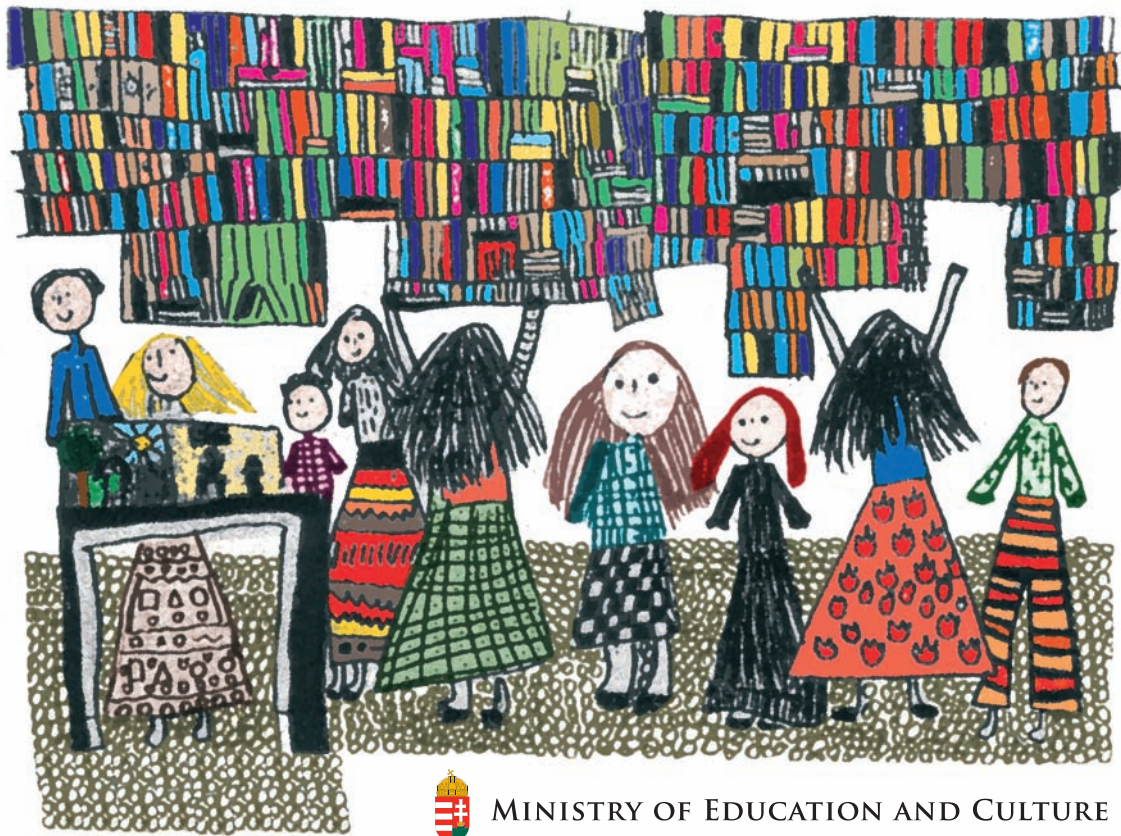


# EDUCATION IN HUNGARY

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE – AN OVERVIEW



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

# EDUCATION IN HUNGARY

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

AN OVERVIEW



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

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## FOREWORD

*At the dawn of the third millennium Hungarian education is entering into a new and vital stage of her thousand-year history. The overall adaptation to present social, economic and cultural realities, the pressing need to better respond to the requirements arising from the establishment of a socially more equitable and economically more competitive Hungary in a European context and a rapidly changing global environment, in the meantime to prepare the education system for future challenges is doubtless a demanding task.*

*This booklet offers a short overview of the most outstanding events of the education system's evolution over the centuries, without concealing the weaknesses and difficulties it has been confronted with, and intends to offer an objective portrait of its present state highlighted by a few vital statistical figures. Finally it outlines the main features and objectives of the proposed renovation process in coming years.*

*I would like to express my conviction that drawing upon its solid traditions rich in outstanding achievements, the innovative spirit of a number of teachers and creative educational communities also with the rational and focused use of the large Community funds at its disposal in the coming decade, the Hungarian education system will be able to meet the challenges, and to play a pioneering role in the modernisation process of the country, making Hungary a more just, a more equitable knowledge based society fully integrated into Europe.*

*Thus Hungarian education will live up to its past.*

*Those are the key objectives towards which the Ministry of Education and Culture is committed to working in the period to come.*

*Budapest, October 2007*

DR. PHD ISTVÁN HILLER  
Minister  
of Education and Culture  
of the Republic of Hungary



# THE PAST

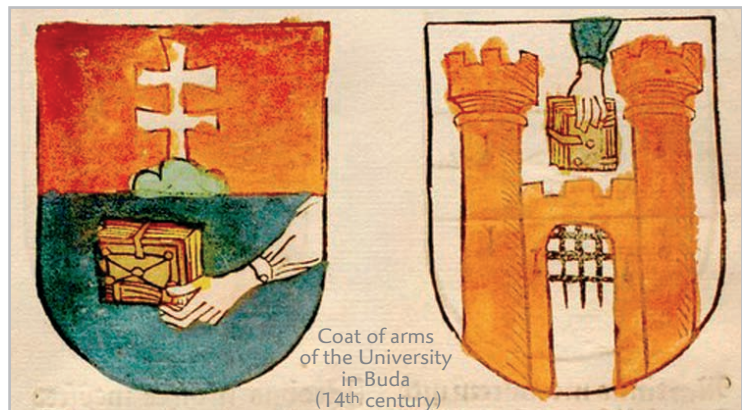
## EPISODES FROM THE HISTORY OF HUNGARIAN EDUCATION

### The beginnings

The beginnings of Hungarian education go back to the early medieval times. For many centuries education and teaching – alike elsewhere in Europe – was closely connected to the Church. As substantiated by a rather old record of codices kept in the Pannonhalma Benedictine Monastery in Western Hungary, a number of well-known commonly used textbooks for teaching Latin grammar were kept in the library. This is a solid evidence of the existence of a monastic school as early as the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. We have well-founded reasons to presume that in medieval times in many other regions of the country, too, teaching was an integral part of monastic life.

### The Middle Ages

The growing demand for highly qualified bureaucrats and churchmen by the expanding and diversifying royal court administration and the Church led to the establishment of universities. The first one was founded in Pécs in Southern Hungary in 1367, the second one, some time later in Buda. Though some of the teaching staff at both institutions was made up of prestigious foreign scholars invited by the founders the establishment of the universities is also a clear indication of the existence of highly developed monastic teaching centres throughout the country. Both universities were short lived and after a few decades ceased to exist due to a shortage of resources and lack of sufficient numbers of students.



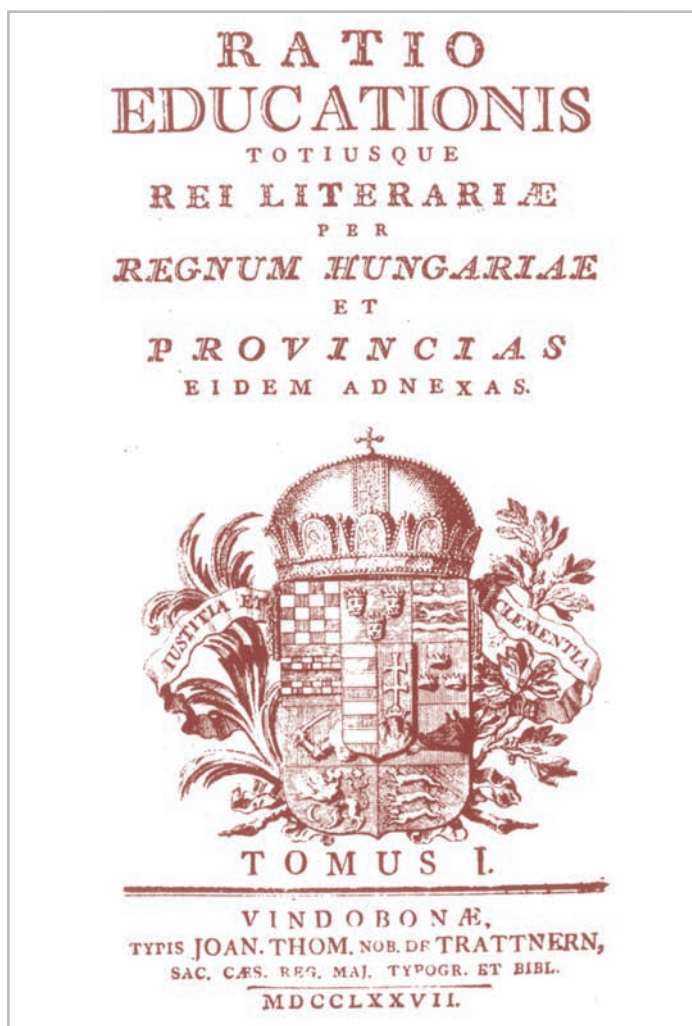
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The Ottoman conquest and the abolition of a sovereign statehood for nearly two centuries almost put an abrupt end to Hungarian schooling, since the Church was reduced to silence and unable to fulfil its traditional civilizing mission in most of the territory of historic Hungary. Nonetheless in the regions spared by the Ottoman conquerors the Catholic and soon the Protestant Church continued to be active in the field of education. The schools administered by the Protestant Church have played a pioneering role in teaching in the Hungarian language instead of Latin. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the opening of a new College in Western Hungary marked the rebirth of higher education.

### The age of Enlightenment

The beginnings of a state regulated education system, is linked to the rule and the name of empress Maria Theresa, who in 1777 promulgated the so-called *Ratio Educationis*. This legislative act outlined a programme of the establishment of the network of four-year elementary schools (*népiskola* or people's school), where the language of teaching and that of textbooks was Hungarian, while in secondary and higher-level education Latin kept its dominant position. For the first time, provisions were made regarding the organisation of teacher training.

This first comprehensive legislative act on education was followed in 1806 by the *second Ratio Educationis*. This made a substantial step toward the introduction of compulsory education, as well as towards making Hungarian the language of tuition in secondary schools. By the formal recognition of schools administered by the Protestant churches an important move was made toward the acceptance of religious tolerance within the education system.



## The age of revolutions and capitalism in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe

The early 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the overwhelming victory of the Hungarian language at all level of education following the decision in 1840 by the National Diet declaring Hungarian the official language of the State. This was also the period when the first vocational schools were established.

During the revolution and the 1848-49 War of Independence a legislative act on education was adopted by the government of the newly independent Hungary. The act while explicitly stating the overwhelming power and control of the state over the content and organisation of the whole education system, confirmed that the strict enforcement of the compulsory character of primary education is solely the responsibility of the administration.

Following the containment of the independent Hungary by the Hapsburgs in 1849, the modernisation process of education after a while took on a new momentum again but according to the Austrian pattern, and the domination of the German language in secondary education. In the 1850's in the cities four-year, in villages three-year compulsory education was introduced. Though the number of primary schools increased by roughly 30%, only less than half of the school age population was enrolled in primary education and less than 2% of the state budget was dedicated to education. In secondary education the Austrian model was introduced, which established the uniform eight-year grammar school and the so-called real secondary schools devoted primarily to mathematics and sciences.

The historic political compromise in 1867 between the Austrian and the Hungarian ruling elites led to the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This development gave an unprecedented impetus to the economic expansion and cultural advancement of the country. The establishment of a modern education system on a European scale is associated with the name of *József Eötvös* a great writer and leading liberal politician of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who was appointed minister of education and culture of the first Hungarian Government in 1867. The Education Act of 1868 introduced six years of compulsory education, ahead of England and France. The introduction and gradual implementation of the principle of compulsory education while requiring the commitment of huge funds by the State, soon produced tangible results: between 1870 and 1910 the rate of illiteracy among the population dropped from 68.7 to 31.3 %.

The Act on secondary education, which entered into force well after the premature death of Eötvös, practically maintained the institution of the six-year grammar school and the so-called real school. The curriculum of grammar schools focused on liberal arts (history, literature and classical languages), that of the



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real (or science) schools, on mathematics and natural sciences. Both types of secondary schools prepared for university studies, which were, however, conditional on successfully passing the secondary school final examination termed *maturity examination*.

The organised school based vocational training started in 1884 by the promulgation of the Act on apprenticeship schools. The task of establishing and maintaining these apprenticeship schools was assigned to local authorities, while supervisory duties were jointly exercised by the local education and trade and industry's authorities.

The third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also the era of the foundation of large national universities in four major cities of the country. The university in the capital city, formally named Budapest from 1875, had four faculties (theology, law, medicine and liberal arts). In 1871 the university of technology was also founded.



Despite this substantial progress, the Hungarian education system continued to be highly selective and discriminative. It maintained among others the institution of the four-year so-called *polgári iskola*, a kind of junior secondary school, which started upon finishing the fourth grade of primary school. These schools which almost exclusively enlisted children of modest origin, were in fact an “educational dead end”, since they didn’t give entitlement for entry into higher education, and with the certificates they issued only jobs requiring lower qualifications could be filled. In a way these schools preserved the education and cultural monopoly of the country’s political and economic elites.

The spectacular economic and cultural development of the country at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century produced outstanding performances by Hungarian scholars, creative artists and entrepreneurs in science, technology as well as in different branches of the arts. Many of them achieved world fame and prestige. The outbreak of the First World War abruptly interrupted this upward trend.

## Between the two World Wars

The deep politico-economic and moral crisis of the early 20’s which resulted from the defeat suffered in World War One, the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the dismembering of historic Hungary led to the birth of the territorial revisionism which inspired the so-called neo-nationalism professing the hegemony of the Hungarian culture in the Carpathian-basin. According to *Kunó Klebelsberg*, the father of this ideology and Education Minister of Hungary for more than a decade, “*nowadays, not the sword but culture will safeguard our nation and make it great again*”. This concept in practice has produced an ambitious education and cultural policy. An unprecedented proportion of over 10% of the State budget was dedicated to education and culture. Hundreds of school buildings were erected, and 5000 classrooms were built country-wide. Academic activities and scientific research were encouraged. Young talented scholars were supported by a generous foreign scholarship programme.

The participation of Hungary in the Second World War on the side of Hitler’s Germany and the occupation of the country in March 1944 by German troops resulted, in the introduction of racially and ethnically motivated discriminatory measures on the academic fields and in education too, heavily affecting scholars, children and teachers of Jewish descent. Many perished in concentration camps, but some left the country before the outbreak of the war and found refuge in the United States. This was the case of a number of great scholars, mostly physicists (for example János Neumann, Tódor Kármán, Ede Teller and many others), who later reached international fame in their exile. Some, like the great composer Béla

Bartók, left the country simply because they could not bear the suffocating political atmosphere of the 40's. This was also a period when at all levels of education, the curricula became simple tools for the dissemination of ideologies based on racism and national hatred.

### The aftermath of the Second World War; the communist era

The disaster of the Second World War resulted in a deep economic and moral devastation. The emerging new political forces agreed on the necessity of the overall democratic transformation of society and of public administration, including the education system in order to abolish the political and cultural privileges of the “ancien régime” ruling classes, and to lay the foundations of a democratic society. Among the first of these measures was the introduction in late summer 1945, of the eight years compulsory free education based on the principle of single public school, called *general schools*. In these institutions, the primary objective of teaching was the delivery of an identical basic knowledge to all pupils irrespectively of their social and cultural background. Secondary level education also underwent a radical reorganisation process and the diverse secondary level institutions were merged into a single four-year secondary school. In 1948 this was followed by the nationalisation of schools and the total banishment of the Churches' responsibility regarding all aspects of public education. Though these measure were supported by most of the political forces in their endeavour to enhance the democratic character and the secular nature of the national education system, in a way they might be considered as a prelude to the Communist Party taking overall control of this sector, too.

In the early 50's the communist supremacy in public education become absolute. While openly and formally transforming the whole education system into an obedient tool of communistic indoctrination of young people, brutal totalitarian methods were introduced in the organisation and the supervision of schools. This process led to the establishment of a colourless and monolithic school system based on a centrally imposed curricula, pedagogical tools and methodology and to a strict central control of the schools and teachers regarding their adherence to the officially professed ideology, the centrally set standards, de facto prohibiting to the school management and individual teachers any pedagogical experimentation, or the introduction of any innovation in the execution of their tasks.

Meanwhile, the 50's witnessed the launching of a vigorous national campaign for the eradication of illiteracy, the opening of the gates of secondary schools and universities to women and to young people of modest origin. Simultaneously as a serious and unjustifiable discriminatory measure, a kind of numerus clausus was imposed on the enrolment of children of non-working class or non-peasant origin, while there was an

almost unqualified support to the admission of students of working class or peasant families. These measures not only gravely impaired the chances of middle class students' participation in secondary and higher education institutions, but also led to a marked decline in the quality of education. Moreover, as a result of the hurried increase in the numbers of pupils enrolled in secondary grammar schools, called general secondary school, a growing number of students leaving these types of schools could not enter higher education, and left the education system without the acquisition of professional qualification, but also unwilling to take up any blue collars job.

During this period vocational education, too, witnessed a major transformation. The frequent changes affecting the structure, as well as the content of VET all aimed to meet the massive needs in labour force generated by the excessive pace of industrialisation, primarily heavy industries, and required by the large stated owned productive units. The introduction in the late 50's of the so-called *polytechnic education* was the last unsuccessful attempt to bring together general education and the delivery of practical skills within a single type of secondary level institution. All these experiments shortly failed to produce the expected results.



After the dramatic and short interlude of the October 1956 Revolution, which also gave birth to fresh ideas in the field of education, the harshest measures taken in the early communist era were gradually abolished or slackened. Nonetheless, democratic, pluralistic principles, consensus seeking dialogue with the concerned stakeholders were systematically ostracised, and any opening to the world and to new ideas was seriously hindered.

The recurring failures in several fields led to an overall review of the whole school system and to the adoption of a new public education law in 1961. The new law though left basically intact the structure of public education, through the establishment of the four-year secondary vocational schools and three-year vocational schools, established a clear cut demarcation between general education and vocational education and training. These two types of VET institutions constitute not without some major modifications the pillars of today's school based vocational education. A further new major development was the increase of the age limit of compulsory education to 16 years of age.



As of 1949, higher education also went through a series of trials and substantial changes. Repeated “socialist reorganisation” of the sector, as the favoured term went, permitted the Communist Party apparatus to take absolute control over higher education. A number of highly qualified and respected professors termed untrustworthy by the regime were compelled to leave the profession, the oversimplification of curricula turned the teaching process into a docile tool of communist indoctrination, the imposition of strict quotas regarding the ratio of stu-

dents of worker’s and peasant’s origin made student’s social and family background a primary selection criteria. All these necessarily led to a palpable fall of the quality and efficiency of higher education. The adverse impacts of the counterproductive measures could not be counterbalanced by the few forward looking steps such as, for instance, the substantial increase in the number of young people enrolled in higher education, the introduction in 1952 of the written and oral entry examination, the massive educational support extended to student of working class or peasant origin, the establishment of evening and correspondence courses facilitating access of adults to higher education, and the promotion of women’s enrolment, etc. It is not by a chance that students as well as members of the educational staff played an outstanding role in the revolutionary zeal of 1956.

### The 1989-1990 political changes

The sweeping political and social transformation of 1989-90 gave a powerful impulse to the abolishment of the monopoly of the State, to the democratisation, and modernisation of the education and training systems across the board. Education had to give adequate answers to the challenges arising from the developing new political, economic and social conditions.

The 1993 Act on Public Education enforces all freedoms – including the right of founding a school by a Church, or a legal entity and by a person – as well as the free choice of school by the parents. It strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination. The Act maintained the basic structure of public education and that of the school based vocational education and training and reconfirmed the duration of compulsory education, but offered the opportunity for choosing. The Act transferred the responsibility of the maintenance of state operated schools and verifying their compliance with relevant laws and regulations to local authorities called school maintainers. The local governments, who are elected by people of the settlements where the schools are operating, were also held responsible for the partial financing of the education institutions under their supervision. While these solutions created a basically democratically managed public education system, they produced an over-decentralised organisation of public education that was unique in Europe, with a weak potential for quality enhancement, performance assessment and for the dissemination of innovation on a national scale.

The adoption in 1995 and the phasing in of the National Core Curriculum from 1998 onward was a substantial step towards the overall modernisation of the content and methodology of public education. The *National Core Curriculum* by setting general standards regarding the volume and content of subjects to be taught, and by identifying from the first until the tenth grade basic skills to be acquired by pupils in the course of the teaching process, established a comprehensive framework regarding the basic objectives and the content of education, and meanwhile it granted schools and teachers substantial autonomy in choosing basic methodology and pedagogical tools for obtaining the expected results, thus giving ample room for the development or the adaptation of innovative methods and tools.

The provisions of the 1993 Act on Higher Education set forth the principles of democratic and autonomous higher education opened to the world, and gave signal to an unprecedented expansion of higher education.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE HUNGARIAN PEDAGOGICAL THINKING

Pedagogical thinking has been a permanent feature of the Hungarian education since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Janus Comenius one of the founders of modern pedagogy was active in Hungary, where he taught at the Sárospatak (North-East Hungary) Reformed Church College from 1660–1665. His contemporary, *János Apáczai Csere* (1625-1659), a scholar educated in the Netherlands and appointed for a while dean of the Gyulafehérvár College in Transylvania was the first to publish a comprehensive programme dedicated to

pedagogy in the Hungarian language. He urged the renovation of the Transylvanian school system with special emphasis on the establishment of a wide scale primary education and also the founding of a university in the principality of Transylvania. In his comprehensive Encyclopaedia also written in Hungarian, which epitomised the knowledge of his time, Apáczai dedicated a separate chapter to education. Both, Comenius and Apáczai Csere advocated a humanistic and holistic approach toward education and stressed the significance of moral education. The Habsburgs- inspired re-catholisation campaign in the second part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century produced a vigorous renaissance of the concept of teaching within the Catholic Church too, where the need of preparing a great number of priests able to win back people to faith was strongly felt. *Péter Pázmány* an imposing preacher and ecclesiastic orator of his time was a formidable rival of the Protestant churches. He was consecrated archbishop of the country in 1616, and founded in 1635 the college at Nagyszombat (North-West Hungary), the precursor of Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest, not only for the training of young Catholic priests but also of young secular academics at the Faculty of Philosophy. He was the author of several books dedicated to teaching, and because of his preaching in a vigorous and innovative language he is duly considered the reformer of the Hungarian language and rhetoric. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century the small number of pedagogy-related works written by Hungarians largely mirrored the main European trends of pedagogical thinking (Pestalozzi, Rousseau, Locke, Herbart, etc.). However their impact was rather limited, since they mostly put their knowledge and skills into the service of the education of the offspring of the high aristocracy. It was not before the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when general and compulsory education gradually gained ground, that pedagogy was recognized as a scientific theory and also as a methodology of practical teaching and was given the status of an independent discipline. The foundation of the Chair of Pedagogy at Budapest University and later at all other major universities throughout the country led to the birth of several schools of pedagogical thinking. The establishment of the Pedagogical Society, the regular publication of a periodical exclusively dedicated to pedagogy, and the growing number of scholarly books on the subject confirmed the existence and evolution of a sovereign Hungarian pedagogical science, moreover they indicated the vitality of the discipline and the diversity of trends.

During the period between the two world wars, diverse trends of reform pedagogy inspired by Montessori, Steiner and others gained ground. A number of Hungarian educators and several experimental schools won international claim. Meanwhile, as a result of the general advancement of the ultra-nationalistic and totalitarian ideologies and politics, and also under the pressure and influence of official government policies pedagogy, too, became gradually infected by chauvinistic ideas tainted with racism and anti-Semitism. Nonetheless, pedagogical trends representing a genuine democratic spirit and advocating for the advancement of people of modest origin through education not only never ceased to exist but were able to mobilise young people to work for these ideals.

After the World War Two, the short period of democratic evolution the democratic traditions of the pre-war era were strengthened, but the gradual communist takeover in ideology and politics soon forced pedagogy as a science into the background. The authorities tried to conceal their disdain toward pedagogy by elevating on the pedestal the teaching of Makarenko. With the advent of the so-called soft dictatorship in the 1980's, the gradually loosening grip of the communist ideology opened the door to reforms in education, too. In a sense, these partial reforms have prepared the ground for comprehensive changes in the early 90s.

Today Hungarian pedagogy is characterised by a great diversity of trends and ambitions. All known major pedagogical schools of thinking are present constituting a colourful palette of ideas and programmes. However, the historic line of demarcation between followers of traditionalism and mainstream thinking that is open to Europe and the world continues to dominate the Hungarian pedagogical thinking.







# THE PRESENT



The present structure (*cf. Annex*) and organisation of the Hungarian education and training systems as well as the content of education is, on the one hand, the product of many centuries of organic evolution embodying traditional European structures and values deeply rooted in the national intellectual and cultural heritage; and on other hand, it reflects the impacts of the comprehensive social and economic and political transformation Hungary has experienced in a global, and in particular, in a European context since the early 1990's. This double-sided character of the systems is manifested in the apparent struggle at a national as well as at local levels between disciples of traditionalism and devotees of innovation and reforms. Over the course of centuries this has been a permanent feature of education policy making and pedagogical prac-

tices regarding all aspects of education. However, as a result of the fallout of the great socio-economic changes of the early nineties coupled with the implications of globalisation, the unprecedented rapid pace of technological progress the sector is witnessing a growing pressure toward fast and profound transformation and conceptual adaptation to the new social, economic, technological and demographic realities.

Notwithstanding the numerous positive and spectacular qualitative and quantitative improvements of the last two decades, the apparent weaknesses and adaptation difficulties characterising nowadays the performance of the systems are doubtless the consequences of these contradictions, and the soul searching of all actors.

## THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The basic principles of operation, organisation, management and financing of the Hungarian education and training systems are regulated by four Acts adopted by the Hungarian Parliament:

- Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education;
- Act LXXVI of 1993 on Vocational Education and Training;
- Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher Education; and
- Act CI of 2001 on Adult Education.

Originally adopted in 1993 and onwards for the most part, following the dynamic but peaceful changeover of 1989-1990, all of the above acts were amended several times according to current economic and/or political considerations and constrains. Within the general context of the principles stipulated by the relevant international conventions, and the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, these amendments always mirror the actual political and ideological agenda advocated by successive governments ruling the country. Moreover, the accession of Hungary to the European Union in 2004 also required the harmonisation of existing national legislation with the *acquis communautaire* also in the field of education.

All of the above acts provide for the full respect of basic democratic principles and humanistic values enshrined in the Hungarian Constitution and the relevant international conventions and covenants, including the Community's legal instruments. They provide for the full respect of the personal freedoms of students, prohibit and sanction any form of discrimination based on race, national and ethnic identity, beliefs, religion or social origin in access to, and participation in, education, and strictly enforce the principle of equal treatment. These acts are complemented by a series of other legal instruments (laws, regulations, decisions and

decrees) meant to ensure their implementation (*cf. Annex*). Also several Acts (i.e. the Act on the local governments, the Immigration Act, the law on the State budget passed annually by the Parliament, etc.) constitute an overall and complex framework for the enforcement of the education and training related legal provisions.

Though each of the acts is dedicated to a specific level and type of education and training, the education and training systems constitute an organic unity. The principle of vertical or transversal transition within the system, the exclusion of dead ends being a basic consideration, primary, secondary and higher education as well as adult education and training are built one upon the other. Nonetheless further efforts are needed to ensure real and unobstructed lifelong access to education and training for all irrespectively of age, social status or individual living conditions through enforcing better transparency, transferability between the different sub-sectors of education and training, as well as through the formal recognition and validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by different forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The PUBLIC EDUCATION ACT provides for all children living in the territory of Hungary a free eight-year general education and free upper secondary level general or vocational education. Under the Act, compulsory and free education starts at the age of 5 (ISCED 0), corresponding to the last year of pre-primary education, and finishes at the age of 18 (ISCED 3). At the end of upper secondary studies students must pass secondary school leaving examinations in order to be admitted to higher education. The Act also regulates the rights and obligations of students, that of the institutions' pedagogical and administrative staff, as well as the rights of parents to form parents' associations in schools and to have a say in matters regarding the education of their children. The accreditation and subsidy of textbooks is regulated by a specific decree. The responsibility of the choice of textbooks falls on the teaching staff, while the Ministry of Education and Culture approves the list of the eligible textbooks.

The VOCATIONAL TRAINING ACT regulates matters regarding upper secondary school based as well as higher vocational education and training, with special regard to areas falling outside the provisions of the Public Education and Higher Education Act. The Act addresses issues related to the recognition of professional qualifications, establishes the procedures regarding regulated professions, especially those requiring examinations and listed in the National Register of Qualifications. It also provides for the status of trainees, the contractual responsibilities of the employers assuming their practical training. Furthermore the Act contains provisions on the modalities of participation of the employers' representative professional bodies (so-called industrial or trade chambers) in curricular development and professional examination procedures.

The recently amended HIGHER EDUCATION ACT, while maintaining the complete respect for academic freedom and autonomy of higher educational institutions is aimed at creating favourable legal and policy conditions for the accession of the Hungarian higher education to the European Higher Education Area. In accordance with the principles and objectives of the Bologna process the new Act enforces the full scale introduction of the three-cycle structure (*cf. Annex*) and the mandatory use of the credit system (ECTS). Its provisions encourage international mobility and contribute to the strengthening of the financial autonomy of the institutions and the development of their R+D+I capacities, and encourage closer co-operation with economic actors.

Education and training opportunities falling outside formal education are mostly regulated by the ADULT EDUCATION ACT. The Act establishes general rules for all adult training providers (educational institutions, legal or natural persons, etc.) regarding the modalities of organising and financing any adult training programme. It provides for a mandatory accreditation of all adult education and training programmes or training provider institutions by a representative body, the National Adult Education Accreditation Board.

## FINANCING

Financial resources necessary for the basic operations of the education and training systems are mainly granted by the State. The share of education in the state budget expenditures in terms of the GDP corresponds to the proportions spent on education by other European countries. In recent years educational expenditures amounted to 5.1-5.3% of the GDP. The level of educational spending per primary education pupils is *grosso modo* in line with that in countries at a similar level of development. However Hungary spends less per lower and upper secondary education student and more on higher education student compared with other countries at a similar level of development (*cf. Annex*).

As regards public education (pre-school education, primary, secondary school based general and vocational education) the financial support is supplied by the annual State budget enacted by the Parliament. Local governments and other school maintainers (i.e. Churches, private foundations,) usually have to complement the central budget support. Their contribution to the local educational expenditure is equivalent to 30-50% of the total costs.

The financial appropriation of schools is chiefly calculated on an annual per capita basis that is according to the number of pupils admitted in the institutions maintained by the concerned local government, and it is channelled to the school maintainers by the Ministry for Local Governments and Regional Development as part of their annual budget allocations granted to the local authorities and to other school maintainers (i.e. churches, private foundations, etc.).

This basic allocation is supplemented by a number of so-called additional financial subsidies. These are granted as recognition of the delivery of special pedagogical tasks. School maintainers i.e. are entitled to receive additional financial aid in cases where schools under their authority are institutions educating children belonging to recognised ethnic minorities (so-called bilingual pre-schools and schools), children with special education needs, children with multiple social disadvantages, migrant children, etc.

School based vocational training being an integral part of the public education system is also mostly funded by the State. Besides State subsidies vocational training schools and higher education institutions where higher level vocational training courses are organised also have access under certain conditions to additional funds from the Labour Market Fund made up by the companies' mandatory contribution.

The principle and the practice of chiefly central State financing apply for higher education, too. Here the State budget appropriations are channelled to the institutions directly through the Ministry of Education and Culture. The number of enrolled students to be trained at State expenses for each field of study is annually set by the Government upon the proposal of the Minister of Education and Culture. However institutions are entitled to admit students who pay the costs of their studies, provided that their entry examination performance matches the minimum admittance score established by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Currently about 50% of the total number of students falls in this category. In order to create a more sound basis for the financing of higher education institutions, measures were taken to encourage contributions by companies and students. This will also enhance awareness of the need for quality education and will better reflect labour market demands.

Since adult education is strongly supply driven, the financing of adult education and training is based on shared responsibilities of all main stakeholders (the State, the employer and the individual).

## ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL, STRUCTURE, ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

At the level of the Government, responsibilities for regulating, managing the system, developing and implementing basic education and training policies are shared between the Ministry of Education and Culture and primarily the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The latter's competencies mostly include the content of secondary vocational training, and also the regular updating of the National Register of Qualifications, as well as adult training.

Vertically, the administration of education and training institutions is largely decentralised. Local authorities, whose number is well over two thousand, are not simply responsible for the management of the public education institutions operating within their administrative area, but make decisions on financial and human resources (i.e. approval of the institutions' budget and appointing their headmasters) and also have to approve, as well as watch over the effective implementation of their pedagogical programmes. .

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the overall management of public and higher education, while adult education and training at a national level is managed and supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Regarding school based vocational education and training the management tasks are shared between these two ministries. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for defining the content of the VET programmes of secondary vocational schools, while overall regulatory matters fall within the competences of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The regional level governance of education and training through devolving certain administrative competences for central authorities and granting funds to regional level bodies is slowly taking shape..

All the referred acts provide for a mandatory involvement of CIVIL ORGANISATIONS AND CONSULTATIVE BODIES in policy making. The recognised representative professional bodies must be consulted prior to any major decisions related to sectoral policies.

## THE PERFORMANCE OF THE HUNGARIAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS

### Achievements and shortcomings

According to international comparative data the average performance of the Hungarian education and trainings systems in terms of efficiency, quality and equity regarding the delivery of knowledge and competences, in relation to the requirements of the knowledge based society as well as the efficient use of

human and material resources is rather mixed. In spite of tangible achievements regarding several aspects of education and training, in recent years basic international indicators measuring efficiency and equity in education and training compared with those of most of the OECD countries show a stagnant or declining performance of Hungary in these areas.

In the context of education and training the most significant progress which characterises Hungarian society is the dramatic IMPROVEMENT OF THE POPULATION'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (*cf. Annex*). While basic demographic trends have been reflected by a stable and slow decline in the size of school-age population (*cf. Annex*), in the course of the past two decades an impressive growth has taken place in the number and proportion of young people admitted to upper secondary level (ISCED 3) general or vocational education. Today over 85% of the relevant age group attends upper secondary level educational institutions. As a result the proportion of people with at least upper secondary education has more than doubled, especially within the younger age brackets.



The expansion of higher education has been even more spectacular. In the interval of 10 years only, the number of young people admitted to full-time university or college courses has quadrupled (*cf. Annex*). Doubtless, this development is not only a reflection of the increasing demand for a workforce with higher qualifications, but also it is a clear evidence of the aspiration of society as a whole, and of individuals to acquire better knowledge and skills.





Even if the modernisation of the content and methodology of education did not keep abreast with the expansion of upper secondary and higher education, an evident progress has been achieved particularly in the delivery of key competencies and the acquisition of specific skills.

In the field of public education, replacing former mandatory and centrally imposed curricula as mentioned earlier, a NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM (NCC) entered into force in 1998. Revised every three years, the NCC as a comprehensive framework offers countrywide basic orientations, principles and objectives as well as conceptual and methodological guidance common to all institutions of public education. It also offers recommendations regarding the allocation of curricular time expressed in percentages of total contact time. Thus, for each grade it grants on a national level content and methodological unity and consistency of the teaching process, while it gives a free hand to individual schools to develop their own custom-made pedagogical programme and local curricula adapted

to their specific needs and potential. Further developing the basic concept of the two previous core curricula, the recently revised NCR, which entered into force in the 2007–2008 academic year, while maintaining a cross-curricular (interdisciplinary) approach in the definition of methodology, strongly focuses all along the whole teaching process on the acquisition of the key competencies in lifelong learning.

In terms of contents, school based vocational education too, underwent major changes. This is particularly valid for the development and the establishment of the NEW NATIONAL REGISTER OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (NRVQ). One of the greatest merit of the new register, besides its modular structure is that by defining the content of qualifications and establishing an ISCED-based hierarchic classification of vocational qualifications acquired in the course of formal, non-formal, or informal training and learning it has created not only a transparent vocational training system, but also a permeability among various qualifications and levels or forms of training. A major development regarding the structure of vocational education was the establishment of post-secondary (ISCED 4) vocational education. The duration of vocational training by two additional years after the completion of the secondary school final examination, and a three-year non-university higher level vocational training courses were introduced. The full alignment of upper secondary vocational training school curricula, and course syllabuses with the new modular NRVQ has just started.

In higher education the large scale implementation of the three-cycle education and the mandatory introduction of the credit system in accordance with the objectives of the Bologna process resulted in the development of new programmes and curricula better adapted to the demands of the labour market and technological changes.

Significant progress has been achieved in foreign language teaching, which has traditionally been an Achilles' heel of the Hungarian education at all levels. Today foreign language teaching has become an integral part of the pedagogical programmes of lower and all types of upper secondary level schools. In higher education the precondition for acquisition of a diploma is knowledge of at least one foreign language. The quality of language teaching has also improved.

Another important asset of the Hungarian education and training systems is the general expansion of digital literacy at all levels of education. In the course of the last decade not only have all institutions of public and higher education been equipped with computers and connected to the Internet, but thanks to extensive in-service training of teachers and to appropriate curricula development, their use by teaching staff and students became widespread.

The recent introduction of a two-tier system of secondary school final examination should also be considered part of innovative content regulation measures. The new so-called advanced level secondary school final examination entitles students to enter higher education without sitting for the traditional admission examination organised by higher education institutions. This new system not only facilitates the transition from secondary to tertiary level but also provides standard, explicit and more transparent admission requirements, and allows candidates to better focus on the acquisition of key competencies (literacy, language and ICT proficiency and problem solving skills).

## THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The education and vocational training sector continues to be the country's largest employer. Without taking into account the administrative staff, teachers employed in public education (ISCED 0, 1, 2 and 3) number about 165 thousand. The continuing declining trend in the school-age population and consequently in the number of children enrolled in pre-school and school-based education has not been reflected so far in the numbers of the teaching staff, and the teacher to pupil ratio is among the smallest among the OECD countries.

The implementation of the Bologna principles the establishment of a three-cycle higher education system requires a comprehensive transformation in the structure of teacher training. According to the provisions of the relevant laws and regulations, with the exception of primary school (ISCED 1) and pre-school teachers, ISCED 2 and 3 teachers' qualification can be acquired solely in the context of master's studies following a single procedure valid for all fields of studies.

Important changes have been implemented in continuing education and in-service training of teachers in recent years. On the one hand, higher education institutions are granted greater responsibility in the provision of further training; on the other hand, participation in continuing education at least once every seven years has been made mandatory. According to a recent survey over 65% of teachers attend in-service training programmes. However, the programmes mostly aim at supplementing or upgrading the missing professional knowledge and for the most part are not linked to practical problems teachers encounter in their day-to-day classroom practice.

## WEAKNESSES AND CHALLENGES

The stagnation, or in a sense gradual deterioration, of the performance of the Hungarian education and training system in terms of almost all internationally recognised major indicators and benchmarks has been acknowledged for a while not only by researchers, but also by policy and decision makers. Causes of mediocrity of performance are manifold, and have been clearly identified. They primarily consist of the inherent rigidity of systems manifested in a too slow and insufficient or only partial adaptation of structure, content and management, and generally speaking the overall governance of the sector to necessities dictated by the new socio-economic, demographic and technological developments. The lack of macro-level continuity characterising education and training policies coupled with a chronic scarcity of funds only intensified the evident weaknesses.

It is to be noted, that the continued dominant or almost exclusive state financing has been a key element in camouflaging the apparent weaknesses and delaying the imperative modernisation. Moreover, hasty responses dictated by ephemeral considerations instead of durable and lasting solutions only aggravated the shortcomings they were supposed to cure.

It has been largely recognized that the correction of these weaknesses is a necessary precondition for the improvement of the overall performance of education and training badly needed in the context of the knowledge based economy and society. It is also evident that to this end reforms are also indispensable in other related connecting areas such as administration and financing.

Following 2005, medium-term strategies have been developed for all forms and levels of education (public education, vocational education and training, higher education, etc.). A lifelong learning strategy integrating all sectors in the context of the European Lifelong Learning Strategy was adopted by the Government in September 2005. Most of the planned or proposed measures have been incorporated in the mostly EU funded 2nd National Development Plan (2007–2013) and recently approved by the European Union.

Although a number of reforms are in the making across the board, the weaknesses of education and training systems persist and continue to present major challenges confronting education policy makers, the education community, and in fact society as a whole.

### • Unequal access to quality education; segregation

Though unequal access to quality education traditionally marks Hungarian education the combined impact of growing regional and social inequalities characterising socio-economic developments of the past two decades has clearly intensified this controversial feature of the system. That is why explicit policy efforts and a number of practical measures of a legal, administrative as well as financial character aimed at improving access to quality education of children with multiple social disadvantages and reducing latent and deliberate segregation practices in schools, mostly affecting children of Roma origin, have so far produced modest or partial results only, and in this field no major breakthrough has been achieved. In international comparison, Hungary continues to be one of the countries in Europe where school-based education is marked by a high index of separation among children according to their socio-economic background, and where the performance of the students and their progress within the education and training system is strongly marked by their social and family background. Moreover, as evidenced by the conclusions of a number of related surveys, instead of offering students with social disadvantages a chance to catch up through the delivery of quality education, schools largely reproduce social inequalities.

A standard feature among institutions operating in economically backward regions or municipalities is the poor physical condition of school buildings and the insufficient supply state-of-the-art educational equipment. This is not only a permanent obstacle to the delivery of high-quality education but also prevents the enforcement of the principle of equal treatment, and in fact is a major source of segregation and inequity.

### • Lack of a single and systematic assessment and evaluation system in public education

An acknowledged liability of the education and training systems is the lack of organized regular external inspection and evaluation of the efficiency of school processes. After the fall of communism the central inspection of school performance was abolished and supposed to be replaced by local and/or self-evaluation procedures. These practices, even if adopted across the board, could not guaranty authentic comparability of the performance of individual institutions or teachers, which would be a precondition to independent and impartial quality assessment with an effective and stimulating impact. In higher education only the very initial steps have been made toward the development and introduction of output driven training programmes.

### • Insufficient response of education to regional needs

Regardless of the incontestable progress in this field, the approach of public and higher education toward matters tied to region-specific social and economic issues, especially their active response to regional labour market demand and their effective contribution to social inclusion are still insufficient and are short of solid legal ground and appropriate administrative structure.

### • Low participation of adults in lifelong learning

Hungary is one of the European countries where the participation in lifelong learning of adults, especially of those with low educational attainment, is the lowest (*cf. Annex*). Though the causes of this are manifold, undoubtedly the weak motivation of the adult population for learning, the inadequacy of the acquired learning skills throughout school education, and the clearly supply driven non-formal training market obviously are amongst the most important factors which provoke this phenomenon. In addition, there is a lack of initiative for higher education institutions to organise non-formal training courses specially focusing on regional or local needs.

### • Insufficient economic and financial efficiency,

While there has been a noticeable decline in the number of school age children and recently the number of young people admitted to upper secondary education levelled out and is now slowly but steadily decreasing, no substantial change has taken place in the number of teachers and schools in public education. In addition, due to various demographic movements primary schools in small villages are facing dwindling

enrolment. As a result, the number of students per teacher is among the lowest among the OECD countries, and a number of primary, and lower secondary schools are forced to operate with a very limited number of pupils.

### • Insufficient responses to labour market needs

There is an evident gap between the output of upper secondary general and vocational schools and higher education institutions and the demands of the labour market for skilled labour and a highly qualified workforce. The shortage is mostly felt in skilled blue collar jobs in high and medium-tech. industries and in technological and mechanical engineering. The chronic imbalance is primarily due to a serious lack of systematic feedbacks from the labour market as well as the weak professional and financial motivation of education and training institutions to meet labour market demands. There is no single counselling and guidance closely connected to public employment services, the transition from school to the world of work remains almost totally unregulated, and economic actors play an extremely subordinate role in the definition of the content of training and the the output of trade. The contribution of higher education to the dissemination of knowledge and innovation among industries is largely insufficient.

Nonetheless, the outstanding performance of a great number of institutions of primary, secondary and tertiary level education and their highly innovative approach toward the content and methodology of teaching and learning inspired by international experience and standards offer clear evidence of the vitality of the systems and their actors. This constitutes an enormous potential for a general renewal of Hungarian education and training.

## THE HUNGARIAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Doubtless Hungary's EU membership has brought about immediate and tangible results in the area of education and training the impact of which could be mostly felt in the field of mobility by a relatively large segment of the population.

What is even more significant in this respect is the role the European Union is playing in underpinning the overall development of Hungarian education and training. This contribution is twofold. First, through the structural funds the European Union extends substantial financial support to the upgrading of education and training in terms of infrastructure, human resources as well as content development. Secondly,

the active participation in the development, articulation and implementation of Community education and training policies is a powerful tool, and a permanent source of inspiration and incentive for modernising and upgrading content, methodology and governance of education and training. European education and training policy initiatives often are strong arguments in the hands of those who advocate new approaches, innovative policy measures, or even urge comprehensive policy measures.

In the period 2004–2006 the European Union extended significant financial assistance. In the framework of the First National Development Plan nearly 400 million euros were allocated to the improvement of the physical infrastructure and equipment of school based and higher education, and also to the development of the content and methodology of education and vocational training. The implemented measures are in full harmony with the basic orientations of the Government's medium-term development strategies for school based general and vocational education and higher education, and they constitute an integral part of the planned development projects. They also represent a springboard to, and foundations for, future reforms.

In the context of the open method of coordination (OMC) Hungary is an active participant of European level policy making in the field of education and training. While contributing to shaping up a common European policy framework, she takes advantage of the many opportunities offered for mutual learning, exchange of experience and good practices regarding all aspects of education and training. Hungary gives, particular attention to policy matters regarding strengthening the role of education and training in the establishment of the knowledge based society and her contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the renewed Lisbon strategy. In a number of fields and concrete cases the transposition or a creative adaptation of European level policy approaches and methods contributed and contributes presently, too, to the development of innovative measures and models. The recent decision on the development of a national qualification framework compatible with the European Qualification Frameworks exemplifies this trend.

An additional powerful tool supporting the modernisation efforts of the respective fields is the active participation of Hungary in EDUCATION AND TRAINING RELATED COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES, and also in the COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK PROGRAMMES for research and development. Participation in these community programmes greatly facilitates the successful integration of the country into the European education, training and R&D area.

# THE FUTURE



## WHY REFORMS ARE NEEDED AND WHAT THEY INTEND TO ACHIEVE

The Hungarian education and training systems are confronted with challenges similar to those of almost all education systems in Europe. They are challenges arising from globalisation and global competition encompassing education too, particularly in the higher education market, from the aging society, from the unprecedented rapid pace of societal and technological mutations, and, last but not least, from the implications of a declining social cohesion. Moreover, as a consequence of the country's EU membership, Hungarian education and training systems have to contribute more efficiently to the overall modernisation of the society. All this is supplemented by what the State socialism has left behind regarding the structure, the organisation and financing of these sectors, as well as the accompanying and deeply rooted social and cultural behaviours. Making these systems actually more responsive to these global challenges requires an innovative approach toward the content, the structure, the management and the governance of these systems, thus making them capable of adjusting themselves to the rapidly changing global and immedi-



ate socio-economic environment. The reform process consists of the definition and the implementation of measures necessary to make those systems sufficiently flexible, and to create the potentials necessary for their continuous self-adjustment.

The concrete programmes and the roadmap for the renovation of the Hungarian education and training systems is gradually taking shape. Based on a creative adaptation of the European concept of lifelong learning to Hungarian conditions, all segments and aspects at every level are being affected. The present government expressed its firm commitment to a comprehensive reform of basic human services including the sectors of education and training

The fact of being a member of the European Union, the blissful reality of shared basic values, the pressing need and also the tangible opportunity for searching together for valid and legitimate answers to the above socio-economic and global problems, which does not only facilitate, in a national context, the identification of distinctive and specific solutions, but also enables combating these difficulties through joint efforts and actions. The amalgamation of national efforts and resources with the Community policy and financial support appears clearly in the measures Hungary is planning to implement in the course of the 2007-2013 programming period in the field of education and training, and in her participation in the implementation of the objectives of the *Community Education and Training 2010 Work Programme*.

While the identified strategic and overall policy objectives and benchmarks are fully consistent with the comprehensive goals of the Lisbon strategy focusing on growth and jobs, the proposed tools for concrete implementation are in harmony with those envisaged in the 2010 Education and Training Work programme. They also fully address to the specific requirements of the upgrading and renovation of education and training systems arising from the country's fundamentals as reflected in the situation analysis of the *New Hungary Development Plan*, and human resources related *operational programmes*.

As explicitly stated in the referred documents, the renovation programme of the Hungarian education and training systems is fully consistent with the basic principles of the European lifelong learning strategy concept. It is stretched over a period of 7 to 9 years and provides for a gradual and co-ordinated implementation of the most diverse actions, with the prospect of creating by 2013–2015 *a modern, well-equipped, more equitable and efficient education and training system capable of delivering competitive knowledge at all levels and forms of education and training*, ensuring the acquisition of key competencies and thus equipping the country with the human potential necessary for meeting the requirements of a country which economically, technologically as well as culturally is fully integrated into the EU. Especially the *Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP)* and the *Social Infrastructure Operational Programme (SIOP)*, dedicate sig-

nificant share of their funds to support education, training, employment and social policy related operations. Furthermore, the seven regional programmes will directly address the resolution of eventual education and training related difficulties and bottlenecks arising from local conditions or needs.

What is ultimately important is the fact that the prospects of using massive Community assistance in education and training offer a unique window of opportunity for carrying out critically necessary content and structural renovation of the sectors. All in all the New Hungary Development Plan will allocate over 700 million euros for the funding of projects aimed at the upgrading education and training, which will represent about 10% of its total budget. This massive investment should enable education and training to fulfil their unique tasks arising from the new and evolving economic, technological and social realities, and to play an active and distinctive role in an enlarged European context in the renovation and modernisation of Hungarian society.

This vast and far-reaching operation will only be successful if solid guarantee is given across the board for a strong co-ordination among all stakeholders involving actors at central, regional as well as at a local level. A better synergy between branch ministries, bodies and organisations representing different branches, or segments of the teaching and academic professions, parental and other organisations will be ensured. They have all been involved in the drafting, articulation and ex ante assessment of the development programmes. That is why all the planned operations anticipate the development of a variety of forms and schemes for a stable and meaningful co-operation between all actors concerned.

It must be stressed that the implementation of the reform program will not mean a radical departure from the present policy aims and practices. On the contrary, the programme will deliberately build upon the achievements, experience and skills as well as, intellectual and organisational virtues accumulated all through the centuries and especially in the course of the two decades which elapsed since the systemic change took place. In a way, the programme will be the continuation and ultimately the accomplishment of the reforms started in all segments of education. In the early years of 2000 within the framework of the medium-term development strategy of school based as well as higher education and some of the stipulated innovative measures were already funded by the First National Development Plan (2004–2006).

## QUALITY, ACCESS, EFFICIENCY – HOW ARE THE REFORMS GOING TO WORK?

The comprehensive renovation of all the concerned sectors will be carried out under the triple banner “QUALITY, ACCESS, EFFICIENCY”, and involves the content, structure and governance of education and training and also their physical infrastructure. These three main objectives constitute a coherent set of priorities. Consequently any operation to be implemented under one of the banners should be consistent with and eventually support the other two specific objectives. This means i.e. that the implementation of interventions targeted at the improvement of financial efficiency should definitely not lead to the decline of the quality of education, and vice versa, the enhancement of quality cannot be achieved at the cost of sacrificing the requirements of efficiency. Also, the upgrading of schools’ ICT infrastructure will be coupled on a mandatory basis, with the retraining of teaching staff, the development of curricula and pedagogical and methodological tools enabling their efficient and effective use.

By the term QUALITY the programmes first of all mean the substitution on a national scale at all levels and forms of school based education and training of the traditional content based education, by the delivery and the acquisition of lifelong learning key competencies primarily basic skills, also, those facilitating labour market insertion and mobility (ICT, foreign languages, etc.), or necessary for active participation in adult learning. Special care will be given to early childhood education and the present 4-years period dedicated to the delivery of basic key competencies (literacy and numeracy) will be extended to the first six grades.

The accomplishment of this comprehensive objective requires the development of appropriate pedagogical tools and methodologies, coupled with the necessary training, retraining and on the job training of teachers. Also, the development and the full-scale introduction in school based education and training of a single quality management and assessment system enabling the comparative evaluation of the performance of pupils, teachers and educational institutions on an equal footing will also be an efficient instrument for the enforcement of high quality education.

The development of a comprehensive Hungarian National qualification framework, fully compatible with the European Qualification Framework to be established by 2009 will be a major step for a better transition, transparency, comparability between different levels and forms of education and training, while it will facilitate the mobility and transferability at the European level.

In higher education the motto Quality basically means a full-scale introduction of the three-cycle higher education. This vast operation was launched in 2004 and supported by the First National Development Plan (2004–2006).

## DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE

In order to achieve a better quality in education and training infrastructure development is an absolute necessity. First priority is to bring support to those communities and villages which, due to their remote geographic location and economic and social backwardness, are short of the financial means necessary for the maintenance of a decent level of school infrastructure and are embattled with lack of resources. A further consideration in the extension of support for infrastructure development, mostly through the introduction of state of the art technologies is the encouragement of all public education institutions to implement innovative pedagogy facilitating the acquisition of key competencies.



Infrastructure development, involves also the renovation and remodelling of hundreds of obsolete and broken down school buildings, the establishment of pre-school educational-buildings in settlements where there is a total lack of such services. The supply of modern technical, primarily ICT equipment, will be

tied to the implementation of innovative measures aimed at the enhancement of the quality of education. In school-based vocational training the network of the so-called regional integrated training centres will be further disseminated. This will ensure on a regional level a fair quality of vocational training in line with local labour market needs. In higher education infrastructure development will strengthen the R+D potential.

## BRINGING EDUCATION CLOSER TO THE WORLD OF WORK

A fundamental prerequisite for the improvement of the quality of education is bringing education closer to the world of labour. To this end a series of concrete actions and measures are assigned in the course of the seven-year programming period. In school based education and training the development and full scale implementation of a career guidance and orientation system linked on local/regional level to the networks operated by the public employment services (PES) will greatly facilitate a smoother transition from school to the world of labour, and provide both schools and employment services with vital information. In higher education, in order to achieve this objective a national digital network will be established for the systematic collection, sorting out and the processing of a vast pool of data, which will constitute the pillar for the establishment of a nationwide database. This will enable the tracking of jobs and will facilitate the integration into the labour market insertion of all new university or college graduates. Employers, would-be students, young graduates as well as higher education institutions will be granted free access to this extensive database.

In this context, the reform will support the enhancement of the role of the higher education sector in the dissemination of knowledge. The R+D+I capacities of institutions will be strengthened and stable working relations and cooperation will be promoted between industries and universities through the establishment of clusters and centres of excellences, and through the increase of the number and proportion of students in science, mathematics and engineering.

Also, higher education institutions will be encouraged to take a more vigorous part in adult education, particularly in introducing diverse forms of non-formal learning with particular focus on meeting regional needs.

## ACHIEVING BETTER EQUITY IN EDUCATION

The term Access means first of all ensuring more equity in education, a better provision of quality education for all. This will be achieved first through the implementation of a series of legal and financial measures assuring fuller access to quality pre-school education, school-based education and training and higher education for all, as well as combating all forms of segregation, whether open or latent. These will supplement a number of measures already taken toward this direction. Some of them had an immediate impact on prohibiting eventual segregating practices. In this context, special attention will be given to resolutely ensure inclusive education to children of Roma origin who will make up by 2020 about 10% of the country's total school population. Besides legal measures and generous financial incentives, special pedagogical programmes, and tools as well as teacher training and on the job training programmes will be developed in favour of inclusive education and training. Also a special "anti-segregation watchdog" network will be put in place.

Programmes for the renovation of school buildings will grant priority to the upgrading of school buildings located in backward villages and micro-regions where there are high concentrations of children living in poverty and subject to multiple social disadvantages. This will be an effective intervention supporting anti-segregation policies.

Priority will be given to operations combating school failure and early school leaving. This will include a number of measures of pedagogical and methodological character the main objective being the prevention of early school leaving, by offering a chance to catch up for those who are lagging behind. These activities will focus on the development and implementation of various preventive measures, meanwhile different forms of second chance schemes facilitating the reintegration of young people who left school without any qualification.

Access to higher education for young people with acknowledged social disadvantages and young women on childcare leave will be facilitated.

The term Efficiency of education and training means striving for a better and more rational use of physical and human resources. Improving at all levels the efficiency of education and training systems will by all means be an undertaking of major importance, consequently any renovation of the systems should methodically tackle this issue. This endeavour in no way can be simply reduced to a simple financial manoeuvring aimed at cutting budgetary resources dedicated to education meant only to make economies.

In school-based education, in view of the lasting negative demographic trends and as a result of the significant decrease in the school-age population, a school integration scheme constitutes the main pillar of the programme. It will involve several dozen public schools mostly operating in regions and small villages with steadily dwindling population and consequently students, where the individual maintenance of the institutions financially is not only highly inefficient, and imposes unbearable financial burden upon the communities, but also cannot ensure a staff and standard equipment necessary for the delivery of quality education. In those cases through diverse financial incentives and administrative measures the communities and their schools will be encouraged to form so-called school associations, when several schools will organise themselves around one “leader” school early school education classes might be kept in the small localities, while upper classes will be concentrated in the leader school, which will also be responsible for methodological guidance and enforcing quality assurance. These school associations will be financially more efficient, economically more viable meanwhile ensuring the delivery of quality education in the most remote areas as well.

Other important means of improving efficiency will be the upgrading at all levels of education the management and governance capacities of institutions and school maintainers, through extensive use of ICT equipment and the development of integrated data bases.

In higher education efforts to be made toward the diversification of the financing of higher education and to take measures aimed at the reinforcement of these institutions’ financial autonomy, as well as of enhancing the demand driven nature of the sector.

## MINIMISING THE SOCIAL COSTS OF THE REFORM; ANTICIPATING CHANGE

Also, measures will be taken for minimising the social costs of school reorganisation. To this end, those teachers who are in danger of losing their job due to these operations will be offered different schemes of professional reorientation programmes for the acquisition of new skills facilitating the finding of jobs within the teaching profession or in other sectors.

# ANNEX

## FURTHER READINGS

István Mészáros. *The Thousand-Year History of Schools in Hungary* (Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest 1999)

National Summary Sheets on Education Systems in Europe and Ongoing Reforms, Hungary, Eurydice 2007

Education in Hungary 2006, Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development, Budapest, 2007, or <http://www.ofi.hu>

The New Hungary Development Plan (2007–2013), the Social Renewal Operational Programme, Social Infrastructure Operational Programme. <http://www.nfu.hu>

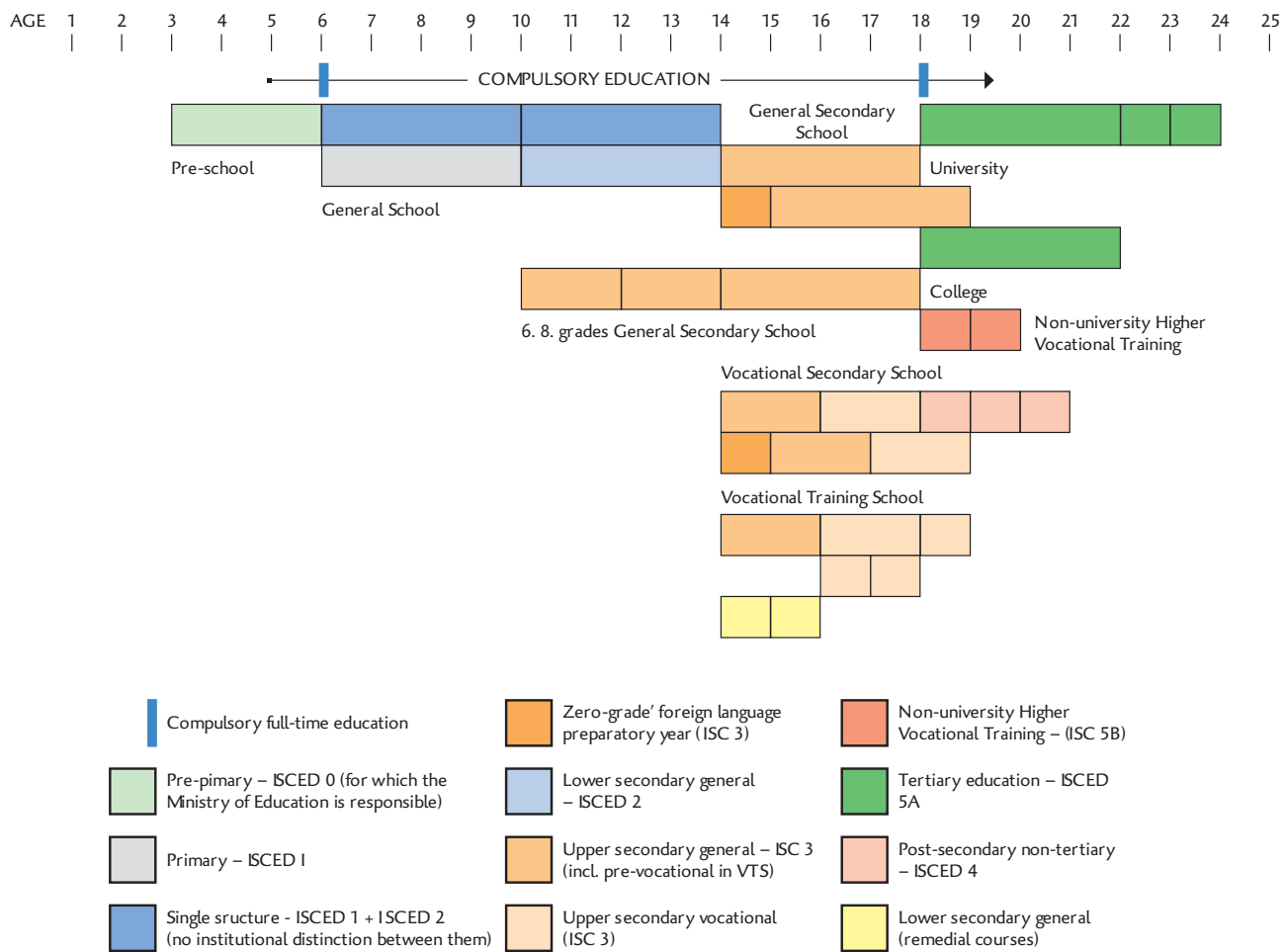
Equity in Education. Dimensions, Causes and Policy Responses. OECD country analytical report, 2007: Country sheets

Towards Bologna. The Hungarian Universitas Program – Higher Education Reform Project, <http://okm.gov.hu>

Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Hungary for Lifelong Learning. <http://okm.gov.hu>



## The Hungarian education system

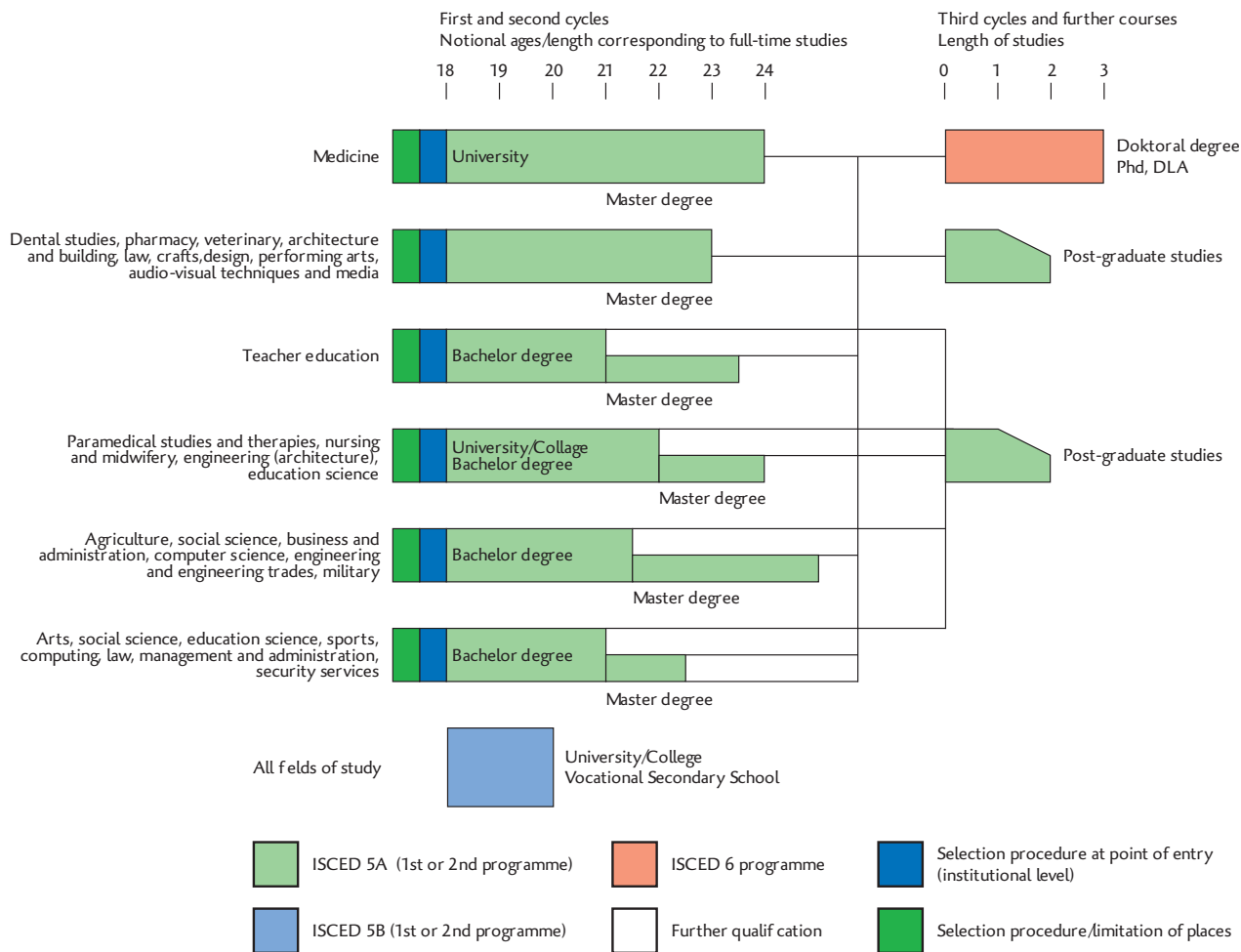


Source: Education in Hungary 2006

## Abridged list of education and training related legal provisions in force

- Act LXXIX of 2003 on Public Education
- Act LXXVI of 1993 on Vocational Training
- Act CXXXL of 2005 on Higher Education
- Act CI of 2001 on Adult Training
- Act C of 2002 on the Recognition of Foreign Certificates and Degrees
- Act XXXVII of 2001 on the Guidelines Regarding the Textbook Market
- Government Regulation No 130/1995(X.26.) on the National Core Curriculum, last revision of the NCC by Government Regulation No. 202/2007. (VII.31.)
- Decree No 1 of 2006 (17 February) of the Minister of Education on the National Registry of Qualifications

## Higher education structure



Source: Education in Hungary 2006

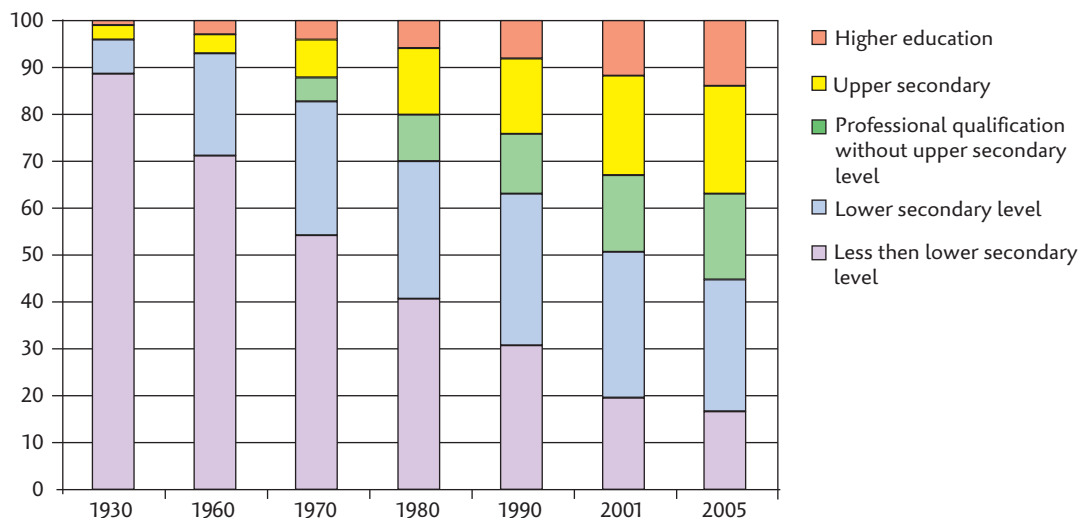
### Public expenditures by level of education in percentage of the GDP (1999–2005)

Year	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1990	0.74	2.38	1.47	3.85	4.59	n/a	0.81	0.16	0.12	5.68
1991	0.79	2.56	1.57	4.13	4.92	n/a	0.88	0.16	0.15	6.11
1992	0.84	2.68	1.72	4.40	5.24	n/a	1.06	0.16	0.12	6.58
1993	0.87	2.61	1.65	4.26	5.13	n/a	1.07	0.21	0.12	6.53
1994	0.88	2.55	1.53	4.08	4.96	n/a	1.08	0.21	0.13	6.38
1995	0.77	2.13	1.31	3.44	4.21	n/a	0.96	0.19	0.10	5.46
1996	0.72	1.91	1.20	3.21	3.11	n/a	0.85	0.18	0.09	4.95
1997	0.76	n/a	n/a	3.00	3.76	n/a	0.94	0.17	0.11	4.98
1998	0.75	n/a	n/a	2.93	3.68	n/a	0.91	0.19	0.11	4.89
1999	0.77	n/a	n/a	2.91	3.68	n/a	0.97	0.20	0.33	5.18
2000	0.71	n/a	n/a	2.71	3.41	3.64	1.09	0.21	0.40	5.11
2001	0.72	n/a	n/a	2.76	3.48	3.73	1.05	0.20	0.47	5.19
2002	0.78	n/a	n/a	3.01	3.79	4.05	1.05	0.21	0.52	5.57
2003	0.85	n/a	n/a	3.33	4.17	4.53	1.12	0.23	0.25	5.77
2004	0.80	n/a	n/a	3.13	3.93	4.27	1.01	0.22	0.22	5.39
2005	0.81	2.03	1.08	3.11	3.91	n/a	0.99	0.23	0.22	5.37

1. Pre-school education
2. Primary and lower secondary education
3. Upper secondary education
4. Primary and lower secondary education
5. Total public education
6. State subsidies to non-state public education institutions
7. Higher education
8. Other types of education
9. Other education related expenditures
10. Total expenditures on education

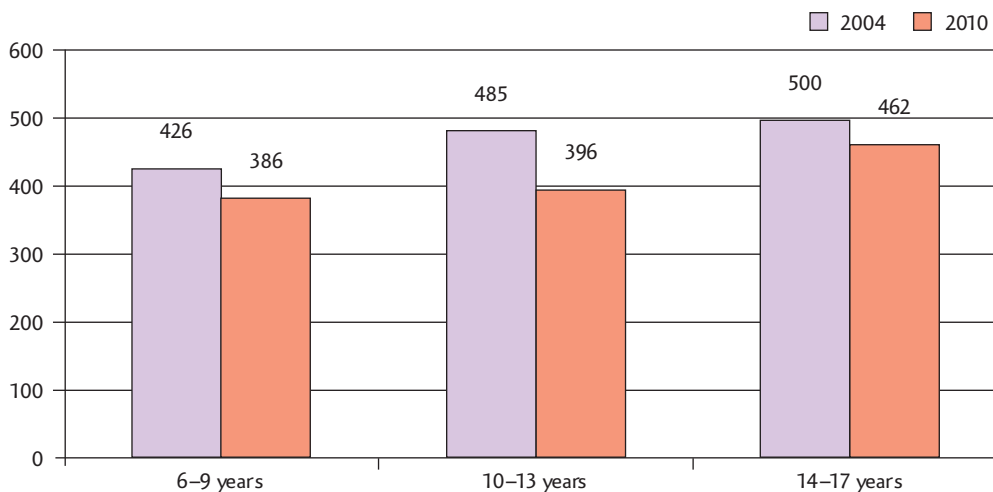
Source: Education in Hungary 2006

### Education attainment of the Hungarian population (1930–2005)



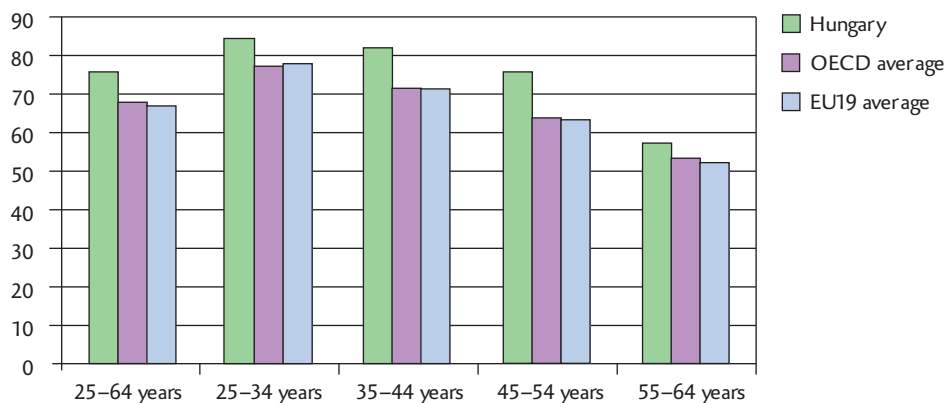
Source: Jelentés a magyar közoktatásról 2006

### Size of generations in 2004 and estimated size in 2010 (thousands)



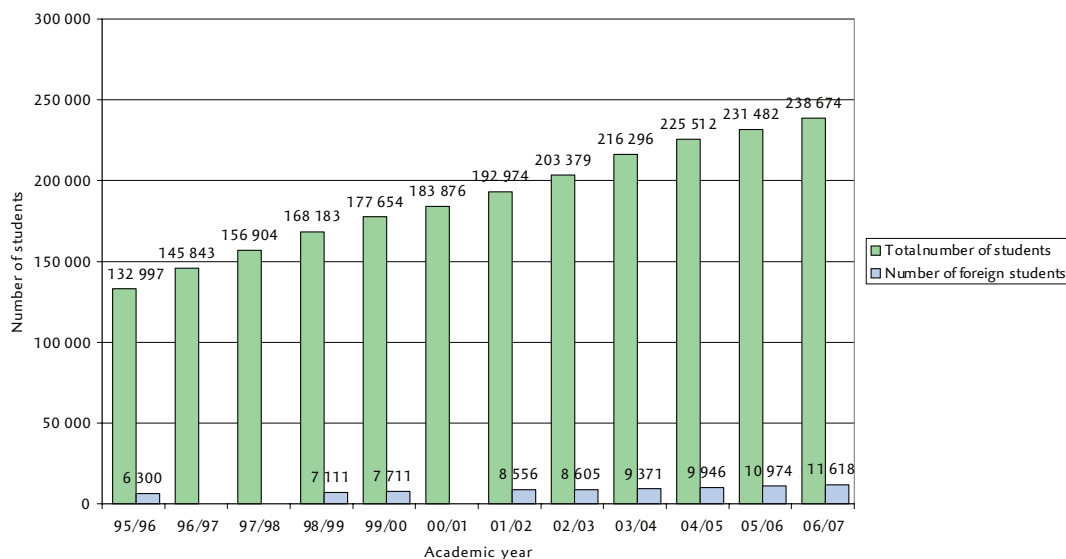
Source: Education in Hungary 2006

### Population that has attained at least upper secondary education (percentage by age group, 2004)



Source: Education in Hungary 2006

### Total number of full-time students and of full-time foreign students in the Hungarian higher education (1995-2006)



Source: Ministry of Education and Culture

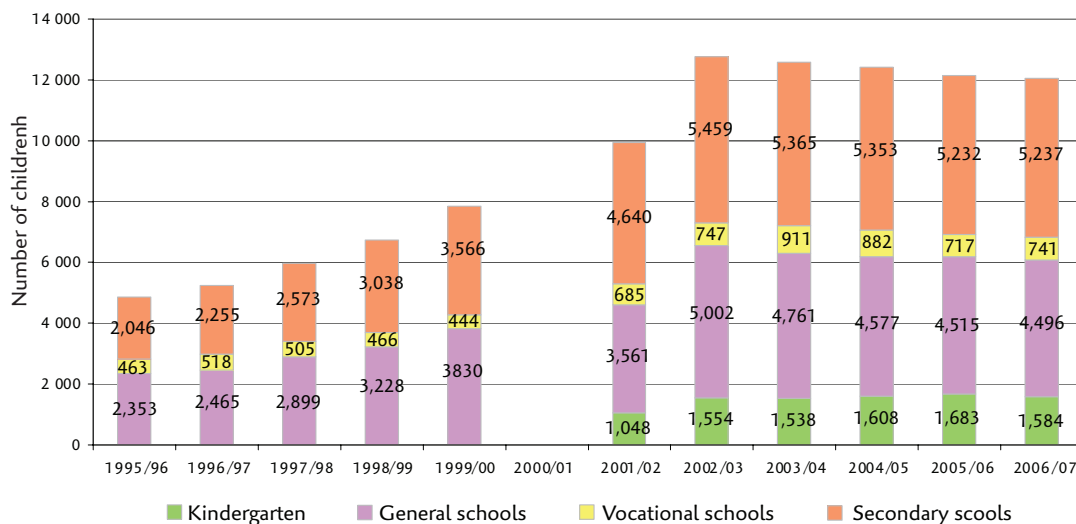
## Participation in lifelong learning of persons aged 25–64 (%)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU (25 countries)	:	:	:	:	:	7.5 <sup>(e)</sup>	7.5 <sup>(e)</sup>	7.6	9.0 <sup>(b)</sup>	9.9	10.2	10.1
EU (15 countries)	:	:	:	:	8.2 <sup>(e)</sup>	8.0 <sup>(e)</sup>	8.0 <sup>(e)</sup>	8.1	9.8 <sup>(b)</sup>	10.7	11.2	11.1
Belgium	2.8	2.9	3.0	4.4	6.9 <sup>(b)</sup>	6.2 <sup>(i)</sup>	6.4	6.0	7.0	8.6 <sup>(b)</sup>	8.3	7.5 <sup>(p)</sup>
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	:	:	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Czech Republic	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	5.6	5.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	5.8	5.6	5.6
Denmark	16.8	18.0	18.9	19.8	19.8	19.4 <sup>(b)</sup>	18.4	18.0	24.2 <sup>(b)</sup>	25.6	27.4	29.2
Germany	:	5.7	5.4	5.3	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.8	6.0 <sup>(i)</sup>	7.4 <sup>(i)</sup>	7.7	7.5
Estonia	:	:	4.3	6.3	6.5	6.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	5.4	5.4	6.7	6.4	5.9	6.5
Ireland	4.3	4.8	5.2	:	:	:	:	5.5	5.9 <sup>(b)</sup>	6.1	7.4	7.5
Greece	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.1	2.6 <sup>(b)</sup>	1.8	1.9	1.9
Spain	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	5.0	4.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	4.4	4.4	4.7	4.7	10.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	10.4
France	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.7	7.0 <sup>(b)</sup>	7.0	7.0	7.5
Italy	3.8	4.1	4.6	4.8	5.5	4.8 <sup>(b)</sup>	4.5	4.4	4.5	6.3 <sup>(b)</sup>	5.8	6.1
Cyprus	:	:	:	:	2.6	3.1	3.4	3.7	7.9 <sup>(b)</sup>	9.3	5.9 <sup>(b)</sup>	7.1
Latvia	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	7.3	7.8	8.4	7.9	6.9 <sup>(p)</sup>
Lithuania	:	:	:	:	3.9	2.8	3.5	3.0 <sup>(b)</sup>	3.8	5.9 <sup>(b)</sup>	6.0	4.9 <sup>(p)</sup>
Luxembourg	2.9	2.9	2.8	5.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	5.3	4.8	5.3	7.7	6.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	9.8	8.5	8.2
<b>Hungary</b>	:	:	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.5<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.8</b>
Malta	:	:	:	:	:	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.2	4.3 <sup>(b)</sup>	5.3	5.5
Netherlands	13.1	12.5	12.6	12.9	13.6	15.5	15.9	15.8	16.4 <sup>(b)</sup>	16.4	15.9	15.6
Austria	7.7	7.9	7.8	:	9.1	8.3	8.2	7.5	8.6 <sup>(b)</sup>	11.6 <sup>(i)</sup>	12.9	13.1
Poland	:	:	:	:	:	:	4.3	4.2	4.4	5.0 <sup>(b)</sup>	4.9	4.7
Portugal	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	3.4	3.4	3.3	2.9	3.2	4.3 <sup>(b)</sup>	4.1	3.8 <sup>(p)</sup>
Romania	:	:	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.4 <sup>(p)</sup>	1.6	1.3
Slovenia	:	:	:	:	:	:	7.3	8.4	13.3 <sup>(b)</sup>	16.2	15.3	15.0
Slovakia	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	8.5	3.7 <sup>(b)</sup>	4.3	4.6	4.3
Finland	:	16.3	15.8	16.1	17.6	17.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	17.2	17.3	22.4 <sup>(b)</sup>	22.8	22.5	23.1
Sweden	:	26.5	25.0	:	25.8	21.6	17.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	18.4	31.8 <sup>(b)</sup>	32.1	32.1	:
United Kingdom	:	:	:	:	19.2	20.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	20.9	21.3	26.8 <sup>(b)</sup>	29.4	27.5	26.6 <sup>(p)</sup>
Croatia	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.1	:
Turkey	:	:	:	:	:	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.9	2.0
Iceland	14.1	15.7	16.5	19.3	20.2	23.5	23.5	24.0	29.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	24.2	25.7	:
Norway	:	16.5	16.4	:	:	13.3	14.2	13.3	17.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	17.4	17.8	18.7
Switzerland	:	29.5	29.8	33.3	31.1	34.7	36.0	34.4	24.7 <sup>(b)</sup>	28.6	26.9	:

(:) Not available; (e) Estimated value; (b) Break in series; (p) Provisional value

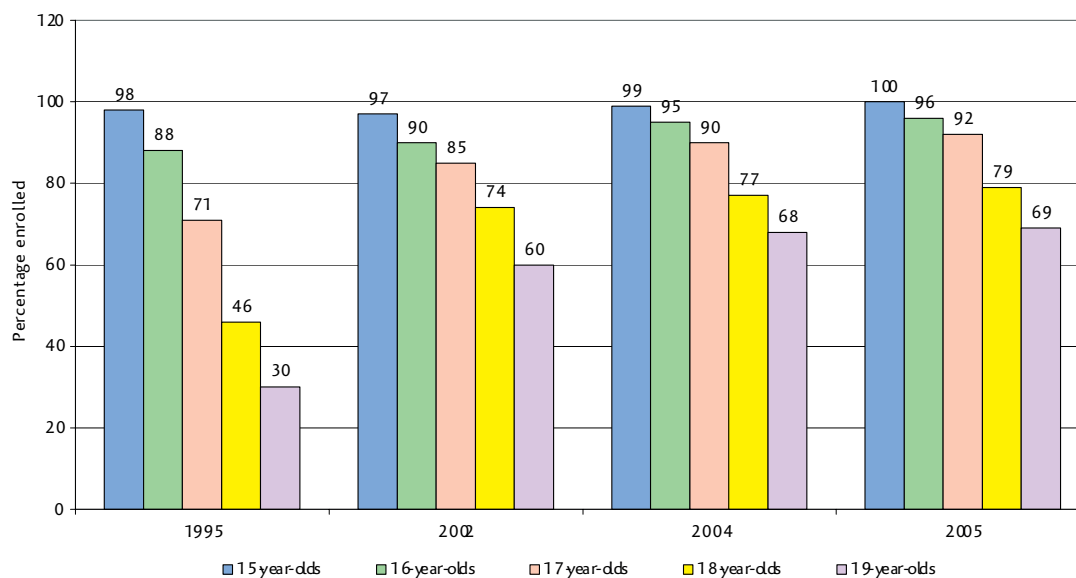
Source: Eurostat

## Migrant children in the Hungarian public education (1995–2006)



Source: Ministry of Education and Culture

## School to work transition: Percentage of the 15–19 age cohort enrolled in education or training (1996–2005)



Source: Ministry of Education and Culture



