

**THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

**Report on Education Policy 2007**

*National report on the implementation of the Education and Training  
2010 work programme*

**BRATISLAVA, APRIL 2007**

## CHAPTER 1: PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY

### 1.1. Current state of play :

#### 1.1.1 Implementation of the lifelong learning strategy

The Slovak Republic (hereinafter only SR) had no strategy of lifelong learning (hereinafter only “LLL”) and lifelong guidance (hereinafter only “LLG”) till the end of 2006. This situation had not been accommodating legitimate interests of citizens and employers, public sphere on all its levels and educational institutions, hence four most important players in the area of human resources development and employment. In the April 2007, the Government of the SR has adopted *The LLL and LLG Strategy*, put forth by the Minister of Education, which is defining implementation procedures and tasks bearers till 2015.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1.2 Plans for future adjustments, completion or modification of the strategy

In order to ensure future adjustments and modifications of *The LLL and LLG Strategy* requested by situation and in the interest of its progressive completing and sustainability, the Ministry of Education of the SR will prepare and adopt the plan for implementation of *The LLL and LLG Strategy* in September 2007. This plan will define procedures for accomplishing main objective, priorities and specific targets and will identify resources. At the same time, the Ministry of Education of the SR will put forth a bill of the Act on LLL in autumn 2007, which will be a legal framework regulating LLL in the SR. The Ministry of Education of the SR plans in mentioned intentions also these completion steps during 2008:

- to implement validation of non-formal education and informal learning outcomes by establishing national authority that will authorize natural and legal persons for recognition of non-formal education and informal learning outcomes for the purpose of attaining partial or full qualification and direct validation of non-formal education outcomes through accredited non-formal educational programmes in modular form with assigned number of credits;
- to implement system of LLL and LLG quality management through national authority functions authorized to certify educational institutions, to accredit non-formal educational programmes in modular form with assigning credits to particular modules; to certify lecturers and managers of non-formal education and career guidance counsellors.

Also planned system of continuous monitoring and forecasting development of educational needs in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and educational institutions, that will be able to react on changing labour market needs and deployment of information system for LLL and LLG, will be the part of completing *The LLL and LLG Strategy*.

#### 1.1.3 Obstacles encountered in the establishment of the strategy

Obstacles expected in strategy implementation reside in particular in resistance of formal system towards validation of education got in the non-formal system, and also in the lack of interest within the decisive sphere to create conditions for implementation of innovative features into non-formal system and resistance of formal educational system to accept these features.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/72D2F96631133B00C12572BA002D7D25?OpenDocument>

## **1.2. Comprehensiveness, coherence and relevance:**

### **1.2.1 Covered systems and levels of education and training**

Most important reason for developing *The LLL and LLG Strategy* was the need to systematically cover existing educational sub-systems (formal, non-formal education and informal learning), mutually open and interconnect them into functional relations supplemented with LLG so that they accommodate real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and educational institutions. Realization of strategy objectives will facilitate access to education, to getting new qualifications and to employment during whole active life of citizens. The strategy relates to primary schools, secondary schools, higher education institutions, further education and adult education.

### **1.2.2 Challenges addressed by the strategy**

Fundamental challenge within the strategy is to complete the LLL and LLG systems so that they would facilitate access of citizens to repetitive and flexible attaining of the new qualifications through high quality education got also in non-formal education and informal learning systems, besides formal one. Other challenges are solving situation regarding low number of adults participating on further education and high unemployment rate of young people.

Evidence basis for identifying such a challenge were SWOT analyses of the educational sector pointing out the fact, that Slovak educational and guidance system has been reacting insufficiently to labour market needs over last decades. This is showing up in particular in:

- absence of open lifelong learning system for the labour market;
- insufficient ability of formal educational system to react flexibly to arisen needs of new qualifications by developing and deploying new educational and study fields;
- mutual separateness between formal and non-formal educational system;
- absence of the recognition of non-formal education outcomes for the purposes of attaining qualification;
- insufficiently guaranteed quality of non-formal learning from the side of the state;
- absence of continuous monitoring and exploration of educational needs on the level of state administration;
- absence of lifelong guidance system for all phases of education and active life of a human;
- insufficiently transparent and effective manner of financing formal and non-formal education and informal learning;
- insufficient development of key competences for lifelong learning.

### **1.2.3 Priorities for action and policy development within strategy, in the light of these challenges**

- ensuring quality and openness of the LLL and LLG systems;
- monitoring and forecasting of educational needs of citizens and employers;
- transmittance between non-formal and formal educational systems;
- recognition of non-formal education and informal learning outcomes;
- providing complex information services for LLL and LLG, effective investments to these areas and development of *learning regions*;
- effective planning and drawing of structural funds for completing and development of LLL and LLG systems;
- development of key competences for LLL.

### **1.3. Main policy measures:**

#### **1.3.1 Main policy measures in the strategy and their mutual relations**

- passing the Act on LLL by the National Council of the SR;
- establishment of the national authority that will authorize natural and legal persons for validation of non-formal education and informal learning outcomes;
- developing the National Qualification Framework and National Qualification System.

The Act on LLL will regulate relationships between formal education, non-formal education and informal learning and conditions of the LLL system activity in the SR through its components. The Act on LLL will propose, that tasks of developing and implementing methodology, quality control and management of validating non-formal education and informal learning outcomes would be performed by the national authority - the Ministry of Education of the SR.

Legislative intention of this act envisage, that non-formal education and informal learning outcomes validation will be carried out by verification – by comparing qualification requirements for performance of specific working activities in the National Qualification System with actually achieved and proved level of knowledge, skills and competences of applicant by examination at authorized body.

#### **1.3.2 Measures designed to address progress towards achieving the EU benchmarks including national targets in these areas**

The SR is achieving very good results of comparative indicators in two EU benchmarks: (1) to decrease average rate of early school leavers below 10% of the total number till 2010; (2) to achieve at least 85% share of 22-years-old with completed upper-secondary education till 2010. At the same time, the SR has achieved highest growth of number of mathematics, science and technology graduates within the EU in the years 2000 – 2003.<sup>ii</sup>

However, the SR achieved insufficient results in evaluation of reading literacy in the knowledge and skills research of 15-years-old students (PISA) that took place in the OECD and partner countries and in the EU benchmark relating to participation of adult working age population in LLL.<sup>iii</sup>

Measures that will support progress in achieving the EU benchmarks are focused in particular on broadening possibilities of participation on education (mainly non-formal education) also on the basis of providing information on possibilities to educate for specific job opportunities through LLG.

Moreover, the measures will enhance education quality and validation of its outcomes on the level comparable to formal education. The national objective within the benchmark to LLL from the document of the EU Council No. 8486/03 EDUC 73 is to attain participation of 25-64 years old adults in LLL in the Slovak Republic on the level of 15% till 2015.

The Act on LLL, which is now being prepared, is the framework for these measures.

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<sup>ii</sup> Source: Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training – Staff working document of the EC – Report 2006

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

### **1.3.3 Allocation of resources to main policy measures, including national targets for more efficient use of funds and the use of EU funds to support of lifelong learning**

The bottom line of financing non-formal education in the SR will be the implementation of financing tools considering following criteria: level of financial requirements to public resources, administrative complexity of implementation and realization, multi-resource principle including ensuring share of non-formal education participants, transparency, controllability and degree of misuses. Also finances from the EU structural funds, in particular the European Social Fund, could be used for financing non-formal education. (Information on using these financial resources in programming period 2004-2006 is provided in annex).

### **1.3.4 Measures to change attitudes to learning**

*The LLL and LLG Strategy* aims to accomplish change in attitudes towards learning by changing of paradigm of citizens' attitude towards their own education by means of tools making non-formal education equal to formal one. Desired positive shift in attitudes of citizens, employees as well as employers towards education will be achieved by this form ensuring simplification of citizens' access to education, bringing education closer to a citizen, broadening educational possibilities in further education institutions, possibility of dividing educational process into several phases according to individual needs and last but not least, by increased quality and tools for controlling the level of education.

### **1.3.5 Strengthening evidence-based policy making, using a culture of evaluation, leading to innovation in education and training**

The specific target of *The LLL and LLG Strategy* is to deploy information services for lifelong learning and establish conditions for implementation of innovations into education also by utilizing the principle of *learning regions*. Specifically, by creating preconditions for development of *learning regions*, where regional networks of various institutions create tailor-made services for projects of providing LLG and LLL, including realization of "second chance" type of programmes. These networks should contribute to sustained accommodating needs of individuals as well as all local and regional authorities in the field of LLL and LLG. The SR is standing at the beginning of creating information system on lifelong learning containing detailed actual information about network of institutions, about programmes, local and regional conditions and access to career guidance.

### **1.3.6 Measures to target the needs of disadvantaged people**

The strategy incorporates proposal of effective career guidance system that will cover interests and demands of target groups of any age and status (also the disadvantaged and immigrants). The guidance system means accessibility of quality services for children, youth as well as adult, for people who are participating in formal education system as well as for people not participating, employed as well as unemployed, for various types of disadvantaged groups on the labour market, but at the same time also for interested persons from the major society.

## **1.4. Development, implementation and dissemination of the strategy**

### **1.4.1 Coordination and consultation mechanisms involving all relevant stakeholders**

The Ministry of Education of the SR, as the central body of state administration responsible for lifelong learning, will coordinate implementation of specific measures and will prepare action plan

deploying the strategy in cooperation with involved ministries, state administration, self-government and social partners. Detached department for the LLL has been established within the abovementioned ministry as response to all actual intentions of European policies in the field of education and due to need of existence of department coordinating agenda in this area.

#### **1.4.2 Implementation arrangements, including publicity and dissemination**

The Ministry of Education has obtained the European Commission grant for implementation and publicity of *The LLL and LLG Strategy* for the period of January – November 2007. Workshop focused on exchange of knowledge, best practices and suggestions of experts from the LLL field and a conference for approx. 200 participants where objectives, intentions and tasks of *The LLL and LLG Strategy* will be presented to expert public and where steps for its implementation will be discussed, will take place within fulfilling obligations resulting from the project.

Also issue of expert thematic publication is planned activity within the grant. The Ministry of Education of the SR will publish all actual information, materials, documents etc. relating to implementation of *The LLL and LLG Strategy* into practice on its web page. Regularly held press conferences of the Minister of Education will serve for this plan as necessary.

Also *The National Programme for Learning Regions*, that will be submitted and passed in second half of 2007 on the basis of the plan of main tasks of the Ministry of Education of the SR, can be included among implementation measures and impulses. There will be established such mechanisms, so that *learning regions* will adjust *The LLL and LLG Strategy* to their own conditions and needs and implement it in the most suitable manner.

### **CHAPTER 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSVERSAL POLICY OBJECTIVES**

#### **2.1 Establishment of national qualification system and framework**

National ministries responsible for qualifications (the Ministry of Education of the SR and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR) will define and decide on extent of National Qualification Framework for the Slovak Republic (specifically which systems and subsystems will be covered by specific authorities in charge) on the basis of realization procedure draft for the European Qualification Framework implementation in conditions of the SR put forth by the Ministry of Education of the SR, which will be discussed by the Government of the SR in May 2007.

With active support of the Government of the SR, not only cooperation among ministries and labour market institutions will be enhanced, but also greater coherence among particular areas of the Lisbon process and *The Education and Training 2010 Programme* will be created contributing to important synergic effect.

It will be possible on this basis to approach to development of the National Qualification System from the side of the Ministry of Education of the SR and to development of the National System of Occupations incorporated in the National Qualifications Framework from the side of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR. The National Qualification System will be realized and established through the national project co-financed from the European Social Fund by direct assigning to the contractor.

The basic purpose of establishing the National Qualification System in the SR (in particular in relation to LLL) is to enable separation of classification criteria for attained qualification level and

type (in particular competences) from the place and way of attaining competences corresponding to respective qualification level or qualification type.

This should be achieved by the manner enabling inclusion of not only existing, but also newly originating qualifications and educational programmes into particular qualification levels. The purport why to establish the National Qualification System is also examination of learning outcomes that are comparable to the level and type of qualification attained through such programmes for further education and training and applying attained capability in the training field. This will enable to include and recognize also qualifications attained in other countries and validate them irrespective the place and manner where and how they have been attained. This validation refers to formal and non-formal education outcomes as well as informal learning, i.e. systematic education not categorized in the formal education system, e.g. corporate learning, experiences achieved by practice, occasional learning etc.

## **2.2 Identification and validation on non-formal and informal learning**

Identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is one of strategic priorities of submitted *The LLL and LLC Strategy*. The strategy proposes two forms of validation and identification of learning outcomes in the SR:

- credit system for non-formal learning programmes,
- validation of non-formal education and informal learning outcomes of persons from practice through established national authority with defined competences.

*The LLL and LLC Strategy* envisages attaining qualification by two ways: verification of knowledge, skills and competences gained in non-formal education and informal learning programmes and validation of credits attained in non-formal educational programmes (transition points between and parity of formal and non-formal education) with consideration to European tools such as EUROPASS, ECTS and ECVET.

A citizen gaining specific number of credits for participating on educational activities in non-formal learning system can accumulate them according to his own discretion and he will be able, with support of LLC, to shape his partial and full qualifications according to his individual need and need of local or regional labour market.

Assigning specific number of credits (e.g. 80% for certain number years of experiences in the field, e.g. 5 years and remaining credits - 20% can be obtained by verifying attained general or professional qualification by examination according to defined and approved evaluation standard at authorized legal or natural person).

## **2.3 Widely accessible lifelong guidance policies and systems**

The LLL system has started to be gradually implemented from the year 2005 already in primary schools by qualified career guidance counsellors. Career guidance counsellors and class teachers increase their qualification, gain new information and experiences through the project of specialized innovation study in one, and gradually in other methodological and pedagogical centres (educational organizations established and centrally administered by the Ministry of Education of the SR). Highly topical issue of career education and career guidance and counselling reacting to the needs of practice is elaborated in the project.

Several activities to meet targets of the Lisbon process have been realized within the working programme 2005-2006, approved by the European Commission. Handbook for concept makers in career guidance and counselling has been translated into Slovak language. The national project of the State Vocational Education Institute and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR named *Modular Distance Learning for European Mobility Career Counsellors (MODILE-EUROCARCO) Modified for the Target Groups* has been prepared and realized on the basis of this handbook.

Main objectives of the project are:

- innovation of training and education of experts specialized on career guidance and counselling with consideration to European dimension aimed at enhancing qualification, adaptability and expanding mobility of persons entering labour market in the field of career guidance and counselling
- improving counselling service at choosing education, occupation and job in order to increase employment prospects on labour market in connection to changes in labour market qualification needs aimed at helping in particular young people in integration process.

The State Vocational Education Institute in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR and the Headquarters of Labour, Social Affairs and Family have prepared materials "Report on Situation in Career Guidance and Counselling in the Educational Sector" and "Career Guidance and Counselling in the Sector of Labour, Social Affairs and Family" in 2005. The Centre of Career Guidance and Counselling (hereinafter only "Centre") has been established as department within the State Vocational Education Institute. Methodical and educational support of the Centre is focused on LLL and on strengthening the role of experts specializing themselves on career guidance and counselling in schools and educational institutions through educational programmes.

One of specific aims of newly prepared and proposed *The LLL and LLC Strategy* is to assign developing comprehensive LLL system and to create conditions for future legislative regulation of the LLL system. The LLL system in Slovakia can be build according to proposed strategy by joining its separately working elements, which are covered in decisive sphere by the Ministry of Education of the SR, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR, the Ministry of Health of the SR and the Ministry of Justice of the SR.

## **2.4 Measures to reinforce transnational mobility**

Measures to reinforce trans-national mobility realized in the SR encompass wide range of target groups from practical interships of secondary vocational school pupils, through mobility of higher education students for the purpose of study or practical interships in foreign countries to mobility of pedagogical employees of pre-school institutions, primary, secondary and higher education institutions, instructors and other employees of further education institutions and human resources managers in enterprises and other organizations. Every year it concerns more than three thousand mobilities from Slovakia into participating countries participating in the programmes.

### Mobility outwards the SR

After accession of the SR to EU, administration of such mobilities is significantly simplified. Before they were limited by various restrictions on national level (applied e.g. by the Great Britain and Ireland). Project and applications themes were based on applicants needs (organizations or individuals). Using the Europass as part of mobility validation was theoretically possible since



January 2005, in practice it started to be applied in second half of 2006 and for the time being, satisfactory level of granting Europass to all participants of pupil and student mobilities has not been achieved (it fluctuates around 20% of all realized mobilities in 2005-2006). The National Agency of the Lifelong Learning Programme advises all applicants of the need of using this tool within information campaign for projects preparation and in 2007 agency plans also joint seminar with the National Europass Centre for support of its utilization.

### National Europass Centre

Activities of the National Europass Centre of the SR address challenges and recommendations of the European Commission, in particular for years 2005 and 2006. The year 2005 was specific for the initial character of the Europass initiative. All activities were focused on promotion and activities related to it. In 2006, also the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR thematically participated in promotion, also on the basis of the European Commission call. Considering the fact, that the year 2006 was the European Year of Workers' Mobility within the European Union member countries, this initiative has been incorporated into action plan for 2006 that has been approved also by the European Commission. On the basis of call and recommendations of the European Commission, the National Europass Centre of the SR realized following activities leading to increasing awareness about its activity and function in 2005 and 2006:

Publication activity: Three Europass publications have been issued in 2005, namely:

1. Europass – Basic documentation;
2. Europass – Recognition of educational certificates in the Slovak republic;
3. Europass – the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2241/2004/ES of 15 December 15 2004 on a Single Community Framework for the Transparency of Qualifications and Competences (Europass) - About higher education in the Slovak Republic and in the European Union member countries.

Dissemination activity of the National Europass Centre: The Centre organized nation-wide expert seminar that took place in May 2005 and was focused on following issues:

1. Status of higher education institutions in the process of recognition of educational certificates;
2. From Bologna to Bergen;
3. Europass;
4. Recognition of educational certificates after accession of the SR to EU.

Seminars and publications were realized on the basis of financial support from the European Commission.

### Euroguidance Centre of the SR

The Euroguidance Centre of the SR ensures the Slovak Republic's participation in PLOTEUS information portal. The portal about the area of higher education and mobility support is partner portal to the EURES portal. The Centre ensures also its marketing on national level and participates on national fairs of study and work in foreign countries. Special section of portal is dedicated to possibilities of European mobility financing through grants. Most of individual questions processed by the Centre relate to this area. Also participation in two pilot projects where the Centre acted in the role of national coordinator can be regarded as contribution to system support. The Guidenet project dealt with support of Slovak experts entering the European network for LLC. The project Fit for Europe tested realization of multi-language portal for support of European dimension in guidance and counselling services and European

mobility support. The initiative support of EUROPASS is a standard part of the Euroguidance Centre's activities within its presentations on national or international level.

### **CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC POLICY OBJECTIVES IN SCHOOLS, HIGHER EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT EDUCATION**

#### **3.1 Schools, higher education, vocational education and training, and adult learning**

##### **3.1.1 Governance and leadership of education and training institutions**

The school system in the Slovak Republic has three school levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. The structure of education and learning system is defined by acts, execution regulations and edicts of the Ministry of Education of the SR setting forth and laying down details of functioning of its particular elements.

**The school system** represents set of all educational institutions providing linked levels of education, their functioning and means (including legislative one) ensuring education in the country. The school system is the structure of institutions of so-called formal and non-formal education controlled and administered by the Ministry of Education of the SR.

Establishing competences towards kindergarten and primary schools are performed by self-government (municipalities), towards secondary schools by self-government (higher self-governing regions). The state administration body does not step in execution of their particular tasks. It only controls observing execution of statutory power. Financing of educational system is self-government competence: municipalities are financing kindergartens and primary schools and self-governing region offices are financing secondary schools. Financing is realized from the Ministry of Finance of the SR through the Ministry of Education of the SR to school self-governments. It's a normative type of financing per capita of a pupil. As for organization perspective, no fundamental changes within administration, governance and leadership of education and training institutions took place in 2005 and 2006 in the SR. (More detailed information on administration, governance and leadership of education and training institutions in period monitored by the report are provided in annex.)

##### **3.1.2 Stimulating private investments from enterprises, households and individuals**

In the area of stimulating private investments, two positive examples from the period covered by the report presented in the annex of the report can be mentioned.

It is obvious from mentioned two examples, that solvent private establisher contributes to increase of educational level in Slovakia, as private initiative induces innovations and effectiveness as well as competition in traditional methods, in manner and forms of management. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify efforts at ensuring conditions for stimulating private investment into educational sphere from the side of competent national institutions.

Higher education institutions were during last years establishing foundations on the basis of valid legislation through which it is possible to apply for assignation of 2% from taxes of legal and natural persons. A taxpayer – natural or legal person, is entitled to declare in statement of taxable income or special declaration that share of paid tax up to 2% should be remitted to legal person designated by him. Financial resources raised in such manner could be subsequently invested in the development of higher education institution.

Amendment to the Act No. 172/2002 on Higher Education Institutions, being prepared in the present time, will enable that financial resources deposited by business sector into joint research projects with higher education institutions (basic and applied research, experimental development, centres of excellence, technology incubators) and into further education of employees would be an allowance, up to 2% of basis for calculation of income tax. The Act will define centres of excellence as possible part of higher education institution.

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

Pilot projects for pupils from socially disadvantaged environment were realized in the Slovak republic, in particular implementation of teacher assistant function for pupils with special educational needs. Since June 1, 2004, “social” scholarships in amount dependent also on their education outcomes are provided to secondary school students including special schools pupils from socially disadvantaged environment (material poverty or living minimum). Scholarships are provided in compliance with the Edict of the Ministry of Education on Providing Scholarships to Secondary and Special School Pupils. Measures for minority language groups were adopted, that make children of immigrants and refugees equal in the area of access to education through additional trainings of Slovak language as language of instruction. These initiatives resulted from the National Action Plan of Decade of Integrating Roma Population 2005 – 2015 (2005)<sup>IV</sup> and the Concept of Migration Policy of the SR to the Conditions in the Sector of Education<sup>V</sup>.

Widening access and improving equity of participation, treatment and education outcomes, especially for disadvantaged people, has been realized in higher education institutions on the basis of existence of educational centres for handicapped people on three higher education institutions in the SR.

These centres are financed from public finances funds on the basis of financing development projects of higher education institutions – it concerns so-called “unique workplaces”. At the same time, utilization of information technologies as a mean helping students with health handicap is supported. This field focuses on projects with specific utilization of information technologies in pedagogic process with special emphasis on students with health handicap and these creating appropriate conditions for education with regard to their special study needs.

### **3.1.4 Measures to address gender aspects in education and training**

### **3.1.5 Use of learning outcome based approaches for the definition and design of education and training objectives, standards and curricula, and their relevance to the needs of society and the economy**

One of the strategic centre lines of *The LLL and LLC Strategy* in the SR is to change the paradigm of education outcomes evaluation based on measuring inputs (length of education) to measuring outputs (education outcome, so-called “*learning outcome principle*”) that fits also for outcomes validation in informal learning.

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<sup>IV</sup> [http://www.orgovanova.vlada.gov.sk/data/att/3425\\_subor.rtf](http://www.orgovanova.vlada.gov.sk/data/att/3425_subor.rtf)

<sup>V</sup> <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?rootId=360>

### **3.1.6 Quality assurance systems**

The Edict of the Ministry of Education of the SR on Structure and Content of Reports on Education and Learning Activity, its Outcomes and Conditions of Schools and Pre-school Institutions is in force since February 1, 2006. This ordinance deals with the issue of preparing, submitting, discussing and approving reports on education and learning process. The aim of such report, that has to be prepared by the school director and than approved by the establisher, is to gain comprehensive view to governance, conditions and level of education and learning of the school. The report becomes thus a basic document characterizing the school outwards, while own evaluation of conditions, course and outcomes of education and learning is applied. Indicators of course and outcomes of education and of quality of learning process are value of teaching by teachers, quality of learning by students, as well as mutual relationships among school, students, parents and other natural and legal persons participating on education and learning in schools.

### **3.1.7 Development of learning partnerships with stakeholders (policy-makers at national, regional and local levels, social partners, learners and representatives of civil society)**

Entry and activity of strategic investors in particular in the automotive industry creates link of vocational education and training (hereinafter only “VET”) directly to teaching new working procedures and technologies, the VET school leavers can use immediately upon completing the school at employer, what significantly contributes to VET attractiveness. Example of best practice is the Protocol on French-Slovak Partnership and Cooperation in Vocational Education with the PSA Peugeot Citroën signed on May 12, 2005. Also professional and pedagogic preparation of Slovak teachers and specialists in the field of technical subjects education, so that Slovak schools would be professionally prepared and able to provide quality of LLL in the field of automotive industry, is part of cooperation.

Dialogs among academia of higher education institutions and subjects of social practice were realized within development of new study programmes of three-level education. This process is not completed – contents of study programmes are constantly modified in particular in technically oriented study fields. It is always realized on the basis of impulses from industrial practice.

## **3.2 Primary schools including pre-primary education**

### **3.2.1 Increasing investment in and strengthening pre-primary education**

Kindergartens in the SR are in establishing competence of municipalities and non-state kindergartens are financed from share taxes of self-government, state is financing only special kindergartens for children with special educational needs (handicapped children) that are in founding competence of the state through regional school offices. Increasing investments and strengthening pre-primary education is competence of subjects establishing kindergartens.

The Government of the SR reckons in its statement of policy with support and strengthening pre-primary education and preparation of children. The government will consider taking out kindergartens from the Act on School Establishments and their inclusion into the new School Act (being prepared) as first level of school system.

The Government's attitude is based upon the knowledge, that kindergarten is irreplaceable element in preparation of children as for intellectual, physical and socio-emotional aspects. It has important role for children from socially weaker family environment and for children with special needs. In pursue for fulfilling its statement of policy, the Government of the SR has decided by its Resolution No. 222/2007 that pre-primary school establishments will be defined in new School Act to be a school and schooling of 5 years old children in pre-primary institutions will be free of charge<sup>VI</sup>.

### **3.2.2 Modernisation of school curricula and assessment arrangements (inter alia to address learning outcomes and the attainment of key competences)**

The Slovak Republic stands nowadays on the threshold of content reform of education and curricula reform. The aim of the reform is to create space for creative work of pedagogues, for reinforcing education, for improving complex development of cognitive skills of pupils. Content and curricula reform is part of global reform efforts concerning also change of methods, forms and change of teacher's preparation, school policy (financing, teacher status, education etc.) and change of conditions and management of educational system. The objective is to improve children and youth education and learning quality and effectiveness within primary and secondary education, to achieve greater openness of the educational system towards children and youth and ensure equity of access to quality education for everybody.

The reform will create two-level educational system based on national and school curricula. It will establish national curricula and school curricula and time subsidies for national (60%) and school curricula (40%). Selection of curricula and its modernization will respect the principle of quality preparation of school leavers for productive life in modern society, the principle of complex development of cognitive functions and the principle of "educationality" of teaching.

The national curricula will build on defined outcome competences in kindergartens, on first level of primary school, on second level of primary school and on secondary schools leaving. Schools will prepare school curricula by subjects and educational fields respecting principles of content and curricula reform. In connection to above mentioned, preparation of pedagogues and professional employees will be changed and new level of their LLL will be established.

National subject (educational) commissions will propose new curricula for subjects and educational fields - integrated subjects respecting competences on outputs of particular school levels. Content and performance standards for particular teaching subjects and educational fields on outputs of particular school levels will be elaborated on the basis of new curricula and competences. Following will be more considerably incorporated in the content of education: patriotism in connection to the European citizen identity – multiculturalism, language learning preparation, information and communication technologies preparation, communication skills, critical and creative thinking.

Besides these actual activities, the Ministry of Education of the SR has adopted new curricula for informatics for 1<sup>st</sup> level of primary schools and informatics for 2<sup>nd</sup> level of primary schools. New curricula utilizing information and communication technologies in education and learning process were experimentally tested on 20 schools in 2000-2006.

The SR carries out national testing of pupils within completing secondary education and primary education. These results are taken into account at accepting students for study on higher level.

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<sup>VI</sup> [http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/9FE8C6CF436497CCC12572AB0026D47C/\\$FILE/Zdroj.html](http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/9FE8C6CF436497CCC12572AB0026D47C/$FILE/Zdroj.html)

### **3.2.3 Addressing the specific learning / training needs of teachers (including pre-primary) to enable them to cope with their changing roles in the knowledge-based society**

Pedagogic employees of pre-primary institutions, primary and secondary schools are continuously educated in organizations of further education of pedagogues established by the Ministry of Education of the SR, i.e. in methodological and pedagogical centres in the Slovak Republic (5 centres), in the Nation Institute for Education, in the State Vocational Education Institute and in school computing centres with support and cooperation with higher education institutions. Further education of pedagogues as part of lifelong learning reacts topically on demands of pedagogical practice, needs of society, economy and knowledge-based society.

Methodological and pedagogical centres have organized specific education focused on using information and communication technologies in pedagogic practice, on language education and managerial competences for needs of pedagogues in pre-primary establishments. Education is organized according to knowledge-based society demands.

### **3.2.4 Measures to reduce early school leaving, to increase rates of completion of upper secondary education, to reduce the proportion of low-achieving 15 year olds in literacy and to increase the take-up of mathematics, science and technology subjects (EU benchmarks)**

The Slovak Republic as the EU member country drew financial resources from the EU funds in the cohesion policy field on the basis of *the Community Support Framework* document for the first time in years 2004 – 2006, i.e. in shortened programming period that started for original EU 15 member countries already in 2000.

The programming period 2007 - 2013 is therefore first programming period for the Slovak Republic in which the SR will have opportunity to use resources from the EU funds during its whole duration, on the basis of *the National Strategic Reference Framework* document. The National Strategic Reference Framework<sup>vii</sup> focuses in its strategic priority *Human Resources and Education*, within the priority *Modern Education for Knowledge-based Society*, on increasing quality and access to LLL with emphasis on transformation of education content aimed at attaining basic skills and key competences so that actual and perspective demands of knowledge-based society will be reflected. Measurable indicators for evaluation of successfulness and progress in realization of measures through support from EU environment are all relevant EU benchmarks. Other measures are incorporated in other thematically related parts of this report.

## **3.3 Higher education:**

### **3.3.1 Measures to reinforce the knowledge triangle between education, research and innovation**

In consideration to the level of higher education system reform realization outlined in the Concept of Further Development of Slovak Higher Education for 21<sup>st</sup> Century passed by the Government of the SR in August 2000 and legislatively laid down in the Act No. 131/2002 on Higher Education Institutions, present period can be regarded as one of milestones on the way aimed to achievement of modern higher education system capable to accommodate demand for

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<sup>vii</sup> [http://www.rokovanie.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/72B4A570DC9D66B5C125717700444CA3/\\$FILE/Zdroj.html](http://www.rokovanie.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/72B4A570DC9D66B5C125717700444CA3/$FILE/Zdroj.html)

quality higher education creating at the same time basis of Slovak research & development potential.

It will be necessary to evaluate present progress of higher education system reform in forthcoming months and update steps of further measures realization for support of knowledge triangle among education, research and innovations on higher education institutions on the basis of this evaluation. We have succeeded to significantly increase capacity of the Slovak higher education system in relatively short time, and now increasing its quality becomes the paramount target. Well functioning Accreditation Commission of the SR has key and non-substitutable role in the system of control and increasing quality. Its primary goal in the forthcoming time is to begin complex accreditations and subsequent diversification of higher education institutions towards research universities. Setting research universities aside will be important step so that the higher education would become basis of the SR's research & development potential.

Basic breakthrough for increasing support of knowledge triangle among education, research and innovations was passing the Act No. 172/2005 on Science and Technology Support where all conditions for increasing initiative of higher education institutions for performing effective and successful research activities and related quality education were created. Activities in this triangle were supported also by substantial increase of research activity importance within the budget for higher education institutions, where resources has been allocated also in the part coming out from evaluation of pedagogical activities in such manner that 85% was based on pedagogic performance and 15% from research activities. This ratio should in perspective increase in favour of research. This trend motivates higher education institutions to increase efficiency and intensity of research activities.

The growth of financial resources for science on higher education institutions was by 12.4% in 2005 in comparison to previous year and by 82.5% in comparison to year 2002, amounting to 1,066 billion SKK. In 2006, the growth in comparison to 2005 was by approx. 14%. The support of higher education research has been realized also within development resources for building unique workplaces, where approx. 110 millions SKK has been used during 2005 and 2006. Important milestone was establishing the Slovak Research and Development Agency (SRDA) administering significant amount of financial resources, organizing tenders and being a partner also for foreign projects submitted by scientists from the SR.

Introducing the Act No. 172/2005 brought significant change in relation to managing the research & development within higher education institutions. Focus was shifted to competitive forms of acquiring grants and thereby also accessibility for all science and technology subjects, i.e. also for higher education institutions. In conditions of higher education institutions, it requires to develop mechanisms for preparing quality materials for projects, part of which should be specialists in the higher education institution management ensuring also transfer of science and technology outcomes from academic environment into practice. Nowadays, these tendencies begin to be gradually realized on higher education institutions as it is on universities in the EU countries.

### **3.3.2 Participation targets and measures to achieve them**

In the field of study, it is necessary to further support reinforcing three-level model of higher education. Promotion of bachelor level in society is important task so that this education would be perceived as full higher education and its graduates would find adequate assertion on labour market. It is also necessary to further scale up full-time doctorate study.

Necessity to extend mobility of students and higher education institutions employees in both directions should be considered as evident. In other words, to enable more Slovak students to complete study or at least part of study in foreign countries and on the other hand, attract more foreign students to Slovak higher education institutions. In this regard, it is necessary to support providing higher education on Slovak higher education institutions also in world languages, in particular in English.

The SR went in 2005 and 2006 through full transition to higher education in terms of Bologna Declaration, i.e. 3-level education.

### **3.3.3 Measures to increase excellence**

In the thematic area of innovations and building of research excellence centres of higher education institutions, projects focused on innovation or building research excellence centres of public higher education institutions are supported in the SR. The support is performed on the basis of direction of the Ministry of Education of the SR on submitting development projects and in compliance with methodology of allocating state budget resources to public higher education institutions. Provided state-of-the-art instrumental and laboratory technology together with other functional devices and facilities of excellence research centres must be utilized at latest from September 2008 at solving projects of applied research in cooperation with business practice and with contractually agreed specific person realizing solution outcomes. While the applicant have to clearly declare in the project proposal, that outcomes of future project solutions will be utilizable in industrial or social practice or will be used at solving future excellence projects of basic research, with which the unique workplace of higher education institution will participate in the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Framework Programme or in tasks of new research & development state programmes.

### **3.3.4 Measures to increase the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology**

The Slovak Republic has registered highest growth of mathematics, science and technical disciplines graduates within the EU in 2000 - 2003. Dialog on the level of the Government of the SR, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education and the Slovak Rector Conference on searching possibilities to support mentioned study programmes has been initiated to this issue. Defining coefficients of economic demandingness of study programmes, so-called KEN, laid down by the Ministry of Education of the SR and the flows of financial resources to particular study programmes are based on which, could be regarded as one of support alternatives of technical and science study fields.

## **3.4 Vocational education and training and adult learning**

### **3.4.1 Measures to improve quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training and of adult education**

With the aim to improve quality and attractiveness of VET, the Ministry of Education of the SR has adopted in December 2006 *“Evaluation of Experimentally Tested Educational and Study Fields in the Area of Vocational Education and Training”* in terms of the edict of the Ministry of Education of the SR on experimental testing. Evaluation contains list of education and study fields of secondary vocational training institutions and secondary vocational schools that will be experimentally tested in the school year 2007/2008. The process is divided into individual phases – submitting proposals for experimental testing, realization of experimental testing itself, submitting intermediate evaluation and final evaluation of experimental testing. Progressive trends in



vocational education and training in the SR are pursued by the evaluation. Evaluation report will be submitted to regional school offices, to the State School Inspection, to the State Vocational Education Institute and the Institute of Information and Prognosis in Education. At the same time, results of evaluation are presented in enclosure to Pedagogic-organization instructions for the school year 2007/2008.

### **3.4.2 Measures to reinforce the link between VET and labour market needs including early identification of skills need, improving relevance of curricula and qualifications**

Implementation of two-level model of educational programmes should be a solution to mentioned problem according to present attitude of stakeholders in the SR. The basic principle of this model is division of responsibility for content of VET education and study fields between the state and a school ensuring educational and learning process. Deployment of educational programmes is important tool for achieving new level and extent of education outcomes and educational activities. Educational programme will represent complex programme of solving objectives, content, methods and forms of educational process, strategies and methods of evaluation, organization and management. Fundamental contribution of such proposed educational policy will be creation of new relationship among central – state, local – school and individual – pedagogic responsibility. State educational programmes will define state concepts about specialization, content and outcomes of education by particular national economy sectors, administration, culture and art. Development, opposition, revision and innovation of state programmes will be ensured by relevant ministries through centrally administered organizations in cooperation with experts from science and practice, including pedagogy and psychology.

School level of education will be represented by school educational programmes as starting point for education and learning work in school. School programmes have to come out from state educational programmes. This type of programmes will not only enhance school autonomy, but it will also ensure match with regional labour market needs, development needs of region and individual needs of individuals. Schools will have wider opportunities for cooperation with employers' organizations in the form of advisory committees or working groups. Using the licence held by the Headquarters of Work, Social Affairs and Family of the SR, which is outcome of the project Integrated System of Typal Positions, is actual in this relation. Outcomes contain many elements utilizable in vocational education and training, also in the form of individual subject named *Introduction to the World of Labour*. Nowadays, works on development of state educational programmes within the ESF project "Improving Vocational Education in the SR on the Level of ISCED 3C" are in progress. Fifteen educational programmes for study field groups will be a basis for subsequent works on development of school educational programmes.

The material named *Proposal of Vocational Education and Training Coordination System for Labour market*<sup>VIII</sup> has been adopted by the Ministry of Education of the SR in March 2007. The proposal comes out from request to address priority tasks in the VET field. It describes present situation in cooperation between employers sphere and VET, as well as its basic legal framework. It presents important information and suggestions of employer subjects, educational institutions and state administration and self-government authorities on present situation and further development of integrating employers into VET, which is not only described, but also evaluated.

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VIII

[http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/RegionalneSkolstvo/OdborneVzdelavanie/SKOV/20070404\\_systm\\_koordinacie\\_OVP.pdf](http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/RegionalneSkolstvo/OdborneVzdelavanie/SKOV/20070404_systm_koordinacie_OVP.pdf)

The material presents suggestions and measures for labour market coordination with VET institutions that could help to mobilize and improve current situation of vocational education system. Submitted form of vocational education coordination system for labour market aims to achieve three main objectives. To describe development and present situation of labour market cooperation in developing and improving level of primary VET in the Slovak Republic, to propose the system of VET and labour market coordination and to suggest measures that would enable mobilization and improvement of employers sphere integration into VET. In connection to the material *Proposal of Vocational Education and Training Coordination System for Labour Market*, the State Vocational Education Institute has been assigned with elaborating detailed branch analysis. At the same time, it was assigned to incorporate approved system of vocational education and training coordination for labour market into new School Act (being prepared).

New quality of VET conditioned by system approach and active participation of employers' subjects to addressing its goals, content and structure by cooperation with institutions associating employers, with employers, central state administration authorities, territorial self-government authorities and other subjects at adjusting existing educational and study fields to labour market demands also by establishing new study fields is a condition for successful entry of students to labour market.

### **3.4.3 Opening up pathways to further and higher education**

The steps of the Slovak Republic in relation to preparation and implementation of *The LLL and LLC Strategy* and with preparation of the LLL Act pursue goals covering intentions to open access to further and higher education in the SR in greater extent than for the time being.

Tools defined in the strategy and the act comes will result in: broadening access to LLL through providing information and counselling on all possibilities and opportunities; creation of effective and functional counselling system for occupation choice and career growth; implementation of career counsellors professional growth system linked to the system of their further education and with the system of expert methodical support; building the system providing necessary information for decision making of education stakeholders (students, parents, schools, employers and state administration and self-government employees); providing education to all so that relation between education and other responsibilities and activities could be ensured; development of flexible educational programmes with various study length (long-term, short-term and brief trainings); deployment of modular access to education supporting gradual preparation; creation of integral system of students evaluation on the end of every educational level based of preconditions and attained results diagnosis. In summary, these measures address ensuring access to education for all so that they would be able to assert themselves in the knowledge-based society.

### **3.4.4. Addressing the specific learning / training needs of vocational and adult teachers and trainers to enable them to cope with their changing roles in the knowledge-based society**

The Methodology of Creation of Profession Standards of Individual Categories of Pedagogical Employees based on competence profiles of individual categories of pedagogues derived from educational objectives, values and targets of schools has been adopted by the Ministry of Education of the SR in 2006.

At the late 2006, the Conception of Career System in Education outlining career order of pedagogues, based in improving pedagogical competences in career pathways of profession, has been elaborated.

Financial resources from the European Social Fund were in 2005 and 2006 significant factor contributing to realization of educational programmes for further education of teachers. Through them, educational institutions of the Ministry of Education of the SR used institute of so-called national projects that facilitated development profession competences of teachers (e.g. education of pedagogues for utilization of information and communication technologies in educational process – functional literacy (FIT), education of executive pedagogical employees, education to completion study in secondary schools, education in foreign languages, education of career/profession guidance counselling, global development education, education of teachers in work with students from socially disadvantaged environment, education teacher assistants for support of social inclusion and parity of opportunities of pupils threatened in education, human rights education, education in distant form (EDiF), for building information-educational portal for wide pupil and laic public etc.)

During 2005 and 2006, the programme objective of the Ministry of Education of the SR - *Development of Regional School System* has been performed. The target to increase computer literacy of regional pedagogical employees was realized by training 55,000 regional pedagogic employees in training courses focused on using information and communication technologies. The project for achieving functional literacy in information technologies for 40,000 pedagogic employees will be realized in 2006-2008 with the support of European structural funds. The National Supportive Service for E-twinning has been established in Slovakia within realization of the project supported by the European Commission. As per September 1, 2006, 479 schools (14%) have registered and 149 projects have been realized.

Existence of educational organizations of the Ministry of Education of the SR for further education of pedagogues gives a guarantee for covering whole territory of the republic by educational events, for prompt implementation of education for attaining necessary required skills and competences of pedagogues, as well as for achieving qualification, also for temporary period.

#### **3.4.5 Measures to reinforce social partner involvement in training, in particular sectoral approaches to skills and qualifications**

Social partners as target groups will participate on addressing projects of developing the National Profession Framework and the National Qualifications Framework through their representatives in consultation project team. Consultation teams will comment project outcomes. Moreover, social partner representatives will directly participate on development and creation of profiles of professions, qualifications and evaluation standards and certificate complements. They will be nominated for work in projects by employers' organizations with nation-wide scope of activity, commerce and industry chambers and central labour union bodies on the basis of interest into open variant of institutionalized forms of body.

Employers, their associations and chambers will be at the same time involved in the work of bodies named "sector boards" that will participate in creation of qualifications and will guarantee them.

#### **3.4.6 Measures for enhancing access and opportunities for learning among the disadvantaged, and alternative pathways, including for early school leavers**

The Slovak Republic have engaged in the initiative of so-called "second chance schools" proposed by the European Commission in the document from 1995 – *White Paper on Education and Training: Teaching and Learning Towards the Learning Society*” aimed at fighting against unemployment among people in the age of 16-25 years from disadvantaged environment early

leaving schools without attaining required qualification. Primary and secondary criteria of second chance schools are in compliance with the philosophy and principles of the National Programme of Education and Learning in the SR for Forthcoming 15-20 Years (Millenium). The aim of second chance schools is to improve integration of such young people facing real threat of exclusion from labour market by participating on improving their abilities and motivation to learn and educate and attain basic knowledge and new skills.

The basic idea resides in reintegration of this target group by offering them second chance through new type of education. With regard to aversion towards traditional way of education prevailing among these young people, the second chance schools works on entirely other principles. It is very important so that the school itself would be a very motivating environment. The school should have strong link to partner companies in the region, whereby appropriate education with perspective of asserting school leavers on the labour market would be ensured. The complexity of education and tutoring people from mentioned target group resides in that their subjective disposability for inclusion into standard educational network is low and this is also dominant reason why they drop from institutionalized school network. They need different approach, pace, methods, way of education, and environment than customary in standard school system.

Short-term re-qualification and motivation courses and trainings and necessary complement of tutoring, however they do not address existence problems of marginalized groups of youth effectively in connection to their assertion on the labour market. Employers do not accept certificates from short-term courses as sufficient and required qualification for performance of certain profession.

Mentioned group is not able to assert on the labour market and remains long-term unemployed without second chance to participate in education and learning process. The Slovak Republic pursues to solve this issue systematically and regionally by support of establishing educational institutions of this type according to needs and demographic structure of citizens. The solution is possible only under close cooperation of subjects in the region creating links in the structure with their interconnection in social and political system of given city or region.

Supported activities are aimed the target that the level of attained knowledge of second chance school leavers would be on the same qualitative level as the knowledge level of leavers from any other school within existing school educational system is. Quality standards of second chance schools are being developed by the European Association of Second Chance Schools and its partners within the TQM (Total quality management), SOCRATES and Grundtvig 1 international projects. By networking second chance schools, retaining system is created ensuring that a pupil stays in the educational process and his subsequent reintegration to the labour market. Educational participants do not participate on financing, but it is realized on the basis of compound financial resources (from state budget, structural funds, foundation resources, enterprises, municipalities, self-governing regions, non-profit organizations, and NGOs).

Regarding the support of other form of secondary and higher education of disadvantaged social groups support, the Secretariat of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR for Roma Communities provides financial resources for the Programme of Support of Roma Students of Secondary and Higher Education Institutions on the basis of the resolution of the Government of the SR. These funds are designated for secondary schools and individuals, higher education institutions students for facilitating study of talented pupils from socially weak families. The help concerns all schools included into secondary school network, schools with leaving exam as well as without (training institutions and vocational schools), including higher vocational schools as

well as higher education institutions. In case of secondary study, the applicant for support is a secondary school, through director that carries out selection of applicants for study support on his school on the basis of defined criteria. Applications of schools will be judged by selection commission at the Secretariat of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR and upon approving financial support and concluding a written agreement with the Government Office of the SR, the school can realize the support program. In case of higher education, the support is realized through the Open Society Foundation.

### **3.4.7 Measures to increase the rate of adult participation in lifelong learning, and to reinforce key competences among adult learners and older people whether employed or not (EU benchmark)**

Measures of developed *The LLL and LLC Strategy* supporting increase of adult participation in lifelong learning encompass following activities:

- to implement the system of continuous monitoring and forecasting educational needs development in order to create conditions for citizens, employers, public administration and educational institutions and to react on changing labour market needs,
- to deploy information system for LLL and LLC that will be effective tool for free access of citizens and institutions to education and counselling and at the same time it will be bidirectional communication tool of its clients,
- to implement system of LLL and LLC quality management through national authority functions authorized to certify educational institutions, to accredit non-formal educational programmes in modular form with assigning credits to particular modules; to certify lectors and managers of non-formal education and career guidance counsellors,
- to implement validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes by establishing national authority that will authorize natural and legal persons for verification of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in order to attain partial or full qualification and direct validation of non-formal education outcomes through accredited non-formal educational programmes in modular form with assigned number of credits.

### 1.3.3. - Additional information

#### Structural funds

In the 2004-2006 programming period the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic performed duties of intermediate body under the managing authority for the Sector Operational Programme Human Resources and Single Programming Document NUTS II Bratislava Objective 3 co-financed by the European Social Fund.

The Ministry of Education of the SR carried out activities to support vocational education and training within the Measure 3.1 of the Sector Operational Programme Human Resources and the Measure 2.1 of the Single Programming Document NUTS II Bratislava Objective 3 in the 2004-2006 programming period.

#### *Sector Operational Programme Human Resources (SOP HR)*

The global objective of the SOP HR is „growth in employment based on qualified and flexible labour force“ and specific objectives are „increase in employability and labour market flexibility“; „development of the inclusive labour market“ and „raising the qualification potential and adaptability of employees“.

The main objective of the Priority 3 – *Raising the qualification and adaptability of employees and persons entering the labour market*, was to ensure that the labour force disposes of skills requested by the labour market. This was reached by raising the cooperation between the educational system and labour market services, supporting employee adaptability by means of further education and LLL and ensuring the concordance of educational plans according to labour market needs.

Measure 3.1 – The adaptation of the VET to the needs of the knowledge-based society was aimed at the systematic interconnection of the VET system, including the tertiary education system with labour market needs, mainly by means of its orientation on the improvement of key competences, creation and development of the modular structure of the vocational education, on the expansion of tertiary education institutions, on the support of programmes for broadening and improving practical training and vocational practice, on the support of programmes improving access to the VET for all, including students with learning difficulties, students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, including Roma communities for which the listed statement is characteristic. The measure was also focused on the improvement of integration of the Roma population into the mainstream of the educational system.

The main objective of the measure was the transformation of the VET system towards labour market needs with the emphasis on the needs of the knowledge-based society and social inclusion.

The number of approved projects authorized for the support by non-recurring financial subsidy in the years 2004 – 2006: 208

The number of pupils/students participating in programmes based on innovated, newly created curricula, modernized programmes and methods of the VET and educational activities focused on basic/key skill training up to the end of 2006: 11 599

The number of innovated and newly created specializations/curricula and special textbooks up to the end of 2006: 1604

The number of educational institutions engaged in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the VET up to the end of 2006: 2906

The number of pedagogical employees participating in programmes aimed at schooling in new curricula up to the end of 2006: 1644

The number of persons coming from disadvantaged backgrounds on whom motivation and activation supports, courses and scholarship programmes were centred up to the end of 2006: 3664

*Single Programming Document NUTS II Bratislava Objective 3*

The global objective of the SPD is „improving the competitiveness of the region by means of the human resources development“.

The main objective of Priority 2 – The improvement of lifelong education and support of research and development in the context of raising human resources quality is the support of the sustainable economic growth and the improvement of competitiveness, adaptability and quality of employment in the Bratislava Region by human resources improvement. This improvement is supported mainly by stimulation and improving the offer of qualifications, that are required by the society based on knowledge; by building the system of lifelong education, that is able to react flexibly on the needs of the modern labour market; by the transfer of new technology and top expertness to all sectors of industry; by the integration of research and development institutions into international networks of innovation and research; and education enhancement by support of institutions of higher education as these are the centres of research and development and innovation networks.

Measure 2.1 – The stimulation and enhancement of the education for needs of employers and business sector was mainly focused on the support of the reform of regional education, further education of pedagogical employees, support of the public and private sector, which carry out education activities in connection with labour market needs in the Bratislava Region, on the support of the tertiary education institutions and better cooperation between the education system and labour market services. Examples: the systemic support of students key technical competences, creation of evaluation system of the vocational education and training, innovation of pedagogical documentation, curricula including adaptation of teachers to these changes, creation of modular education programmes, innovation of schooling with the support of information and communication technologies, support of open school system and realization of courses for the improvement of managerial, business, key skills of teachers, lecturers and students.

The main objective of the measure was to rise adaptability and competitiveness of enterprises by means of better offer of educational activities for employed persons and persons entering the labour market.

The number of approved projects authorized for support by non-recurring financial subsidy in the years 2004 – 2006: 151

The number of created study places in employee education programmes, vocational training programmes with the participation of employers and social partners, further education programmes up to the end 2006: 2409

The number of employee education programmes, vocational training programmes with the participation of employers and social partners, further education programmes up to the end 2006: 270

The number of realized programmes of career consulting up to the end 2006: 2

The number of pupils/students studying according to modernized curricula and methods or in modernized education programmes and vocational training up to the end 2006: 2158

The number of educational institutions having direct benefit from the realization of help up to the end of 2006: 215

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### 3.1.1. - Additional information

**Secondary schools** provide secondary school students with secondary vocational education, complete secondary vocational education, complete secondary general education and upper vocational education. They prepare secondary school students for occupations and activities in the national economy, administration, culture, arts and other life spheres (and also for university studies). Secondary schools are according to the valid legislation divided into following types:

- secondary grammar school,
- specialized secondary school,
- secondary vocational school,
- associated secondary school.

**The secondary grammar school** is a comprehensive education school which is internally differentiated. Secondary grammar schools prepare their students mainly for university studies. Secondary grammar school programmes vary in length. There is minimum four-year and maximum eight-year programme. Grade 1 -4 of an eight-year secondary grammar school can be established at an elementary school. Complete secondary general education is finished by passing a school-leaving examination („*maturita*“).

**The specialized secondary school** prepares students mainly for execution of vocational activities, especially for techno-economic, economic, pedagogical, sanitarian, socio-legal, administrative, artistic and cultural occupations. The study usually lasts four years in particular specialization. The complete secondary vocational education is finished by passing a school-leaving examination. Specialized secondary school graduates can continue their studies at universities. The conservatory is a special type of specialized secondary school that prepares its students for song, music, dance or dramatic art specializations and university studies. The conservatory usually has six grades, dance specialization has eight grades and is completed by “absolutorium”.

**The secondary vocational school (středné odborné učilište- SOU)** prepares students in two-year, three-year and four-year programmes for execution of worker occupations and vocational activities. The study is completed by a final examination. After study completion school-leavers will obtain also a vocational certificate. Students in four-year programmes are being prepared for the execution of techno-economic activities. The four-year study provides the complete secondary vocational education and it is completed by a school-leaving examination. In three-year programmes the study is completed by a final examination. The secondary vocational school educates students both theoretically and practically.



Since 2001, after the revision of the school law, has the process of formation of **associated secondary schools** started with a view to improve educational process in vocational education and rationalize the network of secondary schools. Associated secondary schools came into existence by the mergence of secondary vocational schools and specialized secondary schools with the same or related education content. They provide preparation in secondary vocational school programmes and specialized secondary school programmes.

Secondary schools organize advanced courses and „post-maturita“ studies. Thus students can improve their skills for the execution of a particular occupation, increase their qualification or specialization necessary for the execution of some particular techno-economic activities. The study is usually completed by a school-leaving examination.

**Higher education institutions / Universities** are top educational, scientific and art institutions, which have the right to provide academic education. Higher education and university studies last 4 to 6 years and are finished by the state final examination. Higher education and university graduates are awarded the academic degree of „Bachelor“ (Bc.), „Master“ (Mgr.) at Master level, „Engineer“ (Ing.) at Engineer level in technical, agricultural and economic specializations, and also degree of „Doctor of Medicine“ (MUDr.) and „Doctor of Veterinary Medicine“ (MVDr.) in medical disciplines.

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### **3.1.2. - Additional information**

#### **Private Secondary Vocational School J. Peterku, Hodruša-Hámre**

Insufficient coverage of costs for the secondary vocational school, expensive and hardly accessible vocational material-technical support (rust-resistant steel, non-ferrous and precious metals and machine technologies) affected the switch of establishment competence from the self-governing region to a private establisher. The incoming private establisher has in administration a workroom building for vocational training, in which he has built up a gas boiler-house at his own expense and also clears school's expense from own sources, because normative financing according to Act Nr. 597/2003 Z. z. on Financing Elementary Schools, Secondary Schools and Educational Facilities is not sufficient for such type of art-technical education.

#### **Private Metallurgical Secondary Vocational School, Železiarne Podbrezová**

Železiarne Podbrezová (Metalwork Corporation Podbrezová) is a corporation with 167-year tradition that educates incoming generation in all occupations necessary for smooth running of the production in the metalwork. After 1991 there was decay in student preparation for the metalwork. The situation was changed only by the turnover in establishment competence in 2003 and creation of private metallurgical secondary vocational school established by the Metalwork Corporation Podbrezová. Consequently, improvement was reached in quantitative indicators (number of students) and also in qualitative indicators (modernization of the school and vocational training). The new establisher solved the problem of loss of qualified employees by systematic recruitment and choice of students. The prosperous metalwork corporation became motivation for applicants for this study. At present the establisher provides continual development of students not only as far as educational part is concerned, but also as far as out-of-school activities are concerned. This is centred on sporting activities and subsequent offer of job in the metalwork corporation for graduates.