay in the school career. Currently, school authorities pay more attention to these problems. More specifically, one tries to ascertain that deficit in the command of a language is not interpreted as immaturity. These deficits should be remedied via remedial instruction in the German language. In cooperation with immigrant organisations, efforts are being made to diminish the fears of change.

In the course of the discussion on PISA results, national education policy-makers also considered improving pre-school language teaching. Starting with the school year 2005/06 students will be registered in October/November of the year prior to school entrance. On this occasion the child's ability to communicate in German will be tested, failing which it will be recommended to parents/or legal guardians to avail themselves of the remedial measures offered at kindergarten. 120 hours of such early teaching in areas of special needs will be integrated into the day-to-day activities of kindergartens. Parents are not obliged to register their children for such remedial instruction.

2.5. The transformation of schools (self-evaluation, QM, school improvement) „Supplementary" and/or „mainstreaming" (inclusion, differentiation) approach

>>*Measures for the integration of handicapped students*

In the 1980s due to strong commitment and political pressure, particularly by parents of children with disabilities, pilot schools were set up for integrative instruction at primary school. The sensitivity of educational policy-makers as regards the human rights of children with disabilities and their special needs was successfully raised. Previously, it had been the prevailing opinion that children with disabilities should be

taught in their own special schools since they would unreasonably burden mainstream instruction and could benefit more from instruction tailored to their own requirements. However, school segregation was increasingly perceived as a kind of social ostracism of children with disabilities. The joint teaching of students with and without disabilities close to their homes was supposed to open up new opportunities for children to learn and live together.

The practice of joint teaching was a change of paradigm with the focus on social integration and the aim of getting children and young people with disabilities involved in everyday social relationships and dismantling fears and prejudices among students without disabilities. Moreover, there was an increasing trend towards acknowledging different learning potentials without any pressure for equalisation.

As soon as it becomes evident that a child is not able to follow the pace of tuition at mainstream schools, due to a physical or mental disability, parents, schools or authorities have to apply for the recognition of children's special needs. Upon such recognition, parents may decide which school the child is going to attend. There are several models of integrative instruction:

- Integration classes: Students with and without special needs are taught together by a team of teachers.
- Support teacher classes: children with disabilities receive extra instruction geared to their special needs for several hours a week, provided by a special-school teacher in the mainstream class.
- Cooperative classes: in principle, primary school, general secondary school and special- school classes are organised separately. The teachers involved jointly plan the type and extent of the joint class work of both groups of students.

An increasing number of parents favour integration. Since 1980/81 the number of students at special school has dropped from 28,688 to 13,411 in 2003/04 (in the same period the total number of students has decreased by approximately 20%).

One of the main reasons for a broad acceptance of integration is that educational concepts and forms of instruction in these classes are seen by the large majority of parents as a chance for the students without disabilities. Practical experience has revealed that initial fears that students with special needs would disturb work in class and hamper the progress of other students was unfounded. Studies have proved that successful integration classes are good practice examples characterised by features which benefit both children with and without special needs. In such classes the individual needs of all students get more attention and social learning is stressed more strongly than in conventional classes. The evaluation of integration trials has illustrated that students

without special needs assess their relations with the teachers and their personal well-being more positively and that they see better opportunities of participation in this form of education.

In 1997 the integrated class system was expanded to general secondary school and secondary academic school (lower cycle). At present, integrative support is being tested in the 9th compulsory school year, at pre-vocational schools and at two secondary vocational and technical schools.

Parents, teachers and supervisory staff believe that integration appears to work better at primary school than at secondary level I. This may be due to the following factors:

At secondary level I, the class-teacher system at primary school is replaced by a specialist-teacher system and subject-oriented instruction is given priority.

Integrative instruction requires a readiness to plan and arrange for instruction in a team. This is certainly easier to achieve by a small team (class teacher – integration teacher) than by a large, heterogeneous team. Demands for high performance at secondary academic school as well as the streaming system at general secondary school pose a challenge to integrative teaching.

Biological developments during adolescence often make it difficult to combine the cognitive, emotional and social requirements of integrative teaching.

2.6. Reducing inequity in terms of learning outcomes

The following special challenges regarding lifelong learning are defined in Austria:

- Expansion of early support measures and pre-school education, particularly for children of immigrants
- Further improvement of individual development options in the primary sector and secondary level I (reduction of the maximum number of students per class)
- Increasing permeability in the tertiary sector (improvement of credit transfers)
- Intensifying measures for immigrants and the low-skilled in the adult learning sector / extension of basic education provision
- Improving labour market policy measures for women and older workers to strengthen labour force participation
- New financing schemes for LLL / development of learning-centred financing instruments.

The need that exists in these areas is revealed by relevant scientific studies and international comparative studies such as PISA, the comparative data identified by EU benchmarks, and studies on the labour market such as the Labour Force Survey as well as various OECD studies.

>> *The priorities for action and policy development within the strategy in the light of these challenges*

Current top priorities are: increased individual support in the primary sector and at secondary level I; intensification of pre-school education; and further improvement of integration measures in these areas.

Being a cross-curricular subject, ICT plays a key role: Overall, the ICT strategy is seen as a driving force in developmental processes, innovations and quality enhancement in all areas of the education system. On the one hand, it aims at integrating ICT and new media in specific fields of development in educational policy (e.g. individual support, educational standards), on the other, at teaching comprehensive digital competences, thus guaranteeing general access to education.

Within the framework of the strategic guidelines for LLL 2007 will see a further setting of priorities and their subsequent, gradual implementation in thematic areas that still need to be defined.

2.7. Setting appropriate targets (standards)

In 2008 the pilot phase in testing the use of educational standards, came to an end and Austria is now supplementing the so far prevailing strategy of input control by a more intense focus on learning outcomes. Standards define the competences students are expected to acquire in a lasting manner up to a specific school year. Competences of both students and teachers are described in such a concrete way that they can be implemented as tasks and be surveyed by testing procedures.

In the compulsory school sector, educational standards are being developed at grades 4 and 8 in the subjects of German and mathematics as well as English (at grade 8) and piloted in selected schools. By the autumn of 2007 (cross-curricular) standards for the natural sciences (at grade 8) had also been developed to an extent that they can be piloted now. Currently, validation tests are conducted in the subjects referred to. Apart from setting up a testing administration, issues connected with feedback to students, teaching staff, principals and school administrations as well as the design of measures for in-service teacher training are in the foreground:

Schools are to be enabled to carry out their quality assurance in a more data-controlled way (on the basis of the results of standard testing). In addition, to support this change process, material for self-evaluation for teachers is developed and tested. External and internal evaluations aim to support the continuous quality development process.

In early 2005 the Austrian vocational education and training (VET) sector started to develop educational standards as well. To ensure the acquisition of a final qualification, first of all educational standards for the 13th year of schooling were formulated for selected general-education subjects and the entire specialist training. This aims to define interfaces and designs transition more smoothly. Current work is focusing on the design and piloting of didactic examples for classroom, which are to contribute to improving teaching quality.

In the field of apprenticeship training, Austrian social partners in their function as major stakeholders have laid a key cornerstone for orientation towards learning outcomes by defining activity descriptions and occupational profiles.

>>*Standardised Final Exams (university entrance exams)*

In a pilot phase, number of academic secondary schools (upper cycle) are testing a new structure of the final exams at the end of year 12. Up to now, teachers have had their own students examined by tasks they designed themselves. The disadvantage of this system is a lack of objectivity and reliability at these exams.

English language teachers (followed by other foreign language teachers) began to develop a "Four-skills exam", following the competency based approach of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, which is part of the national Austrian curriculum for foreign languages. In order to come to objectively comparable results, a team of the University of Innsbruck, in cooperation with teachers, began to develop standardised reading and listening tasks and to carry out validation tests. Currently, a team of experts is working on standardised writing tasks and assessment scales for writing. The aim is to create a centralised competency-based exam structure within the next two or three years.

General implementation should be accompanied by organising in-service teacher training as well as by publishing sample items and exercise books.

2.8. Lifelong learning goals (competencies, learning to learn, motivation)

>>*Incentives to life-long learning*

The variety of options open to different groups when entering initial education repeats itself or is even enhanced in further training. Therefore, active measures to promote life-accompanying learning play an important role in dismantling entrance barriers to vocational and private further training.

A whole set of measures has been put in train for the promotion and support of life-accompanying learning in Austria, addressed to different target groups and implemented at local, regional or federal levels accordingly. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to give a complete list of these measures. The reader is, therefore, referred to the Austrian implementation report on the memorandum about lifelong learning of the European Union (European Commission 2003). The measures listed in the present paper are either addressed at all employees and/or employers or are exemplary for different regional initiatives. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that in the context of ESF objective 3, a set of measures are enacted, which are connected with LLL. As regards the university sector, mention is made of special grants and above all of *Fachhochschul* courses of study designed for attendance by those employed full-time. When it comes to cooperation between educational facilities and enterprises, mention should, in particular, be made of educational clusters.

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Equity and Education – Country Note: CZECH REPUBLIC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. SITUATION ANALYSIS – EQUITY PROFILE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Education System of the Czech Republic has been undergoing through a period of crucial changes in its organization, goals and tools to achieve them. The principles of the new curricular policy were outlined in the National Education Development Programme for the Czech Republic ("White Book")[1] and are enshrined in Education Act No.561/2004 (on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education), which came into force on January 1, 2005.

The formal Education System of the Czech Republic is structured into various levels of education such as Pre-school education, Basic education (i.e. primary and lower secondary education), Secondary education and Tertiary education. This chapter will briefly describe each level of education with a focus on the issues of equity.[2]

The report will not deal with all aspects of equity in education such as gender questions, the education of foreigners, the education of majority population in acquiring inclusive values etc., but will focus predominantly on the educational issues of socially disadvantaged children and of children from diverse cultural backgrounds.

1.1. Pre-school Education

Pre-school education in the Czech Republic is generally open for children from age 3 up to the point when they enter compulsory education, which usually happens at the age of 6. This level of education is optional. However, its importance for further development of a child's skills and his/her success in education system has been stressed by various international and national studies. Pre-school education is perceived as an important tool for pursuing equity in education and various measures, to be described later, are taken at this level.

Pre-school education takes place mostly in kindergartens. Part of the pre-school educational system is also composed of preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged

1. http://aplikace.msmt.cz/pdf/whitepaper.pdf
2. This chapter works mostly with information from: MATĚJŮ, Petr – STRAKOVÁ, Jana (eds.): *(Ne)rovné šance na vzdělání. Vzdělanostní nerovnosti v České republice [(Un)equal chances for education. Education inequalities in the Czech Republic].* Praha, Academia, 2006, and from the strategic documents of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports: such as *Paper on the realization of Concept of Early Care for Children from socio-culturally disadvantaging environment in the field of education in the period 2005 – 2007* and others. Statistical data are from the works released by Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání (ÚIV) [Institute for Information on Education], e.q. *Annual report of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports about the state and developement of the educational system of the Czech Republicion 2007* and other researches carried out by ÚIV and from the PISA and Education at a Glance publications.

children and children from different cultural background established at basic schools. Education in kindergartens takes place either in common kindergartens, or in kindergartens for children with severe impairment via adjusted curricula[3] or in kindergartens opened at government-run centres – children's homes. Pre-school education (its content, organization etc.) is defined in the Framework Education Programme for Pre-School Education (FEP PE) while both kindergartens and basic schools are obliged to form their School Education Programmes (SEP) based on FEP PE.

Preparatory classes were first established in 1993 and the aim was to reduce the linguistic handicap of Roma children. The target group was widened in 1997 and preparatory classes focused on the education of children from a socio-culturally disadvantaged background. The latest legislative change occurred with the 2004 Act on Education. Preparatory classes are open to socially disadvantaged children and children from different cultural background[4] one year before their enrollment in compulsory education (generally children at the age of 5 are considered for acceptance, those who need preparatory education to succeed in mainstream education). The minimum number of children per class is seven. At the request of parents, the child will be enrolled in a preparatory class following the approval of the headmaster, who will decide on the matter on the basis of application by the parent and a written recommendation by the school counseling organization[5]. Preparatory classes systematically prepare children to enter compulsory education, respond to required standards and by doing so reduce some initial inequities. Preparatory classes are set up for socially disadvantaged children and children from different cultural backgrounds who did not attend kindergarten.

Preparatory classes can be established at basic schools that educate children according to the programme entitled Basic school or Framework Education Programme for Basic Education, at basic schools or the so-called "basic practical schools", which educate children in accordance with a programme designed for Special

3. Terms adjusted curricula or adjusted or modified standards refer to educational programme with reduced knowledge-based content of the curriculum for children with special educational needs adjusted to their needs.
4. Socio-cultural disadvantage is defined in the Education Act of 2004, section16 as:
- Family environment with low socio-cultural status, endangered by sociopathic phenomena
- Mandatory institutional and juvenile correctional education
- Status of asylum seeker persons, who participate in the proceedings to acquire international protection in the Czech Republic
5. School counseling organizations are centres, which offer pedagogical and psychological counseling to pupils and students, their legal guardians, schools and school institutions. (Activities of these organizations are described in degree 72/2005). Services provided by the counseling organizations focus on creating proper conditions for the physical, mental and social development of pupils and students; fulfilling of the educational needs and the development of abilities of children; prevention of the emergence of study-related problems and of sociopathic phenomena; creating proper conditions for the integration of students with impairment; career guidance; creation of proper conditions in education, forms and methods for work with children from minorities or ethnic groups; creating proper conditions for talented students; methodological and professional support of teachers, their education etc., and diminishing the impacts of impairment and the prevention of impairment. (See decree 72/2005)

schools[6] or FED for Basic Education with annex to the FEP specifying the education of students with mild mental disabilities (FEP BE MMD) – with adjusted standards[7] or at specialized schools accessible to children with severe disabilities[8]. The number of children who attend preparatory classes is increasing as along with the number of preparatory classes. However, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (hereinafter MEYS or the Ministry of Education) does not posses exact data about the number of preparatory classes established at the special schools or basic practical schools, data available considers only the number of preparatory classes opened at specialized schools (See table 1). The Ministry of Education cannot evaluate the consequences of the fact that preparatory classes are currently run at basic practical schools with adjusted curriculum, as it is also short of additional data on the number of children who enroll in basic practical schools or schools educating in accordance with FEP BE MMD after students have finished preparatory classes run at a basic practical school or basic schools educating in line with FEP BE MMD. However, as preparatory classes are designed to pursue inclusive education and to help disadvantaged children to attend and succeed at mainstream basic schools, there are efforts aimed to limit the scope of preparatory classes at basic practical schools or schools which educational activity is based on the programme for special school or FED BE MMD.

6. The term "special school" as used in this context refers to an adjusted education programme for children with mild mental disability that was used in the so-called "special schools" for children with mild mental disability (zvláštní škola). Although the Act on Education of 2004 abolished this type of school, schools have to finish the education of students who started to be educated in accordance with this programme; schools started to work with the Framework Education Programmes only last year. A certain number of basic schools that educate students according to the modified programme or FEP BE MMD adopted the term "basic practical school". We will use the term "specialized school" for basic schools that educate students with severe mental disabilities or multiple disabilities and children with autism; these schools provide education based on the Framework Education Programme for Specialized Basic Schools. To distinguish between these two types of schools, we will use the terms "basic practical school" or "special school" in case of the former and the term "specialized school" for the latter.
7. In comparison with FEP BE (for mainstream), FEP BE MMD puts lower emphasis on reading literacy, numeracy and other areas essential for development of intellectual capacities and such key competencies as learning to learn.
8. Children with severe disabilities can be educated at a pre-school, preparatory level of education for 3 years and afterwards they enter specialized basic school.

Tab. 1: Number of preparatory classes

School year	No. of preparatory classes	No. of children in preparatory classes	No. of preparatory classes established at specialized school	No. of preparatory classes established at basic school
2005/2006	123	1441	44[9]	79
2006/2007	146	1713	44	102
2007/2008	164	1929	48	101

Source: Institute for Information on Education

Teachers are obliged to ensure teaching methods which respect the individual needs of each child and are aware of their physiological, psychological, hygienic, social and emotional needs. The difference between education in kindergarten and education in a preparatory class is that the latter is set up at basic schools and thus needs to be adjusted to the school environment and conditions – time, space and material resources management. As opposed to kindergartens, tuition fee is not required at preparatory classes.

Teachers in preparatory classes are also obliged to assess children; at the end of the school year they work out an assessment paper, where they describe the learning process of a child, acquired knowledge and skills defined in FEP PE, identify his/her education needs, talent, interests and also come up with recommendations for an individual study plan to be compiled, if need be, for the child. This assessment paper is sent out to the basic school, where the child begins his/her compulsory education. Therefore, preparatory classes should not only prepare a child for compulsory education (most preferably in mainstream education) but they also help basic schools to prepare socially disadvantaged children and children from different cultural backgrounds for education by specifying their educational needs and recommending individual study plans.[10]

Kindergartens mostly educate children from the age of 3 to 6. 3,200 children with impairment[11] were educated in 119 kindergartens with adjusted curriculum in

9. 41 schools out of these were practical schools, 2 were schools for children with physical impairment and 1 was specialized school.
10. *Paper on the realization of Concept of Early Care for Children from socio-culturally disadvantaging environment in the field of education in the period 2005 – 2007*. Praha, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports 2007, p. 13 – 15.
11. Children with mental (and severe), physical, visual or hearing impairment, speech and linguistic impairment, multiple impairment, autism and specific learning and/or behavioural disorders.

2007/8, compared with 3,400 children in 118 specialized kindergartens in 2006/7. 3 kindergartens, established at government-run centers – homes for children without parents, were in operation in 2006/7. Children with an impairment, socially disadvantaged children and children from different cultural backgrounds are also educated in mainstream kindergartens in inclusive classes – compared with 1683 children in 2007/8 and 1591 children in 2006/7 – we can see a slight increase here. Children with an impairment as well as disadvantaged children can also be educated in mainstream kindergartens, albeit in specialized classes – 6850 children in 2007/8 and 6877 children in 2006/7. Overall, children with impairment constituted 2,9% of all children enrolled in pre-school education in 2007/8, we can compare this number with 1,2% from the previous year.[12]

As was already mentioned, pre-school education is optional. Still 79,2% of all 3-year olds, 92,6% of all 4-year olds and 94,2% of all 5-year olds attend kindergartens. The number of 6-year old children with a postponed commencement of compulsory education was at 22.8% out of all 6-year old children. MEYS lacks data for the exact number of socially disadvantaged children and for children from different cultural backgrounds attending kindergartens. The prediction is that these children attend kindergartens significantly less often than children from mainstream society (e.g. see Table 2, results of a research at kindergartens).

Table 2: Proportion of children from families with a low social and cultural status in different groups of children (results of research at kindergartens, answers provided by headmasters)

Group	**Proportion of children from a family environment with a low social and cultural status in the following groups of children**						**Total**	
	No child	0–20 %	20–40 %	40–60 %	60–80 %	80–100 %	%	Abs.
Proportion/number of schools in the school year 2005/06								
Children in their last year before commencing compulsory education	29,4	54,1	10,9	1,9	1,3	2,3	100,0	523
Children who were recommended to commence compulsory education	54,0	34,6	7,1	1,4	0,4	2,4	100,0	494

12. Data is from: *Annual report by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on the state and development of the educational system in the Czech Republic in 2007.* Praha, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports 2008; and the Annual report of the *Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on the state and development of the educational system of the Czech Republic in 2006.* Praha, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports 2007.

Children who were recommended to postpone their compulsory education	44,9	13,2	16,1	7,7	5,0	13,2	100,0	441
proportion/number of schools in the school year 2006/07								
Children in their last year before commencing compulsory education	29,0	55,9	9,8	2,3	0,8	2,3	100,0	521
Children who were recommended to commence compulsory education	51,5	37,4	6,0	2,2	0,8	2,0	100,0	497
Children who were recommended to postpone their commencement of compulsory education	49,0	11,9	14,2	7,6	4,7	12,6	100,0	445

The table shows only children in their last year before the commencement of compulsory education.
Source: Institute for Information on Education

1.2. Basic Education

Children enter compulsory education usually at the age of 6 (there are exceptions when the doctor or the school counselling organization recommend 1-year deferral[13]). The length of compulsory education is 9 years and it takes place at basic schools.

13. In 2007, there were cca 20% of children with deferral, this number is very concerning. As we can see from the PISA results, deferral does not have positive impact on the student results.

Results of PISA 2003 according to deferral

	boys (deferrals 21,2%)		**girls (deferrals 12,6%)**	
	without deferral	**with deferral**	**without deferral**	**with deferral**
maths	529	506	510	476
reading	477	462	509	480
sciences	527	511	520	487

Compulsory education is divided into 2 educational levels: the 1st level (grades 1 – 5), which corresponds to primary education in international classification (ISCED 1) and the 2nd level (grades 6 – 9), which corresponds to lower secondary education in international classification (ISCED 2). After completing the 5th grade, students can continue compulsory education either at the basic school or at a conservatory but also at grammar school offering 8 years of education, where students complete compulsory education and immediately go on to secondary education (higher secondary education, ISCED 3). Compulsory basic education was the highest level of attained education for 12% of the Czech population in 2002 (16% of the female population and 9% of the male population). According to Education at a Glance 2007 (EaG 2007), 10% of the Czech population acquired only basic education.

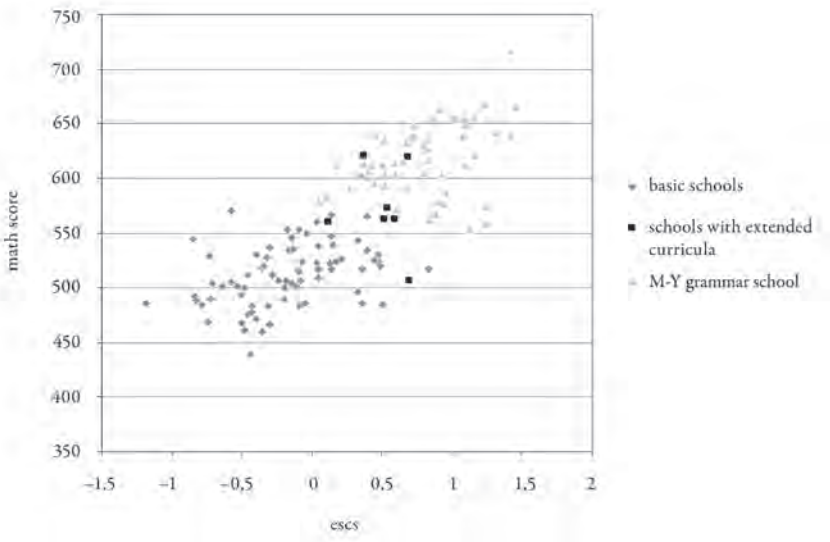
The Act on Education of 2004 abolished one type of basic school – the special basic school for children with mild mental disabilities, thus confining the educational system of the Czech Republic to two types of basic schools: basic schools and specialized basic schools for children with complex needs, especially children with severe physical and mental disability or autism. Basic schools educate students either according to the educational programmes for compulsory education[14] and in line with the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE) or they educate children solely or partially[15] in accordance with an education programme entitled Special School (Zvláštní škola) and/or Framework Education Programme for Basic Education complete with an annex for children with Mild Mental Disability (FEP BE MMD). Some of the schools which educate students according to FEP BE MMD and the education programme Special School use the name "Basic Practical School", this term occurring in decree 73/2005. After completing education based on FEP BE and FEP BE MMD, children are considered to have achieved basic education. Specialized schools for students with severe physical and mental disability educate students in line with Specialized School (Pomocná škola) and Framework Education Programme for Specialized Basic School (FEP SBS). This type of education is aimed for children with severe physical and mental disabilities. After completing this educational programme, children are considered to have achieved the rudimentary aspects of education. In 2007/8, 4.3% of children with an impairment were individually integrated into classes

14. There were three types of education programmes before the Education Act 2004 (for Basic School, for National School and General School), standards of these programmes are very similar, methods differ. Schools still work partly according to these programmes and partly according to Framework Education Programmes defined in the Education Act 2004. Basic Schools started to work according to FEP BE in school year 2007/8, thus it is the 1st and 6th grades that are educated according to FEP.
15. Schools can combine different education programmes for various classes. Therefore, there might be schools that educate certain number of classes according to education programme Basic school and FEP BE and certain number of classes according to education programme Special school and FEP BE MMD.

in mainstream education. The basic education of students with severe mental and physical disability according to FEP SBS can be prolonged for a period of 10 school years, the right of students with severe mental and physical disability to acquire the basics of education is guaranteed by law until they reach the age of 20 or 26.

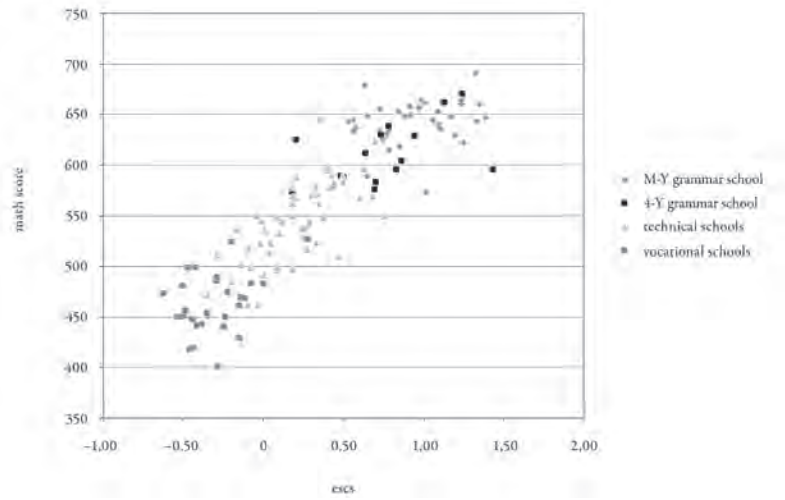
Results from the OECD PISA survey have confirmed, yet again, that the Czech education system is selective. According to PISA 2003, the Czech Republic is a country with one of the most selective education system, while the results of students are strongly influenced by their family environment – their economic, social and cultural status (see tables 3 and 4). There are five different study programmes for 15-year olds and the selection of study path occurs at an early age.

Table 3: Results in the math test of students in the 9th grade in various types of schools in relation to their economic, social and cultural status (ESCS), PISA 2003.



Source: PISA 2003.

Table 4: Results of students in the math test in 10th grade (1st grade of secondary school study) in different types of schools in relation to their economic, social and cultural status (ESCS), PISA 2003.



Source: PISA 2003.

Students with talent that is expressed in some skills are selected to attend classes with an extended study of certain subjects in the 1st level of basic education (See table 2). Apart from that, students with very good study results are selected to study at 8-year grammar schools, which are usually perceived to be "elite" schools for the most talented students with better care and conditions for education, at the end of the 1st level of basic education.

Table 5: Number of basic schools with the extended study of a subject and the number of students attending

	1991/1992	**1995/1996**	**2002/2003**	
				% from all basic schools
Schools				
Mathematics and sciences	175	150	126	3,2%
Physical education	134	190	269	6,8%
Foreign languages	161	307	218	5,5%
Other subjects	-	106	84	2,1%

Total	**470**	**753**	**697**	**17,6%**
Students				
Mathematics and sciences	14 610	13 232	11 724	1,2%
Physical education	12 546	17 330	24 618	2,5%
Foreign languages	26 299	46 881	43 906	4,4%
Other subjects	-	12 385	14 012	1,4%
Total	**55 455**	**89 828**	**94 260**	**9,5%**

Source: MATĚJŮ – STRAKOVÁ 2006 from Annual development report of education system in the Czech Republic, Institute for Information in Education 2003, p. 100.

The will to integrate children with special educational needs has increased and refers to children with an impairment as well as socially disadvantaged children and to children from diverse cultural backgrounds. The Czech Republic is taking measures to develop inclusive education. However, it is clear that it will take a long-term effort to complete the process.

There are basic schools and classes within basic schools that educate children with mild mental disabilities according to FEP BE MMD – an educational framework with adjusted standards. Children and students might be enrolled in these schools or classes during their study period if they have problems keeping up with the educational content in mainstream education. The procedure of enrolling students in schools or classes with adjusted curriculum is as follows: the current school requires the diagnostics of child at the school counseling organization (the Education and Psychological Counseling Organization) either with the acknowledgement of a legal guardian or that guardian himself/herself, to set the level of child's intellectual capacity. The Counseling Organization, based on the results of the diagnostics, recommends whether the child should stay in mainstream education or should be enrolled in a school with a special curriculum (a basic practical school). If the counseling organization recommends that a child should change education programmes, the child's doctor also needs to submit a recommendation for a change in educational programme. If the legal guardian agrees with these recommendations or the change of educational programme, he/she is supposed to ask the head master of a basic practical school or basic school educating students in accordance with the modified educational programme (FED BE MMD) to accept his/her child. If the headmaster approves of the request, the legal guardian signs the agreement to change both the child's educational programme and school and

the child will then be enrolled in a school with an educational programme modified for children with a mild mental disability.

The Czech Republic has been criticized on this issue. The European Court for Human Rights handed down its verdict on a case of complaints by Roma children on their discriminative transfer to special schools on the basis of their race and ethnic origin (D.H. and others versus the Czech Republic) on November 13th, 2007. The Grand Chamber decided by thirteen votes to four that there had been a violation of Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in conjunction with Article 2 of Protocol No. 1, which guarantees the right for education. The case highlighted that the special educational needs of Roma children were not ensured in the process of their enrollment in schools. As a result, the aggrieved party (plaintiff) was placed in schools with curricula modified for students with mild mental disabilities and was segregated from majority population students. Worse still, education that the aggrieved party had received entailed even more serious disadvantages and endangered their personal development instead of enabling them to overcome the difficulties of their situation.[16] The Czech Republic is now in the process of taking measures to assure inclusive education.

According to the PISA results, the Czech education system is selective and students' results, motivation and success in education and consequently also on labor market[17] depend heavily on the economic, social and cultural status of their family background. This leads to another form of segregation within the educational system that arises from the selection of schools by students and their parents. In big cities, there might be a concentration of children from families with high economic and social status in schools, for example, where the majority of students are from similar social and economic backgrounds, and vice versa, children from families with a low economic, social and cultural status might concentrate at schools where majority of student come from a low economic, social and cultural background. It is predicted that when a certain ratio of Roma students or students from low economic and social status background attending a given school is exceeded, students from the majority population and with a higher socio-economic status tend to leave that school, which leads to the emergence of the so-called Roma schools.

One of the important findings of the PISA survey – which points to selectivity

16 See for example: *Report of the state of Roma communities in the Czech Republic in 2007 (Z práva o stavu romských komunit v České republice za rok 2007)*. Praha, Government office of the Czech Republic 2008.

17 *Education at a Glance 2007* brings the percentage of unemployed people with regards to their achieved level of education. The unemployment rate in the group of people who achieved basic and lower secondary education increased rapidly from 7.7% in 1995 to 24.4% in 2005. In the case of people, who achieved upper secondary education, this shift was from 2.1% in 1995 to 6.2% in 2005. The unemployment rate of people completing tertiary education was up from 0.7% in 1995 at 2.0% in 2005.

being demonstrated by the phenomenon that students' performance depends heavily on family background, and which also explains the above-mentioned mechanism of segregation – has revealed differences between the results of student both outside and within schools. The Czech Republic exceeds the OECD average inter-school variance and performance-related differences explained by the economic, social and cultural status of students and schools. The impact of family background is not only reflected in the difference between individual students but also at school level.[18]

Basic and secondary schools offer courses to adults who want to complete their basic education or the basics of education. In 2007 a total of 344 individuals attended courses to achieve basic education at basic schools and 307 individuals attended courses to acquire rudimentary knowledge at special basic schools.

1.3. Secondary education

Secondary education, which corresponds to upper secondary education in international classification, can be obtained at general, academically oriented types of schools, at grammar schools or at technical schools that issue a final certificate[19] ("maturita") or at vocational schools without a final certificate or in a small number of artistically oriented conservatories. Secondary education attendance by 15 to 19-year olds has been above 80% since 1990/91 and was 88.4% in 2002, secondary education attendance by 15 to 18-year olds was at 92.7% in 2007. This level of education is the most common, highest attained level of education, 75% of the Czech population between 25 and 64 years of age completed upper secondary education in 2002 and, according to Education at a Glance, 2007, 77% of those between 25 and 64 years of age reached this level of education.

The most significant difference in secondary education with regards to tertiary education being continued, employment opportunities and salary levels, is that between secondary schools issuing a final certificate and secondary schools with no final certificate. Secondary education with a final certificate is organized in 4-year study programmes at grammar schools and at secondary technical schools. Study without a final certificate takes place at secondary vocational schools in 2 or 3-year

18. KOUCKÝ, J. et al: *Učení pro život. Výsledky výzkumu OECD PISA 2003 [Learning for Tomorrow's World. First results from PISA 2003]*. Praha, ÚIV (Institute for Information on Education) 2004, p. 13 – 14.
19. These schools also have a vocational certificate, but it is less valued than a final certificate and does not allow graduates to go on to tertiary education. Some vocational schools also offer study programmes with a final certificate. When the term"certificate" used in the text is in fact reference to a final certificate.

study programmes.[20] Some of these vocational schools offer special, practical training programmes for students who finished their compulsory education in a grade lower than grade 9 or those who graduated from a special school. The secondary education of students with special needs can be prolonged by 2 years. There were 1447 secondary schools in 2007/8 educating a total of 525 700 students. Approximately two third of students enrolled in schools in secondary education in 2007/8 embarked on study programmes with a final certificate. There were 542 vocational schools without a final certificate in 2007, educating approximately one third of secondary school students.[21]

The main objective of vocational education "with no certificate" is to train graduates for future employment. 43% of the adult population (25-64 years old) achieved secondary education in 2002 without obtaining a certificate, and even though this number has since fallen, it is still above the OECD average, which was at 19% in 2002. This considerable difference can be explained by a large number of those who would otherwise drop out of education system in other OECD countries. On the other hand, when we compare numbers of people who have achieved compulsory or secondary vocational education without a final certificate in the Czech Republic with people with the same level of education in other OECD countries, it is at 55% in the Czech Republic compared with 51% in other OECD countries.

The majority of candidates for secondary education are accepted by vocational schools, which also accounts for the fact that applicants capable of achieving secondary education with a final certificate but lack of motivation, family support or self-confidence, tend to opt for this school type, given a higher probability of acceptance.

Secondary vocational schools without a final certificate can offer extension study programmes for their graduates, focused on the acquisition of an all-inclusive secondary education via obtaining a final certificate. Dead end in secondary technical education is represented by a study programme with the code E, designed as a secondary study programme for leavers of basic special schools and basic practical schools. This type of programme does not create the possibility for extension studies to issue a final certificate and, therefore, puts students at a disadvantage on the labor market. One of the measures on the Ministry's agenda is to create the possibility of extended studies for this study programme.

Acquiring secondary education with a final certificate entails a crucial change

20. Some vocational schools also offer study programmes with a final certificate.

21. Statistical data from the *Annual report of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports about the state and developement of the educational system in the Czech Republic in 2007*. Praha, ÚIV (Institute for Information on Education) 2008.

of position for graduates on the Czech labor market; the probability of becoming unemployed decreases after achieving this level of education.[22]

1.4. Tertiary education

The average rate of people with a background of tertiary education (25-64 years old) is approximately 11% (13% in 2007). This rate is almost the same for younger generations (25 – 34 years). This is approximately half of the number of tertiary educated people of the same age group in OECD countries. Everyone who has finished all-inclusive secondary education – those who have graduated from secondary schools with a final certificate – can apply for a tertiary study course and can sit for an entrance exam. There are two types of tertiary education: post-secondary vocational schools (VOŠ), which prepare graduates via 2 or 3-year programmes to enter the labor market; and bachelor or master study programmes at universities, which prepare graduates to enter the labor market or to continue their study at post-graduate level by starting a scientific or academic career. The number of foreign students in Czech tertiary education has increased, in 2002 3.4% of all students were, for example, foreigners (the majority of these were from the Slovak Republic), in 2003/4 this number was up at 5.3%. The unemployment rate affecting tertiary education graduates was as low as 1.6% in 2002, which was about twice as low as the OECD average, while it was at 2% in 2007. This section of the population has an average salary which is 80% higher than that of graduates from all-inclusive secondary education.[23]

Approximately 11% of tertiary education students study in post-secondary vocational schools. Post-secondary vocational schools require tuition, unlike at universities, which is free of charge. There were 177 post-secondary vocational schools in 2007/8 and the best known fields of study are linked to the subjects of economy and medicine.

In the Czech Republic it is possible to graduate from three types of university study: the bachelor study programme, the master study programme and the doctoral study programme. Universities have academic independence and autonomy; they are established by the Parliament and are funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports through grants offered to each university. In 2002/3 a total of 232,000 students studied at 147 faculties nationwide. Demand for university study exceeds

22. MATĚJŮ – STRAKOVÁ: c.d., p. 104.
23. MATĚJŮ – STRAKOVÁ: c.d., p. 104 – 108.

supply; the most popular fields are social sciences, law and economics. Today only 1.2% of the population completes a course in post-gradual education. The ratio of students enrolled in university study changed slightly; the number of grammar school graduates decreased in the period 1990 – 2000 from 62% to 40%, whereas the number of secondary vocational schools with graduates having taken a final examination increased from 30% to 38% in this period. The majority of Czech university students who enter university are under 22 years of age. Private universities are an alternative to state universities and are financed mostly from tuition fees, which range from Kč 25,000 to Kč 120,000 per year. In 2003 there were a total of 35 private universities compared with a total of 45 in 2007.

Each university or tertiary education institution can apply for financial aid from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for its development programmes, through which it is possible to financially support disadvantaged students.

To summarize these facts, there are various points in the educational period where selection takes place:

1) kindergartens – as tuition needs to be paid in kindergartens, children from families with a low economic status may not afford the education of their children in kindergartens, or there is a shortage of capacities in kindergartens in or near a particular place of residence.
2) specialized schools and adjusted educational programmes as well as framework educational programmes with adjusted standards (annex for children with a mild mental disability) at the basic educational level
3) selection of children, whose talent has been manifested after the 5th grade of the basic school, and who will be accepted for 8-year grammar schools (about 9% of children) or basic schools with extended study of certain subjects
4) entrance exams at secondary schools
5) entrance exams at universities

1.5. Lifelong learning

One of the main goals of the system of initial formal education is to prepare the ground for lifelong learning, which is important for the steady development of the Czech economy. Substantial structural changes are still necessary for the Czech economy to become truly competitive. And a crucial aspect of these changes is the increase and shift in qualification of its population Lifelong learning is the answer to the stronger

challenges that stem from changes in contemporary economy and the society, as it links formal, non-formal and informal learning, thus allowing individuals to improve their qualification and respond to demand on the market. Moreover, lifelong learning is an opportunity for those dissatisfied with their educational path to acquire a specific field or level of education, which is an important tool for social cohesion.

The Czech Republic has prepared and passed important laws and measures towards developing lifelong learning as an integral part of its educational policies and the educational system itself. The National Qualifications System, prepared in connection with the Act on Verification and Recognition of the Results in Further Education, directs progress towards greater openness and permeability in the system of initial vocational education, aimed to build additional links with further education. The National Qualifications System formulates requirements for competences for the performance of qualified activities (both complete and partial qualifications) prioritizing their recognition and certification, no matter what were the means through which they were acquired. The module and credit system in the Czech Republic should support the consultation process for the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training.[24]

Participation in further education is lower than in other European countries. In 2004, 6.3% of the population took part in further education, compared with 9.4% in other EU countries.[25] According to the Lisbon strategy, EU member states are expected to be at 12.5% by 2010 in terms of the percentage of population participating in further education. Only 0.4% of the Czech population with the lowest level of education (less than all-inclusive secondary education, complete with a final certificate obtained) took part in further education in 2004.[26]

24. *The Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic.* Praha, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports 2007, p. 54.
25. *Eurostat Labour Force Survey, Spring Results.* EUROSTAT 2004.
26. MATĚJŮ – STRAKOVÁ: c.d., p. 116.

2. POLICIES TO PROMOTE EQUITY IN EDUCATION

The Czech System of Education is selective, selection starting at the youngest age at the level of pre-school education and continues throughout all other levels as described in the above chapter, placing children with impairment and those with social disadvantage in "special" types of schools or classes with a modified curriculum, or by selecting students with proven talent by enrolling them in 8-year grammar schools and in classes with extended studies in specific subjects. Strengthening the inclusive character of the Czech educational system is one of the key priorities of MEYS, expected to be a long-term process. One of the crucial steps in this process is an individual approach to all children or students and the creation of a safe environment in all schools types and at all levels. This chapter will introduce and describe policies and measures aimed at achieving these goals.

2.1. Organization and development of learning – the transformation of the school system as a framework for inclusive education

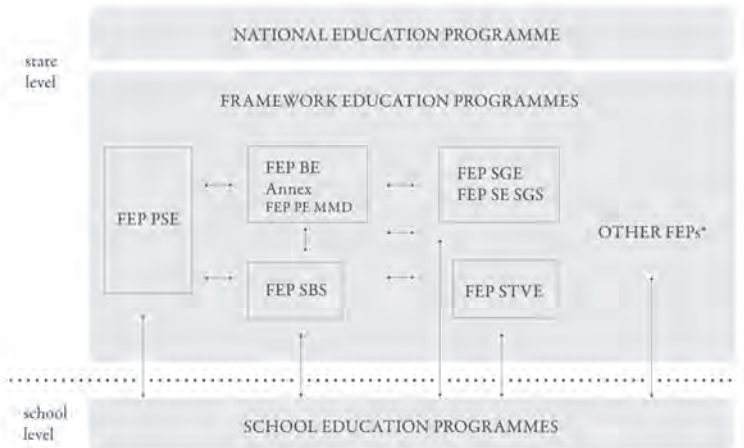
Equal access to education is declared in the new Education Act of 2004[27]. The Education Act sets up the conditions for education and care; it defines the rights and duties of educational institutions and specifies the role of the governing bodies of state and local governments. It introduced a new curricular system for students from 3 to 19 years of age. Curricular documents are developed at two levels: the national level and school level (see Diagram 1). The national level in the system of curricular documents comprises the National Education Programme and framework education programmes (FEPs). The National Education Programme defines initial education in its entirety. Framework education programmes define binding educational norms at various stages: pre-school education, basic education and secondary education. The school level consists of school education programmes (SEPs), which constitute the basis of education at individual schools. School Education Programmes are developed by individual schools themselves, based on principles set out in the appropriate framework education programme. The schools can use the *Manual for Developing*

27. Law no. 561/2004 Sb., on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education.

School Education Programmes, designed for each framework education programme and which contains instructions on how to prepare SEP as a tool.
Framework Education Programmes are the basis for educational reform;
FEPs

- are based on a new education strategy which stresses the development of key competences of students and the need for students, rather than simply acquiring as much factual knowledge as possible, to link these key competencies with educational contents and the ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills in practical life. As defined in the White Book, the role of schools "lies in providing a systematic and balanced structure of basic concepts and relations that makes it possible to put information into a meaningful context of knowledge and life experience. A proper balance between the knowledge–based content of the curriculum, the development of skills, and the acquisition of attitudes and values will be very important. The interlinking of goals, educational content and competences will be enhanced, and a stress will be put on the acquisition of key competences"[28].
- formulate the expected level of education that needs to be attained by all students who have completed a particular stage in education (learning outcomes)
- promote the educational autonomy of schools as well as teachers' professional responsibility for the outcome of the educational process

Diagram 1: The System of Curricular documents in the Czech Republic
Source: VÚP



28. *National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic.* Praha, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports 2001, p. 38.

Captions: FEP PSE – Framework Education Programme for Pre-School Education; FEP BE – Framework Education Programme for Basic (i.e. primary and lower secondary) Education and Annex to the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education Specifying the Education of Students with Mild mental Disabilities (FEP BE MMD); FEP SBS – Framework Education Programme for Specialized Basic Schools; FEP SGE – Education Framework for Secondary General Education (grammar schools); FEP SE SGS – Framework Education Programme for Secondary Education at Sports Grammar Schools; FEP STVE – Framework Education Programmes for Secondary Technical and Vocational Education.
** Other FEPs* – additional framework education programmes defined by the Education Act - Framework Education Programme for Basic (i.e. primary and lower secondary) Artistic Schools, Framework Education Programme for Language Education and others.

FEPs thus:

- follow up the FEPs of previous educational levels and are binding for FEPs at the next levels of education
- define everything common to and necessary at a particular level of education
- specify the level of key competencies that pupils and students need to attain when finishing their level of education
- specify the educational content, expected outcomes and subject matter
- specify cross-curricular subjects with focal formative functions that need to be included as a mandatory component at a particular level of education
- promote a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the educational content, including the possibility of its interlinking as appropriate, and presume choice from a variety of teaching procedures, different methods and formats of teaching that are suitable for the needs of individual pupils and students
- allow for the educational content to be modified so as to meet the needs of students with special educational needs
- are open documents to be upgraded periodically by taking into account the changing needs of society as well as teachers' experience with SEP and the changing needs and interests of pupils and students

Education trends stimulated and promoted by FEPs:

- take into account the needs and potential of pupils and students when attaining the objectives of a particular level of education
- apply variable organizational patterns and individualize the educational process by

observing the needs and potential of pupils and students; apply the principle of differentiation in education
- offer a broader range of optional subjects for the development of pupils' and students' interests and individual potential
- create a favourable social, emotional and working climate based on efficient motivation, cooperation and the activation of educational methodology
- gradually accomplish changes in the assessment of the pupils and students towards a diagnosis on an ongoing basis, individual assessment of pupils' and students' achievements and a wider use of written verbal assessment
- maintain, as long as possible, naturally diverse student groups and weaken the reasons for separating and sending students to specialized classrooms and schools
- put more stress on efficient cooperation with parents.[29]

It follows from this that FEPs set the framework for an open and flexible system of education, which creates opportunities for inclusivity and the development of each child's potentials.

Some opportunities created by the curricular reform that can be highlighted are:

- content and projected results in education are linked more strongly to practical life
- motivating and activating methods that help to develop the individual competencies of pupils and students are preferred in teaching and assessment
- learning to learn and ways to get to know, how to be creative and innovative are preferred to learning facts
- a secure and student-friendly environment and atmosphere at schools is promoted
- the possibility for a wider integration of students with special needs is created
- self-evaluation of schools is set as a basis for the further development of schools
- the autonomy and professional responsibility of teachers is strengthened
- the need for cooperation between school and parents is emphasized
- each school accommodates its school education programme to the actual needs of its pupils/students, to its facilities and the quality of teaching

29. From: Framework Education Programme for Basic Education, Praha, VÚP (Research Institute of Education in Prague) 2007. And complemented by information from other FEPs. All FEPs can be downloaded (also in English) at: www.vuppraha.cz (http://www.vuppraha.cz/soubory/RVP_ZV_EN.pdf). FEP STVE are available at: www.nuov.cz.

The curricular reform set up an inclusive framework of education, the task now being to fully implement it and to turn opportunities into reality. The Czech Republic supports the successful implementation of the reform e.g. through national and systemic projects and individual national projects[30] financed by the European Social Fund and state budget aimed at the self-evaluation of schools, improvement of school management, education of teachers etc. The Education for Competitiveness Operation Programme (hereinafter referred to as EC OP) of the European Social Fund aims some of its calls for proposals and supported fields and activities at the successful implementation of the reform. One of the horizontal issues of EC OP is that of equal opportunities. It will be possible to analyze the systemic projects, individual national projects and their impacts after their completion and it will also be possible to analyze the impacts of the EC OP after the projects supported are completed.

The Czech Republic is also to take other measures realized through government funding. These will be described with regards to the level of education in which they are to be implemented.

2.1.1. General equity measures

Today a planned amendment of the Education Act is under discussion at the Ministry. Several proposals aim at equal opportunities:

- One targets placing children in the so-called "practical schools" which educate students in line with modified curricula. This proposal defines in more detail than the original version the necessities of the so-called "informed agreement" of legal guardians, which is necessary for enrolling their children in a basic practical school or one that educates in accordance with modified curricula.
- Another sets up revision centres based on the decisions and recommendations of the school guidance centres; they will also be able to control the work of school guidance centers. Revision centers will be the ministerial bodies of MYES and will work in each region of the Czech Republic (2 3-member teams in each region). These teams will consist of employees of the School Counseling Organization, with a minimum experience of 7 years; they must have psychological and/or therapeutic

30. National projects/systemic projects/individual national projects are projects financed by European Social Fund and state budget, which are carried out by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports directly or with cooperation with its partners, possibly the state-subsidised organizations administered by the Ministry, or other partners. These projects are aimed at designing and achieving systemic changes in the education system. For projects financed by the Development of Human Resources Operation Programme (DHR OP) in the period 2004 – 2006, the term "national projects" or "systemic projects" was used. For entire government projects financed by the Education for Competitiveness Operation Programme (EC OP), the term "individual national projects" is used.

training courses and need to complete special training schemes designed for revision-related employees.

One of the key initiatives of the ministry is the amendment of the Education Act aimed at the children, pupils and students with special needs in education, the preparation of which is underway. A new formulation is to focus on specific education needs that children have and the state is to fulfill and provide, rather than labeling children as disadvantaged due to certain individual characteristics of these students, which might lead to their stigmatization. The new legislation will thus define specific tools that the government and schools have to provide for children so that they can successfully complete their education.

Another important initiative is the collection of exact data about the situation of disadvantaged pupils/students in the education system. Non-government agencies are in the process of preparing two studies.

The topics of these studies are:

- Sociological research into the segregation of pupils, students and young people from a socio-culturally disadvantaged background
- Analysis of an individual approach by teachers towards pupils and students with special needs in education

The Ministry will use the recommendation of these studies when defining concrete measures.

2.1.2. Equity measures aimed at pre-school education

One measure introduced in order to increase the number of socially disadvantaged children in kindergartens was the introduction of free education for 5-year old children one year before the start of compulsory education, as well as for 6-year old children who were recommended to postpone the commencement of their study. This provision failed to bring the expected result; on the contrary, it led to a fall in the number of 5-year old children in pre-school education.[31] Thus, the amendment to the Education Act also reintroduced tuition for this target group.

A strategic document focusing on pre-school education is the Concept of the Early Care, approved by the Government and updated in 2008. This document also

31. *Annual report of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports about the state nad developement of the educational system of the Czech Republic on 2007.*

introduces a number of measures. One of the most important measures is related to preparatory classes. These are perceived to be a successful tool for inclusive education policy (see Tables 6 and 7). One of the steps prepared by MYES is aimed to extend education in preparatory classes to two years. MYES will also focus on the development of inclusive education in the segment of kindergartens in order to support socially disadvantaged children and children from different cultural background more intensely in kindergartens.

Table 6: Answers of headmasters in basic schools with preparatory classes to offer.

Statement	Agreement with the following statements					Total	
	Absolutely agree	Partially agree	Partially disagree	Absolutely disagree	Cannot comment	%	Abs.
Preparatory classes have an undeniable impact on the success of children after they are enrolled in mainstream schools.	87,8	11,1	-	-	1,1	100,0	90
Preparatory classes have an obvious impact on the quality of communication with the parents of children who attend it.	68,9	26,7	3,3	-	1,1	100,0	90
Preparatory classes undeniably prevent non-Roma students from changing schools (to get enrolled in a different school).	5,6	15,6	17,8	35,6	25,6	100,0	90

Source: Institute for Information on Education

Table 7: Number of children, who attended preparatory classes, having been recommended to continue their compulsory education in different type of schools

Recommendation	Number of/proportion of children			
	2005/06		2006/07	
	Abs.	%	Abs.	%
Mainstream class	640	61,4	829	64,4
Specialized class	125	12,0	146	11,3
Individual study plan	35	3,4	38	3,0
Postponement of the commencement of compulsory education	243	23,3	274	21,3
Total	1043	100,0	1287	100,0

Source: Institute for Information on Education

Other tools used within the Concept of Early Care were:

- Education of teachers and university students preparing for teaching, so that they are able to work with children from a socio-economically disadvantaged background.
- Support of NGO projects aimed at early care through the financial programmes of the Ministry. (Financial programmes will be described in greater detail in a separate chapter.)
- The Ministry has run a systemic project, "Centers for the integration of minorities", which also aimed at providing early care for children from a socio-culturally disadvantaged background.
- Education of social workers and health workers, so that they might be able to work efficiently with the target group

In the future, the Czech Republic will focus on work with parents, offering more complex services to disadvantaged people – social workers themselves should be trained to be capable of providing help in a more complex manner, informing families about the importance of education of their children and providing parents with information on the educational alternatives of their children. This goal should be realized partly through a national project, which is to commence in 2009. This project will create centres of support for inclusive education, which will provide methodical support for teachers at all levels of the educational system aimed at work with socially disadvantaged pupils and students from different cultural backgrounds, create networks of specialists and multidisciplinary teams that support teachers and parents, and endorse regional facilities. MYES will also focus on the preparation and implementation of the concept of early education and care of children of 0 – 3 years of age; for this purpose, MYES will launch a cooperation initiative with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry for Regional Development.

2.1.3. Equity measures aimed at basic and secondary education

Measures at this level of education are:

- Teachers' assistants – for socially disadvantaged children and children from diverse cultural backgrounds and for children with a severe mental and physical disability
- School education and psychology counseling services provided by counseling organizations in education and psychology or by specialists at schools. The Czech Republic ran a systemic project aimed at placing about 100 psychologists and special pedagogues in basic and secondary schools. Similar project that will also bring about the transformation of the system of school guidance centres will continue

in 2009. The purpose of the Czech Republic with regards to the transformation of the counseling system is to ensure the process of un-biased counseling, diagnostics and intervention care, finding new alternatives for counseling organizations and centers, functioning and operating towards more mobility, flexibility, defining new standards in offering counseling services in the system of revisions etc.

These measures are aimed at helping students to reach standards at a particular level of mainstream education, to help them with their studies, to help teachers to prepare individual study plans for students with special needs, to help them realize special needs and respond accordingly, so that disadvantaged pupils and students can succeed in mainstream education and thus produce outcomes required in the learning process – knowledge and competence needed in their practical life.

Other planned or implemented measures are:

- Mentoring – support of disadvantaged students in their last year at basic school and 1st year students at secondary school to successfully finish their basic education, have aspirations of secondary education, pass the entrance exams to secondary school, successfully study at the secondary school and attain upper secondary education, preferably one with a final certificate. This measure will be introduced as one of supported areas of specific financial programmes at ministerial level.
- Additional support of tutoring
- Further education of teachers to enable them to work students with special needs in mainstream education
- Providing schools with the necessary equipment – special textbooks, easy-to-read text books and other didactic and compensatory equipment
- Support of reconstruction initiatives to ensure barrier-free access to school buildings
- Improvement of parent-school relationship – scheduled systemic project "Development of Community Schools" is to implement the concept of Community schools and prepare the ground for spreading this type of school in the Czech Republic through methodological support, education of "community coordinators" etc. The primary aim of the concept is to open the school for the community, thereby involving the whole community in school life, improving the relationship between adult individuals and their children's schools, opening schools for lifelong learning activities, improving the school atmosphere and creating a friendly student-parent environment, thus intensifying the inclusive potential of schools for students with special needs.

- Emphasizing the principle of a respect of diversity in the FEPs within the horizontal multicultural education, and also by including the history of the Roma community in educational programmes.

What can be perceived as the biggest problem in terms of equity from the perspective of learning outcomes is the existence of different study types and educational programmes with curricula modified for students with a mild mental disability, plus the fact that some students who are made to study in accordance with these modified programmes do not necessarily need to be educated separately from mainstream students. Poor study results, poor study motivation and aspirations are highly influenced by a socio-economic family status and acquired education, and do not necessarily translate themselves into a child's personal skills or abilities. The Czech Republic is a country with low intergenerational mobility in education. At the same time, this tendency, apart from other phenomena already described in this report, is exacerbated by the structuring of the Czech education system, where it is necessary to pass entrance exams on the basis of which type of secondary school one wishes to get enrolled in and is also worsened by teaching methods being oriented towards the provision of knowledge. "This places demands on the home preparation of the child and prefers children from more educated families with more access to cultural capital. Initial education in the school system has a tendency to reproduce, rather than reduce, inequality derived from a culturally poor environment. This trend will continue in further education, where participation is dependent on the level of initial education achieved".[32]

2.2. Reducing inequities in terms of learning outcomes

There are several study programmes with different standards at each level of the Czech education system. Within pre-school education, there is one FEP, which sets standards for education in kindergartens via modified curricula in kindergartens for children with an impairment and in preparatory classes.

Standards set in education programmes differ more within basic education – there are two FEPs – FEP for Basic Education and FEP for Specialized Basic Schools – with adjusted standards for students with severe disabilities – students acquire a level of education referred to as "basics of education". Then, within FEP BE, there is the annex

32. *The Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic,* p. 55.

for students with a mild mental disability, which again sets modified standards for students educated in accordance with this programme. Nevertheless, students who complete this programme are said to acquire basic education, just like those who graduate from FEP without an annex.

Study programmes are regularly substituted by the Framework Education Programmes, FEPs within secondary education also set different standards designed for general education, technical education and vocational education without a final certificate, while FEP for secondary education in "one-year practical schools" and "2-year practical schools" – with modified standards for students with mental impairment – is under preparation.

Setting modified standards for certain group of students is a hotbed of disadvantage when compared with students who have received mainstream education, which reaches out to the labour market as well – as their education path is formed during basic school and a return to education in mainstream schools is far too complicated. The modified study programme at basic school is, usually, due to demanding entrance examinations to secondary schools, followed by vocational secondary education without a final certificate and in some cases followed by an educational programme that offers no option to obtain it later (secondary study with code E) and, finally, in the Czech education system it is not possible to get enrolled in tertiary education without completing secondary education with a final certificate.

One of the tools for reducing inequities and dead ends in education is lifelong learning. Young people and the adult population should be able and motivated to learn even after completing their formal education; they should have the opportunity to improve their qualification, to be able to respond to the demand of the labor market and thus be competitive. What the Czech Republic perceives to be of crucial importance for lifelong learning is to ensure the permeability of the education system – this should be acquired by a regular updating of the National Qualifications System and the introduction of modularization and a credit system during the early stages of education, thus enabling closer interconnection and horizontal permeability between schools with different orientation at the same level of educational process and also vertical permeability between vocational education at upper secondary level and tertiary level. At the same time, special attention has to be given to disadvantaged individuals. The diversity of educational pathways and the motivation of secondary school students should be promoted with special emphasis being placed on groups endangered by the phenomenon of premature leaving. Other strategic goals of successful implementation of lifelong learning is development in the field of functional literacy, harmonization of educational opportunities offered with the needs of social-economic

and environmental development, stimulation of demand for lifelong learning, rise in the quality of educational opportunities and developing counseling services.[33]

Progress in the field of equal opportunities can be traced through international comparative research initiatives such as PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS etc. PISA, for example, points out the interconnectedness of socio-economic family status with the results of students, compares the number of different study programmes and shows the level of competencies depending on particular types of school. Priorities for the development of education system are based on the results of these comparative researches and studies.

Researches in the Czech Republic, which directed at results and position of the socially disadvantaged children, children from different cultural backgrounds and children with impairment in the educational system, are only about to begin. As ethnic data has not been collected recently, the Czech Republic does not have exact information on foreigners, children from ethnic minorities, e.g. Roma children in the education system, their numbers, study results and specific segments of the education system they occur in. As the education reform has started only recently, and currently only the grades 1 and 6 are run in line with FEP BE, the research of education according to different FEPs will be a task for the next few years. The Ministry has plans of longitudinal studies in this context. Results of these studies will be important tools for the further development of the education system and for focusing measures, both those already in use and those yet to be taken, on achieving equal opportunities and inclusive education.

2.3. Financial and human resources

Activities to create equal opportunities in education in the Czech Republic are financed through the financial and development programmes of the Czech Republic, Operational programmes of the European Social Fund and annual subsidy from the national budget. This chapter will describe financial resources granted and administered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. It will not provide information on all programmes and resources invested in the area of equal opportunities by the Czech Republic.

33. *The Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic,* p. 64 – 69.

2.3.1. Financial Programmes

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports announces financial programmes (FP) 1 – 3 times a year via calls for proposals. Financial resources for these FPs are allocated for 1 calendar year only, with no possibility of re-allocation in another calendar year.

Equal opportunities are supported through the following FP:

- FP for the support of the Roma community
- FP for the support of secondary school Roma students
- FP for the support of education in the languages of national minorities and for multicultural education
- FP of state support of NGOs for work with children and youth
- FP for the support of the integration of foreigners

The financial resources of these programmes, with the exception of the Programme for support of secondary school Roma students, instead of being offered directly to the target group, are transferred to organizations which carry out particular projects and activities aimed at the target group.

2.3.1.1. Programme for the support of the Roma community

Organizations (with the exception of foundations and non-endowment funds), which carry out activities supporting the members of the Roma community, are entitled to a grant. Usually, these are NGOs, kindergartens, basic, secondary schools, tertiary education institutions and municipalities.

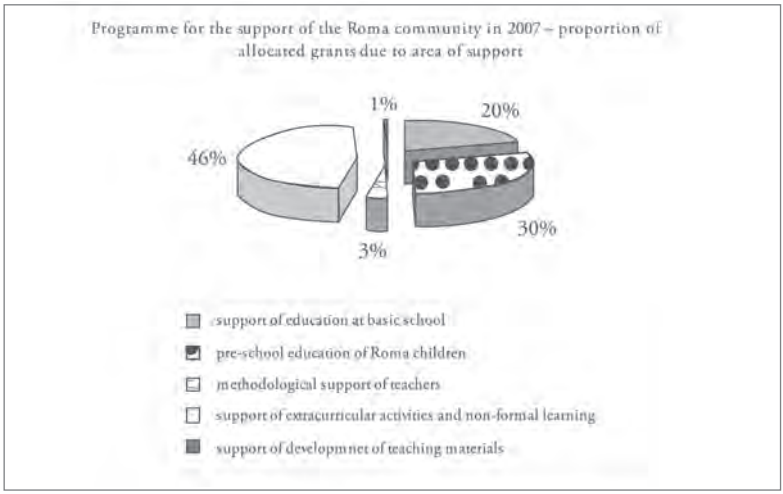
The programme is designed predominantly for the support of the integration of the Roma minority but projects can target socially disadvantaged persons as well. The Programme started in 2002 and is announced annually, the allocation in 2007 was CZK 15 millions (€ 610 000).

In 2007, projects were to be submitted in these areas:

A. Pre-school education of Roma children – e.g. integration of Roma children into kindergartens, support of preparatory classes, NGO projects of social and pedagogic intervention, etc.
B. Education of children from the Roma community at basic and secondary schools – e.g. projects aimed at the support of children in compulsory education such as extracurricular activities, help in children's preparation for school, low threshold clubs, etc.

C. Methodological preparation of teachers
D. Preparation of didactical materials and studies for the development of education programmes, methods and strategies

Diagram 2 shows the proportion of allocated resources in the above-mentioned areas.



2.3.1.2. Programme for the support of secondary school Roma students

This FP has been announced annually since 2003 in two rounds, the annual allocation is CZK 10 million (€ 406,000). Grants are aimed at the support of students (Czech citizens), whose families cannot afford to pay for their secondary study or post-secondary vocational study costs. These expenses (tuition fee, meals, travel expenses to school, accommodation, stationary etc.) for economically disadvantaged Roma students are paid directly to schools and are provided for students up to the age of 26.

2.3.1.3. Programme for the support of education in the languages of national minorities and for multicultural education

Organizations (with the exception of foundations and non-endowment funds), which carry out activities for the support of national minorities, are entitled to this grant. These are usually NGOs, kindergartens, basic, secondary schools and tertiary education institutions. The programme was first introduced in 2002 and its annual budget is CZK 19 million (€ 772,000).

Areas of intervention are:

A. Linguistic education of children and of youth from national minorities.
B. Education-related activities for children and youth from national minorities.
C. Support of basic and secondary schools with a significant proportion of pupils and students from national minorities and ethnic groups.
D. Preparation and realization of educational programmes and study materials, which focus on the prevention and elimination of ethnic and national hostility, racism, anti-Semitism, and also on projects in the field of the teaching of the Roma language, are supported.
E. Preparation of educational materials aimed at improving the education of socially disadvantaged pupils and students.
F. Research and analysis focusing on the education of national minorities and ethnic groups living in the Czech Republic.

2.3.1.4. Programme of state support of NGOs for work with children and young people

The Programme has been announced annually since 1991 with the aim to support work with young people. Projects focus mostly on extracurricular activities and extracurricular education, e.g. work with children on a regular basis in interest clubs and playgroups, summer and winter camps and work with children on an irregular basis, e.g. in low-threshold clubs and centers. The annual budget of the programme is CZK 200 million (€8,130,000).

Part of the projects, supported within the programme aim at the integration of students and of children with physical disability, children from national minorities, Roma children, children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Resources allocated for these projects are at CZK 20-30 million annually (€ 813-1,220,000) (10-15% of the total budget of the programme).

2.3.1.5. Programme for the support of the integration of foreigners

Grants are provided for NGOs (with the exception of funds and non-endowment funds), schools, school institutions and tertiary education institutions for activities aimed at the integration of foreigners. The size of the programme budget is CZK 2 million (€ 81,300) annually.

Areas of support within the programme are:

A. Projects in support of multicultural education.
B. Projects in support of the teaching of Czech as a foreign language.

C. Studies aimed at the education of migrating foreigners; organization of seminars on the education of foreigners.

2.3.2. Development programmes

Equal opportunities are also promoted through development programmes:

2.3.2.1. Development programme to support the financing of teacher's assistants
The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports introduced this programme in 2005. It is announced annually in two rounds and is aimed to cover the expenses of teacher's assistants spent on socially disadvantaged children. 330 – 350 assistants, who work in kindergartens, basic and secondary schools in the Czech Republic, are given annual support. The programme budget is CZK 80 million (€ 3,250,000). Apart from these, each region has its financial resources to cover the growing costs of schools in terms of the education of students with special needs. Some regions use this money to cover the expenses of additional teacher's assistants.

2.3.2.2. Development programme to support the financing of teacher's assistants at church and private schools of children with an impairment
Similarly to the above-mentioned programme, this one is also announced annually in two rounds and it covers the expenses of teacher's assistants of children with an impairment. Approximately 250 assistants are supported annually via a budget of CZK 15 million (€ 610,000).

2.3.2.3. Development programme for special text books, learning texts and materials for visually disabled students, students with a hearing disorder, mentally disabled students and students with a learning disorder
In 2008 approx. CZK 5,6 million (€ 228,000) was allocated for this programme. The preparation and production of special textbooks and learning materials for disabled students is financed through this programme.

2.3.2.4. Development programme to ensure the conditions of basic education for underage asylum seekers, individuals claiming international protection in the Czech Republic, children – foreigners educated in foreigners' detention facilities etc.
This programme, introduced in 2006 with annual budget 8 millions of CZK (325 00€), focuses on increased costs on wages to be covered, the supply of stationery and other types of equipment, organizational forms of education etc. Grants are provided only to schools which educate these children.

2.3.3. Projects financed from the European Social Fund

Equal opportunities are also promoted through the finances of European Structural Funds. A number of projects, financed from the ESF, have been carried out, either as national and systemic projects financed by DHR OP and individual national projects financed by EC OP (mentioned also in previous chapter) or as other projects (grant projects or other individual projects[34]) aimed at equal opportunities, socially excluded persons or people endangered by exclusion. Previously around € 97,4 million was allocated for the improvement of education in schools and school organizations and for the development of supportive systems in education. Nowadays, individual national projects financed by EC OP, supported within the Area of Intervention 4.1 – Systemic Framework of Initial Education, which aim at promoting inclusive education and equal opportunities – are being prepared and about to be launched in 2009. The aim of these projects was described in the previous chapter. The overall sum set aside for the Area of Intervention 4.1 is in the region of € 91 million. Within Priority Axis 1 – Initial Education of the EC OP, one of the Areas of Intervention is the Equal opportunities of children, pupils and students, including children, pupils and students with special needs in education. Within this area of intervention about € 155, 5 million will be invested in projects aimed at an inclusive educational system, the support of socio-economically disadvantaged children and disabled children, multicultural education and education towards human rights and tolerance, the development of a guidance system, the education of teachers and the development of their abilities to work with students with special needs and with the classroom as a social group, its dynamics, cohesion etc.

2.3.4. Annual support from state budget

Here financing refers to equalizing measures being embraced in the Education Act, such as preparatory classes for children from a socio-culturally disadvantaged environment, services of school guidance centers, special care provided for disabled children in specialized schools and for children with a social and physical disability in basic schools, higher costs incurred by schools educating pupils and students with special needs and using plans tailored to individual students, cost of special equipment

34. Projects, which were not carried out by MYES and its partners and focused on the whole-system changes, but were carried out by different subjects in a smaller range. These „smaller" projects financed by DHR OP were called „grant projects", in the case of EC OP there are two types „grant projects" carried out in one region, or „other individual projects" carried out at least in two regions, with the exception of capital city of Prague.

and textbooks, cost of interpreters for children with hearing disorders etc.

Financial resources are allocated to schools and guidance centers through the establisher as part of the annual budget. At the moment it is not possible to define the exact sum of finances allocated for these purposes.

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Equity and Education – Country Note: HUNGARY

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SITUATION ANALYSIS: THE "EQUITY PROFILE" OF HUNGARY

1. Introduction

The fact that Hungarian public education reproduces socio-economic inequalities has become a central topic of social, economic and educational policy in the past few years. In spite of several policy attempts since the second half of the 1990s, Hungarian public education continues to segregate socio-economically disadvantaged groups through selection mechanisms that influence student performance and individual learning paths from a very young age. These issues gained public attention only by the end of the 1990s even though several research initiatives had highlighted growing inequalities in public education. It was not until the results of PISA 2000 that policy-makers began to address the issue. Since then, several OECD (*PISA 2000, 2003, 2006; Special Needs Education, 2000*) and national studies (*Csapó, 2002; Radó, 2000; Radó, 2003; Andor–Liskó, 2000; Hermann-Horn-Kádár, et al.-2008, Report on Public Education 2006*) have pointed out that selection mechanisms in Hungarian public education system increases differences among schools to the extent that they cannot provide equal opportunity for students who enter the system with socio-economic and cultural disadvantages. On the contrary, socio-economic inequalities are multiplied by a mechanism related to the selection and segregation aspect of public education.

Until recently, these issues have been confined to being in the focus of education policy, disregarding a direct link between educational inequalities, the inefficiency of public education and the sluggishness and low rate of economic growth characterising the Hungarian economy. Lately, correlations between the economic power, the socio-economic developmental potentials of a country and the accessibility of quality public education for all social groups[1] – as is indicated by international studies – have also become acknowledged in the context of Hungarian policy discourse. The argument that the smaller the educational disparities between socially advantaged and disadvantaged groups – measured in educational output – the bigger the economic performance capacity of the country (*Levin, 2003*) reflects a new approach to educational inequalities. As opposed to the "same for all" logic of the *equal treatment* approach, a new approach

1. This is explained by an improved evolution and use of personal capacities and by the complex, positive impact of educational qualifications on the quality of life. In countries where certain social groups are excluded from attaining the qualifications necessary to actively participate in social and economic life, the expenses incurred by the social and healthcare budget have increased significantly. This means that a considerable amount of human resources fail to make us participate in economic production, and that parallel to this, the expenses of state budget increase to the extent that it cannot be supported by a poorly performing economy.

– based on the concept of equity – would promote principles of "fairness and justice"; i.e. by compensating for inherent socio-economic disadvantages through education via observing individual abilities and needs. The "same for all" principle conveys a (re)-distributive logic that has been reflected in the exclusive use of per capita funding provided by central government agencies on integrated forms of education over the years. This supplementary funding, available for the "equal treatment" of students who are different from "their normal peers" in one way or another (learning difficulties, different socio-cultural or linguistic background, organic deficiencies) has, however, not induced integration within mainstream public education. By contrast, it has in the absence of standard criteria often reproduced the original problem of segregation.

In the light of these problems, changes in education along with fiscal, social and economic policies can be observed to have taken place in the past 2-3 years. Changing policy trends will be discussed in the second part of this paper. Firstly, the equity profile of the Hungarian public education system is outlined with a view to the impact of differences in socio-economic status, residence, ethnic origin, gender and individual, special needs in respect of educational outcomes and student performance. The equity profile of the public education system responds to these issues by analyzing various dimensions of educational inequalities and their significance in the context of socio-economic trends.

1.2. Dimensions of educational inequalities

1.2.1. Socio-economic status

Consecutive PISA reports since 2000 (*2003, 2006*) have highlighted the poor performance of 15-year old, Hungarian students in mathematics, sciences and in reading. PISA 2006 data shows that the overall performance of Hungarian 15-year olds is below the average in all three domains (*PISA 2006*). PISA studies have also indicated that Hungary has exceptionally large differences in performance between students of high and low socio-economic status. A strong correlation between the ESCS index and student performance seems to be based on differences between schools. Compared to the OECD average (21 per cent), in Hungary 46 per cent of the variance of the ESCS index derives from socio-economic differences among schools; i.e. the socio-economic composition of its student body. Among OECD countries Bulgaria (51 per cent) and Chile (53 per cent) were the only countries that scored higher (worse) than Hungary in this dimension. In other words, 70 per cent of the difference in student performance is explained by the difference between schools (see Appendix).

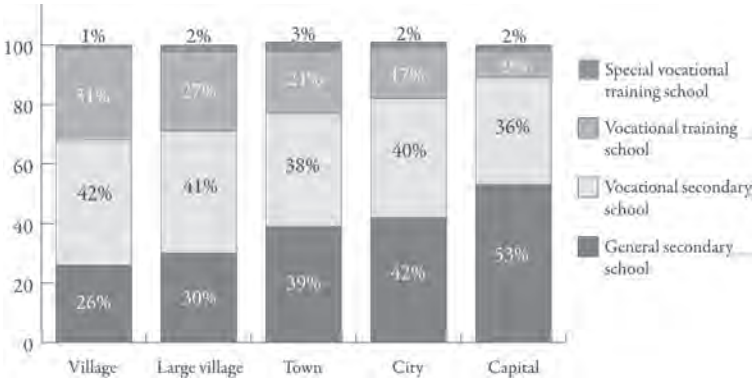
Data implies that the Hungarian public education system is incapable of providing

fair access and quality education for all students, regardless of their socio-economic status. Secondary schools are segregated by socio-economic status, while student performance in mathematics, sciences and reading literacy strongly correlates with differences in socio-economic status between secondary school types. However, attainment in higher education is also dependent on socio-economic status: children with a lower socio-economic status drop out of the education system after obtaining a secondary degree: e.g. the percentage of the Roma in higher education is way below the proportion of the Roma represented in the cohort of 18 year olds (in 2005 it was 10 per cent, in 2020 it is expected to be at 20 per cent and in 2050 over 20 per cent) (*Discussion Paper on Equal Opportunities, 2006*).

1.2.2. Residential differences

Inequalities in public education do not directly correlate with regional socio-economic disparities. On the other hand, a significant difference can be observed across regions and settlements in the progress of students, access to various educational services including their quality as well as ambitions related to those conditions. This is most visible in the case of single schools in small settlements. Due to the relatively small size and the economic disadvantage of these settlements, the cost for local governments to finance a single school is somewhat higher than in the case of larger settlements (*Hermann, 2005b*). In terms of opportunities available for students to go on to secondary education, a higher percentage of primary school-leavers in small settlements continue their studies in vocational schools.

Proportions of continuing education at secondary level by school category and settlement type, 2005 (%)



Source: KIFIR database, 2005

Given their budget constraints, single schools in small settlements aim for the highest possible number of student intake in order to ensure more per capita funding for individual institutions, therefore they have a more heterogeneous student body than schools in larger towns. (*Small Schools of Small Settlements, 2006*). This heterogeneous composition often highlights extreme differences in the socio-economic background of students: with the highest proportion of Roma in these schools, we may also find students with higher ESCS index in the same schools. (*Forray–Hegedűs, 2003*). As a result, segregation in small settlements exists only at the inter-municipal level (as parents with higher socio-economic status take their children to a more homogeneous school of neighbouring settlements or towns i.e. those with fewer Roma residents. Data shows that selection mechanisms have reversed effects in residential differences: the bigger the settlement, the more selective its schools are in terms of students' socio-economic background. In bigger cities schools can afford to select a homogeneous student body for classes; i.e. to get more motivated students from higher socio-economic statuses (*Report on Public Education 2006*). These differences between smaller and bigger settlements correlate with educational outcomes; i.e. there are significant disparities between the capital and villages with regard to students' reading literacy and mathematics skills measured in the National Competence Tests.

Average performance of 6th and 10th graders by type of settlement, 2004

	Mathematics	Comprehension
Budapest	508.8	512.0
County seat	498.4	501.3
Town	473.4	479.9
Village	438.3	444.3

Source: Calculations by Dániel Horn from the database of the National Competence Assessment of 2004

1.2.3. Gender differences

Gender differences in educational outcomes no longer denote women's limited access to education. They do, instead, show a difference in various learning paths and in the aspirations of students of both sexes. While women are still at a disadvantage in the labour market when compared with men, inequalities in public education tend to affect young males. In primary and secondary education, there is no difference in the number of male and female students, although the representation of female students in secondary schools of higher prestige is 20 per cent higher. It is also female students a greater number of whom seem to participate in higher education: the percentage of

female students was 51-52 per cent at universities and 56-57 per cent in colleges. In the same vein, gender differences in learning paths can mainly be identified with regard to participation in general secondary and vocational education. Participation ratio in secondary vocational education has been balanced since 1997/98. In vocational schools, however, young males are over-represented. The drop-out rate within this group of males is generally very high, which leads to their failure in the employment market and eventual social marginalization.

1.2.4. Ethnic differences

>>1.2.4.1. Migrants

The structure of immigration in Hungary is unique in international comparisons since the majority of immigrants from neighbouring Romania belong to the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. The greatest number of immigrants from a non-neighbouring country are from China: percentage figures in this context were over 5 per cent in 2005. This, mostly Hungarian ethnic composition of immigration, has strengthened the assimilative pedagogical approaches in Hungarian public education, which were, paradoxically, welcomed by the Chinese community. Despite the difficulties of the Chinese in mastering Hungarian as a second language, Hungarians are less prejudiced against them than they are against their Hungarian-speaking fellows citizens of Roma origin.[2] The Hungarian public education system has developed pedagogical tools neither for the teaching of Hungarian as a foreign language, nor for the use of foreign languages in teaching, nor for the purpose of handling pedagogical tasks related to immigration (*Vámos, 2006*).

>>1.2.4.2. Roma students in the education system

In Hungary there are no official statistics available on the education of the Roma population. Since the Act on the Protection of Personal Data and Disclosure of Data of Public Interest came into effect in 1992, personal data may neither be collected nor can it be processed in respect of the ethnic background of citizens. Estimates from research surveys are available, but we lack a detailed overview of the situation (*Report on Public Education, 2006*). Not only does the absence of official data impede the creation of an accurate statistical portrait of the education of Roma people, it also limits the ability of educators and policy makers to identify educational issues such as the aspiration and performance of students of ethnic minorities or the capability to

2. A study in an elementary school in Kecskemét in 1996 showed that 73% of the Hungarian students had no problem having a Chinese student sitting next to them. At the same time, 50% of them said they would be disturbed by having a Roma student sitting next to them. (*Horváth Á., 1997*).

fully document and address the issue of discrimination. As a result of the absence of data needed to differentiate between "mentally disabled", "disadvantaged" and Roma students, these categories are sometimes used as if they were synonymous, therefore the same programmes and policies are required for each group (*OECD Thematic Review, 2005*)

According to recent estimates, in 1999 11 per cent of school-aged children were Roma; in 2008 this ratio is expected to reach 15 per cent (*Havas–Liskó, 2005*). It is well-known that the efficiency of the Hungarian public education system is impeded by the practice of enrolling 10 times more Roma children in schools with special curriculum for the "mentally disabled". The practice of Roma children being categorized by expert committees as "students with a mild mental disability" has been criticized by national and transnational experts alike. In 2005 the OECD recommended the abolishment of the entire category, the revision of the procedural practices of expert committees and the introduction of new standard protocols for qualifying children with special educational needs. (*OECD Thematic Review, 2005*).

At the same time, some promising trends can also be observed in the education of the Roma. While at the beginning of the 1990s less than half of the Roma population were school-leavers from primary school after finishing their studies in primary education, today 90 per cent carry on with their studies to actually complete the 8th grade, although they are a few years older than their peers. Figures on continuing education reveal a rapid expansion of the secondary education of the Roma, although disparities can be seen in their representation in different types of secondary education.

Changes of the Roma continuing their studies after primary school by programme type, between 1993/94 and 2002/03, (%)

	1993/94	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
Failed to continue	49.8	16.5	16.1	14.9	9.9	10.2	8.1
Special vocational training school	9,4	8.6	10.4	9.4	5.5	5.4	6.2
Vocational training school	30,2	61.6	57.5	56.5	62.8	63.6	63.8
Vocational secondary	10,0	9.3	12.0	15.4	16.2	16.3	15.9
General secondary	0,6	3.7	3.8	3.6	5.6	4.4	5.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	166	168	176	182	419	430	452

Source: Havas–Liskó, 2004

The representation of Roma students in higher education is still at around 2 per cent, but this number is also growing: in the first part of the decade it was only 0,5 per cent. One of the main obstacles to the educational effectiveness of the Roma population is the variety of segregational practices that have become quasi-norms in the daily functioning of schools (*Havas–Liskó, 2005; Kertesi–Kézdi, 2005; Mártonfi, 2005*). On various forms of segregational practices that entail qualitatively worse educational services, see section 1.3.3.

1.2.5. Personal abilities and special needs

In Hungary, the official categorization of children with needs of special education has blurred the difference between children with organic disabilities, learning difficulties and social disadvantages (*Report on Public Education 2006*). Unlike the OECD's 3D category system that differentiates between children with organic disabilities (A), learning difficulties (B), and children not belonging to either of the two former categories but in need of special educational services (e.g.: migrants) (C), the Hungarian system has created a separate category for "students with individual attainment" in addition to categories of A and B. This group includes students with disabilities, learning difficulties and social disadvantages.

This classification has contributed to anomalies of qualifying large numbers of Roma children as students with needs of special education because of their "mild mental disabilities". There has been a silent consensus among experts that most of these Roma children have no mental disabilities at all. At the same time, the lack of consensus among experts to standardize qualification tests have further contributed to an overall increase in the number of students categorized with special education needs over the past 4 years. In the period between 2001 and 2002 4,8 per cent of all elementary students were classified as SEN students, in 2002/03 5,3 per cent, in 2003/04 5,9 per cent while in 2004/05 6,3 per cent fell in that category (*Report on Public Education 2006*).

Opening status of pupils recorded at primary school job locations in day school, 2001/02–2004/05

Description	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Mild mental disability	31 765	31 332	30 515	28 450
Medium mental disability	3 834	3 850	3 695	3 863
Impaired hearing	364	569	563	597
Deaf	402	386	359	358
Partially sighted	308	227	272	296

Blind	102	111	109	104
Physical disability	392	387	504	481
Speech impediment	1 143	1 121	1 345	1 291
Mild mental disability, partially sighted	151	130	188	118
Mild mental disability, blind	30	36	32	38
Mild mental disability, impaired hearing	167	67	133	133
Mild mental disability, deaf	75	67	53	45
Mild mental disability, physical disability	275	317	263	271
Medium mental disability, blind	51	35	37	34
Medium mental disability, deaf	33	29	34	30
Medium mental disability, physical disability	83	131	121	124
Deaf-blind	5	5	10	13
Autistic	420	514	564	597
Dyslexic, other disorder of component skill	5 319	8 745	12 079	16 550
Severe behavioural and learning disorder	1 262	1 923	3 181	3 529
Total	46 181	49 982	54 057	56 922
Total number of pupils	944 244	930 386	909 769	887 785
Disabled to total pupils ratio	4,9	5,4	5,9	6,4

Source: Calculations by Erika Garami from the OM databases of 2001/02, 2002/03, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005.

**Including both children trained in line with special education curricula and integrated children.*

Qualitative aspects of special education have also gained special attention in connection with this problem. SEN institutions have often been criticized for not promoting the integration of these children into society. Advocates of inclusive education have argued that social integration can only take place through the inclusion of SEN students in mainstream public education. In order for inclusive education to materialize, mainstream schools must be open to and capable of teaching children with

different needs, ranging from organic disabilities to disadvantaged social background and to outstanding talent (*Kőpatakiné, 2004*). The practice of separated education of "normal" and SEN children (even in schools that have an "integrated" approach but in reality offering a separate curriculum for those with a "mild mental disability"), however, increased the difference between these children. In special education classes, legal requirements of a quality education are often not met: three out of four teachers in these programmes are teachers not qualified in special education and in three out of ten schools there are no teachers in special education at all. (*Report on Public Education 2006*). In more than 80 per cent of the cases these special classes combine children of different ages, the majority of whom are overaged (*Havas-Liskó, 2002*).

The over-representation of the Roma in SEN programmes and the high ratio of SEN children in elementary schools have generated critical remarks from the OECD, national researchers and civil organisations. As a result, changes in the legal background of the SEN category system and in the procedures and standard protocols of expert committees have recently begun to address these anomalies. The detailed discussion of changes in policy and legal measures will be presented in section 2.2.

1.3. Inequalities across levels of public education

1.3.1. Pre-schooling

Pre-school education is available from the age of 3 and is compulsory from September of the year in which the child reaches the age of 5. It is also possible to enrol during the year. In case of a shortage of capacities the child will be put on a waiting list. Parents are free to opt for any kindergarten, but only institutions located in the district of the child's residence will have the obligation of acceptance. Pre-school education is free of charge. The expenses of meals provided are to be covered by parents, but the needy ones entitled to support in compliance with the child protection system are offered free meals as of September 2003. The better the head of the household is educated, the more the family is likely to take advantage of pre-school services. The results of a research show that although rejection of an application to a kindergarten happens mostly as a result of a shortage of capacities, the second most common reason in that respect is that one of the parents is unemployed and can, therefore, look after the child. (*Equity in Education CAR, 2005*).

This is especially relevant in the case of Roma children whose serious disadvantages in public education derive from the incompatibility of their informal knowledge (socialization) with the framework of formal, mainstream public education (*Radó,*

2002, Hermann-Horn-Kádár, 2004). Pre-school education might be able to equip these children with proper skills but non-attendance of kindergartens by the Roma has been an obstacle to their early development. In 1993/94, 20 per cent of 5-year old Roma children did not participate in pre-school education (*Report on Public Education 2006*). Improvements have taken place since then; in 2002, 88 per cent of 5-year old Roma children participated in pre-school education (*Havas-Liskó, 2002*).

Amendment in 2003 of the Act on Public Education introduced new measures to make pre-school education widely available for children living in poverty and those with multiple disadvantages. In this vein, a three-year-old child with multiple disadvantages, as well as children with eligibility for day-care in compliance with the Act on Child Protection, may not be rejected by kindergartens. In 2008, a pre-school fund was created to provide financial incentives for disadvantaged parents to send their children to kindergarten. See section 2.2. for details.

1.3.2. People without primary education

According to data on primary education, although compulsory education was extended up to the age of 16, the number of students leaving day-time education without a primary qualification increased during the 1990s. 90 per cent of the 15-year old population finished their 8th grade in primary school as required by law in the period between 1993 and 1994. This figure was 44 per cent within the Roma population (*Report on PE 2006*), percentage figures are up at 77 if Roma students who finished the 8th grade at an older age are also taken into account. Today, 90 per cent of the Roma are primary school-leavers having finished their primary education there, although every 5th Roma student is known to have attended a segregated school (*Havas–Kemény–Liskó, 2002*) In the last few years this data has stabilised around 5 per cent, i.e. 5 to 6 thousand young people per year (*Report on Public Education 2006*). The latest data shows that half of students without a primary final will not acquire a primary qualification later either, which eliminates their chances of getting a job. In order to (re)-integrate these students in the education system and the labour market, several programmes have been launched in recent years (see sections 2.3.3.).

1.3.3. Types of segregation in primary education

(Hermann-Horn-Kádár, et al., 2004)

>>1.3.3.1. Segregation across schools

Segregated schools emerged as segregation of Roma settlement districts/sites in run-down outskirts evolved. This goes back to the spontaneous migration of the 1990s

when large numbers of unskilled and – given the new economic conditions, now unemployed – Roma moved from towns to poorer, backward regions and settlements. As their number grew, the more advantaged local population migrated to towns and regions with better infrastructural facilities and employment. As a result, the number of non-Roma students in local schools decreased as non-Roma families sent their children to schools (non-Roma) in neighbouring settlements. In 2000 in 28 schools – out of 192 – non-Roma parents sent their children to schools in neighbouring settlements, despite the fact that their settlement had more than one school (*Havas–Kemény–Liskó, 2002*). Roma parents who could not afford travel expenses incurred by daily commuting or those who were unaware of the importance of their choice of school sent their children to the nearest local school. An unintended consequence of this process was the evolution of ethnically segregated schools. The qualitatively worse educational services that these schools offer discourage non-Roma parents from sending their children to these institutions (*Report on Public Education, 2006*).

>>1.3.3.2. Segregation within schools

Due to the budget maximizing needs of local governments, some schools established class structures that allowed the segregation of Roma students in order to prevent the "exodus" of non-Roma students to other settlements. Various forms of in-school segregation exist. These are:

a) classes of special needs education for students to fall in line with their peers, where requirements in performance are lower, teaching is of lower quality and the proportion of Roma is very high. According to a study, 81.8 per cent of Roma children study in SEN classes, often organized for children whom expert committees did not consider "students with mild mental disability" but were labelled as students with behavioural problems, therefore, their teaching in integrated classes was not recommended (*Havas–Kemény–Liskó, 2002*).
b) classes of intensive courses where certain subjects are taught in intensive courses (e.g.: English, mathematics) that are mostly attended by non-Roma students.
c) classes of "minority Roma education". Before 2002, local governments received per capita funding of minority education that they often used to establish segregated Roma classes.

>>1.3.3.3. Special schools

The official explanation of sending Roma children to segregated special schools has been that they are not able to learn at the speed of their peers due to the lack of socialization in Roma families and the failure to attend kindergarten. In practice, however, Roma

children's catching up with their peers in special schools is seriously hindered by poor equipment facilities and low teaching requirements in these schools. In addition, the pedagogical performance of teachers in these schools is of poorer quality due to the low prestige of special schools. In special schools where the ratio of Roma children is above 75 per cent, the proportion of unskilled teachers is around 30.8 per cent, while in mainstream institutions it is 17.4 per cent (*Liskó 2001*). Children are to stay in special schools until their abilities are reconsidered by committees and are regarded acceptable for mainstream primary school education. In most cases what this means is that they stay in special schools until the end of their primary education.

>>1.3.3.4. Private student status

A relatively new form of segregation is the practice of private student status that exempts children from daily school attendance and requires them to pass exams halfway through the school year. Private student status can either be obtained upon the request of the parents or at the recommendation of expert committees. While in the first case it is the responsibility of the parents to prepare children for the mid-term exam, in the second schools have that responsibility. The Ombudsman for National and Ethnic Minorities reported in 2001 that parents are sometimes forced to sign the private student status of their children with the school. A modification of a relevant decree in 2002 was expected to eliminate this problem with the inclusion of childcare service in reviewing the decision on private student status. Nevertheless, local governments and schools have been on the same side to segregate these, mostly Roma, children (*Hermann-Horn-Kádár, 2004*).

1.3.4. Secondary level: typical learner careers

The horizontal and vertical expansion of secondary education took place during the 1990s. Joining secondary training programmes and institutions (secondary school, vocational high school and vocational school) became a possibility at several points: at the age of 10, 12 or 14. The distribution of students among various types of secondary schools displays inequalities between Roma and non-Roma students: 57 per cent of Roma students continue their education in vocational schools, while only 19 per cent study in vocational high and/or secondary schools to finish their training with a school leaving certificate. It is estimated that 50 per cent of Roma students drop out in the 9th and 10th grades, which means that only 32 per cent of them begin the 11th grade, where many of them drop out during the year, leaving only 24 per cent of Roma students to finish their secondary school education (*Report on Public Education 2006*).

Continuing education in the proportion of graduates 1998/99

Secondary school studies	Roma	Non-roma
Does not continue	14,9	3,2
Special vocational school	9,4	3,2
Vocational school	56,5	36,8
Vocational high school	15,4	38,1
Secondary school	3,6	18,4

Source: Liskó, 2002

Vocational schools have over the years eroded to the point of taking students that are "left behind". The gap between the socio-cultural background of students in vocational schools and in the other two types of secondary schools is enormous: only one-third of vocational students' mothers have passed their secondary school leaving exams. This ratio in the case of secondary schools students is 70 per cent. Nearly half of vocational school students live in poverty and commute from villages. Their "choice" of vocational school had been "determined" by their low average marks or, for that matter, failures in the primary school. As a result, these students are unmotivated and many of them drop out in the 9th or 10th grade. The lack of consensus over the function, requirements and the financing of the vocational training in the 9th and 10th grade of vocational schools adds to an overall lack of motivation among teachers and students (*Report on Public Education, 2006*)

1.3.5. Career correction and second chance (CAR 2005)

>>1.3.5.1. Adult education in secondary schools

From the mid 1990s there have been signs of adult education neither serving the purpose of training "adults" nor functioning as an alternative for correction of an earlier educational career. Instead, it has become a framework for an alternative educational career. This alternative training route reversed the earlier sequence of primary and professional training, starting with professional training (daytime in vocational school), then providing general secondary education (within the framework of adult education). Most students pursue their studies as young adults with the aim of continuing their previous studies (e.g. as dropouts from vocational training or vocational school-leavers without a degree and with employment problems). Many of these students are full-time wage-earners, which increases the demand for flexible evening courses. Unfortunately, not many vocational high schools offer second-chance courses of this type to be wrapped up by a school-leaving exam. Consequently, they are

not prepared to take large numbers of salary earner students and to offer them flexible course structures adjusted to students' working hours.

>>1.3.5.2. Vocational training

In the case of students heading towards vocational training, we might say that an increasing rate of students receiving vocational qualification pass the secondary school-leaving exam before going on to vocational education. In 2001 the number of students with a qualification related to the secondary school-leaving exam was eight times higher than before (34,326 students compared with 4668 students in 1990), while the number of people receiving qualifications without taking the school-leaving exam fell significantly. It is also a typical career possibility associated with this training programme for students to use a higher level vocational training as a stepping-stone and to continue their studies in an institution providing a degree from higher education by way of an easier entrance procedure (*Equity in Education CAR 2005*).

>>1.3.5.3. Transition from school to work

The third possibility in secondary education is to enter the world of work, which is no longer characterised by the practices of a period from a few decades earlier, one that indicated preference for entering the world of work right after finishing one's secondary studies. Today the "transition period" between education and the world of work is typical during the period of approaching adulthood. That transition is apparently characterised by people in their twenties making it into the education system, particularly people between the age of 25 and 29, a number that has also increased in the last few years. As for people in their twenties, "double dipping" is also a typical phenomenon, which means that besides holding down a job, an individual will obtain two different degrees at the same educational level. This is characteristic of young people acquiring a second profession after leaving vocational high schools just as well as highly educated students heading for a second diploma. Career routes characterising this age group have become individualized and show a very colourful, previously unknown picture. Young adults have left the system of secondary education, but intensive learning periods are included in this period of their lives, offering them the opportunity of an activity within the framework of formal or non-formal learning (*Equity in Education CAR 2005*).

The equity profile of the Hungarian public education system can be evaluated by an estimated weighing of the dimensions that explain the differences in educational outcome. The table below provides a summary of the equity profile of the Hungarian public education system.

Dimensions of inequalities	Impact of dimension on outcomes	Trend of direction
Socio-economic status	Great impact	Growing
Residential status	Weak impact	Not changing
Ethnic, language background	Strong impact	Not changing
Personal disabilities	Medium impact	Weakening
Gender	Medium impact	Growing

Source: Discussion Paper, 2006

TRENDS IN THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

2. Making the necessary financial and human resources available

2.1. Strategic documents on equity in education

Since the second half of the 1990s, special emphasis both in policy-making and in government programmes has been laid on issues related to problems of inequality and equity in public education. These trends are identifiable in strategic programme documents, concrete development programmes as well as regulations. The Public Education Development Strategy in 2003, for instance, regarded educational inequalities as one of the most important problem areas of public education and assigned the following development-related goals to their reduction:

1.) Expansion of pre-school education within disadvantaged social groups;
2.) Modernization of vocational training;
3.) Integration of Roma and other disadvantaged children;
4.) An antidiscrimination programme;
5.) Integration of children with special needs.

The Strategy for Lifelong Learning was adopted by the Government in 2006. The document defines the "support of disadvantaged groups and groups at risk on the labour market" as one of seven urgent intervention areas. The focus of this intervention

area is on preventing dropouts and increasing the chances of disadvantaged groups to participate in lifelong learning programmes. In this vein the strategy intends to develop programmes for vocational training, disseminate integrated forms of education and level out regional differences both in education and in training. With a cross-sectoral view, the strategy also intends to reconsider social assistance and to create an environment that encourages the combination of training and work in the case of disadvantaged groups (part-time work practices, training during maternity leave). Less overtly, the Vocational Training Development Strategy 2005-2013 also promotes the integration of disadvantaged social groups in vocational education by defining its main goal as "high-quality vocational training for all" and the integration of dropouts through vocational training (*Report on Public Education, 2006*).

More recent strategic documents such as the National Action Programme for Growth and Employment 2008-2010 and the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Cohesion (2008-2010) also look into educational inequalities and equity measures respectively from the perspective of economic growth and social cohesion. The National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Cohesion 2008-2010 defines the development of equal opportunities in the education system as central in fighting child poverty and in reducing the rate of inactivity on the labour market. On the basis of recommendations by the Commission, the National Action Programme for Growth and Employment introduces two measures to address educational inequalities in a lifelong learning perspective. The initiative "improvement of investments in human resource development" focuses on the training of disadvantaged groups, especially adults without primary education, by extending the "One Step Ahead!" programme. The initiative on "education and training matching labour market needs" aims to improve quality, accessibility and efficiency in public and higher education, mostly relying on the Social Renewal Operational Programme financed by the European Social Fund.

The priorities of this measure are:

- Supporting pre-school education to ensure equality in educational outcomes between disadvantaged and mainstream groups.
- Abolishing school segregation and disseminating integrated forms of education by training mentors, kindergarten teachers, scholarships, etc.
- Improving the quality of public education through competence-based education via teacher training in this framework, new measurement and evaluation mechanisms, diagnostic tools for testing.
- Higher education to be adjusted to the needs of the labour market.
- Establishing a National Qualifications Framework.

The transformation of the institutional framework necessary for the implementation of the priorities of this strategic document has already started.

Specific mechanisms that have been used to implement strategic priorities have been:

- Introduction of new legislative regulations in public education.
- Transformation of the system of financial incentives.
- Introduction of a new measuring and assessment system.
- Introduction of a system of communication and dissemination.

2.2. Regulations for more equitable education

The past few years have seen a series of legislative attempts to support "equity" and fairness in education. The Act on Public Education (1993 LXXIX 121. § 14.) defined the terms of the status of individuals referred to as "disadvantaged" and of "individuals with multiple disadvantages". On the basis of European Union Council measures (2000/46), the Government set up the Equal Treatment Authority by decree (362/2004. (XII. 26.). The Authority may, via an administrative procedure, take action in individual cases and may investigate violations, if any, of the principle of equal treatment. The Act on Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment in 2003 defined criteria for equal treatment in all state and public administration sectors. It also identified specific mechanisms of direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, segregation and has established provisions for legal sanctions.

On the basis of Section 65 of the Act on Public Education, the Ministry of Education in 2002 initiated the development of the National Network of Integration in Education, for supporting the implementation of tasks associated with the education of disadvantaged children, particularly the Roma. The network had two objectives: firstly, to establish a system of basic institutions responsible for integrating mainly the Roma into education; secondly to improve professional background services. In 2003, an Integrative System of Pedagogy was introduced in the mainstream schools of the network but cumbersome procedures and the changing rules of financing created hiccups in the implementation of the programme, which eventually failed to live up to initial expectations.

In 2008, decrees 12/2007. (III. 14.) and 9/2008. (III. 29.) of the Ministry of Culture and Education introduced new financial mechanisms to replace "integration head quotas" and to promote equal opportunities besides the closing-up of the gap between disadvantaged and mainstream students (see section 2.3.). The decrees introduced

competitive, grant-based funding to support ability development, integrated trainings and pre-school development programmes. This type of funding represented a major transformation of the mechanisms and the system of financing equal opportunity/equity practices as supporting legislation provided various mechanisms to apply benchmarks in the provision of funding. Unlike in the case of previous head quotas (see section 2.3.), regulations of the ability development grant fund made it necessary for local governments to fulfil requirements on the demarcation of school districts and the preparation of an action plan for equal opportunities in public education as a precondition for eligibility for this type of funding. Both requirements had been defined in respective pieces of legislation (see below). In the evaluation of applications, performance in competence development is also taken into account: schools have to attach their results in a table of indicators of National Competence Assessment with a view to the ratio of children with multiple disadvantages in the school.

Further modifications in the 1993 LXXIX Act on Public Education (2007 LXXXVII) also aspire to promote the integration of disadvantaged children in public education.

These modifications are:

- Financial support for disadvantaged families that send their children to kindergarten before the child's 4th birthday.
- Local governments must prepare an institutional quality management programme related to the self-evaluation of schools.
- Schools must participate in the annual National Competence Assessment that provides an external evaluation of the teaching performance of schools through student output in mathematics and literacy skills.
- The local governments of poorly performing schools should prepare an action plan for school development.
- Section 89 raises the preparation of an action plan for equal opportunities in public education as a precondition of participation in any of the national and transnational competitive funding programmes. The overall goal of the programme is to reduce the segregation of Roma and disadvantaged children, to reduce the extent to which they are assigned to the category of "students with a mild mental disability", to improve their attendance in kindergarten, to reduce unequal access to educational service and the dropping out of these students and to abolish educational discrimination.
- Section 66 modifies the practice of the free choice of schools[3] by making it mandatory

3. The free choice of schools – a principle introduced in 1985 – has contributed to the evolution of educational inequalities and the practice of various forms of segregation (Szira, 2005b). The first amendment of the Public Education Act in 2005 restricted the rights for liberty of schools to limit their selection of future students to applicants.

for schools to take children whose residence is within the school district. If there is more than one school in the settlement, school district boundaries are to be drawn in a way that the maximum percentage of children with multiple disadvantages is not more than 15 per cent higher than the ratio of children with multiple disadvantages in the settlement itself. In school districts where the ratio of children with multiple disadvantages is above 50 per cent, schools cannot be obliged to take all children from those districts, especially if other schools in the settlement have excess capacities. Schools having fulfilled their obligations towards children from their districts are required to take children with multiple disadvantages to use excess capacities in the application process.

Major modifications in the legislative environment of the education of children with special needs have also taken place. Firstly, the direct impact of the "From the Last Bench" programme[4] was the reconsideration of the methodology and procedures of expert committees in classifying children with special needs (see section 1.2.5.) that resulted in the introduction of new standards for testing. At the same time, the 2007 amendment (No. LXXXVII) of the Public Education Act established new categories for the classification of children with special needs. On the basis of the new categories, expert committees reviewed children who had been classified as being in need of special treatment because of "learning difficulties arising from psycho-developmental problems". In the case of 4202 children out of 31,918 involved in the review, no learning or behavioural difficulties could be identified!

Finally, it is the intention of the Ministry of Culture and Education to introduce a complementary stipend for teachers working with children with multiple disadvantages. The complementary stipend in question is expected to be accepted by Parliament during the period between October and November 2008, based on a regulation by government decree No.138/1992 (X. 8.).

2.3. Resource map of financing: normative, competitive, complementary funding

Four types of financial incentives can be distinguished in the support of equity in education: per capita funding (head quotas), competitive grant funding, market-based funding (vouchers) and individual complementary funding schemes. Hungarian education policy has been in favour of per capita funding (head quotas)

4. http://www.okm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=125&articleID=142&ctag=articlelist&iid=1

and of individual complementary funding. Competitive grant funding has recently replaced head quotas. The logic of action related to head quotas followed the principle of "the same for all" without particular target appropriation. Competitive grant funding, on the other hand, provides a means for education policy administration to establish benchmarks and standard targets, moreover to monitor and evaluate the implementation of projects.

2.3.1. Per capita funding (head quotas)

In the absence of clear legal criteria and target appropriations, the head quota for national and ethnic minority education and its successor, the head quota for integration, has provided perverse incentives for beneficiaries (local governments) and schools to practice non-inclusive forms of education. The head quota for national and ethnic minority education, for example, was found to be used by schools to organize the in-school segregation of Roma students (*Report of Ombudsman 2001, 2002*). The head quota for integration and ability-development, launched in 2002 as a financial incentive for schools participating in the National Network of Integration

a.) failed to encourage local governments to abolish residential segregation that usually serves as a basis for educational segregation;
b.) did not respect school-specific costs in the teaching of disadvantaged children as its distribution disregarded differences in the distribution of children with multiple disadvantages in the education system;
c.) in the absence of criteria and target appropriation for integration, beneficiaries (local governments) often used the funding only "to fill the budget" through formal integration of segregated schools.

>>Anomalies of implementation<<

The external evaluation of the Network in 2007 pointed out that unclear legislative definitions and standard requirements resulted in the misuse of funds. The so-called "integration head quota", introduced by the 57/2002. decree of the Ministry of Education with the aim of encouraging the integration of Roma students, was often used to formally "integrate" two institutions, thus overcoming segregation across schools but leaving in-school segregation of the Roma intact in a new institutional form (see section 1.3.3. on types of segregation).

Today, per capita funding schemes are still in existence for the support of national and ethnic minority education besides the education of children with special needs. National and ethnic minority head quota is available for local governments (beneficiaries)

provided that teaching takes place in the minority language or bilingually. The head quota for children with special needs is available at differentiated rates, provided special education is guaranteed in the institution for children with severe or multiple disabilities, children with mild organic mental disabilities and children with severe and/or permanent non-organic learning and behavioural difficulties.

2.3.2. Competitive funding

One of the main advantages of competitive grant funding is that it provides instruments for education policy administration to set standard requirements and to monitor and evaluate implementation. Whereas in the case of head quotas the only benchmark of financing is the number of disadvantaged children, policy makers can set various conditions for the use of competitive grant funding (e.g.: specifying the circle of potential beneficiaries, setting targets in implementation). This kind of financing mechanism can better ensure the spending of funds on genuine goals with a view to school-specific circumstances and costs. The amendment of the Act on Public Education of 1993 established several types of competitive funds that provide financial incentives for beneficiaries and schools to abolish forms of segregation and to implement equitable and integrated forms of education.
The table below is a summary of these funds:

Name	Beneficiary	Goal
Ability development, integrated education fund and pre-school development programme fund 12/2007. (III. 14.) and 9/2008. (III. 29.) MoCE	Local governments	Integrated forms of education
Quality Assurance fund for the employment of external experts 17/2007 (III. 14.)	Local governments	Quality control and management for transparency and accountability
Performance motivation fund 17/2007 (III. 14.)	Local governments whose quality management programme includes a teacher performance evaluation system	Financial incentives for improving teacher performance

Funding of competitiveness is not an entirely new policy instrument in Hungary designed for the promotion of equity in education. Between 2004 and 2006 ESF and ERDF funded development programmes provided considerable amounts of competitive

funding for development programmes promoting social cohesion. Measures related to the second priority of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme (HRDOP) (2004-2006) focused on the reduction of inequalities in the education system via

2.1 Availability of equal opportunities for disadvantaged students in the education system, aimed to reduce the rate of dropouts among disadvantaged (especially Roma) students;
2.2 Support of programmes on social integration;
2.3 Improvement of the employment rate of the disadvantaged, especially the Roma population.

Competitive funds were available through tenders in several areas, in six of which the target group was a group of disadvantaged students while two programmes focused on the inclusion of children with special educational needs (*Report on Public Education, 2006*). One of these programmes focused on the financing of the revision of methodology and procedures of expert committees examining children for special education. The programme was carried out under the 2.1.1. B component of the HRDOP and involved a pilot project for the development and testing of the new methodology. Among programmes for the integration of disadvantaged groups, mention should be made of "One Step Ahead!" and "Training Embedded in Employment". The "One Step Ahead" programme was aimed at supporting the (re-)training of adults with poor qualification or those without vocational school-leaving certificates. After every 150 hours of training participants earned a one-month salary with the minimum wage as well as financial support offered for the purchase of books. Mentors were also available for trainees with multiple disadvantages. The condition for participation in the programme was to undertake training in trades particularly needed in the county of residence. Given the successful implementation of their original targets, both programmes were planned to be continued within the financial framework of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP) of the 2nd National Development Plan. Unfortunately, due to current budget restrictions by the Government, the "One Step Ahead!" programme has recently been suspended despite ongoing registrations by new participants all over the country.

The third priority area of the Social Renewal OP for the period 2007-2013 is devoted exclusively to the development of the system of public education with a view to providing access to quality education for all.

The following measures are to be taken in connection with this priority:

3.1. Support of the dissemination of competence-based education,

3.2. Improvement of the efficiency of public education, innovative solutions and cooperation,

3.3. Reduction of the segregation of Roma students and of students with multiple disadvantages, availability of equal opportunities,

3.4. Support of the inclusive and intercultural education of children with special needs.

Programmes aimed at promoting equal opportunities-equity in public education in the Social Renewal OP. The programme invites tenders in the following areas:

Title	Goal	Amount 2007-2013
SROP 3.3.2 According to the amendment of Act on Public Education (1993. LXXIX. 89. §) participation in tendering in national and/or transnational competitive funding programmes is conditioned by the preparation of an action plan on equal opportunities by maintainers (local governments or multi-purpose micro-regional associations) of public education institutions.	Maintainers that define specific measures in their action plan to establish greater equity in their schools for disadvantaged students and if the implementation of these measures cannot be financed otherwise, may apply for grants to implement the action plan.	HUF 1 483 178 000
SROP 3.3.3 Supporting the quality assurance and networking of schools with integrated forms of education	The overall goal of the programme is to support the emergence of best-practice institutions that can act as role models for other school in integrated forms of education. The network of these best-practice institutions is encouraged by the programme. 35-40 applications are expected in the programme.	HUF 1 319 000 000
SROP 3.3.4. Supporting continuing learning paths of students with multiple disadvantages toward higher education	The goal of the programme is to increase the number of disadvantaged students in higher education, to support Roma students in higher education. The programme has three components: - improving language competencies of students with multiple disadvantages - preparing these students for a successful secondary school-leaving exam - supporting a good performance by Roma students in higher education, providing additional services for the preservation of their Roma identity. In 2008, 1500 students with multiple disadvantages are expected to participate in preparatory courses for the school-leaving exam and another 1500 in language competence courses. 120-200 students in higher education will participate in special mandatory and/or optional courses between 2008 and 2010.	Financial framework in 2008 HUF 768 676 876

SROP 3.3.5. Supporting extra curricular study group programmes and the development of a antidiscrimination signal system	The goal of the programme is to reduce the number of dropouts while strengthening and improving the learning paths for secondary school education of Roma children and students with multiple disadvantages. Extra-curricular study groups are informal educational forums organized by parents, students or NGOs where these students can receive personalized help in different areas of their studies. The antidiscrimination signalling system is intended to map out practices of school segregation and discrimination and to introduce developmental intervention tools. The programme is also expected to provide legal help for students in critical cases. 50-75 applications are expected.	Financial framework in 2008 HUF 1 650 000 000
SROP 3. 2. 1. B New forms and system of learning	The goal of the programme is to reintegrate dropout students into secondary education with a school-leaving exam in order to improve their chances on the labour market. The programme supports Second Chance Secondary Schools and digital forms of education for this disadvantaged group. The programme aims at developing extra-curricular activities and networks for these students to compensate for their social and cultural disadvantages. Approximately 24 applications are expected.	Financial framework in 2009 HUF 330 000 000
SROP 3.2.1 A and C Employment embedded in training	The programme is the continuation of the "Training embedded in Employment" programme of the HRDOP 2004-2006. Similarly, the aim of the new programme is to provide alternative learning paths with employment schemes for Roma students having dropped out of the formal education system. By using the training-employment model, Roma students can obtain realistic employment positions in the labour market working as pedagogical or general education assistants. As a result of their work, dropout rates, school absenteeism can be reduced and the performance of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students can be improved. Mentors at the workplace are employed to help the integration of these students in the labour market. Participants will work in public and general education institutions where they can also obtain the necessary hours of practical education in vocational training.	HUF 9 billion

2.3.3. Individual complementary funding

Several individual supplementary funding schemes have existed since the early 2000s to provide financial assistance in nurturing talented, disadvantaged children to participate in secondary education. Programmes that have provided scholarships, funding for accommodation and travel are:

For the road (Útravaló) programme
The programme was launched in 2005 under Government Decree 152/2005. (VIII.2.). The overall purpose of the programme is to help disadvantaged students learn trades, pass the school-leaving exam or obtain higher education certificates through the financial support of their studies by using scholarships and working with mentoring teachers.
The three sub-programmes of this scholarship scheme are:
- Road to the secondary school
- Road to the secondary school-leaving exam
- Road to learning trades

In 2005 20,045 students participated in the programme, in 1675 schools, supported by 7739 mentoring teachers. Both mentoring teachers and students received scholarships for the time of their participation in the programme (Report on Public Education, 2006).

Catapult mentor programme
From a lifelong learning perspective it is important to take note of this scholarship scheme for mentors in higher education. The overall goal of the programme is to provide assistance for students with multiple disadvantages in integrating them into the structure of higher education and in preventing dropouts. The output goal of the programme is to help these students in their integration in the labour market at the end of their higher education training. It is a programme set up by the Ministry of Culture and Education that finances the scholarships of mentors establishes benchmarks for the training of mentors, also monitoring the process of implementation.

Arany János Programme
- *Arany János Dormitory-Vocational School Programme for Students with compound disadvantages:* The purpose of the programme is to offer an inclusive environment in dormitories of vocational schools for disadvantaged children to compensate for socio-economic disadvantages and thus reduce dropouts and support their participation in vocational training.
- *Arany János Dormitory Programme for Disadvantaged Students:* The goal of the programme is to provide pedagogical support in dormitories for children with socio-economic disadvantages to study in vocational high and secondary general schools and to successfully obtain their school-leaving certificate.
- *Arany János Talent Supporting Programme:* The overall goal of the programme is

to provide pedagogical help, conditions for obtaining competitive knowledge and personality development for disadvantaged students mainly from small settlements to successfully obtain their school-leaving certificate. The beneficiaries of the fund are: secondary schools and dormitories.

2.4. Supplementary human resources (psychologists and teaching assistants)

The "Training embedded in employment" programme of the National Public Education Institute was financed by the National Employment Fund within the framework of the HRDOP 2004-2006. Public education institutions participating in the programme through tendering were able to select locally unemployed Roma who, while working for the public education institution, could obtain their secondary school-leaving certificate and/or learn a trade. Participants received the minimum salary for their employment at the institution. Following their final exams public institution were obliged to employ the participants for a period of two years.

The overall goal of the programme was to establish a best-practice model that does at the same time provide conditions for extra-institutional learning, the expansion of teachers' professional activities, the promotion of equity in social mobility, and the availability of new forms of secondary education. More specifically, the programme was aimed at integrating the Roma into the world of education and employment while offering them role models from the middle-class via certificates from education, language skills and a culture for labour. The ultimate goal was to educate them to become role models within their own local communities.

Some statistics of the programme are indicative of its success. Out of 60 participants

- 14 already had a secondary school-leaving certificate at the beginning of the programme: after one year 12 graduated as pedagogical assistants and 2 as child supervisors,
- 46 were preparing for the school-leaving exam: 2 dropped out, 40 obtained the school-leaving exam, 4 postponed taking the exam in 1 or 2 subjects,
- 44 obtained a professional qualification: 14 as special education teachers; 14 as child supervisors and 16 as pedagogical assistants.

Participants spent an average of 4 years in the programme. 47 per cent of those who have already successfully finished the programme are currently employed, 20 per cent are full-time housewives, 13 per cent are in secondary education and 13 per cent are

unemployed. One third of participants are expected to continue working in the mentor institution, one third wish to continue their studies (secondary and higher levels) and 25 per cents expect to be unemployed in the long run.

It is not only the fact that the original goals of the programme were realized during implementation and the role that its best-practices had in reducing unemployment among the unskilled, which established the programme's popularity in the media as well as in international professional circles. As opposed to traditional approaches to communal work, this programme provided opportunities for progress through its strong emphasis on learning and on the planning of individual learning paths. In this way the programme supported the development of adaptation and employee-related skills as well as decision-making, based on individual responsibility that in the long run may have a positive impact on the families of participants and on communities. Despite the success of the programme, no legislative modification that would make the employment of Roma coordinators, teaching assistants, psychologists etc. mandatory in public institutions is, currently, on the agenda
(*Evaluation of the programme ..., 2008*).

3. Policies aiming at the transformation of delivery on educational service in institutions

3.1. The transformation of schools

Educational inequalities became central topics in education policy through problems of quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the Hungarian public education system. It was a series of PISA tests (2000, 2003, 2006) that caused attention to be drawn the poor performance of Hungarian students in particular areas of competence. Besides problems related to the quality and effectiveness of education, PISA studies have also highlighted the inefficiency of the public education system when viewed in the light of unsatisfactory outcome versus high spending in GDP terms in the education sector (*PISA 2006*).

It was in this context that several new policy elements were introduced to promote better quality, efficiency and effectiveness in public education. The most important among these were:

- the system of national competence assessment (2001),

- the introduction of the new, competency-based secondary school-leaving exam[5]
- the dissemination of the practice of institutional quality development (*Radó, 2006b*).

The overall goal was to provide a balanced support of the decentralization of content development by means of output regulations and evaluation. Defining key competences of policy expectations and enforcing them via regulations was particularly important in the decentralized system of Hungarian public education, where a multiplicity of methods and approaches thrived in setting the goals and targets of (local) education due to local interpretations of the institutional framework. From the perspective of educational equity, this had a significant, negative impact on difference among schools in terms of the quality and efficiency of the pedagogical output (see situation analysis 1.2.1). In other words, the goal to strengthen the principle of professional accountability in public education was expected to provide policy and legal instruments to publicly measure, evaluate and, if necessary, sanction poor institutional performance in schools with a majority of disadvantaged students attending. As sanctions would introduce developmental tools to improve institutional performance, a measuring-assessment system might ensure equal opportunities and greater equity in public education.

3.1.1. Problems of accountability in Hungarian public education: evaluation systems

Accountability in public education is about the definition of educational services, the evaluation of these services and the application of intervention measures in case of poor quality services. In Hungary, these elements have been rather weak and fragmented *(Radó, 2006b)*.

1) The division of tasks between three levels of education management (central government administration, local (maintainer), institutional (school)) is clear but not entirely regulated.

- In terms of quality assessment, it has been the duty of the maintainer to evaluate schools but the dimensions of evaluation are not clearly defined;
- The external evaluation mechanism of a quality assessment system through school inspection (and attached feedback) has been entirely absent since 1985 despite EU recommendations (2001) on school inspection as a supportive tool of institutional self-evaluation;

5. This new exam was designed to test school learning as opposed to broader learning gained through family status and to provide a tertiary entrance exam, thereby eliminating additional tests to enter tertiary education (*OECD Thematic Review 2005*)

- The external assessment of student performance has been the obligation of the central administration although its beneficiaries are the schools themselves;
- The information and research system has been maintained by the educational management but data has been accessible to everyone, while feedback has not been provided for institutions;
- The responsibility of intervention has also been dispersed across the three levels without any consequences on poor performance.

2) In the absence of a proper evaluation of education policies and development programmes it has been difficult to give an account of the impact of policy tools.

- What is known is that the effects of regulations, the framework curriculum, per capita quotas and competitive grant funding are always shaped by the local context (interpretation);
- What may be assumed is that the new competency-based secondary school-leaving exam had an enormous effect on secondary education;
- What is entirely unknown is what effects financial resources, provided by development programmes, may have had (the decisive role of the local context on the absorption of funds; the assumption is that it often takes place without a significant transformation of the local context).

3) Hungarian schools are neither goal nor output oriented organizations with the ability to provide external requirements for teachers. Below is a list of what the reasons thereof are:

- Maintainers of schools (local governments) do not define goals in synergy with other local objectives; they do not establish expectations towards schools beyond their day-to-day functioning;
- In the absence of external institutional evaluations, institutional goals accepted by all are of marginal importance;
- Schools are protected from the external world; their performance is not evaluated on the basis of external expectations;
- In the absence of school management being held accountable, internal institutional references are more significant than external ones;
- Rather than defining expectations towards teachers, parents tend to support them;
- Student self-governments have been reduced to free-time organisations; they cannot, therefore, influence institutional processes.

It was in this context that the Centre for Education Policy Analysis (CEPA) of the Ministry of Education in 2006 prepared a strategy for the establishment of a uniform

quality assessment system in Hungarian public education. The quality assessment system was proposed to be accompanied by a system of developmental intervention tools in order to achieve the desired effects of feedback at all management levels. The overall goal of strategy was to transform schools – through a quality management system – so that the effectiveness of public education assessed on the basis of student performance would match the efficiency level of cost appropriation. Its focal ingredient would be a quality assessment system capable of functioning as an output-management system that links performance with costs at all levels of management in public education.

3.1.2. Recommendations of the CEPA strategy (2006)

Student performance assessment: national/central assessments and exams

1. Assessments and exams need to reach the following goals:

- Learning development: the development of teachers' evaluation practices and methods and the strengthening of their reflexive teaching.
- School development: the development of the self-evaluation practices in schools, the strengthening of institutional quality management in the context of learning development
- Ensuring professional accountability: feedback on the basis of measuring/assessing institutional output, curricular requirements and output standards.

2. Goals in the implementation of the above requirements with a view to harmonizing existing resources, assessment and exams at different points within the system:

- A diagnostic developmental assessment of grades 4 and 6 that includes all students. Performance results are only aggregated at national level.
- A summative assessment, including all students, of fulfilling requirements in mathematics, grammar and literature, natural sciences at grade 8. This assessment is designed to evaluate the performance of schools, hence students do not receive direct feedback. The evaluation of tests takes place at the national level.
- A "minor secondary school-leaving exam" in mandatory subjects for those who participate in secondary training ending with a school-leaving exam in the 10th grade. National evaluation of results does not take place.
- A summative assessment of general knowledge-related requirements in the 10th grade in vocational schools prior to qualifications being obtained. This assessment type is designed to evaluate the performance of schools, hence students do not receive direct feedback. The evaluation of tests takes place at the national level.
- A final examination to take place in the 12th grade for summative assessment.

3. Institutional evaluation

Institutional efficiency can be increased by the development of institutional procedures and mechanisms. Therefore, institutional evaluation is not exclusively about learning and pedagogical performances but also about studying and evaluating factors, processes and actors that have an effect on efficiency. The evaluation of the quality of institutional mechanisms is about conditions and processes being compared with output. Actors of institutional evaluation are the central government, the maintainer (usually embodied by local governments) and schools. Institutional evaluation performed by the central government is a summative assessment of intermediate institutional performance through student performance assessments, thematic evaluations and control via the central government. The institutional evaluation of the maintainer is a summative, critical and development-related assessment of the school. Institutional self-evaluation aims for higher efficiency in pedagogical work.

4. Self-evaluation – is a systematic study of institutions with the purpose of providing a more in-depth knowledge of institutions about their own functioning and thus increasing their efficiency. The functions of self-evaluation are:

- Comparing student performance with the pedagogical goals of institutions.
- Studying user satisfaction (students, parents).
- Analyzing the pedagogical and operational activities and processes of institutions (situation analysis, mapping out problems).
- Making decisions about necessary developments via self-evaluation, this being the first step in institutional quality assessment.
- Improving efficiency through implementing developmental goals.

5. Various fields of institutional self-evaluation include:

- Evaluation of the pedagogical programme.
- Learning efficiency.
- Satisfaction of the parties concerned.
- Circumstances and activities affecting institutional efficiency.
- Management of learning, institutional activities supporting learning.
- Evaluation of teachers' work.
- Organisational operations of individual institution.
- Realization of goals included in the development plan.

6. External evaluation by the maintainer – i.e. an evaluation of the entire scope of institutional activities. It serves the purpose of institutions being held accountable to the maintainer and the assessment of user and maintainer expectations as well as that of fulfilling central policy goals. Its functions are:

- Providing information for the maintainer on fulfilling its obligations arising from its duties of service provision and developmental policy.
- Informing the parties concerned of the quality of public education services.
- Informing the maintainer of its expectations towards the institution being met.
- Evaluating the fundamental tasks of an institution (teaching and training) in the context of its programme objectives.
- Input data for development initiatives meant to improve efficiency.

7. Specific areas of maintainer assessment:

- Evaluation of pedagogical programme.
- Effectiveness of learning.
- Realization of maintainer expectations.
- Evaluation of the management of an institution.
- Efficiency of institutional operation.
- Results of institutional development.

Information system

8. The goals of an integrated information system would be:

- To ensure the harmonization of data collected on public education at different aggregate levels and for various purposes.
- To satisfy information-related needs at various levels of educational management (national, regional, maintainer, institutional).
- To provide a background for the indicator system of national quality assessment.
- To provide information for the maintainer; institutional self-evaluation.
- To integrate data on student performance.

Quality-evaluation sub-systems and possible interventions

9. A complex quality assessment system realized via measurement/assessment and feedback is expected to have a significant impact on public education. As a tool of education policy, quality-evaluation systems can only operate if

i) quality assessment is harmonized with particular sub-systems and
ii) if conditions are provided for intervention on the basis of quality evaluation. These sub-systems are:

- A system of control.
- Accreditation mechanisms.
- Content regulation.
- Management and planning.
- Financing.
- Human resources.
- Professional services.

10. Aggregate student performance assessment ensures the identification of primary, secondary and vocational schools that perform below the average of a particular school-type in three consecutive national-level competence assessment schemes. The Minister of Education will oblige the maintainer to prepare a document in which a detailed account is given of the reasons for unsatisfactory performance. The document should also include a set of specific measures to be taken and an institutional development programme. The implementation of the programme is monitored by the National Public Education Evaluation and Assessment Centre.

3.2. Supplementary and/or mainstream approaches

The quality assessment system expected to be introduced in 2009 will be a major step towards upholding equity measures through a tangible accountability system within the framework of mainstream public education. A standardized measurement of student achievements would provide tools to see disadvantaged student performance against mainstream standards (which are unavailable at the moment) and an aggregated, institutional assessment might help reduce existing differences among schools. Appropriate indicators of a quality assessment system to measure educational outcomes at the individual and institutional levels would provide reference points for equity measures and could re-shape traditional supplementary funding schemes currently offered to promote equal opportunities for disadvantaged children.

An education policy that aims for the promotion of "equal opportunities and equal treatment" of disadvantaged students at the margins of mainstream public education tends to provide supplementary funding as a form of compensation for socio-economic disadvantages. Ironically, this logic of governance separates rather than integrates the education of disadvantaged groups into mainstream public education. By creating two separate interpretative contexts, the initial intention of policy makers vis-a-vis equal treatment fails to yield results. A typical way of financing disadvantaged education

at the margins within the supplementary framework is the provision of head quotas. The logic of action related to per capita funding, however, finances the day-to-day functioning of institutions on the basis of the number of students attending and, in the absence of standard requirements in terms of quality attached to accessing funding, it fails to help the transformation of existing practices of segregation and discrimination.

The traditional, per capita funding system has recently been replaced by competitive grants (see section 2.3). The institutional logic of competitive grant funding operates with indicators on the basis of standard requirements and a monitoring system capable of creating a single institutional context for the interpretation of the performance of disadvantaged students within the framework of mainstream public education. Development schemes regarding the establishment of a national quality assessment system and the harmonization of financing (competitive grants) and regulatory subsystems are indicative of steps having been taken towards a mainstreaming approach. However, at the strategic level, mainstream public education has been separated from policy elements aimed at "equal opportunities". The establishment of the Directorate General for Equal Opportunities, which is independent of the State Secretariat of Public Education in the Ministry of Culture and Education, is one example of this separation at a strategic level. This cognitive separation of equal opportunity/equity measures from the overall development of public education is also reflected in the organization of competitive funding in educational development policy.

The third priority in the Social Renewal Operational Programme of the 2nd National Development Plan (2007-2013) concentrates on ensuring access to quality public education for all on the systemic level (Table in 2.3). Nevertheless, in the organization of measures, the reduction of the segregation of disadvantaged groups appears separately from other mainstream public education measures such as competence-based education or the improvement of the efficiency of public education. This still reflects the logic of a traditional supplementary approach that puts the education of disadvantaged groups in separate interpretative frames from the overall developmental objectives of mainstream public education.

>>Example for supplementary approach in the SROP<<
As intervention 3.1 contains measures on a complex dissemination of competence-based education, 3.1.4 focuses on the complex institutional development of schools including special education curricula, and 3.1.6 is about the development of a uniform service provision in special education. Therefore, while intervention 3.1 is about complex competence-based institutional development in public education, it disregards institutional development from the perspective of the education of the Roma and of disadvantaged groups. It seems to be the intention of policy-makers to organize fragmented measures into integrated tender modules, where applicants can apply for development funds within a single uniform developmental framework. In the case of 3.1.4. this would mean the inclusion of measures related to the desegregation of Roma and disadvantaged students within the complex institutional development plan of schools. In other words, modular tendering would enable the system to include the promotion of equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups within mainstream public education.

3.3. School-community, school-parents relationships
(*Szekszárdi, Report on Public Education 2006*)

The transformation of schools and the development of transparent mechanisms to evaluate school and teacher performance for a better quality education have become particularly important due to a growing dissatisfaction with schools in the aftermath of the PISA shock. One way to increase the transparency of the teaching process would be to actively involve parents in the quality management of teaching. The Public Education Act provides an opportunity for the establishment of school committees (by involving parents and maintainer school management) that both "interpret" the recommendations of parents for the school management and mediate between the two parties. Parents have the right to improve the management and the quality of education via written recommendations. However, according to a recent study, school boards have failed to fulfil their legal obligations regarding representation (*Report on Public Education, 2006*). 17,9 per cent of parents had some kind of recommendations for the school. 57 per cent of these recommendations concerned the quality of education in the school (*Report on Public Education, 2006*).

Unfortunately, despite the fact that a number of parental organisations exist in Hungary – most of them under the umbrella organisation of the Hungarian Parents' National Association – they have failed to become channels for representation (Report

on Public Education, 2006). Indicative of the nature and the size of the problem is the fact that the number of NGOs in the education sector has grown while there has been a sharp decline in NGOs in other sectors. Many NGOs in the education sector are foundations established by parents to help finance the school of both their own choice and of their children's choice (*Report on Public Education, 2006*).

The transparency of the teaching process within a school community can also be established through web pages, students' self-governments and school days. Secondary schools are considerably ahead of primary schools in all these fields. School web pages are especially important, new virtual forums of transparency. Although less than half of the total number of schools, and 90 per cent of secondary schools have web pages, in 50 per cent of the cases school policy and pedagogical programmes are available on the website of schools. Other virtual community functions such as galleries, forums and notice boards are also widely used by the schools.

Official education policy websites form a loose and often redundant network. The website of the Ministry of Culture and Education (www.okm.gov.hu) mostly addresses school management and teachers through a compilation of statistics, legislation, tenders, etc. The most popular website of the sector is Sulinet (www.sulinet.hu), which has three sub-portals: public network Sulinet (to which schools are attached), Sulinet Expressz (for tax benefits and purchasing ICT products) and Sulinet Digital Knowledge Base (a free educational learning system). The website of Sulinet Digital Knowledge Base has not been updated since 2004. Other alternative channels in the education sector are, for instance, the website of History Teachers' Association, the National Association of Head Masters, or that of the Alliance for Waste Reduction.

Despite a tense and often conflict-ridden relationship between parents and schools, legal provisions aimed to strengthen the transparency of school management are not currently on the agenda.

3.4 Policies aiming at reducing segregation and exclusion

Policies aimed at the reduction of segregation and exclusion can be divided into two groups: those that have a direct impact on desegregation and social inclusion and those with an indirect influence on these. Below is a summary of policy instruments of both categories.

Direct impact	Indirect influence
Mandatory school districts (section 1.2)	Measuring and quality assessment system (section 3.3)
Antidiscrimination signal system (SROP 3.3.5)	Action plan for equal opportunities (SROP 3.3.2)
Network of integrated schools (SROP 3.3.3)	Supporting continuing education (SROP 3.3.4)
New forms of learning (SROP 3.2.1.B)	Quality assurance fund (section 1.3.2)
Training Embedded in Employment (SROP 3.2.1.A,C)	Revision of the methodological devices of expert committees (section 1.2)
One Step Ahead (HRDOP currently in abeyance)	
Individual scholarships (section 1.3.3)	
Ability-development and integration fund (section 1.3.2)	

4. Setting targets for institutions and their impact on equity

4.1. Setting targets and standards

Until the beginning of the decade the multiplicity of methods and approaches available, meant to measure performance in public education, was rather fragmented. In 2001 it was the introduction of the National Competence Assessment system that first established uniform standards with the aim of assessing student performance. Two new policy elements in that period – a competence assessment system and a new, competency-based secondary school-leaving exam – were intended to set appropriate targets for schools and for teachers on nationally required learning output at the end of various educational periods (e.g. at the end of the 4th, 6th 8th and 12th grades). The list of competences were defined in the National Curriculum by a Government Decree in 2003 (243/2003 (XII. 17.). This was confirmed via Act CXXV, Section 91 in 2004 which specified the annual mandatory assessment of pedagogical work in schools with regard to the development of basic competencies. Results of the competence assessment scheme were to be published in the official journal of the Ministry.

The outcome of PISA 'shock results' in Hungary was an intense policy discourse on problems of quality, efficiency and the transformation of the system of national standards. These attempts were encouraged by the OECD and the EU whose 2001/166 EC recommendations on European cooperation in quality evaluation in school education were especially relevant for the Hungarian context. The recommendations directly linked issues of quality and efficiency of the education system to greater equity, which ensures quality education for all regardless of socio-economic, ethnic

background or residential status. In this vein, the recommendations put forward the establishment of a transparent quality evaluation system in school education that ensures equal opportunity and social inclusion in a lifelong learning context. In order to achieve this end, the preparation of school-level self-evaluation methods and an external evaluation system along with the clarification, in particular, of the purposes and conditions of self-evaluation, was encouraged.

Although the establishment of a national system of competence assessment in 2001 was an important step towards setting appropriate uniform standards for performance assessment, the role of these standards in policy development was not defined until 2006. Standards are one of the key elements in assessing the quality of education by providing specific means of comparability. At the same time, proper feedback and, in the case of low performance, intervention mechanisms must also be ensured for policy improvement. All in all, from among the five systemic conditions of an institutional quality evaluation system, feedback and intervention mechanisms, demand-oriented developmental support and criteria (legal and policy) for assessment were not provided in Hungary until as late as 2006[6].

The enforcement of assigned targets and the establishment of a performance oriented model of a quality assessment system finally took place through the amendment of the Act on Public Education in 2006 that linked the system of competence measurement to assessment of institutional quality management. The modification also provided links between the new quality assessment system and the Lifelong Learning Strategy of the Hungarian Government (2005), insofar as the priorities of the strategy itself include the content and methodology development of public education and the improvement of a quality assurance and management system, in order to support the inclusion of disadvantaged social groups in the labour market via access to lifelong learning programmes (LLL Strategy).

The framework of this modification was provided by EC recommendations (2006/962) on key competencies for lifelong learning. The recommendations are set in the context of promoting equal opportunity in education in a lifelong learning perspective. They encourage member states to develop the provision of key competencies for all as part of their lifelong learning strategies with a view to ensuring that initial education offers all young people key competencies that equip them for adult life. In this context, appropriate provisions should be set for young people who,

6. Radó (2006b) lists the following systemic conditions to a quality assessment system: institutional autonomy, assigned targets, intervention in unsatisfactorily performing institutions, access to demand-oriented developmental support, quality assessment and feedback.

due to educational disadvantages caused by personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, need particular support to fulfil their education potential.

4.2. A professional accountability system for greater equity

On the basis of these recommendations, the amendment of the Act on Public Education was meant to support the quality of learning at all levels of school education, the efficiency of public education and the accountability of three levels of management: state, local government and school. The methodological background of a new measurement/assessment system was to be provided by the recommendations of the strategy prepared by CEPA in 2006 (see section 3.1.2). The amended Act has the aim of launching a new measurement/assessment system in January 2009, thus the first academic year to be evaluated via this new method will be that of 2008/09.

The new system is going to be a mixture of an output-oriented as well as quality-oriented accountability system (*Radó, 2006b*). Output-oriented accountability systems are based on the regular measurement of student achievement, based on output standards and direct consequences attached to assessment results (*Radó, 2006b*). Quality-oriented accountability systems, on the other hand, are related to quality and efficiency standards, the measurement of students' achievements that provide information for the external evaluation of schools (*Radó, 2006b*). In this accountability system, consequences are linked to institutional evaluation rather than directly to student achievement. Furthermore, output and quality standards are clearly defined towards schools, and mechanisms used in case of unsatisfactory performance serve developmental purposes and implement tools of intervention accordingly. The elements of the measurement-assessment system are:

- Standardized assessment of the achievement of students,
- Examinations,
- Self-evaluation of schools,
- External assessment of school performance on the basis of student achievement,
- Indicator-based information feedback and,
- Intervention measures in cases of unsatisfactory performance.

4.3. The measurement/assessment system of Hungarian public education

- The institutional quality management programme of schools should include the dimensions and methods of institutional self-evaluation and its relevance to the quality management programme of the maintainer (local government);
- Annual external evaluation of schools on the basis of the annual National Competence Assessment of student performance;
- A school should be ordered by the maintainer to prepare an action plan for institutional development if the pedagogical output of that school is below the average of national standard;
- Evaluation results should be made public by the maintainer;
- Should the evaluation of the school indicate that results are, yet again, below average in the following year, the Education Agency will instruct the maintainer to prepare an action plan and to hire an "external specialist" to provide professional support;
- The maintainer's action plan should be approved by the Education Agency, which also monitors the implementation of the plan;
- Maintainers may apply for financial support to be able to hire "external specialists" for quality assurance for the improvement of the pedagogical output in these schools. This is guaranteed by decree No. 17/2007 (III.14) by the Ministry of Culture and Education, which also contains provisions for a fund aimed to motivate performance and to provide a competitive funding scheme for schools to supplement the income of teachers.
- The 2008/09 academic year is the first of its kind when the Ministry is to publish results; 2007 was a year when a progress report was published.

Appendix

Between-school and within-school variance in student performance on the science scale in PISA 2006
Variance inter- et intra-établissernents des scores sur l'échelle de culture scientifique du cycle PISA 2006

	Total variance in SP[2]	Variance expressed as a percentage of the average variance in student performance (SP) across OECD countries[1]				
		Total variance in SP expressed as a percentage of the average variance in student performance across OECD countries[3]	Total variance in SP between schools[4]	Total variance in SP within schools	Variance ewplained by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status of students	
					Between-school variance explained	Within-school variance explained
Australia	9 926	110,6	19,5	91,1	7,8	4,3
Austria	9 551	106,5	60,7	50,7	7,9	0,6
Belgium	9 791	109,1	57,0	53,0	11,7	2,0
Canada	8 743	97,5	17,9	79,3	4,3	3,2
Czech Republic	9 687	108,0	62,4	55,9	12,7	1,7
Denmark	8 580	95,6	14,8	82,0	6,0	8,1
Finland	7 301	81,4	4,7	76,7	1,2	5,5
France	w	w	w	w	w	w
Gernany	9 908	110,4	66,2	50,8	11,6	1,4
Greece	8 420	93,9	48,5	55,1	11,3	1,7
Hungary	7 720	86,1	60,5	38,5	9,4	0,2
Iceland	9 263	103,2	9,3	95,4	0,1	6,4
Ireland	8 871	98,9	16,9	82,6	7,4	4,9
Italy	9 045	100,8	52,6	51,8	4,8	0,4
Japan	9 812	109,4	53,0	59,4	2,9	0,1
Korea	8 093	90,2	31,8	59,3	3,8	0,4
Luxembourg	9 356	104,3	30,5	72,7	12,4	6,0
Mexico	6 490	72,3	25,5	38,2	4,2	0,3
Netherlands	9 081	101,2	59,6	40,0	6,8	0,7
New Zealand	11 230	125,2	20,0	106,0	10,6	10,1
Norway	8 894	99,1	9,9	88,8	2,8	5,2
Poland	8 047	89,7	12,2	78,9	5,5	8,6
Portugal	7 824	87,2	27,8	58,5	8,8	3,6
Slovak Republic	8 648	96,4	40,9	55,6	11,7	2,6
Spain	8 150	90,8	12,7	74,2	5,0	5,3
Sweden	8 635	96,3	11,5	85,8	4,4	6,2
Switzerland	9 830	109,6	37,5	66,7	8,0	4,8
Turkey	6 928	77,2	40,8	35,8	5,9	0,7
United Kingdom	11 156	124,4	23,5	97,8	8,6	6,1

United States	11 186	124,7	29,1	94,0	12,7	7,7
OECD average	8 971	100,0	33,0	68,1	7,2	3,8
Argentina	10 197	113,7	53,2	58,4	12,2	1,6
Azerbaijan	3 106	34,6	17,9	18,1	1,4	0,4
Brazil	7 970	88,8	41,4	46,6	8,2	0,6
Bulgaria	11 352	126,5	69,6	59,4	16,4	1,0
Chile	8 446	94,1	53,0	52,2	14,2	0,8
Colombia	7 200	80,3	25,2	57,0	7,5	1,3
Croatia	7 356	82,0	33,8	50,0	6,0	1,3
Estonia	6 986	77,9	16,0	61,5	3,8	2,9
Hong Kong-China	8 381	93,4	34,1	58,3	3,6	0,6
Indonesia	4 909	54,7	19,4	25,4	0,7	0,0
Israel	12 299	137,1	44,4	96,1	9,9	4,1
Jordan	7 989	89,1	19,7	67,5	5,1	3,3
Kyrgyzstan	6 991	77,9	30,7	48,3	3,0	0,2
Latvia	7 056	78,7	14,5	64,2	4,3	3,1
Liechtenstein	9 330 104,0	c	c	c	c	c
Lithuania	8 082	90,1	25,5	65,4	9,0	3,8
Macao-China	6 095	67,9	19,2	55,0	1,0	0,3
Montenegro	6 390	71,2	20,2	50,8	3,5	0,8
Qatar	7 012	78,2	47,3	41,9	c	c
Romania	6 585	73,4	35,5	37,7	6,8	1,0
Russian Federation	8 023	89,4	24,1	66,9	4,6	2,2
Serbia	7 224	80,5	34,3	48,7	6,6	1,0
Slovenia	9 628	107,3	64,8	42,8	6,2	0,3
Chinese Taipei	8 889	99,1	45,8	51,7	6,0	1,0
Thailand	5 958	66,4	25,6	43,6	7,7	0,4
Tunisia	6 768	75,4	32,3	43,9	3,0	0,2
Uruguay	8 887	99,1	39,6	57,7	11,8	1,9

Partners

1. The variance components were estimated for all students in participating countries with data on socio-economic background and study programmes.
2. The total variance in student performance is calculated from the square of the standard deviation for the students used in the analysis. the statistical variance in student performance and not the standard deviation is used for this comparison to allow for the decomposition.
3. The surn of the between- and within-school variance components, as an estimate from a sample, does not necessarily add up to the total.
4. In some countries, sub-units within schools were sampled instead of schools and this may affect the estimation of the between-school variance components (see Annex A2).
5. This index is often reffered to as the intra-class correlation (rho). statLink: http://dx.doi.org/10,1787/142104560611

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Equity and Education – Country Note: SLOVAKIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

1.1. Education – a legal framework

Slovak legislation does guarantee the right of education to everyone as education is expected to develop a full-fledged personality for humans besides a sense of dignity and reverence to human rights and to fundamental freedoms. Education should stimulate proficient participation in an open society, promote mutual understanding, tolerance and sociability among nations or racial, ethnic or religious groups. In order for this to be ensured, the education system is to provide for:

- basic education to be obligatory and freely accessible to all;
- secondary education, in different forms including technical and vocational education, to be freely accessible via the use of adequate means (that are, mostly, free of charge);
- higher education to be freely accessible to everyone responding to individual abilities by the use of support tools available for the purpose;
- encouragement and intensification of the elementary education of individuals who did not acquire or complete basic skills or education;
- development of the school system at all levels and establishment of a proportionate scholarship system.

The state guarantees to respect the freedom that parents or guardians have in choosing the schools (regardless whether established by the state or not) that respond to minimum quality level requirements set by the state, and in insuring the religious and ethical education of children consistent with their beliefs.

1.2. General education policies and equity

Educational policies tackle the issues of equity at each educational level, ranging from those of pre-school age through students in the formal education system to further education and the education of adults. The Slovak education system

attempts to cover the whole spectrum of individuals concerned by putting them in perspective with the intention of imposing reliable conditions of lifelong learning for everyone. Education, in this sense, should contribute to the prevention of social exclusion and help to save endangered groups from relegating to the margins of society (such as immigrants, low skilled individuals or adults). Equity in the access to education is often aimed at adults who have failed in their educational effort and also at making allowances for difficulties in older age. Measures should encompass training programmes on literacy and basic skills as well as "second chance" programmes.

There are several measures and provisions that had or still have significant impact on equity in formal education at primary and secondary level:

a) Two groundbreaking acts[1] have decentralised the management of education and changed the organisation of schools and school administrations and the financing of education. The laws have delegated the responsibility of schools' administration to regional authorities, including the financing system in which establishers/regional actors decide on the use of funds and bear greater responsibility for the performance of schools and the quality of tuition. That, for one thing, has forced the authorities and the establishers of schools to use the resources much more effectively and to look for additional funding from different sources, too. Also, it has naturally rationalised the school network as the authorities with a responsibility on specific issues had to decide about the efficiency of the operation of some establishments. It has often resulted in the consolidation of schools or in setting up strict quality and management requirements/rules. It has also enhanced equity among establishers. Laws at the same time have introduced a normative financing of regional education, which means that schools are financed in accordance with the number of students and the personal and economic demands of the educational process. This has made the system much more transparent as the money 'follows the student', so to speak, and is easier to account for.
b) The children/students coming from a socially weaker or less stimulating environment have the opportunity to claim for individual learning conditions. The school, in cooperation with the child and his/her family, sets up an individual learning programme and ensures the use of specific methods and forms of teaching/learning suitable for the student's progress. The school also arranges for adaptations and special schemes for the learning environment as well as the organisation of the learning process.

1. Act No. 596/2003 on the state administration in education and educational self-administration.
Act No. 597/2003 on the financing of primary, secondary schools and school establishments.

c) The MoE makes contributions to establishers or school operators (in some cases parents or legal representatives of a child) for socially disadvantaged children/students to be entitled to food and school utensils.

1.3. Educational reform in progress

The aim of educational reform is to create conditions for:

- free offer of educational opportunities and free choice for the educational pathway (the state sets basic requirements on the extent, content and process of education and the students/legal representatives of the pupils are free to choose an educational option/school with regard to the school education programme; in Slovak schools this creates the basis for competition and subsequently for quality improvement);
- enhanced participation of parents, pupils and employers' representatives in the education process and administration via school self-governments;
- change in the education philosophy and attitudes shifting from the traditionally normative and uniform character of schools towards a creative and humanistic concept aimed at shaping people's personalities and values to reach a degree of appropriateness and pro-social behaviour;
- creation of a new quality structure of educational content derived from subject and field competencies that we understand as the ability to mobilize a scale of knowledge, skills, social and cultural values, attitudes and personal characteristics in different contexts and activities;
- two-level system of education programmes;
- change in the methods and forms of education moving from informative explication methods to the rectification of exploration methods e. g. to active exposure and revelation, discovery and research; to shift from methods prioritizing memorizing and characterised by directives, towards problem-solving, projects, creativity and interaction.

Act No. 245/2008 on education and training (the so called General School Act), has started the transformation of regional education, mainly in terms of subject matter content.

The following principles are implemented by the law:

- the last year of kindergarten to be free of charge;
- state primary and secondary schools to be free of charge;

- equal status of schools regardless of their establisher;
- equality of education acquired at state, church or private schools;
- free choice of education in consideration of the expectations and abilities of children and students;
- equality and inseparability of education and upbringing in the educational process;
- prohibition of all forms of discrimination and, in particular, of segregation;
- lifelong learning;
- educational counselling (psychological, pedagogical, special-pedagogy, therapeutic and social activity targeted to optimize the educational, didactic, learning, mental, social and career development of individuals with special focus on children with special educational needs; advisory services also provided to legal representatives of children and to pedagogical employees);
- development and innovation of the educational process based on the results of research and science;
- preparation for an independent life in an open society in the spirit of understanding and tolerance, equality between men and women, friendly relations among nations and religions;
- control and assessment of the quality of education;
- integration of the Slovak educational system into the European educational area by preserving one's own experiences and traditions;
- encouragement of educational aspects such as the development of emotions, motivation, interests, socialization and communication skills, self-control and self-management, moral values and creativity;
- prohibition of all forms of corporal punishment or sanctions.

The amendment of the law introduces two-level education programmes, sets up a 10-year compulsory school attendance, allows for individual education programmes, defines assessment and classification rules as well as monitoring and quality assessment rules, sets the conditions for educating the children of foreigners, particularly talented children and children with special educational needs. The law also strengthens the competencies and responsibilities of the regional and local administrations in school management and State School Inspection in controlling and supervising the quality of the educational process. Moreover, educational levels have been harmonized with ISCED classification.

1.4. Two-level education programmes – the tool for equity enhancement

The most crucial reform changes stem from educational programmes. The compulsory didactic content of primary education is defined by the state educational programme. *Thus, the pupils may acquire:*

a) primary education (ISCED 1) in completing the first grade of primary education (last year of a primary school for mentally handicapped students);
b) lower secondary education (ISCED 2) in completing the second grade of primary education.

Besides the state educational programme, compiled by the MoE, schools themselves set up a school educational programme (compiled by the school principal following a programme review by the pedagogical council and the school board). The school educational programme constitutes the principal document of the school that defines the school's points of reference and profile in line with the educational objectives and the respective state education programme. The educational programmes should also constitute the conditions for educating students with special needs (physically handicapped, temporarily disabled, socially disadvantaged students).

According to the law, individuals without lower secondary education, are allowed to attend school to acquire a level of education/qualification, either in full-time or in part-time form, which is conducive to a special exam. In accordance with Act No. 131/2002 on Higher Education, every citizen of the Slovak Republic, of an EU Member State or a third country, has a right to study a HE study programme of his/her choice, provided that the requirements of admission are complied with.

1.5. Financial incentives – the way of reducing social disadvantages

There is a system of scholarships established via legislation[2]. It is possible to grant a subsidy for meals, school utensils and motivation-related contributions to children and students coming from families in financial need. Motivation-related contribution, offered as an alternative to prevent social exclusion, can be requested by a) the establisher of the school, b) the municipality (provided that the establisher is a regional school office) or c) a civil organisation established by a regional school office. The contribution

2. Act No. 600/2003 on children allowance, the Slovak Republic Ministry of Education Edict No. 453/2005 on motivation scholarships, Slovak Republic Ministry of Education Edict No. 102/2006 on social scholarships, Slovak Republic Ministry of Labour Decree No. 3749/2005 on the provision of subsidies.

cannot be granted to students failing to comply with compulsory school attendance requirements, those who have to repeat a year or those punished for misbehaviour. The contributions are provided on the basis of the family background of students and are provided to those who receive social benefit or whose monthly income is at the poverty line (subsistence level).

The contribution amounts to:

- 50 % of the subsistence level for average school results up to 2.0[3]
- 35 % of the subsistence level for average school results from 2.0 to 2.5
- 25 % of the subsistence level for average school results from 2.5 to 3.5.

1.6. Advisory services – the precondition of good decisions

In addition to the facilities established for the education of children with special needs, there is a comprehensive educational advisory system including the following organs of psychology and social-pedagogy:

- centre for pedagogical-psychological counselling and prevention;
- centre for special-pedagogical guidance;

and

- educational advisor;
- school psychologist and special school psychologist;
- therapeutic pedagogue;
- social pedagogue;
- prevention coordinator,

all of whom cooperate with families, schools, training centres, employers, public administration bodies and civic organizations. The Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic (MoE) offers methodical guidance for the operation of the advisory centres.

The centres themselves carry out the following activities:

- psychological profiling, inquiry, analysis, stimulus and prognostic assessment of student behaviour;
- psychological counselling;
- psychological diagnosis and psychotherapy;

3. The rating at schools in the Slovak Republic ranges from mark 1 for best performance to mark 5 for underperformance.

- special pedagogical action in increasing the level of educational success with students;
- special pedagogical diagnosis, corrective and re-education practices;
- social counselling and socio-therapy;
- complex childcare for children with handicaps;
- elimination of deficiencies in the psychic or behavioural development of children;
- creation of appropriate methods, approaches, prevention programmes;
- keeping records and special evidence for children in need;
- educational and career counselling and guidance.

The operation of the school psychologist, psychologist, special pedagogue, school therapist, school prevention coordinator and social pedagogue is free of charge.

Diagnostic centres proffer diagnosis to children and pupils with disturbed or endangered psycho-social development, aiming at setting further appropriate and adequate educational or re-educational care, and/or at setting up an individual re-education programme, and/or recommending the placement of children with regard to their professional preparation or their family background, and/or providing guidance to health care institutions and by elaborating diagnostic reports on children. Sanatoriums then provide psychological, therapeutic and educational care to children whom ambulatory treatment failed to help.

Re-education centres aim for education or professional training provision targeted to reintegrate students in need into their original, social environment. Re-education centres are differentiated according to particular problem types that students undergoing treatment for re-education, students with increased health care and protective treatment or young mothers have.

2. EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH HANDICAPS

The main task of special pedagogy in a European context is the social integration of handicapped persons. The process of education should focus on an inspiring motivation for success that engages every child in active self-improvement, proper self-comprehension and comprehension of the outside world. In special pedagogy the top rank is that of pedagogy aimed at those with multiple handicaps. Establishments specialized in complex educational, health and social care with experts and specialists available for each handicap type are key elements to be introduced.

2.1. Special education – a tailor-made service

The future development of special education is determined by the principles of democracy, humanism, differentiated approach to the personality of students, the continuity of education and the anticipation of educational needs.

General objectives for all types of handicaps are:

- an integrated educational process to be spread with the aim of calling for a consequent individual appraisal of each solution;
- to establish a special, pedagogical advisory centre in each Slovak district by 2015 by providing a complex special, pedagogical care but not at the expense of kindergartens ;
- to establish centres for children and youth with special educational needs for prevention, research, diagnostics, rehabilitation, compensation, correction, intervention, assessment, consultation and methodical purposes geared to specific handicap types and with a view to cooperation with parents;
- to elaborate standards with specific requirements that a student must meet in a set timeframe to enable his/her departure from a special school to a standard one and vice-versa during the whole school year;
- to facilitate individual learning programmes for children with extraordinary talents;
- to overcome the so-called "unrestrained integration" and to provide for adequate personal and material conditions at standard schools so that only children in need of some sort of protected educational attitude should stay at special schools, which in turn should be moved to special educational centres;
- to extend the network of student integration centres or special establishments;
- to ensure barrier-free access;
- to support individual education in the home of students with the aid of audiovisual technology, compensation instruments, computers and television as well as advisory services;
- to re-introduce the institution of a model school for the better preparation of teachers;
- to create posts for supporting pedagogues and therapists in special establishments;
- to create conditions for the differentiation of vocational education and training (VET) according to the interests and abilities of handicapped students;
- to allow for the creativity of teachers and decision making capabilities of principles in schools;
- to cooperate with the National Labour Office on the educational alternatives

offered for the handicapped;
- to provide integrated education at secondary schools;
- to support the university studies of handicapped people via support centres and coordinators.

2.2. Special education in practice

The education of handicapped children proceeds at
a) so-called special schools adapted to the special needs of the pupils (ranging from pre-school to secondary level) or
b) standard schools in both, integrated as well as separated form.

Requisite compensation tools as along with teaching aids and books are guaranteed and made available for free for the needy. The state budget also provides for specialties such as pedagogical assistants who help to remove handicap-related obstacles. The law has made it possible for the education of handicapped children to be prolonged to the age of 11. If it is not possible to educate a mentally handicapped pupil in a vocational school, the possibility to attend so-called practical schools that prepare pupils for uncomplicated or undemanding work is also an option to follow. Upon leaving a 3-year practical school, students receive a final certificate – a report on specific activities that the school leaver is capable of performing. New legislation paves the way for the education of mentally handicapped adults (e. g. inmates of social service homes) who did not receive vocational education or training in schools specialized in the tuition of practical skills. Vocational schools provide training to mentally handicapped children who are capable of working independently, although need extra guidance in their social and working attainment. Vocational training lasts for a period of 2 to 3 years (to attend preparatory courses is an option to follow). Thus, mentally handicapped students are offered the facilities of lower secondary education. Vocational schools and practical schools are also open for students from a lower grade of primary school provided that they comply with requirements in respect of compulsory school attendance.

The table below is an illustration of the situation in special education in various school types:

		Kinder-gartens	Primary schools	Special primary schools	Apprentice schools	Practical schools	Gym-nasiums	Voca-tional schools	Total
Number of schools	State schools	34	34	187	60	42	2	6	365
	Integrated classes at standard state schools	26	90	210	0	0	0	1	327
	Private schools	4	3	8	0	2	0	0	17
	Integrated classes at standard private schools	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
	Church schools	2	1	5	1	3	0	0	12
	Integrated classes at standard church schools	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	9
Number of pupils	State schools	794	5902	21446	4605	528	60	192	33527
	Private schools	37	107	148	0	10	0	0	302
	Church schools	22	45	412	15	28	0	0	522

Concepts on special education also support the individual integration of students and of students with special educational needs.

School type	Number of individually integrated children and students									
	Total	Handicapped and talented students thereof								
		Autism	Mental handi-cap	Aural handi-cap	Defect of vision	Dis-turbed commu-nication	Phys-ical handi-cap	Developmental disorder		Mas-ter-mind
								Behavi-our	Learning	
Kindergar-tens	592	26	141	43	34	167	128	26	27	x
Primary schools	15273	66	3738	302	226	762	1036	859	8027	257

Gymnasiums	317	3	x	23	34	x	43	23	179	12
Vocational schools	717	3	x	35	49	x	99	17	514	0
Associated secondary schools	920	4	x	29	22	x	85	26	754	0
Apprentice schools	876	3	x	15	5	x	43	41	769	0
Total	**18695**	**105**	**3879**	**447**	**370**	**929**	**1434**	**992**	**10270**	**269**

The following table shows the distribution of special education among standard primary schools in the Slovak Republic. The concentration of (unintegrated) special education in Eastern Slovakia (associated with lower economic performance, a higher concentration of Roma, higher unemployment) is even more remarkable in view of the fact that East Slovakia is formed only by two regions (NUTS III) out of eight (West Slovakia 4, Mid Slovakia 2) accounting for 29 % of the total population (West Slovakia 46 %, Mid Slovakia 25 %).

State of affairs - September 2008					
School type		**No. of students who left to special schools**	**Schools with a special class**	**Special classes**	**No. of students in special classes of primary schools**
Public primary schools	West Slovakia	304	7	11	91
	Mid Slovakia	261	7	10	83
	East Slovakia	745	10	15	153
	Total SR	1310	24	36	327
Private primary schools	West Slovakia	0	0	0	0
	Mid Slovakia	1	0	0	0
	East Slovakia	0	0	0	0
	Total SR	1	0	0	0
Church primary schools	West Slovakia	15	0	0	0
	Mid Slovakia	8	0	0	0
	East Slovakia	14	1	3	44
	Total SR	37	1	3	44
Total SR		1348	25	39	371

2.3. Re-education

The re-education process of children and youth with psychosocial or emotional development disorders seems very demanding. Despite huge efforts by experts to find and to prove the most efficient (interconnected and systematically completive) methods based on a scientific knowledge of psychology, pedagogy, special and therapeutic pedagogy, psychiatry etc., the human factor appears to be the most important element here. A kind-hearted and understanding attitude towards children and youth with a delinquent behaviour development is the precondition for gaining their trust and, subsequently, for the implementation of professional re-education programmes.

2.4 Education of students with exceptional talents

Special development of exceptional abilities and talents can be encouraged at all educational levels through the extension of the educational content and/or education as an individual training programme. There are two principal forms in terms of the education of talented students:

a) in schools and classes for pupils with a high general intellectual capacity (exploiting aptitudes as well as the entire personality of a child, eventually treating problematic behaviour expressions related to masterminds);
b) in schools and classes for pupils with special intellectual abilities (focusing on the enhancement of student performance in separate subjects).

In accordance with the law, school principals are obliged to make provisions for talented pupils.

3. DIFFERENT ORIGIN – REASON FOR A DISADVANTAGE?

3.1. Exercising human rights in education

Exercising human rights in education comprises a focus on the development of the individual, consequently respecting the individual character of each child, the importance of the cooperation with the families as well as educational counselling for parents. In primary and secondary schools, among the ways of emphasising this issue is a set of pedagogical-organisational instructions for schools issued by the MoE. The instructions provide for the use of respective thematic ingredients of subjects such as

civics, religion, ethics, as well as an interdisciplinary context to strengthen tolerance and the elimination of racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Students are offered guidance to become familiar with the need for human rights in everyday life, too. Human rights education in the Slovak Republic is realised mainly via subjects in general education. There is no specific subject on human rights in the primary and secondary school curricula. The Civics, taught in years 6-9 at primary school within the framework of one lesson per week, plays a substantial role in the Slovak education system in defining the basic attitude of students to law, order and human rights. Curricula available to students at primary school (year 1-9) and secondary school (year 1-2) can be shaped by choosing between the subjects of Ethics or Religion (based on one lesson per week to be taught) which are equally aimed at highlighting the need for respect in connection with basic human rights, the acceptance of and cooperation with others, familiarity with pro-social values and manners. Ethics puts the emphasis on interactive and partner relationships. History, Slovak Language and Literature, Mother Tongue and Literature at minority schools, Foreign Languages and Geography all have an important role in this context. Education in human rights at secondary schools and grammar schools is performed within the framework of Civics that contain specific sections on psychology, sociology, economy, the state and law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, politics and philosophy. The fundamental aspects of Human rights are also taught at special schools.

3.2. Migration policy in the field of education

The Migration Office is responsible for the integration of migrants, cooperation with UNHCR, non-governmental organisations, self-governments and state administration. In terms of respect for human rights or, for that matter, menace to discrimination, asylum seekers rank among the most endangered non-Slovak groups in the Slovak Republic. The Action Plan to Prevent all forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and other forms of Intolerance deals with the issues in a cross-sectoral manner while also comprising tasks for systematic education and intensification of opinion-making in state administration, self-governments, the pedagogical as well as non-pedagogical public along with primary and secondary school students. Based on the obligations arising from the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Slovak Republic as a host country is also obliged to grant the right of education to refugee children and to unaccompanied minors (= children younger than 18 outside their home country, separated from their parents or from another person

legally responsible for their well-being). An essential part of tasks is the preparation of teachers, tutors and other pedagogical employees as main actors in the realisation and development of the teaching methods and subject matter.

The integration process begins as early as the stay in camps of immigrants. Social workers provide social services and legal advice to clients directly in camps. Asylum applicants can also attend cost free Slovak language courses or re-training courses in establishments run by the Ministry of Interior. The asylum procedure and the approval of an asylum application will be followed by an "integration offer". The offer is aimed to find housing and a job (when refusing the offer, the asylum seeker must find housing and employment on his/her own).

The complex programme of foreigners' integration into society includes:

- teaching of the Slovak language and eventual retraining;
- assistance and aid in finding job offers;
- assistance in finding social housing;
- social security;
- health care;
- creation of conditions for the acceptance of refugees in municipal communities and target localities.

Children of immigrants in possession of a residence permit, the children of asylum seekers and the children of Slovak expatriates receive education at Slovak primary and secondary schools under the same provisions as those pertaining to citizens of the Slovak Republic. Kindergartens can be attended by the children of asylum seekers, who may be accompanied by their parents. The principals at primary and secondary schools decide on the placement of children in respective classes, consistent with their educational level and their command of the official language of the country. For the enrolment of children in primary and secondary education, the government organises state language courses in order to remove linguistic barriers. Parents are obliged to have their children registered for compulsory education and be attentive to their school attendance. For asylum seekers, the Slovak laws apply in issues of secondary as well university education. An asylum seeker is entitled to apply for employment in the same manner as a Slovak citizen. Asylum seekers are also entitled to run businesses according to the Slovak Trades Licensing Law.

3.3. Minority education

Minority rights are an integral part of human rights. There are 11 ethnic minorities in the Slovak Republic representing 14.2 % of the population (counting the Hungarian 9.7 %, Roma 1.7 %, Czech 0.8 %, Ruthenian 0.4 %, Ukrainian 0.2 %, German 0.1 % and other 1.3 % minority)[4]. The constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees the right to education to everybody, together with the right to establish and run education institutions, to be taught and educated in one's own mother tongue and have a say in minority issues. The development of national or ethnic identity and its protection is a natural right of minorities.

Education acquired at schools with minority language of instruction, which form an integral part of the Slovak school system, is equal to education acquired at schools with the Slovak language of instruction. The educational sector in the Slovak Republic guarantees democratic rights to parents in choosing the language of instruction. The education of minorities is a means to establish civic and shared identity as well as patriotism.

There are several principles of minority education regarding the elaboration of pedagogical documents, training programmes, the establishment and management of schools:

- principle of equal opportunity in acquiring equal education regardless of the language of tuition;
- principle of equal opportunity for success on the labour market in the Slovak Republic and in other member states of the European Union;
- principle of preserving and developing national identity and a positive relationship with the Slovak Republic;
- multiculturalism as evolvement of tolerance; acceptance, care and cooperation;
- principle of independent decision-making by school leaders on the educational programme in cooperation with the self-governments of schools and in line with the Government's educational programme;
- principle of having pedagogical documentation on file in the official language of the state language and in the minority language of instruction;
- principle of coordinated, further education of pedagogues.

Change in the educational content stems from the development of key competences with the aim of raising the educational level of students and via their active participation

4. Official population census, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, May 2001

in the labour market, also highlighting the individual character of each person, his/her talent and physical and intellectual abilities.

Below is an overview of the diversity of the educational level of minorities living in the Slovak Republic:

Educational level in a breakdown to nationalities	Slovak	Hungarian	Roma	Ruthenian	Ukrainian	Czech	German	Polish	Croatian	Serbian
Basic and incomplete	907115	158693	10831	6758	1956	7651	1258	744	217	48
Apprenticeship	914475	120521	5925	3090	1292	10214	791	584	122	43
Vocational	182109	13867	1017	1326	571	2827	307	143	75	16
Secondary	1228354	115018	1088	7382	3709	13231	1566	586	283	197
Bachelor	15636	1466	14	117	112	233	43	39	10	12
University	343950	22553	128	2752	2021	6946	792	333	81	49
Doctoral	20589	1099	27	216	159	765	91	18	1	5
No education	10978	2989	1963	82	21	32	13	4	2	1
No reference	50129	42193	2204	133	136	1232	77	46	19	4
Children up to age 16	941518	82842	36718	2462	837	1393	467	161	80	59
Total	4614854	520528	89920	24201	10904	44620	5405	2602	890	434

The strengths of minority education in Slovakia consist in the

- legal capacity of schools;
- a broad net of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools;
- preparation of pedagogues for minority education and a high percentage of qualified pedagogues;
- minority representation in parliament, self-governments and local administrations;
- textbooks and teaching aids the language of minorities;
- support of minority schools via various sources.

Weaknesses, on the other hand, are

- level of command of the official language of the state by pedagogues with a minority background;

- absence of a system of regular quality assessment in education;
- insufficient cooperation between Slovak and minority schools;
- school buildings being in bad repair;
- inflexible system of curriculum development;
- persistence of traditional subject matters and tuition methods, ignorance of progressive methods and specific forms of education;
- low motivation of pedagogues in going on to further education;
- incongruity between educational activities and demand on the labour market.

This implies the following opportunities and risks:

Opportunities	**Risks**
• quality improvement in the tuition of the official language of the country (good command of Slovak being a fundamental requirement on the domestic labour market); • school programmes following the requirements of employers; • no early tracking and streaming; • lifelong learning; • variability and flexibility in the education pathways; • quality improvement in the further education of teachers; • ESF projects.	• failure of education system in preparing the individual for the world of work; • negative demographic trend; • insufficient information of potential students and parents; • tensions and conflicts (xenophobia, racism); • insufficient cooperation between schools; • absence of employers in the professional training of the labour force; • possible brain-drain and exodus of labour to foreign markets.

Current minority education system:

Today the education of minorities in the Slovak Republic is realized in the following manner

a) At schools or in classes where the language of instruction is that of a minority, thus tuition is performed in the mother tongue of a particular minority. Slovak language and Slovak literature are separate, obligatory subjects. This also applies to the Hungarian minority.

b) At schools and in classes with combined tuition, where part of the subjects are taught in the official language of the country and the remaining subjects in the language of a particular minority. This applies to the Ukrainian and German minorities and to the Hungarian language in respect of vocational education and apprenticeship.

c) At schools and in classes where the minority language is taught as the mother tongue and the remaining subjects are taught in the Slovak language. This applies to the Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German and Roma minority.

Number of kindergartens according to the language of insruction							
Slovak	Slovak-Hungarian	Slovak – German	Slovak-Ukrainian	Ukrainian	German	Hungarian	Other
2545	79	0	3	11	0	350	1

Number of primary schools according to the language of instruction																	
Slovak			Slovak-Hungarian			Slovak-Ukrainian			Hungarian			Ukrainian			other language		
1-9 grades	1-4 grades	5-9 grades	1-9 grades	1-4 grades	5-9 grades	1-9 grades	1-4 grades	5-9 grades	1-9 grades	1-4 grades	5-9 grades	1-9 grades	1-4 grades	5-9 grades	1-9 grades	1-4 grades	5-9 grades
1309	650	3	16	15	0	1	0	0	124	124	0	6	1	0	4	1	0

Nationality of children, pupils and students at Slovak schools:

School type	Total	Slovak citizens										Non-Slovak citizenship	
		Total	Nationality									Foreigners	With residence permit thereof
			Slovak	Czech	Hungarian	Ukrainian	Ruthenian	Polish	German	Roma	Other		
Public kindergartens	135254	134993	123046	50	10274	25	58	4	29	1311	168	261	102
Private kindergartens	2052	2007	1900	5	1	0	1	1	0	93	6	45	15
Church kindergartens	2068	2062	1907	1	97	0	0	0	0	57	0	6	0
Special state kindergartens	794	794	743	0	35	1	0	0	0	14	1	0	0
Special private kindergartens	37	37	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Church private kindergartens	22	22	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
State-run primary schools	456393	455682	414641	425	37661	312	177	33	69	1907	457	711	594
Private primary schools	2768	2689	2556	5	12	2	0	2	2	91	19	79	39
Church primary schools	23405	23367	22082	15	1093	2	6	4	7	139	19	38	24

State-run primary schools with special classes	5902	5898	5771	6	95	3	0	1	3	4	15	4	4
Private primary schools with special classes	107	107	103	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Church primary schools with special classes	45	45	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special state-run primary schools	21446	21437	18730	12	1605	0	0	0	0	1087	3	9	6
Special private primary schools	148	148	140	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special church primary schools	412	412	406	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
State associated secondary schools	72208	72159	67384	118	4504	70	27	4	6	9	37	49	30
Private associated secondary schools	2903	2901	1551	0	1254	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Church associated secondary schools	682	682	665	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
State apprentice schools	45035	45011	42087	87	2770	26	2	0	5	15	19	24	21
Private apprentice schools	5815	5814	4636	8	1168	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1
Church apprentice schools	1032	1030	1007	5	12	1	2	0	1	0	2	2	2
State-run vocational schools	67265	67180	62429	142	4332	52	22	5	9	151	38	85	51
Private vocational schools	5668	5657	5117	12	468	4	1	0	2	36	17	11	5
Church vocational schools	2869	2857	2827	3	15	3	4	0	0	1	4	12	1
State gymnasiums	80486	80337	74169	141	5648	95	67	11	32	4	170	149	80
Private gymnasiums	3771	3720	3552	16	42	4	1	2	5	60	38	51	12
Church gymnasiums	15658	15636	14854	17	720	6	5	6	15	1	12	22	12
Special state gymnasiums	60	60	59	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Special state vocational schools	192	192	188	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Special state apprentice schools	4605	4603	4174	6	347	2	0	0	0	72	2	2	0
State-run practical schools	528	528	497	1	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private practical schools	10	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public universities	No reference	126325	119823	232	5887	122	78	16	37	12	118	No reference	No reference
Private universities	No reference	3479	3352	12	91	5	3	0	3	0	13	No reference	No reference
State universities	No reference	1389	1309	5	72	1	1	0	0	1	0	No reference	No reference

4. EDUCATION OF ROMA CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

4.1. Conditions of Roma education

The Slovak Republic is under the obligation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that stipulates that education shall aim at the personal development of every child, his/her talents, predispositions and mental powers, his/her preparation for an active adult life in an open society and the respect for the parents, their cultural identity, language and values. In order to improve the living conditions of Roma, the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015[5] has been proclaimed. The Decade focuses on priority areas of education, employment, health and housing, and commits governments to take into account core issues such as poverty, discrimination and gender mainstreaming. According to PISA, Slovakia is among countries with the most significant difference in students' results in relation to the educational level acquired by the parents. At the same time, Slovakia is one of the countries with the greatest impact of social-economic background on the achievement of students.

The Roma represent the second largest ethnic group in Slovakia. However, there are huge differences in their concentration among regions. Statistics fail to supply data in respect of the actual number of Roma, but that number is approximately 380,000 with up to 44 % being children under age 14. There are different educational approaches needed for the two basic social groups of Roma – the integrated population (772

5. The Decade is a political commitment by governments in Central and South-Eastern Europe to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma within a regional framework.

municipalities/towns), and citizens living in separate city-districts, suburbs or distant settlements (787 localities) representing 51 % of all locations occupied by the Roma.

Slovak law does not allow statistics to be made on grounds of ethnicity, therefore it is not possible to freely monitor the status of Roma children at schools. Ethnic statistics are based on the self-identification of Roma. As a substitute for the absence of data on ethnicity, the category "children coming from socially disadvantaged environment" (thereinafter SD) has been introduced (although the term might possibly include other nationalities on the one hand and might not include all Roma children on the other.)

The current situation in the education of socially disadvantaged children requires the creation of equal opportunities from the earliest stages of tuition. It was necessary to legislatively define the "socially disadvantaged environment" as one that due to social and language conditions does not sufficiently stimulate the development of mental, cognitive and emotional characteristics of an individual, and also fails to support his/her efficient socialization and to provide stimulus for the development of an individual. A socially disadvantaged environment will cause social deprivation and will deform the intellectual, ethical and emotional development of individuals. Within the educational system we use the term "child with special educational needs". Special educational needs of a child are preconditions for conditions to be tailored to actual needs, the organisation and realisation of the educational process so as to respond to the particularities of a student whose physical, psychical and social development is substantially different from current standards.

Here the following criteria apply:

- the student's family receives supplementary social benefits;
- the income of the family is not above subsistence level;
- at least one of the parents is a disadvantaged applicant for employment (set by the "Labour Act");
- the schooling of parents does not extend beyond primary education or at least one of the parents did not acquire basic education;
- sub-standard living and hygienic conditions in the family household (the student disposes of no separate learning space or bed of his/her own, there is no electricity in the home etc.);
- the language of tuition differs from the language used in the family.

Priorities consist in:

- the creation of proper conditions of access to education and the opportunity for socially disadvantaged children to have access to quality education;
- the increase in the enrolment in kindergartens and the readiness of Roma for primary school;
- the improvement in the educational achievements of the Roma;
- the increase in the number of Roma attending secondary schools and universities;
- the decline in the percentage of Roma attending special primary schools for mentally handicapped children;
- the support of the lifelong learning of Roma who need to complete their education, in order to improve their chances of employment on the labour market.

The priorities specified are closely related to the conditional aspects of the successful education of the Roma, which are:

a) personal liberty,
b) identity formation,
c) need for raising the self-esteem of children, pupils, students as well as Roma citizens in general,
d) necessity of instilling responsibility for one's own actions.

To solve these problems, cooperation between different sectors is necessary (considering the health, social, economic, demographic aspects of the issue).

4.2. Concept of Roma education – the starting point

In order to eliminate the shortcomings of the system, the Concept of Roma Education has been set up, identifying the following objectives:

Pre-school education

- to enhance the motivation of socially disadvantaged children to attend a kindergarten (starting the education at an early age prepares children for school, eliminates the risk of a school failure, provides children with basic socializing skills etc.);
- to include kindergartens in the system of schools in order to enhance the stability and sophistication of the system;
- to extend the network of kindergartens in municipalities with a high concentration

of the Roma population by using all possible resources;
- to increase the quality of methodical assistance to school offices dealing with kindergartens;
- to create and implement programmes focused on the cooperation between Roma parents and schools.

Primary education
- to keep and further develop the system of zero-classes (the system has proved to be very effective in practice);
- to develop the content and organisation of the zero-classes tuition in order to stimulate the personal development, cognitive functions and socialization of children and to balance out the absence of pre-school education;
- to reduce the number of students per class and thus enhance an individual approach to students;
- to implement day care in preparing children for further learning;
- to create a pleasant and stimulating learning environment with respect to the social, cultural and linguistic characteristics of children;
- to legislatively resolve the issue of school attendance and of the education of young mothers, moreover to avoid repetition of a year due to health reasons;
- to facilitate the accomplishment of standard primary education via special courses (designed for students having attended a special school, those out of jobs etc.);
- to advocate multicultural and anti-bias education;
- to support investment in school infrastructure (and to avoid tuition in alternating shifts);
- to develop anti-bias school readiness tests for 6 to 7-year old children and to upgrade diagnostic tests[6];
- to exclusively authorize pedagogical-psychological advisory services to test school readiness;
- to increase the number of pedagogues with special qualification at primary schools for the individual integration of students.

Secondary education
- to support the establishement of associated secondary schools offering integrated 3 to 4-year education for vocational qualifications necessary for the world of work;
- to set up, in cooperation with local authorities and self-governments, separate

6. An activity launched by the PHARE projects in 2005.

vocational classes in municipalities with a high concentration of Roma population, in order to help localities with high unemployment and poverty rate to save money needed for students to commute to school;

- to make it possible to obtain a vocational certificate after graduating from a 2-year vocational school (students who have concluded their compulsory school attendance in a year lower than year 9 are allowed to attend a 2-year vocational school. However, a 2-year vocational school is not a secondary school and does not issue vocational certificates that might help the holders of such certificates to be successful on the labour market);
- to carry on research on the status of socially disadvantaged pupils at secondary schools;
- to transform and upgrade curricula for the purpose of including subject matter on and knowledge of Roma history, culture, traditions in the educational content[7] of secondary schools;
- to introduce specific aspects of multicultural and anti-bias education into the educational content of secondary schools;
- to respond to the principles of integrated education via the establishment of schools and the enlistment of students;
- to pilot a study programme on "community work".

University education

- to create material and organisational conditions for the university education of socially disadvantaged Roma;
- to apply the principles of equal opportunities (to create a support system for talented individuals, to organise preparation courses in higher education and to facilitate tutoring in the HE environment);
- to support research programmes on Roma issues (e. g. for the development of new study programmes required);
- to support universities in upgrading educational content in the education of socially disadvantaged students, in innovations in pedagogy and social work studies, in community work and community education;
- to improve the conditions of practicing as well as further education of teachers;
- to support cooperation of different university workplaces;
- to introduce Romology, which includes Roma language and literature, history and culture.

7. Introduction launched by PHARE projects in 2004.

Further education of pedagogues

- to elaborate a professional standard for a teacher – a specialist in Roma education – to become part of career opportunities in the teaching profession;
- to carry on research and monitoring projects about teaching at schools with a high proportion of Roma students;
- to train teachers in work to be performed in integrated classes by using modern techniques and methods;
- to advocate the issue of pupils' behaviour assessment and evaluation by using modern assessment methods.

Psychological and educational counselling and prevention

- to increase the number of psychologists and specially trained pedagogues in advisory centres (due to a growing demand for diagnosis and for other types of work such as group as well as individual work that needs to be performed in the long-term as well as counselling to be offered in different areas);
- to provide for resources needed for a continuous use of new psycho-diagnostic methods;
- to provide for capacities (personnel, material, facilities, finances) in the field diagnosis of students;
- to support the supply of complex advisory services and the cooperation of experts in psychology, special pedagogy, logopaedics, neurology etc.

Roma language

- to provide for the training of teachers of the Roma language ;
- to elaborate on fundamental pedagogical documentation (curricula, syllabi);
- to provide for books, texts, other learning materials;
- to support the editing of specialist literature.

Lifelong Learning

- to create conditions for obtaining qualifications responding to one's own needs and to the needs of the labour market, putting special emphasis on non-formal and informal education.

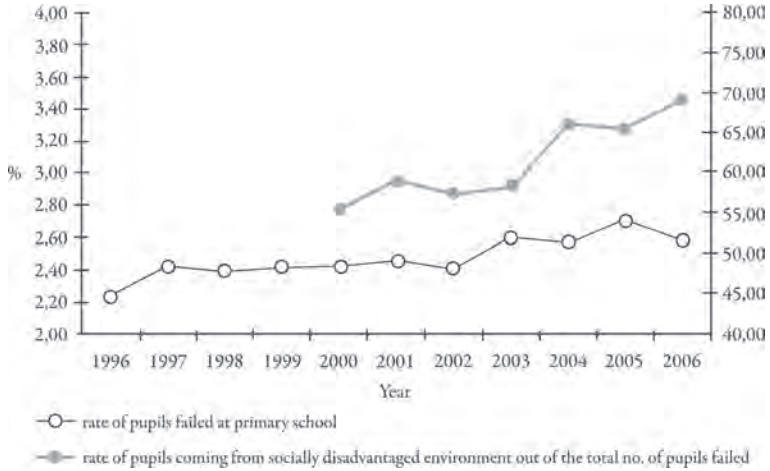
4.3. Roma failure in the school – a socio-cultural issue

Despite existing concepts and efforts being made in the field of education, the absence of success of Roma students at school does not seem to disappear or decrease significantly. The reasons such as the low educational level of parents, a different orientation of values (where education does not play a significant role), a different cultural, social and emotional background, no pre-school education, bad command of the Slovak language, deficiencies in basic social, hygienic or working habits, an occasionally improper approach of teachers and volatility experienced in the school attendance of Roma children are phenomena that seem to persist. Not only that – there is a growing absence of success among Roma students. Over the long term, failure at complying with compulsory school attendance requirements is at 2.5 %, i.e. 25 pupils out of 1000 repeat a year during every school year. 15.49 % out of the total number of students (237,229) are children coming from a socially disadvantaged environment. Most problematic of all is the first and the fifth class, which entails the highest level of psychic stress. Almost one quarter of students (24.71 % of the SD) repeat the first year, which is fairly de-motivating for their attitude to school and has a negative effect on their personal development.

Consequent measures seem to become indispensable:

- compulsory pre-school education;
- reduction of curricula;
- presence of a teacher's assistant;
- establishment of zero-classes (preparation for primary education at the primary school);
- creation of a multicultural environment;
- for socially disadvantaged pupils a differentiated teaching approach and a decrease of the number of pupils per class.

Failure of Roma children at primary schools – trends from 1996 to 2006:



The number of lessons missed also increase (one of the main reasons being the migration of the families that break the law by failing to indicate the location of the student's school attendance). 23.50 % of the lessons missed by the SD pupils; the percentage is even higher at 69.62 % for non-excused absenteeism. The data on missed and non-excused absenteeism closely relate to the failure of Roma students at school, it is, therefore, one of the main indicators for policy-making.

The principals, establishers as well as the ministries should, in this context, also take into account:

- the number of disestablished small schools (schools with a low number of classes) in the locality (also in connection with the transport facilities available to primary school students);
- the date of the benefit payment to SD families;
- the health conditions of the child population;
- the status of the students within the family (e. g. in the context of younger brothers/sisters);
- students' motivation for learning;
- the efficiency of legislative measures to combat truancy;
- the number of lessons missed and students' failure.

The proportion of Roma SD students at secondary schools (grammar-schools, 3-year specializations and vocational studies in particular) continues to be unsatisfactory.

The following table shows the educational level of Roma living in the SR:

Education attained	**2001**[8]	**%**
1. Primary/not completed	40 831	45,40
2. Apprentice (no HE entrance qualification)	5 925	6,59
3. Vocational	1 017	1,14
4. Secondary completed	1 088	1,2
Apprentice thereof	378	
Vocational thereof	508	
General thereof	202	
5. University	174	0,19
6. No education	1 963	2,18
7. No data	2 204	2,46
8. Children up to 16	36 718	40,84
Total	89 920	100

4.4. Zero-classes – How to get off to a good start?

If a 6-year old child is not mature for school, the school director decides
a) to postpone his/her school attendance or
b) to enrol him/her in a zero-class.

Zero-classes are intended for 6-year old children who did not attain a level necessary for school readiness, come from a socially disadvantaged environment and, due to the SD, would probably be unable to cope with the requirements of year one at the primary school. A child can attend a zero-class only upon the understanding of his/her legal representative. The zero-class is included in what is considered compulsory school attendance. The number of students attending one zero-class ranges from 8 (conditionally 6) to 16. The wage-norm for a zero-class student amounts to 170 % of the standard primary school norm.

8. Statistical Office of the SR – Census 2001.

The number of zero-classes has increased in the last few years:

Year	Total	Zero-classes		
	Schools	Schools	Classes	Pupils
2000	2447	62	88	1087
2001	2406	63	86	1104
2002	2396	62	76	970
2003	2387	124	155	1780
2004	2342	137	166	1993
2005	2304	135	160	1959
2006	2283	158	195	2380
2007	2254	161	202	2452

4.5. Day care – sharing responsibilities

Today's difficulties in education come from progressive organisational and content transformation issues that touch upon compulsory school attendance. There are huge problems at Slovak primary schools in view of the fact that more than 20 % of students drop out during the last year at school. The greatest learning insufficiencies appear in logical reasoning, fine motor skills, verbalization abilities, self-activity, relationship with students in the same age group, individual approach to students by teachers and so on. Within traditional education, much of the school work is taken home (or to parents, in some cases). Many less educated parents find this too much of a challenge and are incapable of helping their children with their school work. In this context, the situation in Roma communities is, as it were, alarming. Many children (particularly during the first years of their education) show considerable interest in learning.

Individual approach to pupils seems necessary to maintain this interest, consisting of individual activities as well as the work in groups, internal differentiation, allotment of tasks of different difficulty, extended explanation, conversation, simulation of problem situations, learning through experience and so on. This requires familiarity with the pupil and his/her potential as well as his/her health state and family background. Education should not lag behind the student's progress, on the contrary, it should encourage and motivate him/her to activity and creativity.

The whole-day care is one of the coherent support measures having a lot of advantages, such as:

- intensive educational work with children coming from less stimulating environment;
- intensive out-of-school and leisure time care and work with these children;
- improvement of health provisions, hygiene, meals, daily schedule of the children;
- improvement of the children's time and activity self-organisation, development of the auto-regulation, responsibility for oneself, rational use of one's free time;

as well as disadvantages, such as:

- relatively expensive system demanding finances, personnel and material;
- constraint of the family breeding;
- overload of children because of "learning" all day through.

4.6. Roma at special schools – searching for a way out

For several years, the MoE has been dealing with the problem of enrolment of Roma children in special primary schools for mentally handicapped pupils. The problems affecting Roma children and the conditions of learning are certainly the same for any child with a handicap, and since 2000 legislation has been in effect stipulating that only children with special educational needs preventing them from attending another school type are entitled to be taught at special schools. Since then, it has become illegal to admit pupils to special schools purely because of their inability to master the standard subject matter (in spite of individual care). This change mostly concerned SD pupils. The persistently high number of Roma pupils at special schools was also the consequence of the use of standard school readiness and intelligence potential tests irrespective of their background environment. The new tests, developed within the PHARE programme[9], have been in use since 2004. The new General School Act[10] imposes the rules of classing children in special schools solely on the basis of expert diagnostic examination.

9. School readiness test and RR screening, a test battery to exclude mental retardation of children coming from socially disadvantaged environment aged 6-10 – outputs of a PHARE project named "Reintegration of socially disadvantaged children from special schools into standard primary schools", http://home.nextra.sk/vudpap/reintegracia/.
10. Act No. 245/2008 on education and training.

4.7. Teacher assistant – the friend, the helper, the mediator

In kindergartens, at primary, secondary as well as all types of special schools, a teacher assistant can work and assist the teacher in educating and creating conditions for breaking through the linguistic, health and social barriers of the child. The assistants have, according to the law, the status of a pedagogical employee. They are paid out of the wage-norm. The MoE sets aside a fund for "particularities" such as charges for the transport to schools of children or even of teacher assistants (according to actual needs indicated by schools and establishers). Today there are first courses and study programmes for teacher assistants organised either by methodical centres (qualification studies) or universities.

4.8. Roma Education Centre

In order to support teachers working with Roma children and youth as well as to make allowance for the educational needs of the Roma minority in the Slovak Republic, a Roma Education, Information, Documentation, Advisory and Consultation Centre (ROCEPO)[11] in Presov (East Slovakia), was established in 2001.

The main activities of the centre include:

- realization of educational projects for the employees of schools attended by a high number of Roma students;
- elaboration of methods and materials for pedagogues working with Roma to improve the quality of teaching/training;
- organisation of seminars for institutions and organisations involved in Roma education;
- pedagogical research;
- provision, processing and distribution of information on educational activities for teachers, tutors as well as the general public;
- edition of bilingual methodical materials and guides for pedagogues;
- collection, sorting and archiving of printed and virtual information;
- creation of a database for effective teaching and learning methods for Roma;
- collection of national as well as international project results on Roma education;
- establishment of a documentary workplace for archiving the outcomes of the creativity of teachers and Roma students;

11. http://www.rocepo.sk/modules/aboutus/

- providing for psychological, pedagogical and health advisory services focused on specific problems of the Roma minority and further education of teachers operating in localities with high a concentration of Roma;
- making and expanding contacts and links to Roma education institutions.

5. CONCLUSION

Review of equity provisions in the Slovak formal education system:

Level of education	Provisions
Pre-primary	• the last year of kindergarten free of charge • kindergarten free of charge for parents in financial need (recipients of social benefits) • regular school attendance - condition of receiving benefits • contributions for food and for school utensils to families in financial need • curricular transformation and tuition change, introduction of non-bias education programmes and programmes involving parents in the education process • teacher assistants • decrease in the number of children per class/kindergarten
Primary	• contributions to families in financial need • fall in the number of children per class (+ increase in the wage norm for students with special educational needs) • teacher assistants • zero classes at primary schools • new testing proving school readiness and appraising the real mental abilities of the pupils • parent rooms as areas of interaction between school, child and family offering parents the opportunity to participate in school life, help their children and benefit from the advisory services provided by the school staff • reintegration programmes for pupils moving from special schools into standard primary schools
Secondary	• social scholarships, grants • vocational training for pupils without an accomplished basic education, compensation programmes • uniform school-leaving exams and the option of choosing graduation subjects • teacher assistants
Higher	• social scholarships, grants • fees for external studies at universities • universities allowed to obtain a loan • universities allowed to create workplaces and programmes in cooperation with other HE providers • universities allowed to run businesses

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Equity and Education – Synthesis report: The Potential and Limitations of the Learning Outcomes Based Approach

Policy-making for equity in education in Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of comparative overview

The purpose of this paper is to summarize the findings of a joint project of the Austrian, Czech, Hungarian, Slovakian and Slovenian Ministries of Education on equity in education. However, this overview pursues more ambitious objectives than those limited to a summary of country reports on equity in the countries involved. On the one hand, it attempts to create a regional, comparative framework that allows for reflection on the policies of the individual countries, i.e. it aims at extracting lessons to be learnt by mapping out the similarities and differences among the countries affected. This paper is, on the other hand, an attempt to follow up on the thematic focus of the joint project of five Central European Countries, in other words on the potentials and limitations of a particular approach to education based on learning outcomes in promoting equity.

The introduction of this comparative overview briefly outlines how equity in education is reconsidered in the light of an approach to education based on learning outcomes. Part One of this paper describes the performance profile of the Central European countries in comparison to other regional patterns in Europe and attempts to determine the key features of the Central European region. Part Two looks at the impact of different dimensions of social inequalities on learning in the five countries involved as well as the underlying reasons for the high selectivity of these education systems. Part Three offers a comparative educational policy framework and reflects on the equity policies of the five Central European countries through the prism of an approach based on learning outcomes.

This overview relies on three major pools of sources: (i) country notes on equity in education produced by experts commissioned by the Ministries of Education of the participating countries (Slovenia did not prepare a country report within the framework of this project but participated in two workshops and provided valuable information for this overview.), (ii) international comparative information provided mainly by the progress reports of the Lisbon process in the European Union and by the international student achievement surveys of OECD and IEA, (iii) the country files of the Eurydice database meant to interpret the characteristics of educational systems. In addition to these sources of information, other international reports and research results were used.

Equity in education: the implications of the learning outcomes based approach

Equity has always been one of the major concerns of educational policies in Europe in previous decades. The rationale for promoting equity has always been extremely diverse with value-based orientations (such as gender equity, multiculturalism, egalitarianism, etc.) and considerations which are more of a value-neutral nature (such as investment in human capital, reduction of social safety costs or the strengthening of social cohesion) being a fact of life. Approaches to educational equity vary between two extreme positions across a wide spectrum. On the one end there is a pessimistic approach rooted in the sociology of the sixties, according to which schools are the product of modern societies with deep-rooted social inequalities. Therefore, the very purpose of education is "burning in", reproducing inequalities. On the other end there is an enthusiastic approach known as "alternative pedagogies" according to which "all children can learn". The latter was strengthened by the ruling egalitarian "social engineering" approach in former communist countries, where education was based on the illusion that the social positions of entire societal macro groups can be changed by means of education itself.

The prevailing, "mainstream" approach to equity is more of a balanced one: although the social background of students does to a huge extent determine their educational outcome, education has some room for manoeuvre to compensate for the negative impact on educational outcomes due to low social status. Therefore, the question is how to enhance this compensation capacity of schools. This balanced view is the underlying approach in the definition of equity, produced by an OECD expert group in 1997: "Educational equity refers to an educational environment in which individuals can consider options and make choices based on their abilities and talents, not on the basis of stereotypes, biased expectations or discrimination. The achievement of educational equity enables females and males of all races and ethnic backgrounds to develop skills necessary for them to become productive, empowered citizens. It opens up economic and social opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, race or social status." (OECD 1997.)

For several decades educational inequalities were tackled almost exclusively within the framework of equal access to education. However, the focus of thinking gradually shifted from access to teaching and from teaching to learning outcomes. This shift is not independent from the fact that inequalities, measured by indicators of a traditional kind (such as enrollment rates at different levels of education or dropout rates), show a fairly favorable picture for most of the countries in Europe, especially if viewed

from a global perspective. The true reason, however, for the need to reconsider the interpretation of equity in education is the emerging new paradigm of educational science and educational policy: *the learning outcomes based approach*. According to this, all aspects and subsystems of education are worthwhile to be viewed through the lens of the very purpose of educational services, i.e. results of the learning process.

The learning outcomes based approach is a paradigm that incorporates two parallel processes in the theory of educational policy: the gradual *reconsideration of relevant knowledge* in education, that is, the shift of emphasis from prefabricated knowledge to applicable knowledge (i.e. competencies), and the development of the *lifelong learning model* that refocuses our attention on learning rather than teaching, shifting it from education service providers to learning pathways. The reconsideration of relevant knowledge in education was forced by various reasons mutually strengthening each others impact, such as a growing emphasis on the instrumental aims of education, the collapse of the knowledge monopoly of schools, the sudden emergence of easily accessible knowledge and the transformation of traditional academic frameworks for the structuring of knowledge. Parallel to this, and as a consequence of the prevailing lifelong learning paradigm, educational policies have started to put stronger emphasis on learning and learner instead of teaching and teacher, having also started to apply a holistic approach to education systems that call for a stronger link between various levels and strands of education, and poised to better adjust the supply of education services to actual demand. Even the obvious must, occasionally, be emphasized: when shifting our attention from the issue of access, by learning outcomes, we mean something significantly different from what is meant by pure knowledge; what we mean here is competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes) that open up avenues of additional learning opportunities and the successful application of knowledge in very diverse working and social contexts. According to a simple but easily applicable definition provided by a CEDEFOP study "Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do after completion of learning." (CEDEFOP, 2008.)

The learning outcomes based approach is becoming the framework within which contemporary national educational policies are formulated and which also serves as the foundation for co-operation networks within the most influential international organizations such as OECD and the European Union. In this respect the first very important steps were taken through the launch of a programme called Definition and Selection of Competences (DeSeCo) in 1997, which provided an underlying framework of assessment for the first PISA survey in 2000. This initiative was followed up by the European Union via adopting a list of key competences meant to function

as a common framework of reference. (Commission, 2005.) Although the EU's work schedule in education for a period ending in 2010 sets benchmarks that equally contain traditional and learning outcome-based indicators, the policy initiatives of the European Union for the second part of the decade, such as the European Qualifications Framework, clearly rely on an approach based on learning outcomes. The first attempt to apply that approach in achieving equity in education is the work of the EU Cluster on "access and social inclusion in lifelong learning" that refers to equity as "strategies to diminish the correlation between educational outcomes and the socioeconomic background of learners". This approach creates a balance between the two approaches, allowing the consideration of their relative weight to be left depending on various contexts associated with individual countries.

These initiatives are instrumental in promoting the application of the emerging, new approach to educational policies at national level. National qualification systems, assessment and quality management systems, curricula and standards, are getting more and more "competency-based" at all levels of national education systems. However, an increasingly learning outcome-based character of certain segments of governance and policies does in fact make the approach – still focusing strongly on access and relying on participation being oriented towards equity – quite obsolete. (This is more visible in countries where access and participation-related problems are insignificant.) Therefore, when applying the learning outcomes based approach to the special problem of equity in education it does not only imply focusing on learning outcomes in the course of identifying inequities in education. It also refers to an approach to educational policies. This shift in approach entails an effort to be made in order to understand the underlying reasons for learning outcome disparities, the use of a different set of policy instruments designed to incite, support and force schools to perform according to legitimate, external expectations ("governing by learning outcomes") and the reconsideration of policies that directly address the issue of underachievement by certain student groups. *(See: Part 3.)*

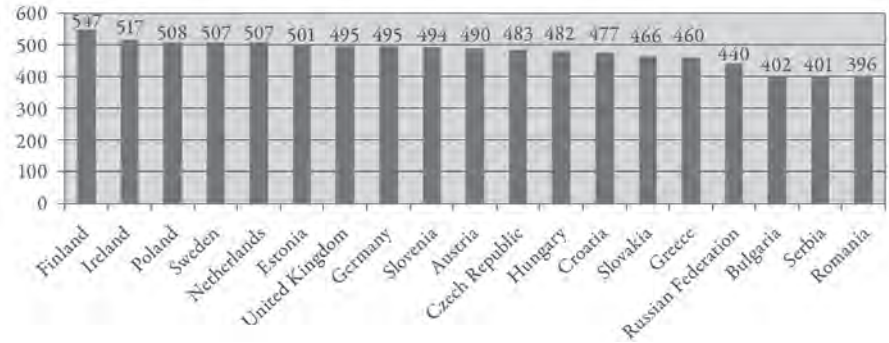
1. REGIONAL EQUITY PATTERNS

1.1. The Central-European regional pattern

By taking some risk arising from simplifications, we can identify three different regional patterns on the North-West/South-East axis of Europe. Countries in Northern Europe can be characterized by a high level of social equity with a fair distribution of high or medium quality educational services, which generates high average performance levels in the education systems of these countries. At the other end of the axis are countries in South-Eastern Europe, where much more significant social inequalities are combined with relatively low-quality educational services. The average level of performance in the education systems of these countries is, consequently, low.

A clearly visible regional pattern is to be seen in the case of Central European countries. This pattern is characterized by the average performance of those countries. For example, according to the 2006 PISA survey, performance figures of students of 15 years of age in terms of their reading skills are lower than the OECD average, these Central European countries score between 494 (Slovenia) and 466 (Slovak Republic).

Figure 1.1 Average literacy scores in selected European countries (PISA 2006)

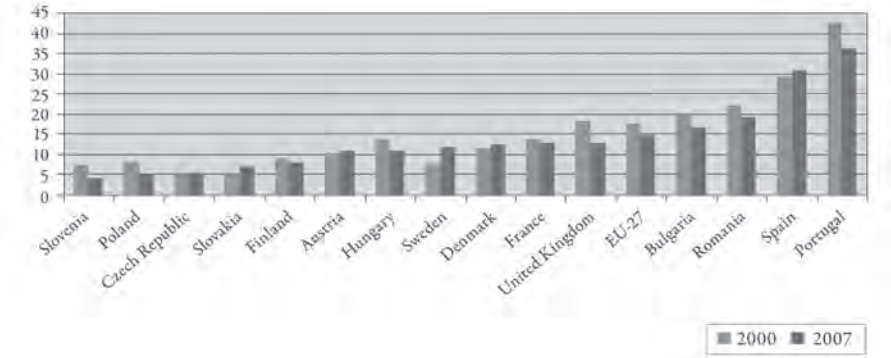


Source: OECD PISA 2006.

As it has already been mentioned, the equity of education systems can be measured by traditional, student attainment-related indicators as well as by learning outcomes. A common characteristic of Central-European countries is that our judgment of the level of equity in these countries largely depends on the indicator (and the underlying

approach) we have chosen. These countries perform rather well if assessed from a traditional point of view. For example, in relation to the proportion of early school-leavers, all of the five countries involved are among the eight top performers in Europe.

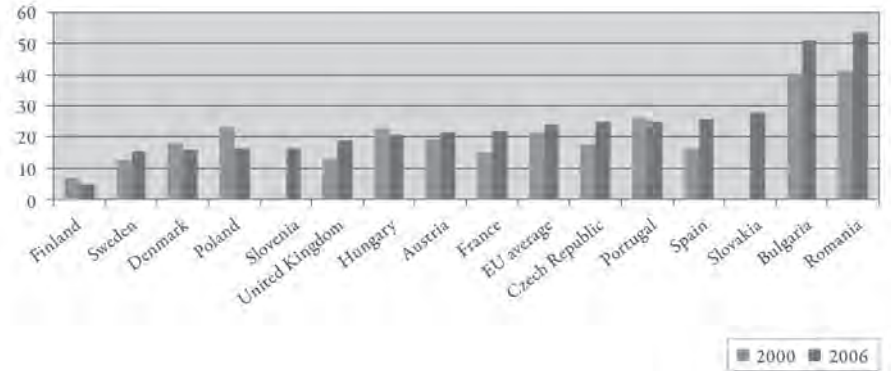
Figure 1.2 Early school-leavers. The percentage of the population aged 18-24 with lower than upper secondary education and not in education or training (2000 and 2007)



Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

However, the picture is very different if we look at equity in terms of learning outcomes in these countries. Take the proportion of 15-years-olds whose reading competencies are at level 1 or lower; the results of these countries are seen being dispersed all over the EU's 27 average.

Figure 1.3 Percentage of students with reading literacy proficiency level 1 and lower on the PISA reading scale (2000 and 2006)



Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

The above-mentioned regional patterns along the north-west/south-east axis of Europe are visible, in this respect, too. For example, while the proportion of students with very poor reading competencies is the lowest in the Scandinavian countries, their percentage in Bulgaria and Romania was higher than half of all 15-year-olds in 2006.

Performance characteristics	North-Western European Countries	Central-European Countries	South-Eastern European Countries
Access and participation related problems	Mild	Mild	Serious
Average learning outcome performance	Good	Medium	Poor
Inequalities in terms of learning outcomes	Mild	Medium	Strong

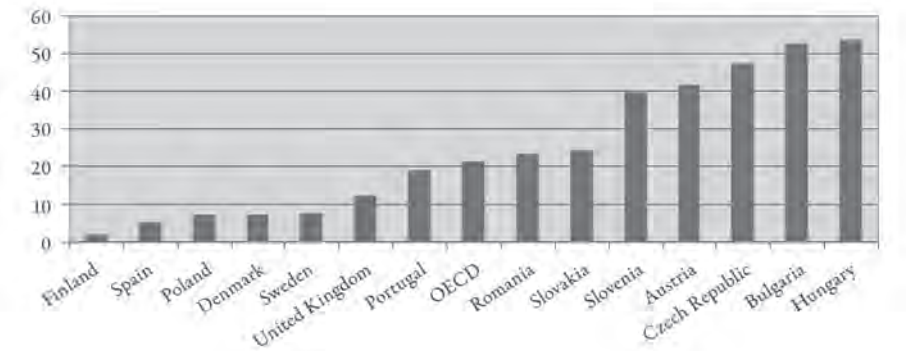
When referring to specific regions in Europe with a common heritage and similar characteristics in their education systems, we are bound to view former communist countries and countries in what used to be Yugoslavia as distinct regions. In fact, there are diverse aspects regarding both performance parameters and the systemic features of education systems in these countries that show remarkable similarities. However, if we dig deeper into the performance profile of these countries, we will find that these regional borders are not necessarily applicable. An analysis of the results of the PISA survey seems to suggest, for example, that Poland is much closer to North-European performance patterns than to the Czech Republic, its Central-European neighbour. Also, Slovenia and Croatia are much closer in this respect to the Central-European regional pattern than to Serbia. Therefore, when pursuing an obviously valid and relevant regional approach to educational problems, we should not confuse these regional patterns with the old political structure of Europe.

1.2. Regional characteristics: high selectivity of education

According to most analyses, the similarity between the results of the Central-European countries is caused by a most striking, common characteristic of their education: a high level of selectivity within these educational systems. An analysis of data pertaining to student achievement proves that bigger performance differences among the schools lead to a lower level of overall average performance in the system.

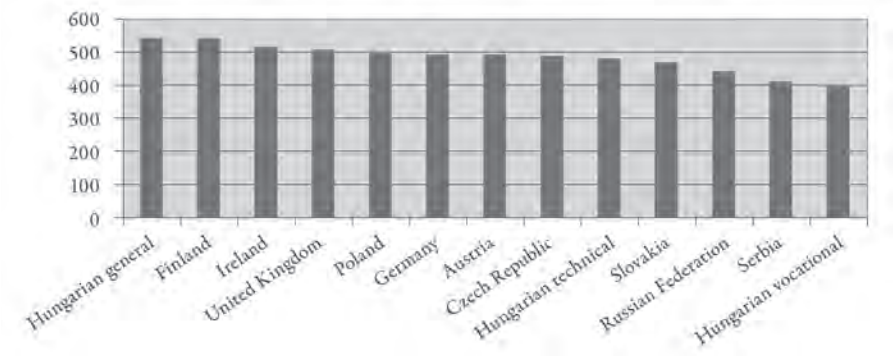
Of course, selection by itself is not necessarily a problem; no country runs fully comprehensive school systems throughout the entire period of compulsory education, something that it is not even desirable. The question is the extent to which inevitable selection at certain points is unfair, and the extent to which streaming students to different strands of education is perceived to be creating performance differences. As it will be seen in the section on the impact of the socio-economic status of the family of students, education systems in various countries of the region redistribute students according to their background among different strands of secondary education.

Figure 1.4 Between school variance explained by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status of students and schools 2006



What is even more striking is the impact of selection on learning outcomes. For example, according to the PISA 2003 results for Austria, the difference between the performance of students in academic secondary schools and general secondary schools (ISCED 2) is 100 points in literacy and 88 points in math. (Simon, 2008). The same survey has revealed an even greater performance gap among the three strands of the Hungarian secondary schools (ISCED 3). The difference between the average performance of students in general secondary schools and in vocational schools is 148 points in literacy and 146 points in math. In Hungary, where education seems to be the most selective system among the Central-European countries, there are sub-systems that perform at the level of effectiveness of the most successful countries, while there are others underperforming any European country in terms of effectiveness. Data suggest that – although the extent of the impact of selection varies – this pattern prevails in other countries of the region, too.

Figure 1.5 Average literacy performance of students in the three Hungarian secondary schools types in international comparison (PISA 2003)



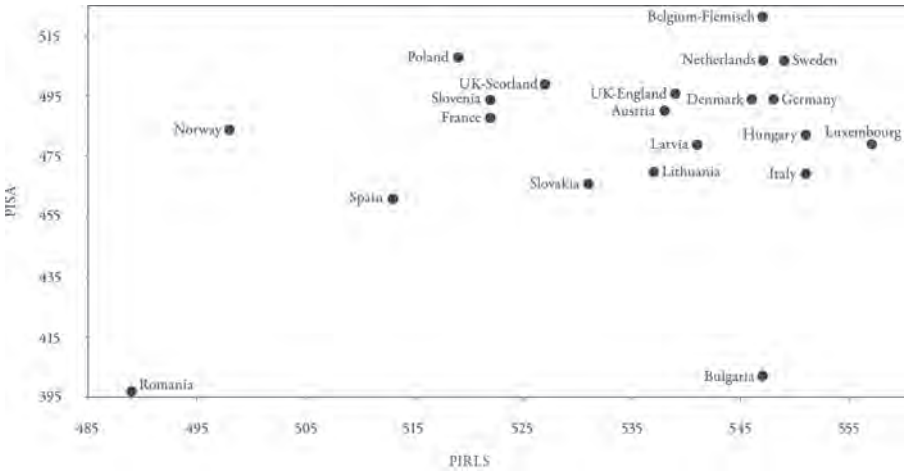
Source: the calculations of Péter Vári

Obviously, disparities measured at the age of 15 arise much earlier. The question is when and where. The need for an answer is supported by the fact that four countries of the region (Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia) have also participated in the PIRLS survey. Although both surveys are aimed at reading skills, they are not directly comparable. PIRLS is geared to competencies at the end of grade 4 (10-year old students) and the tests thereof refer to a common curricular basis. PISA is for the age group of 15-year old students and is disconnected from the curricula, its measurement framework being created on the basis of definition of competencies in the DeSeCo project of OECD. These are the very differences that make the comparison between PIRLS and PISA findings interesting.

Internationally, all of the four Central-European countries have performed better in PIRLS than in PISA. Due to the above mentioned differences between the two surveys, there are two possible options for interpretation: (i) education in these countries is much more focused on curriculum-based knowledge than on everyday, practical competencies, (ii) younger students are better prepared in literacy competencies than students at the age of 15. Bearing in mind everything what we know or presume about typical teaching styles in the schools of the region, we may assume that teaching is still very much oriented to curricular knowledge. Since reconsideration of desired learning outcomes is an ongoing process in all of these countries, there has been a time shortage in this context in spite of deliberate policies aimed at supporting the realignment of teaching. Another interpretation also seems applicable to schools of the region. From grade 5 onwards classroom teaching is replaced by subject teaching.

Although this involves a concurrent change of schools only in Austria, the shift itself is not less dramatic in other countries of the region. Alignment, goals, style and methods of teaching in grade 4 are still substantially different from those in grade 5, subject teaching being not oriented towards the development of practical competencies anymore. (According to a Hungarian saying, up to grade 4 teachers teach students, from grade 5 onwards they teach subjects.) To sum it all up, it is the last two years of ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 where the attention of policies should, most probably, be focused.

Figure 1.6 Country performance in PIRLS and PISA (2006)



Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

The issue yet to be addressed is why a high level of selection intensifies the negative impact of certain dimensions of inequalities on learning? The most likely answer lies in the difference between teaching and learning in homogeneous and heterogeneous classrooms. If good achiever students learn together with low achievers (who are most probably students with an unfavorable socio-economic background), setting high expectations is supported favourably by a classroom climate created by the best-performing students. In such an environment supporting low achievers in catching up with other students is much easier even through the use of traditional teaching methods. A homogeneous classroom of students from a low socioeconomic background almost automatically lowers the performance expectations of teachers that will determine

both their daily assessment practice and their teaching strategies in general. The reverse impact – a typical worry for parents of high achiever students – is much weaker, good performing students do not necessarily perform under their learning potential as a result of the heterogeneous composition of the class. This impact of selection is clearly demonstrated by the complaints of Hungarian primary school teachers educating 7 and 8 grade students about the negative impact of the fact that the best achieving students are very often "creamed off" by six grade academic secondary schools. (These secondary schools enroll approx. one tenth of the students of these two grades and are considered as schools for the elite.)

2. DIGGING DEEPER INTO SELECTION: THE DIMENSIONAL ASPECTS OF EDUCATIONAL DISPARITIES

The source of educational disparities is the impact of a wide range of social inequalities. These social dimensions (and very often their combinations) may all impose a negative impact on learning. In order to understand the educational mechanisms that connect social disadvantages with school failure, we have to estimate the relative weight of the different dimensions of inequalities and their relevance to educational outcomes. This is what we call the equity profile of the education system. Mapping out the equity profile of education systems is instrumental in estimating the capacity of schools in compensating for the negative impact of social disadvantages. (Although it is beyond the scope of this report, country-based analysis may be used as a form of assessment regarding the changing weight of different dimensions on the basis of the analysis of longitudinal data.)

In this overview, we are focusing on five major social dimensions:

- Socio-economic status;
- Ethnicity;
- Personal abilities (in education referred to as special educational needs);
- Residential status;
- Gender.

Educational policy-making in these Central-European countries does not put the same kind of emphasis on various dimensions of inequalities. This is due partly to the differing weight of specific dimensions in these countries, while it also reflects the perception of the importance of various possible sources of educational disparities.

In addition to these, obviously, available information does in fact shape the policy agenda. If certain types of information are not accessible, certain types of educational disparities will remain invisible. (We will return to the information needs of policy-making in the next sections of this paper.) When trying to better understand the common regional patterns of inequities briefly outlined in the previous section by mapping out the similarities and differences of the equity profiles of each country, an attempt will be made to distinguish between the relative weight and the policy perception of various dimensions.

2.1. Socio-economic status

The socio-economic background of children entering formal schooling in the Central European countries is a little bit more favorable than the European average; the proportion of children with parents from an educational background below upper secondary school is lower, the proportion of those with upper secondary education is higher than the European average. In terms of the percentage of parents with a background of higher education, only former communist countries in Eastern-Europe have less favorable data than other countries making up the EU average.

This data is of crucial importance as the educational background of parents has a great influence on the decisions they make on their children's education. According to the results of a Hungarian research on the parents' aspirations regarding the education of their children, parental decisions are strongly determined by their drive to preserve the status they have reached in the first place. Any further investment in the education of children, opening up an opportunity for intergenerational mobility (i.e. for reaching a higher status), is a question of cost-benefit considerations. This pattern of parental aspirations strengthens the role of education in the reproduction of social inequalities. *(Tanulás Magyarországon, 2005.)*

Table 2.1 Children aged 3 to 6 by the educational level of parents

Country	Educational attainment of parents %		
	Low	Medium	High
Czech Republic	5.66	73.41	20.93
Hungary	16.30	61.44	22.26
Austria	10.57	61.42	38.00
Slovenia	4.94	57.03	38.03

Slovakia	9.72	71.94	18.34
EU 27 average	18.96	47.74	33.29

Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

As far as the impact on the learning performance of students of the socio-economic status of their families is concerned, this is the most strongly emphasized dimension of educational disparities in the Central-European countries – and for good reasons. The analysis of PISA results clearly illustrates that educational attainment has a great influence on learning results, especially in Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. This relationship is getting less significant both in Austria, and, to a huge extent, in the Czech Republic. (The dramatic decline of the extent to which parents' education explains the variance of results in reading performance in the Czech Republic calls for deeper analysis, especially in the light of other data such as an increasing proportion of students performing either at proficiency level 1 or lower in PISA, or a very strong influence stemming from the occupational status of parents.)

Table 2.2 Effect of the highest level of parental education on student performance in reading since PISA 2000 (selected European countries)

Country	Variance explained %		
	2000	2003	2006
Finland	3	4	4
Norway	3	3	2
Sweden	3	4	3
Austria	9	7	4
Czech Republic	14	9	3
Hungary	18	14	14
Slovakia	-	9	9
Slovenia	-	-	9
OECD average	8	6	6

If we look at the occupational status of parents, the overall picture for the region is not conspicuously different; the power of this factor in explaining the variance of reading results is more significant.

Table 2.3 Effect of the highest occupational status of parents on student performance in reading since PISA 2000 (selected European countries)

Country	Variance explained %		
	2000	2003	2006
Finland	6	5	6
Norway	8	7	8
Sweden	8	7	8
Austria	13	15	11
Czech Republic	15	10	13
Hungary	17	13	13
Slovakia	-	12	11
Slovenia	-	-	13
OECD average	11	9	10

In the Central-European countries the socio-cultural status is a very strong aspect of social stratification, especially in comparison to Scandinavian countries or countries in South-East Europe. It is even more important when education builds heavily on the work of the students at home, as is the case in the region. Therefore, with the exception of Slovakia, the impact of this background variable is stronger in the region than in the case of the European average.

Table 2.4 Reading performance of students by the level of cultural possessions in the home (PISA 2006) (selected European countries)

Country	Students with a low level of cultural possessions in the home (Bottom quarter of the index)	Students with a high level of cultural possessions in the home (Top quarter of the index)	Difference
Finland	514	570	56
Norway	443	520	77
Sweden	475	536	61
Austria	458	537	79
Czech Republic	446	523	77
Hungary	426	515	89
Slovakia	426	487	61
Slovenia	452	528	76
OECD average	458	527	69

The economic, social and cultural index of PISA (ESCS) combines the above-mentioned social background indicators. It is not surprising that even minor changes in this index may result in substantial differences in achievement in the Central European countries. The assumption that this strong impact of socio-economic and socio-cultural background on learning is, to a certain extent, the result of the selective nature of these education systems, does not seem far-fetched at all.

Table 2.5 Relationship between student performance in reading and the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) 2000, 2003 and 2006 (selected European countries)

Country	Score point difference associated with one unit of the ESCS		
	2000	2003	2006
Finland	29	30	28
Norway	38	44	41
Sweden	36	41	37
Austria	46	54	44
Czech Republic	51	44	60
Hungary	45	48	57
Slovakia	45	51	-
Slovenia	39	-	-
OECD average	38	41	41

The impact of these disparities on the prospective learning career of students is obvious. Since enrollment in higher education does – to a certain extent – depend on achievement during the compulsory education period, those with a more favourable background and better learning results are more likely to go on to higher education. It creates a contradiction where more meritocratic higher education intake regimes do not necessarily lead to more equitable chances for university enrollment as unfair educational disparities are created in the earlier stages of learning. Obviously, the same applies to participation in adult learning.

Table 2.6 Probability of going on to higher education based on the education level of the father of 25-34 year olds in selected European countries

Country	Highest education attained by father			Odds ratio (High/Low)
	Low	Medium	High	
Hungary	0,04	0,19	0,59	34,5
Poland	0,10	0,28	0,77	30,1
Czech Republic	0,04	0,11	0,50	24,0
Slovakia	0,05	0,18	0,45	15,5
Italy	0,10	0,32	0,63	15,3
Belgium	0,33	0,57	0,84	10,7
Portugal	0,17	0,55	0,62	8,0
France	0,35	0,62	0,80	7,4
Austria	0,15	0,29	0,46	4,8
Slovenia	0,09	0,25	0,32	4,8
United Kingdom	0,42	0,51	0,76	4,4
Sweden	0,31	0,49	0,64	40,0
Finland	0,34	0,43	0,52	2,1

Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

2.2. Ethnicity

Another possible dimension of social inequalities that has been emphasized strongly is the ethnic background of students. In three out of the five countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) this dimension is, unquestionably, almost completely associated with the educational failure of a high proportion of Roma students. Also, this question is widely considered as the most tangible failure of these education systems; in spite of a history of almost two decades of efforts and investments focusing on the improvement of the educational achievement of Roma students, the results thereof are hardly visible.

All country notes from the three countries indicate that due to the absence of data the method of identifying educational disparities in terms of measured learning outcomes is not applicable in the case of Roma children. (A widely used but questionable information substitute is based on the shortcut between Roma ethnic affiliation and low socio-economic status that does not bring us any closer to the understanding of underlying educational problems.) As a consequence, there is a "double discourse" on education, one that is, generally speaking, based increasingly on learning outcomes,

and one on the education of Roma children with an exclusive focus on participation indicators that empirical sociological research can provide. Indeed, the participation gap between Roma and non-Roma students is still wide. However, the reasons for this continuing gap remain ambiguous. For example, the connection between ethnically neutral social status-related problems and issues related to ethnicity such as the different forms of discrimination, cannot be separated.

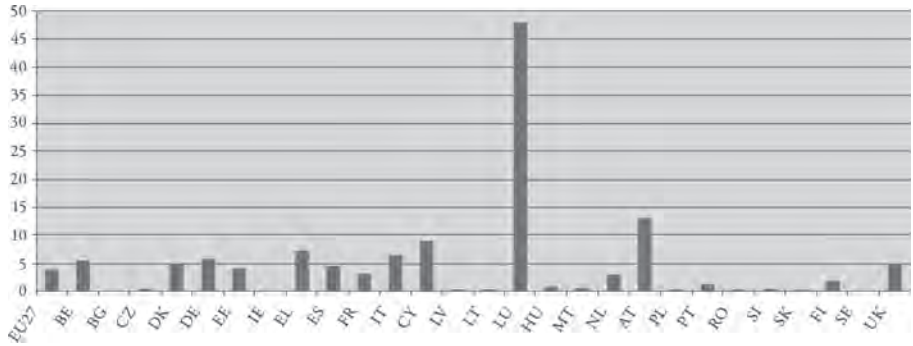
Table 2.7 Estimated number and proportion of Roma students in the Central-European countries

Country	Estimated Roma population (thousands)	The estimated proportion of the Roma population (%)	Estimated number of Roma children under 18 (thousands)	Estimated percentage of Roma children under 18 (%)
Czech Rep.	160-300	2,25	110,4	48,0
Hungary	550-600	5,69	245,5	42,7
Slovakia	350-370	6,67	156,6	43,5
Slovenia	7-10	0,43	3,9	46,4

We are slightly better supplied with data on learning outcomes in relation to other forms of ethnicity: the education of students with a migrant background. However, in the Central-European region it is only Austria where the number and proportion of migrants places this aspect on the educational policy agenda. One of the many indications of the relative failure of immigrant students is provided by the 2006 PISA survey. According to results from Austria, the reading performance of first generation immigrant students was lower by 48 points, while that of the second generation students was lower by 79 points than the performance of native students. All over Europe, these differences were only bigger in Austria than in Belgium and Germany.

Another country with a relatively large immigrant population is Hungary, but the overwhelming majority of immigrants moving to Hungary, particularly in the first part of the nineties, were ethnic Hungarians from neighboring countries. Hungary also has a relatively significant immigrant population of Chinese nationals. We have no evidence regarding their performance in education, while purely anecdotal information seems to suggest that their performance is not poor when compared with that of students who are of Hungarian origin.

Figure 2.1 Percentage of children aged 3 to 6 with migrant background of the total number of children in the same age group in 2006



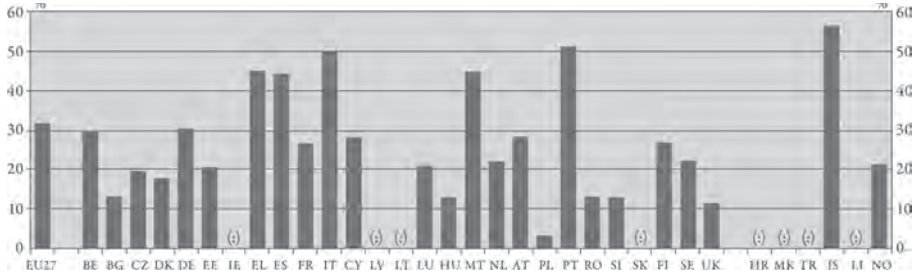
Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

The number of various student groups with diverse (Roma or immigrant) ethnic affiliations definitely shapes the agenda of these countries; Austrian educational policy focuses strongly on immigrants; the Czech, Slovakian and Hungarian agenda is dominated to a great extent by the education of Roma children, while in Slovenia ethnic affiliation is not an outstanding equity issue. However, due to the massive population decline in countries of the region and their intensifying global linkage, the importance of the capacity of education in providing success for immigrant students will also grow in countries other than Austria.

It happens very often that the educational problems of both immigrant and Roma students are dealt with separately. However, we may assume that the reasons for their failure are rooted in the very same deficiencies of the education systems. In other words, we cannot assume that if an education system fails to provide learning success for Roma children, it will be able to do this for immigrant children. One of the indications for the similarity of underlying reasons is the fact that both immigrant students in Austria and Roma students in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary are overrepresented in special education.

Another type of ethnic affiliation with educational relevance is the fact that a large number of national minorities live in all of the countries of the region. Although most observers and policy-makers are convinced that the performance of students with national minority affiliation is not poorer than that of the students of the majority society, no evidence is available to support this assumption.

Figure 2.2 Percentage of early school leavers with migrant backgrounds 2006



Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

2.3. Special educational needs

A high proportion of students with special needs in education in the former communist countries of Central Europe is a phenomenon widely considered to be another sign of the selectivity of their education systems. (Although comparable data for Slovakia is not available, information available appears to suggest that the proportion of children with special needs is not lower than in the Czech Republic or Hungary.) Since this number largely depends on the mechanism of students being recognized (or labeled) as students with special education needs, this data does not reflect the real number of students with health-related detriments to their learning ability.

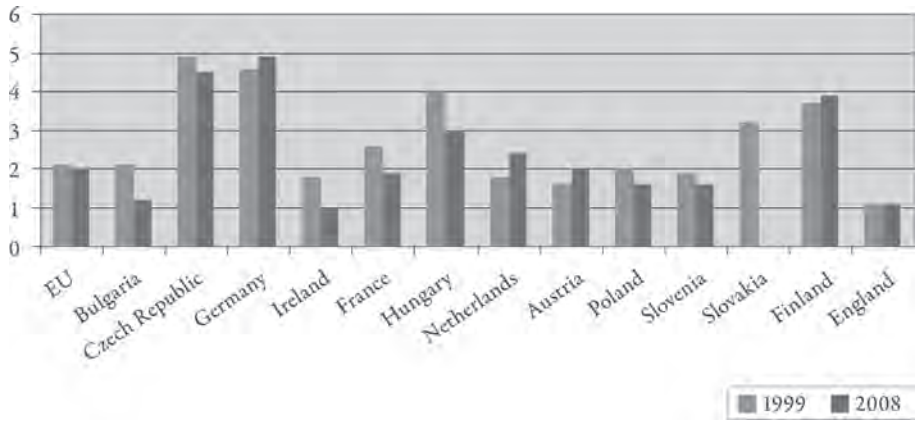
Table 2.8 Percentage of pupils in compulsory education recognized as having special education needs (in all educational settings) 2006 and 2008

Country	**2006**	**2008**
Czech Republic	9.3	8.6
Hungary	7.0	6.0
Austria	3.6	4.1
Slovakia	-	-
Slovenia	-	5.4
EU	3.6	3.6

Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

The question attracting attention is the intensity of the separation of these children in education. This policy problem has, since the eighties, been on the political agenda in Austria, while in other countries of the region it only became one of the major equity requirements as late as the second half of the 1990s. In addition to the genuine, special needs related to educational considerations, integration has become one of the most widely discussed problems because of its strong links to the problems regarding the education of Roma students. (In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, Roma students are overwhelmingly overrepresented in special education settings that are considered to be one of many ways of ethnic segregation.) Although an increasing pressure for integration in the Czech Republic and in Hungary has resulted in a decline in the proportion of students with special needs to be educated in segregated settings, that number is still fairly high. In Hungary, where the decline of segregation of children with special needs is significant, there is no evidence suggesting that this phenomenon goes hand in hand with an improved inclusion capacity of schools. Integration without preparing the schools for inclusion is called "rigid integration", which does not necessarily provide a better learning environment for children with special needs.

Figure 2.3 Percentage of pupils in compulsory education with special needs in segregated settings in selected European countries 1999-2008



Source: Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training 2008.

2.4. Residential status

The most obvious example illustrating the phenomenon that the agenda of educational policy is strongly shaped by data available is the fact that the only country with contribution to a comparative overview on equity in education addressing the impact of residential status on learning is Hungary. The reason for this is that the PISA survey and other international surveys that are the major sources of awareness regarding inequalities in learning outcomes are based on sampling; therefore, they do not provide representative data for this dimension. (Of course, statistical data on participation patterns is available in all countries involved.) In Hungary, however, the "National Assessment of Competences" has since 2001 highlighted the issue of "settlement slope" of basic competencies.

Table 2.9 The average performance of Hungarian students in reading and math learning in the schools of different settlement types (2004)

Settlement type	Literacy		Math	
	6th grade	10th grade	6th grade	10th grade
Budapest	542	523	539	522
County seat town	533	510	532	510
Small town	507	484	502	480
Village	484	437	478	432

Source: National assessment of competencies 2004.

However, a further analysis of these results has proved that the unequal distribution of learning outcomes is not necessarily caused by the quality differences of education that schools in different settlement types offer. With the use of the "SES added value index" the number of schools, either underperforming or performing better than expected on the basis of the social composition of their student intake, can be estimated. In this respect, the performance of small schools in small villages does not necessarily reveal a significant difference from that of any other school. In other words, a discrepancy in the learning outcomes of students in the schools of various settlements is caused by a difference in the social composition of students. (Kistelepülések kisiskolái, 2005.) Bearing this in mind, we are back, yet again, to the huge impact of socio-economic status. In spite of these findings, the weight of settlement differences is still very high on the Hungarian equity agenda.

Table 2.10 Socio-economic added value: the performance of schools in relation to their expected performance in math and literacy

School type	Schools with better performance than expected (%)		Schools with weaker performance than expected (%)	
	Math	Literacy	Math	Literacy
Small schools of small villages	10	9	7	9
National	7	6	7	8

Source: Kistelepülések kisiskolái, 2005.

2.5. Gender

The problem of gender differences in learning outcomes is another example, illustrating in this case the fact that not even well-documented disparities appear to have a strong influence on the educational policy agenda. As has been demonstrated by the PISA survey, the literacy performance of boys is better and the underperformance of girls is more significant in Central-European countries than what OECD figures seem to point to as average. At the same time, the only country in the region where this dimension is on the educational equity agenda is Austria. Although other countries in the region also address this dimension of performance disparities, the intensity of policy intervention is lagging far behind when compared with the increasing weight of the problem.

Table 2.11 Gender differences in reading performance (PISA 2006)

Country	Gender differences (M-F)
Czech Republic	-46
Austria	-45
Slovakia	-42
Hungary	-40
OECD average	-38

Gender differences in terms of learning outcomes are combined with two other possible types of problems: the different participation patterns in formal schooling for male and female students and the socialization impact of education that helps the survival of an unequal power distribution between men and women.

2.6. Possible reasons for high selection pressure

A brief overview of the equity profile of education systems in the five Central-European countries affected, outlined on the previous pages, clearly demonstrates that – with the only possible exception of gender inequalities – all disparities of measured learning outcomes have something to do with the markedly selective character of these systems. In fact, selection intensifies the effect of all these dimensions of social inequalities on learning outcomes. However, the most important question still remains unanswered: what are the reasons behind the high selectivity of these systems? In other words: what are the characteristics of the education systems of the Central-European countries that generate high pressure for selection and segregation?

In order to answer this question, more educational research is needed in addition to the measurement of students' learning outcomes. Nevertheless, a brief distillation of certain findings may orient further research without offering more than an "educated guess" on the underlying reasons for selection. The possible problems to be outlined below may all contribute to the pressure for selection and segregation. However, what is important is their summative impact; they alone do not necessarily explain high selection.

School structure

Undoubtedly, the more fragmented the learning pathways an education system offers, the stronger the likelihood of unfair selection. This is quite obvious in the case of early selection in Austria at the entry to lower secondary education, or in the case of the Hungarian six grade elite academic secondary schools that cream off students with the highest achievement levels in the 7th grade of primary schools. However, the example of several other European countries shows that school structure does not necessarily make selection unfair to this extent. Instead, the question is how students already enrolled are selected when there is a shortage of places in certain school types. The closer the selection method brings the process to a meritocratic ideal the more limited the space available for the better-off. There are experiments using lottery for selection. This, in fact, is a fair selection procedure. However, it has nothing to do with the actual performance of students. A better approach might be to gear capacities to actual needs as much as possible and to use selection mechanisms based on the standardized external measurement of the key competencies of students.

Pedagogical methods: the lack of differentiation

The fact that traditional teaching methodologies in homogeneous classrooms contribute to the generation of greater learning outcome disparities among schools, this leading to lower average performance in the whole system, has already been mentioned. What we also need to understand is the impact of this pedagogical pattern on school enrollment policies and on the way learning is organized within schools. The traditional teaching methodology (known as "frontal teaching"), characterized by the lack of the use of the methodological toolbar of differentiation and the absence of an individualized approach to teaching, generates pressure to form homogeneous, "easily teachable" classes. The most important characteristics of traditional teaching are tangible in the phenomena attributable to circumstances where the instruction of an entire class is a dominant factor, teaching is driven by coverage of text and curriculum, where a single text prevails, a single definition of excellence exist, assessment is almost exclusively summative at the end of a learning session, student differences are acted upon when problematic, student behavior is teacher-driven, problems are solved by teachers and time is relatively inflexible. (Tomlinson, 1999.) Since this type of teaching has to face serious difficulties in the selection of methodological adjustments required when in a classroom of students with diverse backgrounds, it generates a "self-protection" drive to guide students who would otherwise "cause problems" to special education settings. This is the underlying reason why the extent to which certain student groups can be educated in an integrated setting is determined by the preparedness of ordinary schools in the first place.

Written and walking curricula

An absence of differentiation is, typically, combined with elitist expectations towards children. Even if the problem of "curriculum overload" is solved by fully competence-based national core curricula that are completely free from content (as in the case of Hungary) the expectation of teachers may remain elitist. In addition to this, determining goals to be pursued in schools and the content of education is very much the monopoly of the "profession" (i.e. that of teachers and subject experts who develop curricula and school programmes). As a consequence, setting goals for educational services is not separated from the actual design of curricula and programmes. It is important to note here that elitist expectations (based on the cultural code of the educated middle class, and, therefore, have an exclusive impact on low status students) are not to be mixed up with high expectations individualized and mostly oriented towards the success of learning.

Biased expectations

Expectations towards students with an ethnic affiliation are very often biased, (i.e. are based on stereotypes) and frequently lead to double standards (i.e. lowering of expectations towards Roma or migrant children). Since teachers' expectations are self-fulfilling prophecies, biased expectations have a detrimental impact on the learning performance of students. Biased expectations – combined with the low inclusive capacity of schools – generate huge pressure for the segregation of Roma students and for those with special needs. This internal pressure is often supplemented by an external pressure for segregation by those social groups whose influence on the most important decisions affecting the school is strong. Very often schools cannot resist this pressure even if they have the intention to do so.

The negative side-effects of decentralization

What follows is an illustration of decentralization being one of the most important conditions for achieving greater equity in education. Countries of the region are at different stages of the decentralization of their education sector. This process ensures more room for schools to adjust teaching strategies, the organization of learning, institutional policies and the internal allocation of financial and human resources to the actual composition of students they educate. However, decentralization has certain counter-productive side-effects as well, which call for intervention. For example, strengthened institutional school autonomy in determining enrollment policies as well as in determining the profile of education provided by the schools is in most cases combined with a free choice of schools. In an internal and external environment, in which pressure for selection is great, this leads to a well-known phenomenon in the region known as the "white flight". It means that if the number or the proportion of Roma or immigrant children reaches a certain level, white middle-class parents take their children to another school, which leaves the original school with an almost homogeneous Roma or immigrant student group. Another potential shortcoming of decentralization is a possible effect stemming from an unequal distribution of all sorts of resources considered crucial in ensuring equity in education. If public administration and fiscal decentralization is not matched with an appropriate policy coordination mechanism and financial equalization schemes, decentralization may generate a more visible difference between schools.

Financial and organizational interests.
The combined effect of the declining number of students due to demographic reasons, the per capita-based financial allocation system and the rigidity of the system in perpetually adjusting the capacities to the number of students, are phenomena that account for strong competition among schools for "enrollable" children. (This is stronger in countries with per capita financing systems like Hungary or Slovakia, and weaker in Austria, where the compensation of teachers is fairly centralized.) The winners in this competition are schools capable of offering attractive programmes as early as the first grade, which leads to strong selection at an early stage. Certain policies artificially generate interest for segregation by rewarding special education and Roma education programmes via supplementary funding. An additional aspect of organizational interests is the manner in which school principles are selected and their work evaluated. If teachers have a say in the selection of principles, and if the performance of principles is not assessed by the owners of the schools on a regular basis, their primary reference is associated with the inner world of the schools rather than expectations set by education management agents outside those schools. In these cases – and this is typical for the Central-European region as a whole – principles are the prisoners of the "self-protection" efforts of teachers, whose work is not judged upon the success of schools, either.

The weight of these possible reasons for a strong selection pressure might, of course, be hugely different in various countries and there might be other, hardly visible reasons absent from this list. Nevertheless, the list may suggest that combating selection, which is one of the most characteristic features of the education systems in the region, is far from being a simple task to perform.

3. POLICY OVERVIEW

3.1. The policy implications of the regional pattern of inequities

As we have seen in the previous sections, the vast majority of educational disparities that can be described through the traditional indicators of participation (dropout and repetition rates, enrollment in low-value added programmes and dead-end strands of education, early school leaving, etc.) are generated by failure in learning. Identifying inequities in terms of learning outcomes allows for a better understanding of the reasons behind school failures, which also allows for policy adjustment to the specific context within which inequities are generated. We have also seen that there are crucial similarities between Central European countries, particularly in connection with the selective nature of education systems, demonstrated by the social sorting of students and a strong power experienced in the context of school differences when it comes to interpreting the discrepancy between learning outcomes. In fact, unfair selection increases the negative impact of different dimensions of social inequalities on learning, and individual schools are not able to compensate for these effects.

What are the implications of this pattern for policies aimed at the reduction of educational disparities considered to be illegitimate? At this point it might be worthwhile to return to the three regional patterns along the north-west/south-east axis of Europe mentioned earlier on. In the Scandinavian countries, characterized by low social sorting among schools (i.e. the mainstream system is rather equitable), directly targeted development of students who are at risk of failure is appropriate. In countries of South-Eastern Europe, where the social sorting of students is less significant than in Central European countries, while the internal effectiveness (performance) of education is poor, heavy investment in the improvement of the quality of educational services in all schools seems to be the appropriate approach.

In regions other than these two, the most effective policy alignment might be another policy alternative: that of addressing the quality of education in underperforming schools. This is something recommended by the PISA 2003 report: "Another key issue is whether to target low-performing schools or students. The proportion of performance variation between schools, (...) can provide a useful indicator in judging the appropriateness of particular policy approaches. If there is little performance variation between schools, as in Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Poland or Sweden, then school-level policies aimed at improving the performance of low performing students are likely to be more effective. By contrast, in countries

such as Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and Turkey, significant performance difference between schools would suggest that policies should target low-performing schools, at least within each type of school where the system of education is stratified." (OECD PISA 2003.) This conclusion of the PISA survey – one that has been largely unnoticed – also suggests that a particular type of intervention that offers stronger chances for success is targeted at certain schools rather than certain student groups.

This, however, does not mean that certain measures, aimed to address specific obstacles to the success in learning of certain student groups, are not important. There are specific problems that cannot be dealt with effectively via development schemes being geared to the needs of underperforming schools in areas such as language barriers, social disadvantages, segregation etc. Let us take the example of the education of Roma students. The educational failure of a high number of Roma students is caused by the combination of four different types of problems. Each problem type can be addressed by a policy toolkit (policy model) designed to respond to specific obstacles to success in learning:

The roots of Roma underachievement	**The appropriate type of policy**
Poor quality of educational services (Roma students are enrolled in underperforming schools)	*Targeted school improvement* (colour-blind mainstream policy, targeting underperforming schools regardless of the ethnic composition of students)
Interethnic relations (status differences among Roma and non-Roma, demography, institutional support)	*Affirmative action* – often called: positive discrimination (supplementary, colour-conscious preferential and developmental measures)
Minority rights (access to culture and mother-tongue instruction, involvement of self-organized minorities)	*Minority education programs* (supplementary, mother tongue, bilingual, cultural or multicultural programmes)
Human rights (hidden or institutionalized discrimination, segregation)	*Anti-discrimination policies and anti-bias training* (supplementary, colour conscious)

Source: Radó, 2001.

If we look back on the last decade of educational policies in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, what we see is a huge investment in the improvement of the education of Roma students with very modest results. (The same applies to all sorts of programmes of international donor agencies.) Of course, sometimes there are illusionary expectations towards education in this respect. However, the relative failure of education is well documented. One of the underlying reasons for this failure is the fact that these policies and developments fall under the category of supplementary policies, while – due to the lack of targeted school improvement – the main features of the education system have remained unaffected. In other words: what really matters is the capacity of the whole education system, especially that of individual, ordinary schools in achieving a minimum level of equity for all students, regardless of their ethnic background.

This logic does not only apply to the education of Roma students. Without the targeted development of underperforming schools, the separation/segregation pressure of the system can hardly be reduced and the impact of supplementary measures will remain relatively limited. Also, this is the main reason why various good practices in particular schools remain isolated and cannot be scaled up. Obviously, without generating demand by generating development in underperforming schools, good practices and working solutions currently available will not be applied in other schools.

Not losing sight of this problem, let us look at recent measures and programmes in participating countries as they are outlined in the country reports. A brief overview of policies in the following sections is based on the distinction between *mainstream* and *supplementary* policies. Mainstream policies are changes in the whole education system that – intentionally or not – have an impact on the equity of the system, or on conditions that allow for the implementation of other policies aimed at making the system more equitable. (The term 'mainstream policy' is not identical with the widely used term "mainstreaming" meaning the integration and inclusion of particular students groups. Nevertheless, in most cases successful mainstreaming is the result of successful mainstream policies.) Supplementary policies are targeting certain student groups or may target entire levels or segments of the system for the purpose of solving specific problems of particular students groups.

"Mainstream policies"	"Supplementary policies"
Self evaluation-based school improvement efforts by the staff and management of schools is in the focus	Additional support provided to students, teachers, schools and other actors is in the focus
Aim at improving equity across the entire system	Aim at improving the learning success of specific student groups
Target underperforming schools	Target specific student groups
Based on the identification of underperforming schools	Based on the classification of targeted student groups
Use the instruments of governance of education adjusted to this purpose	Specific measures are implemented by incremental policy-making or development projects

3.2. Mainstream policies for greater equity

This section is based on a specific, underlying assumption. Obviously, promoting quality, effectiveness and equity in education is, sometimes, a set of contradictory goals. However – in spite of many different trade-offs within the context, outlined earlier on, of Central European countries – targeting underperforming schools and promoting differentiated teaching in all classrooms may well serve all of three wider, public policy objectives. At the level of this generality, such goals are not at all contradictory. Having said that, we need to be aware of the fact that in a much more specific context of the actual design of policies and policy instruments, trade-offs are paramount and need, almost without exception, to be considered. One example is the design of tests intended for the external assessment of the achievement of students. These tests may serve either formative (quality improvement) or summative (accountability) purposes. Since one test fits only one purpose, the entire quality evaluation system should create a balance between two, equally crucial, objectives.

The point of departure for any mainstream policy is the fact that only deliberate and systematic development efforts by the staff and management of schools can solve problems. To put it differently, schools cannot be developed from outside. *School improvement* (which is, in fact, identical with *school-based quality management* systems oriented towards the development of students in their learning performance) can be delegated to schools as a mandatory task, performing which can be enforced, condoned and supported, but the main responsibility for problem-solving still lies with the schools themselves. This work should be based on reflection; self-evaluation is the process through which school are able to identify their specific equity, effectiveness and

quality-related problems, which allows for the interpretation of external expectations and that might lead to the identification of specific areas in the operation of school that will be targeted along the whole school improvement cycle.

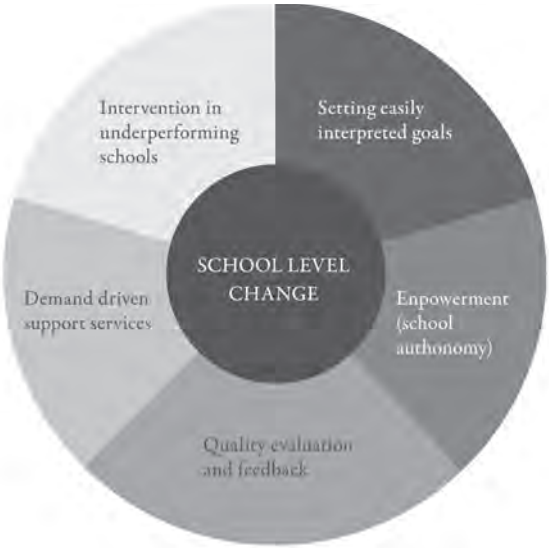
Viewed from this vantage point, considerable differences exist among the five Central-European countries in question. Self-evaluation is the mandatory task of schools in Austria, Hungary and, since 2007, the Czech Republic, but this activity is not yet properly supported or condoned in any of these countries. It has been recommended for Slovenian schools but is yet to be made mandatory via legislation. In Slovakia there is no such expectation set towards schools. Generally speaking, the improvement of schools based on self-evaluation is an essential area for development in all of these countries.

Mainstream policies are built on school-based development. Their primary purpose is, therefore, to create a systemic environment around the schools that can make this happen. The framework for mainstream policies is outlined by the Hungarian country report. (Keller, 2008.) This framework is the model known as "governing by learning outcomes". It is based on the following algorithm: (Radó, 2008)

- *Setting easily interpreted minimum standards*, that is, goals and targets determined in terms of competencies for all schools;
- *Empowerment*, i.e. ensuring the necessary space and autonomy that allows the school to adjust teaching, organization of learning, institutional strategies, policies and processes to new external expectations;
- *Quality evaluation*, i.e. external evaluation (whole school inspection), regular measurement of the achievement of students (i.e. the performance of school) and providing feedback on evaluation/assessment results;
- *Demand driven external professional services* for schools and teachers that adjust to the very diverse development needs of schools;
- *Intervention*, i.e. identification of underperforming schools and targeted developmental intervention.

Setting standards, evaluating, assessing and providing feedback on the extent to which these goals are met by schools and targeted intervention in case of poor performance altogether constitute an entire performance management system in education.

Figure 3.1 The educational policy model of "governing by learning outcomes"



Source: Radó 2008.

The most serious limitation of this approach lies with the fact that it cannot be applied without having certain – sometimes rather expensive – systemic conditions in place. However, without deliberate investment in these systemic conditions, education systems with characteristics described earlier on, prevailing in the countries of Central Europe, can hardly be made more equitable. A brief overview of the extent to which the necessary instruments are in place in the countries of the region is necessary in order to grasp the capacity of these education governance systems to develop and implement mainstream policies.

Setting goals

As far as the mechanism of setting targets for schools is concerned, this can be easily interpreted as and translated into school and teaching strategies (i.e. by setting targets in terms of required student competencies). All countries have taken crucial steps in this respect. For example, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are in the implementation stage of major curricular reforms. In relation to content regulation (input/process and outcome regulation) there are two distinct patterns in use. In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, outcome standards are incorporated into curricular documents.

In this system of regulation setting, achievement standards (output regulation instruments), as distinct from national curricula and programmes (input regulation instruments), would be redundant. This raises the issue, which seems to be relevant for an equity point of view, that issuing separate curricular frameworks for various specific educational purposes (such as special education, education in art, education of minorities, etc.) almost automatically leads to separate sets of standards. However, there is an important question to be answered: how many standards are needed in order to set common, minimum requirements for schools? There is a widely shared view that inputs and processes should be adjusted to different aims and specific students groups, but minimum standards should be applied to all schools and all students. The pattern of content regulation in Austria and Hungary is different; in these systems curricular and outcome regulation is separated more clearly. However, the only country to have started to develop a new output regulation mechanism is Austria; it has already started to implement standards for grades 4 and 8 and for vocational education and training. In Hungary the only standards in place are examination requirements for the graduation exam in secondary schools; there are no standards in use for imposing backward regulatory impact for primary and lower secondary education, these levels are still process-regulated.

Empowerment of schools

Education systems are getting decentralized for a number of different reasons such as the growing scale and complexity of education systems, the shortage of public resources and problems related to the flow of information. There are two additional reasons that are very relevant for an equity-related perspective: the heterogeneity of the clientele that schools have to adjust to and the implications of school-based quality assurance in general. Both considerations generate a need for the extension of the organizational, financial and professional autonomy of schools. (At this point it is worthwhile to make a distinction between public administration and fiscal decentralization, which do not necessarily increase the autonomy of schools, and that aspect of decentralization which is related to the educational service and focuses on school autonomy, i.e. on decision-making competencies and responsibilities delegated to schools.) As far as the empowerment of schools is concerned – in spite of the considerable difference in relation to the extent and scope of the autonomy of schools (having Hungary at the one end of this spectrum and Slovakia at the other) – schools in all of the five countries affected have (or will have in the near future) the necessary room for maneuver that will allow them to adjust to new external expectations.

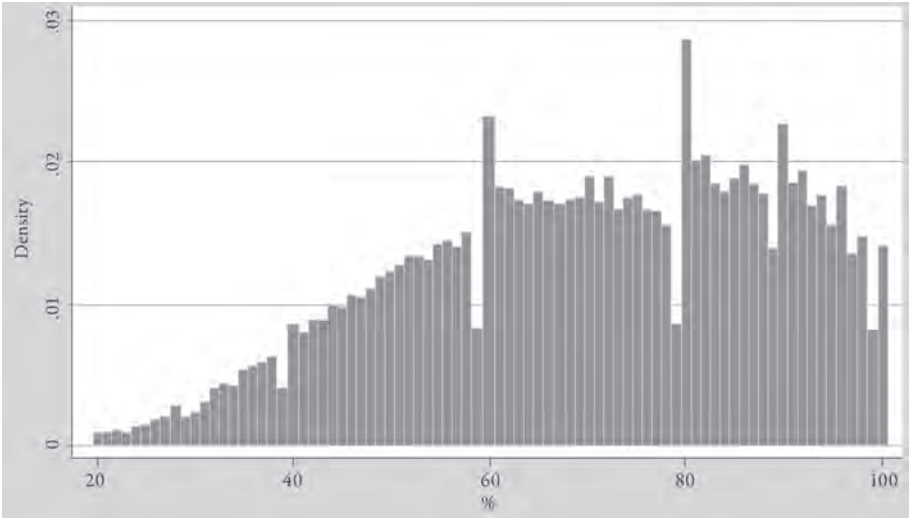
Quality evaluation

In terms of upgrading systems to be capable of serving the purpose of quality evaluation, the overall picture is a little bit less positive. The Czech, Austrian and Slovenian external school evaluation mechanism is more or less up to the task, the transformation of the old control oriented inspection in Slovakia has also started. In Hungary – although the task is, in theory, delegated to the owners of the schools – external overall school evaluation does, in actual fact, not exist. As far as regular measurement of the competencies of all students (i.e. performance of schools) is concerned, the pattern is exactly the opposite of what we have seen in the context of inspection. The only country that has been operating a full-scale testing system since 2001 is Hungary (the National Assessment of Competencies). However, the Hungarian measurement system is, actually, used exclusively for formative purposes; therefore, accountability functions (i.e. identifying underperforming schools, publishing the aggregated results of schools) are not ensured. The Czech Republic has experimented with several measurement projects, while Slovakia tested all 9th grade students in 2007 and Austria is setting up the necessary testing administration framework in connection with the trial of new standards. Experience accumulated in these projects, along with development schemes, provide a good basis for further improvement of the measurement systems in these countries.

The lack of information on the performance of students and schools, provided via external assessment, causes an additional problem. Since information shapes policy, the lack of information leaves policies unshaped. In other words, until the information basis of policy-making is provided mainly by traditional statistical data, policies will largely remain input and processes oriented.

It is important to note that standardized, external secondary school-leaving exams (which exist in Slovenia and Hungary while introduction is pending in other countries as well) do not replace external assessment. Due to the high stakes attached to each of these examinations, tests are not designed to produce reliable, comparable feedback on the performance of schools. (It is clearly demonstrated by the distribution of the results of the Hungarian secondary school graduation [*érettségi*] exam.)

Figure 3.2 The distribution of math school-leaving exam results in Hungary (2005)



Professional support

With the exception of Hungary, professional services provided for schools are typically supply-driven systems, although they can be changed to become more responsive to the diverse development demands of schools. However, even in Hungary, the large investment in the development of education funded by EU structural fund resources turns an initially demand-driven professional support system into one driven substantially by central government agendas. (Regardless of the way in which the support system is organized, creating quality assurance in pertinent services is one of the key conditions of successful development in schools.)

Targeted developmental intervention

Since quality evaluation systems are not yet capable of identifying underperforming schools (in the case of Hungary the system is neither designed nor used for this purpose) a targeted mandatory, development-based intervention in these schools is not possible. Certain countries may use target substitutes as in the case of the Hungarian Vocational School Development Program (2002-2006), through which the development of an entire underperforming segment of the school system was attempted. In Austria a similar temporary solution would be to focus development efforts on general secondary schools.

Since combating school failure by improving the results of underperforming schools is a genuine problem of effectiveness, when designing the content of mainstream intervention, literature on the effectiveness of large schools may be a useful source to use. The following list of the key characteristics of effective schools is a distillation of this type of literature, purely serving the purpose of demonstration.

What works in general?
- Achievement focus, high expectations;
- Good leadership;
- Cohesion of teaching staff;
- School programme, rich learning opportunities;
- School climate;
- Self-evaluation capacity of the school;
- Classroom climate;
- Planned and structured teaching;
- Effective use of learning time, self-managed learning;
- Differentiated teaching;
- Monitoring of the progress of the students, feedback and reinforcement.

(Scheerens. J. et alia 2003.)

School improvement and school-based quality management is a widespread practice in many European and non-European countries that have accumulated a vast amount of experience and know-how that countries in Central Europe may turn to.

3.3 Supplementary policies

As it has been mentioned earlier on, when emphasizing the need for a professional accountability type of intervention, this does not at all mean that supplementary interventions can be replaced or dropped. Such measures and development schemes directly address certain obstacles to the learning success of certain student groups.

The countries of the region use a wide range of such developments, many of them having grown out of different NGO programs in the 1990s. Many of these programmes have proved to be very successful even if – due to the obstacles outlined in the previous sections – they are rarely scaled up and have very often been unsustainable. It is not the purpose of this paper to provide a full overview of these policies, sometimes even individual country reports have had difficulty putting together a full inventory.

However, a structured indication of policy types is needed.
Targeted supplementary policies:
These are policy measures, programmes and developments that address specific education-related problems of individual student groups in a targeted way.

- Target groups are the students themselves. For example, mentoring of Roma students in Hungary.
- Target groups are teachers teaching specific student groups. For example, anti-bias training for teachers educating Roma students in Slovakia and elsewhere, multicultural training for teachers in Slovakia, differentiated teaching training for teachers educating disadvantaged students and inclusion training for teachers in the Czech Republic, gender sensitive education training in Austria.
- Target groups are schools educating specific student groups. For example, providing supplementary human resources (e.g. Roma teacher assistants) for schools educating Roma students in the Czech Republic and Slovakia or support teachers in support classes in Austria, supplementary financial resources for opening zero/preparatory classes for disadvantaged children in the Czech Republic and Slovakia or the "Arany János" dormitory and vocational school programme in Hungary.
- Target groups are local self-governments. For example, mandatory school district regulation and mandatory development of "equal opportunity plans" by local self-governments in Hungary.
- Target groups are other players in education. For example, the revision of the work of expert committees in Hungary and the Czech republic, non-biased school readiness testing in Slovakia, establishment of Roma Education Centers in Slovakia.

Universal supplementary policies: All sorts of policies and developments basically justified by equity related considerations but extended to all children.
Examples of this are:
- Policies aiming at increasing kindergarten enrollment in Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.
- Extending participation in day care in Austria and Slovakia.
- Additional resources for employing school psychologists and guidance advisors in the Czech Republic.

Addressing non-educational obstacles to learning: Very often the reasons for failure or obstacles to further participation have very little to do with the quality of education services available.

Examples for such policies and programmes are:

- A programme in Hungary known as "Training embedded in employment".
- Individual scholarship schemes in Hungary and Slovakia.

As this brief overview – which is far from being complete – demonstrates, there might be an endless menu of programmes addressing a wide range of problems. However, the efficiency of all these programmes cannot be taken for granted solely on the grounds that they serve good purposes. Since even the evaluation of large scale government programmes falls short of being mandatory in the countries of the region, ideas regarding these programmes far outnumber the amount of evidence available on their impact and the sustainability thereof. Therefore, one of the key areas for development in relation to supplementary policies is to have access to information on solution alternatives that really work. Evaluation is particularly important for channeling the experience and know-how accumulated via supplementary measures and initiatives directed at school development in other schools through creating a modularized offer of such development schemes.

There is a visible shift in the manner in which supplementary policies are moved from individual teachers towards entire schools. What is known as the *entire school approach* is a genuine feature of mainstream policies but the planners of supplementary policies are also increasingly aware of the fact that any development targeting individual teachers will have a tendency to remain isolated within the school. In addition to this, sustainability of development can also be ensured solely by targeting an entire institution. This kind of policy design is reinforced by a shift of emphasis towards basic competences. Unlike subject knowledge, the development of competences (such as reading literacy) cannot be designated to individual teachers; this type of learning outcome is the unified result of almost all teachers educating the same students. This strengthens the value of organized cooperation among teachers.

A typical problem in the design and implementation of supplementary policies is the way in which different measures are financed. In several cases additional financial and human resources assigned to schools are incorporated into the normal allocation of financial resources. It is done by amendments to regulations that recognize the specific cost of certain additional services. Therefore, schools become entitled to using part of their budget for these services. Another way of performing the task of ordinary financial allocation is a per capita-based grant supplement offered for specific purposes, regardless of whether that supplement is earmarked or not. The problem with both allocation mechanisms is that it is hard to connect these resources with well-defined outcome expectations. Moreover, due to the weakness of evaluation systems,

typically, there is no appropriate information on the actual impact of these measures. Policy makers simply take it for granted that the resources made available for different purposes serve the goals of a particular policy well. Another alternative is a set-aside scheme that allocates resources on the basis of applications (project plans) developed by schools. In this case financing takes place on a contractual basis that broadens the horizon for setting concrete outcome expectations and also for external monitoring. The operational costs of this financing method are much higher. Recently, Hungary has been experimenting with set-aside schemes for the use of available resources.

Another difficulty arising from supplementary policies is related to classification problems. The basis for information in respect of these policies is created by the classification of a targeted student group. However, the definition of students with special educational needs, socially disadvantaged students or students "with multiple disadvantages" is very difficult and should be developed on the basis of information available. This is the reason why it is an extremely complicated task to directly assign certain support schemes to Roma students as regulations on the protection of sensitive personal data do not allow for the collection of statistical data on ethnicity.

3.4 Underlying policy assumptions revisited

There are certain underlying policy assumptions that educational research or the experience of other countries in the Central-European region do not necessarily support. Revisiting these assumptions, partly in the light of certain findings of this comparative overview, partly on the basis of former educational policy research, might be one of the positive outcomes that mutual learning among the countries of the region may generate.

The following examples are extracted from country notes on equity in the five Central-European countries.

- The ongoing process of decentralization in education in Slovakia is expected to equalize uneven distribution in the quality of educational services. The Hungarian experience, along with experience in other decentralized education systems, seems to prove that it does not happen automatically, and deliberate policy intervention is needed to enforce a minimum level of acceptable quality throughout the country.
- One of the ongoing debates in Austria is on introducing comprehensive schooling in lower secondary education by amalgamating two parallel school types in order to reduce early selection. The age of the earliest selection point does in fact matter, especially if there is strong pressure for selection in the system. However, experience

in other countries of the region illustrates that although they have theoretically "comprehensive" schools, their systems are not less selective, which proves that the reasons for pressure of selection cannot be dealt with simply by changing the school structure.

- Several policies are based on the assumption that more education leads to better results. This is the case in relation to zero/preparatory classes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia or in the context of day care in Austria. Although this may eventually work, the gap between the performance of countries in Central Europe, measured by progression and learning outcome indicators, calls for some precaution. Only evidence provided by evaluation and the measurement of student achievement can confirm these assumptions in every individual case.
- The plan to extend preparatory classes to two years in the Czech Republic is based on the assumption that more of the same working solution brings even more benefit. However, this is not necessarily the case. For example, research findings in Hungary on the reintegration of children into mainstream classes have proved that successful reintegration is extremely difficult after two years of separated education and it rarely happens. In addition, the possible gains from this extension can be lost in later stages as two years in preparatory classes will artificially increase the number of over-aged students in grades 7-8. (In Hungary, the approach is different: in cases when a child's readiness for school is in doubt, parents have the right to keep him or her one year longer in the kindergarten.)
- The experience of Hungarian policies demonstrate that combating the discrimination of Roma students by the prohibition of segregation (and enforcing prohibition) without improving the inclusive capacity of schools does not lead to visible results by itself; it simply forces local school maintainers and schools themselves to replace one form of discrimination by another. The success of anti-discrimination policies largely depends on the successful removal of the reasons of pressure for selection referred to above.
- One of the policy considerations mentioned in the Slovakian country report is the widely shared assumption that smaller classes create a more learner-centered teaching environment. From the point of view of learning outcomes, education research and evaluation itself do not support this assumption. Learning outcomes do not show any correlation with class size. Instead, they are mostly determined by the extent to which the methods of differentiated teaching are used by teachers. (Differentiation does not mean individual teaching of each student.)
- Specific problems such as environment, civic attitudes, racism etc. are often targeted via the introduction of new content in the curricula, in some cases in

the form of separate subjects. (An example of this is the introduction of human rights education within the framework of civic education in Slovakia.) Evaluation experience, however, does not fully support the assumption that the content of education shapes the attitude of children.

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