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## **ANNEX: Recent education policy developments**

This annex contains summaries of recent education policy developments. Countries were invited to submit the summaries organised around the six strategic priorities that now structure the OECD's work in education. A number of countries chose to do so. The maximum length was 400 words per country. Due to space constraints, the entries have not been able to cover all significant policy developments. The emphasis was on outlining major education policy developments that have occurred recently or which are being implemented, and which are likely to be of most interest to an international audience. The entries have been edited to provide a consistent format and to observe space constraints.

Summaries were provided by 16 OECD countries: Australia; Austria; Belgium (French Community); Czech Republic; Denmark; Finland; France; Hungary; Japan; Korea; Luxembourg; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Slovak Republic; and the United Kingdom. In addition, contributions were provided by Israel and the Russian Federation, which have observer status on the OECD Education Committee.

### **AUSTRALIA**

#### **Promoting lifelong learning and improving its linkages with other socio-economic policies**

The Australian government has produced a report to assess the long-term sustainability of government policies, including education, taking into account the financial implications of demographic change. It is engaged in a national consultation on adult learning to address the challenges presented by Australia's ageing population, particularly in rural and regional Australia.

#### **Evaluating and improving outcomes of education**

Australian governments and the non-government school sector have established national key performance measures for reporting against the National Goals for Schooling. There is an annual full-cohort literacy and numeracy testing, and three-yearly sample assessments of science, ICT and civics and citizenship education. To support the National Goals, a National Literacy and Numeracy Plan has been implemented. To improve Indigenous students' outcomes, reforms to the Australian Indigenous Education Programmes will from 2005 direct extra funding to schools in remote areas and will support the involvement of Indigenous parents and communities in school education. The data collected through national benchmarking facilitate targeted assistance.

#### **Promoting quality teaching**

Under the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme \$159 million is being provided to improve the skills and understanding of teachers, and to enhance the status of teaching. The Australian government will fund a National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership to enhance the quality and status of teaching and school leadership. In July 2003, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed a National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching and is exploring nationally-aligned entry-level standards for teachers.

#### **Rethinking tertiary education in a global economy**

In 2002, the Australian government conducted a review of higher education and the government announced reforms in May 2003. The package is based on sustainability, quality, equity and diversity. The Australian government has allocated funds to improve quality assurance mechanisms for offshore campuses. It has introduced an income-contingent loan scheme which provides financial support for study abroad and exchange.

#### **Building social cohesion through education**

Australian governments are working with Indigenous communities in a trial programme to provide more flexible programmes and services. In the trials, responsibility for the condition and well-being of Indigenous communities is shared between families, individuals, communities and governments.

### Building new futures for education

Australia has developed Myfuture ([www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au)), a national internet-based careers exploration service, for individuals at every stage of life. The Australian government is working with States and Territories to develop an e-learning blueprint for schools and supports a range of other ICT initiatives.

Further information: [www.dest.gov.au/](http://www.dest.gov.au/)

## AUSTRIA

### Promoting lifelong learning and improving its linkages with other socio-economic policies

Taking 2010, the target year of the European Union's Lisbon Declaration, as a point of reference, the Austrian government has established a lifelong learning "Taskforce LLL:2010". Its brief is to come up with strategies which give the highly fragmented system of adult education more coherence and to develop an action plan with a clear time frame and new performance indicators.

### Evaluating and improving outcomes of education and promoting quality teaching

In 2003 the Education Ministry set up a Future Commission. Some of the recommendations of the commission's preliminary report were adopted by the government in June 2004. These include:

- The establishment of a system to monitor the performance and efficiency of Austria's schools.
- The introduction of testable standards for critical transition points in Austrian school careers: at age 10 – the end of primary school; and at age 14 – the end of lower secondary education. These were to be piloted in 100 schools from September 2004.
- More accountability and personal responsibility of teachers and principals for the quality of learning in the classroom. One key policy is the establishment of a Leadership Academy to upgrade the professional competence of school principals and of other persons responsible for school management ([www.klassezukunft.at](http://www.klassezukunft.at)).

### Rethinking tertiary education in a global economy

Since the university reform of 2002, the diversification of higher education has gained momentum:

- An increasing number of study programmes are changing over to the three-stage structure recommended by the European Union's Bologna Declaration.
- The non-university sector (*Fachhochschulen*) has become a highly attractive vocationally-focused part-time study option alongside employment.
- By 2007 the transformation of the hitherto post-secondary teacher training academies into proper higher education institutions should be completed.

### Building new futures for education

Early in 2003, the Ministry of Education commissioned a group to analyse the Austrian school system and to propose policies for its improvement. In October 2003, the commission's report was made available and stakeholders in education were invited to express their opinions. In addition, a series of regional conferences was held to provide opportunities for debate and dialogue. A ministerial taskforce will integrate the final experts' report, the public responses to it, proposals made at the regional conferences, and an already existing White Paper on Quality Assurance into an Education Plan 2010.

## BELGIUM (French Community)

The French Community of Belgium is a federated entity whose responsibilities include, inter alia, education policy for the French-speaking part of the country (the Walloon Region and the bilingual Region of Brussels-Capital). In the 2002-03 school year, there were 485 263 children enrolled in basic education (kindergarten and primary schools); 359 809 in secondary education and 141 924 in higher education (university and non-university).

The most important reform of compulsory education (6 to 18 years) took place in July 1997 with the adoption of legislation relating to the missions of the education system. For the first time these missions were clearly

defined and, as a result, the Parliament of the French Community adopted specifications of core skills which all children must have mastered at key stages in their school career. In tandem with this reform, a governing body, in the form of a commission, was set up for the education system.

Besides these changes, a number of legislative or regulatory initiatives have been taken to ensure a level playing field for social emancipation, notably in the form of differentiated funding for teaching establishments, through implementation of a policy of positive discrimination, and through creation of a special advisory and support system for non-French speaking immigrant children.

In the higher education sector, attention should above all be drawn to the recent structural reform designed to integrate Belgium in the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) through the creation of an agency to assess the quality of teaching in this sector.

Further information may be found at the following websites: [www.cfwb.be](http://www.cfwb.be), [www.enseignement.be](http://www.enseignement.be), [www.restode.cfwb.be](http://www.restode.cfwb.be)

## CZECH REPUBLIC

Developments in the Czech Republic have focused on two priorities of the White Paper (2000) incorporated in the new Educational Act.

Curriculum reforms have introduced a system of multi-level educational programmes based on the concept of key competences. At the national level, both an overarching state education programme and framework educational programmes (FEP) for each level of education and field of study are being developed. Schools will create their own educational programmes based on the respective frameworks. The framework for pre-primary education has already been implemented. Frameworks for primary and lower secondary education were to be approved by the end of 2004. The framework for upper secondary general education (*gymnasia*) is under the pilot testing at schools, and is to be approved in 2006. Frameworks for various types of upper secondary education technical and vocational schools will follow.

The increased autonomy of schools is being matched by gradually establishing a comprehensive evaluation system. At the level of the student, a bank of test items and tests is being developed which will enable the educational attainment of all pupils to be assessed at key stages (5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> forms). Reform of the *Maturita*, or upper secondary final examination, is already under way, and is to be introduced in 2009. The reform of the final examination for vocational education has just started. At the level of schools, self-evaluation will be introduced and closely linked to external evaluation by the School Inspectorate. At the level of the educational system, the focus is on better linking the outcomes of international surveys to additional national surveys and other available data, and on setting in place a regional level corresponding to the new structure of school governance.

## DENMARK

### Recognition of prior learning

A policy paper on enhanced validation and recognition of prior learning was prepared for submission to Parliament in 2004. The initiative follows the reform of the Danish career-guidance and counselling system implemented the previous year and includes: the provision of new comprehensive options for education; quality assurance; and enhanced concurrence between education and social and leisure time activity.

### Finalisation of a national competence account

The aim is for the account to form a basis for locating strengths – and weaknesses – in national competences. At the same time it is to form a basis for political initiatives in the sphere of competence. The national competence account will also contribute to public debate on Danish competences. The first account was published in the autumn of 2004.

### Enhanced internationalisation

In April 2004 a policy paper entitled Enhanced Internationalisation of Danish Education was submitted to, and endorsed by, Parliament. The paper, which presents a comprehensive policy covering the entire education and research sector, addresses the challenges of globalisation and the emergence of a knowledge-based society.

The policy includes measures to enhance: the international dimension in the curriculum; the mobility of students and teachers; the use of ICT; increasing opportunities for institutions in transnational co-operation and competition; and increasing Denmark's involvement in international co-operation and comparisons.

#### Policy implications of the pilot review to examine quality and equity

The decision to engage Denmark in the OECD-led review on quality and equity in school outcomes was motivated by two reasons: the modest Danish results in PISA 2000; and the fact that the impact of the social background of pupils on school outcomes apparently is significantly stronger in Denmark than in the countries it usually compares itself to.

Participation in the review must in itself be regarded as a policy development. Consensus has now been established that the Danish primary and lower secondary school system must develop a new culture of evaluation to raise standards, and to create a platform for early intervention to address the needs of pupils with modest learning disabilities. The Minister for Education has initiated four working-groups, including all major stakeholders, to develop recommendations for further initiatives. The reform of initial teacher training that is being prepared at the moment will be influenced by the results of the review.

In addition, Parliament has agreed on a reform of general upper secondary education that will be implemented from August 2005. Additional information and downloading of publications in English: [www.uvm.dk](http://www.uvm.dk)

## FINLAND

### Building social cohesion through education

Today, children spend more time without the care of a safe adult than before, and the pressures to balance family and working life and children's care and school life are constantly growing. The demand for before- and after-school activities clearly exceeds the supply. According to studies, 75% of parents whose children are starting school consider their child to need guided activities before or after school. To improve the situation, Finland promulgated an Act on 1 August 2004 to improve government financing of these activities as well as their quality. Government financing will be available to activities provided for first- and second-year pupils (age 7-8) and for pupils with special needs. The aim is that the provision will meet the need indicated by parents. From the beginning of August 2004, about 60% of first-year and one third of second-year pupils will have access to organised before- and after-school activities. Most of the activities will be provided by sports clubs, other civic organisations and congregations. One third of the activities will be provided by local authorities. The financing will mostly come from government grants and fees to be paid by parents. For more information: [www.minedu.fi](http://www.minedu.fi)

## FRANCE

In 2003-04, there were two major events that mark French educational policy.

The first was the national debate on the future of French education, launched in September 2003 at the request of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, and coordinated by a commission attached to the Ministry of National Education. Its objective was threefold:

- To encourage all French citizens (parents, students, national education employees, economic actors, local and national elected officials, citizens, etc.) to speak out about the big issues in education, from nursery school up to entry into higher education.
- To arrive at a common diagnosis (a summary of the debates has been published under the title *Le miroir des débats*, available at [www.education.gouv.fr](http://www.education.gouv.fr)).
- To contribute to government reflection in preparation for a guideline Bill submitted to Parliament in the fall of 2004 to establish the objectives of schooling for tomorrow.

The second was the 15 March 2004 Act regulating the wearing of religious symbols or dress in public elementary, junior high and high schools. This act reaffirms the principles of secularity and freedom which, in the French republican tradition, guarantee neutrality in schools and the integration of all into the national community (the circular specifying how this new legislation is to be enforced is available at [www.education.gouv.fr](http://www.education.gouv.fr)).

Other priorities – new or renewed – include the following:

- Improving mastery of basic skills in primary schools (reading, writing, arithmetic), as well as of foreign languages and both information and communication technologies.
- Diversifying training opportunities and career paths in junior high and high schools, and reaffirming the importance of technical training and its relation to general education in order to reduce the number of young people leaving the educational system without qualifications.
- Reinforcing lifelong learning and the implementation of a system which takes professional experience into account.
- Preventing violence in schools, developing citizenship education and supporting young people's involvement.
- Pursuing at university level the implementation of a European degree-masters-doctorate programme, encouraging student mobility, and enhancing the international appeal of French higher education.
- Promoting scientific studies and careers.

## HUNGARY

### Promoting lifelong learning and improving its linkages with other socio-economic policies

Links between education and other policy areas were strengthened in the process of creating the National Development Plan for 2004-06, and through the preparation of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme. A committee of relevant ministers has recently been set up to provide a whole-of-government approach in social policy issues, and to examine the impact and the social consequences of decisions. See: [www.fmm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=3442](http://www.fmm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=3442)

### Evaluating and improving outcomes of education

A new competence assessment system was introduced in 2001. This covers all members of specific age groups and allows schools to compare their achievement and progress with others. The results help to identify pedagogical, management, organisational and socio-economic factors leading to good or bad performance. Further information: [www.om.hu/education](http://www.om.hu/education)

### Promoting quality teaching

Initial teacher training programmes are being unified and standardised, and a development programme is supporting the implementation of competence-based education. Developing curricula, programme packages, teachers' skills and raising awareness of innovative practices is the focal point of the programme. In 2002 teachers' basic salary was raised by 50% and various bonuses were introduced to reward high quality teaching. Further information: [www.om.hu/education](http://www.om.hu/education)

### Rethinking tertiary education in a global economy

In 2003, the government published its medium-term strategy for the development of the higher education system to increase its competitiveness and adaptability and to strengthen its regional role and its research and development capacity. Readjusting the training structure according to the Bologna Process is under way. A number of measures are planned to improve institutions' management structure, quality assurance systems, human resource policies and co-operation with economic players. Further information: [www.fmm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=3442](http://www.fmm.gov.hu/main.php?folderID=3442)

### Building social cohesion through education

New laws to eliminate segregation and promote non-discriminatory education are currently being implemented. A fairer distribution of financial support to reduce inequalities, and an additional per capita grant for integrated education, were introduced recently. The National Educational Integration Network is a horizontal learning and tutorial system that assists the adaptation and implementation of inclusive educational programmes. A methodological databank is being established, and programme packages for preventing early school-leaving are being developed. Further information: [www.om.hu/education](http://www.om.hu/education)

## Building new futures for education

The Ministry of Education has launched a programme called Schools of the 21st Century to modernise the learning environment in schools and to adjust their premises to the requirements of e-learning.

Further information: [www.oki.hu/article.php?kod=english-Policy.html](http://www.oki.hu/article.php?kod=english-Policy.html)

## ISRAEL

During the last two years, Israel has begun to implement a core curriculum, differential primary school budgeting and early measurement and evaluation testing. It faces the challenges of immigrant absorption, religious and sectoral divisions, social and economic gaps, the need to equalise the position and status of its Arab minority and severe budget cuts in recent years. In September 2003, Israel appointed a task force to evaluate its education system and to recommend a programme for structural, organisational and pedagogical change. Its interim recommendations were published in May 2004. They focus upon: strengthening early school stages and public education; instituting a full school day; narrowing gaps; measuring and evaluating students' progress and achievements; improving the teaching profession and its status; restoring school autonomy; result-oriented management; decentralising management; accountability and transparency; concentrating resources; and streamlined and realistic budgeting. The most far-reaching change will be the institution of a full school day, five days a week, instead of six half days. Middle schools will be abolished to reduce the number of transitions in a student's career. Schools will have greater pedagogic, budgetary, and administrative autonomy, as well as choice of personnel, including educational staff. The teaching profession will be improved through higher entry standards, internship and licensing examinations. Some training colleges will be upgraded, others will be closed. Teachers will take on educational tasks now performed by other instructional personnel. To compensate them for the longer hours that they will be required to work, there will be a significant increase in teachers' salaries.

Standards will be set for all school principals' functions and training. Minimal acceptance requirements for a principal will include a Master's degree, educational experience and management training. The hiring and firing of principals will be conducted by a committee headed by the district educational administration director. There will be guidance for new principals. Principals' salary scales will be separate from teachers' salaries; training programmes for principals will be developed.

Measurable annual goals will be defined for every school and an annual report will be published, including internal and external evaluation. Management of the school system will be decentralised. Resources will be streamlined, with an "educational basket" to be set for each child, pooling all necessary resources. Clear budgeting formulae are to be set to allocate the financial burden between the government and local authorities, while taking into consideration the authorities' strengths.

## JAPAN

In 2004, Japan pursued the steady implementation of the plan to reform the quotas of educational personnel to ensure the number of teachers necessary for teaching according to individual student needs, such as those based on their level of maturity. Efforts will be made for further realisation of "lessons that are easy to understand". This will be done by positive assistance to each school and/or Board of Education to improve "definite academic ability" in all children. Improvement will be sought through conducting practical research into teaching methods; developing teaching materials at core schools in order to promote instruction responding to the individual; and by dispatching human resources active in the front line to raise motivation for learning.

To improve teacher quality Japan has been implementing the necessary policy measures systematically through teacher education, recruitment and in-service training. Also by carrying out wide-ranging and systematic personnel exchanges, Japan is trying to eliminate regional differences in teacher acquisition, offer equal opportunities for education, and both improve and maintain a nationwide educational standard. In addition, the following measures are being implemented to improve the quality of teachers: performance assessments of teachers and treatment which reflects their efforts; strict handling of teachers with problems in teaching; and employment of working people at school.

From April 2004, incorporation of Japan's national universities as independent organisations took place. Universities' responsibility for knowledge creation is becoming more and more important to Japan,

which is aiming to develop as an education- and culture-oriented nation and a nation that creates science and technology. The incorporation of national universities is being carried out with the aim of creating appealing national universities that are rich in individuality, thereby allowing Japanese national universities to better fulfil their responsibilities. In this sense, demands are on universities to advance and revitalise their education and research activities in order to meet the expectations of the public and society. Each national university since incorporation has been working actively toward reform in the fields of education and research, contributions to revitalising the community, co-operation with industry, and management systems. In 2003, a new professional graduate school system was introduced with the aim of cultivating human resources that can be employed in advanced, professional jobs in every sector of society and to fulfil the function of nurturing of human resources with specialised knowledge and skills. The Central Education Council's Subcommittee on Universities has been deliberating on a future vision for higher education.

## KOREA

### Promoting lifelong learning and improving its linkages with other socio-economic policies

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development launched the School Enterprise Promotion Support Project in 2004 to: support the establishment and management of companies within universities, colleges, vocational high schools and other vocational education institutions; use company facilities for on-site training and teaching; promote technology transfer; and contribute to school finances through profits. Companies shall be established through close ties with specific curriculum fields as organisations under the school structure. They will carry out manufacture, processing, repairs, sales, and services. The system begins in 2004 and will be operated until 2008.

### Evaluating and improving outcomes of education

Since 2002, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development has conducted an annual assessment of reading, writing and arithmetic among approximately 3% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, along with a survey of background variables. Metropolitan and provincial offices of education encourage schools to conduct independent assessments to identify students with inadequate basic scholastic development. The assessment items are based on those in the national test. Results are provided to metropolitan and provincial offices of education and schools in the form of a report.

### Rethinking tertiary education in a global economy

To sharpen universities' competitive edge, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development has launched programmes to: reinforce research-intensive universities; nurture science and engineering talent; implement the New University for Regional Innovation Project to stimulate regional development; stimulate industry-academic ties; encourage globalisation of university education; and build information infrastructures at universities.

The ministry is also preparing a plan to redefine the functions and roles of universities. Student quotas for national public universities in the Seoul metropolitan area will continue to decline. Universities undertaking restructuring efforts on an independent level will be given priority in administrative and financial assistance. Comprehensive measures including amendments in laws and systems are also planned.

### Building social cohesion through education

A variety of policies such as special education and tuition support for low-income families have previously been implemented, but have not been well co-ordinated or comprehensive and have failed to cope with inequity. As a result the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development is working on comprehensive plans for educational welfare. The plans for educational welfare have three major objectives: to guarantee minimum education for all; to resolve inequality; and to create an environment of welfare. The ministry plans to strengthen ties with related agencies, to establish welfare divisions at metropolitan and provincial education offices, and to encourage public participation in implementing welfare policies.

## LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg is a representative democracy in the form of a constitutional monarchy. Under the Constitution, the State is responsible for the organisation and regulation of education. The Communes play a role in managing early, preschool and primary education. Public schools are free in Luxembourg. Educational policy is implemented by the government in power. A large number of initiatives and reforms were completed in 2003. In the context of the implementation of the government's programme, an enormous project was undertaken to restructure Luxembourg schools in order to give them the necessary means and confidence to take on the challenge of giving every child a chance at academic success in an increasingly changing environment. It was necessary to begin by defining the missions of Luxembourg's schools, giving a degree of autonomy to actors in the field, and planning the kinds of administrative and partnership structures needed for modern education management. At the same time, the pedagogical work that has been in progress for several years, the aim of which is to strengthen basic education, began to be put into application. Throughout all of this, the fight against academic failure has been the top priority. The measures taken in a variety of very different areas have all been marked by the same philosophy: create opportunities for success that make it possible to avoid unnecessary failures while maintaining standards and increasing the amount of responsibility assumed by those concerned.

## NORWAY

### Evaluating and improving outcomes of education

A national quality assessment system for Norwegian primary and secondary schools is under development. As part of this system, national tests in reading, writing, English and mathematics will be carried out. The first national tests took place in the spring of 2004. The national tests are intended to be a source for dialogue and quality development, to be a pedagogical tool and an aid in learning and teaching, and to make it easier to follow the development of pupils and schools over a long period of time. A national web site for school assessment and development ([www.skoleporten.no](http://www.skoleporten.no)) was launched in August 2004. The purpose of the national quality assessment system is to provide information on learning outcomes, the learning environment, and the resource situation. A cross-sectoral programme for digital literacy covering the period 2004-08 was launched in March 2004 with the vision of digital literacy for all.

### Promoting quality teaching

By introducing new qualification demands for applicants for teacher training colleges the government wants to make sure that the students have the academic standards and motivation deemed necessary for teachers. Higher qualification requirements for pre-school teachers who wish to become primary school teachers will also be introduced. The government has committed itself to support a substantial programme on competence building for teachers, principals and school administrators. See [www.odin.dep.no/ufd/engelsk/publ/veiledninger/045071-120012/dok-bn.html](http://www.odin.dep.no/ufd/engelsk/publ/veiledninger/045071-120012/dok-bn.html)

## POLAND

In order to address the lack of a coherent lifelong learning strategy, a strategy for the development of continuing education until the year 2010 was adopted by the Council of Ministers in July 2003. It was the first document of this rank dealing with the problems of continuing education and lifelong learning in Poland. In 2003, the School Education Act was amended to define basic concepts connected with continuing education and to insert reference to continuing education and adult education and training, in both school and out-of-school forms, including distance education. In the new legislation an organisational framework of continuing education has been developed, and types of schools and institutions which provide continuing education have been defined. The proposed changes aim to facilitate the transition between the school and out-of-school systems. The provisions of the act also encompass the acquisition of vocational qualifications and titles. The 2003 amendments to the School Education Act created legal grounds for the accreditation of institutions providing continuing education in out-of-school forms in Poland. They permit schools to recognise courses completed in out-of-school forms, with the aim of confirming already acquired qualifications.

Starting from January 2004, accreditation can be awarded and withdrawn by the education superintendent of the region. However, an important role is played by a team whose task is to evaluate the work of an institution

applying for accreditation. As well as the representatives of regional education authorities, the team includes representatives of employers and local labour offices. Fifty-three modular programmes have been developed so far. They constitute a new type of offer on the educational market, and their implementation has had a great impact on the quality of vocational education and training. The modular programmes enable specialised training to adjust to changes occurring on the labour market; they also help students to develop the occupational skills needed at work and contribute to the individualisation of the teaching process. They concern 25 vocations at the level of technician but are also addressed to graduates from vocational upper secondary schools, for whom it will now be possible to continue education in a shortened cycle in post-secondary schools. In addition, 27 learning kits have been developed, serving as teaching aids in particular modules.

## PORTUGAL

The Portuguese Parliament approved the new Comprehensive Law on Education in May 2004. It increases compulsory schooling from 9 to 12 years in duration and introduces major changes in the general organisation of the education system. The law applies to all levels and modes of education. Among other aspects, it reinforces the complementarities between school education and vocational training, as well as the co-ordination of the ministries responsible for education policy and employment policy. This is also the objective of several initiatives undertaken lately, thus contributing at the same time to achieving social cohesion through education. Examples include launching of the national plan for the prevention of early school leaving and the reform of special education and of socio-educational support. Another is the recent creation – jointly by the Ministries of Education and of Labour – of a set of education and training courses leading to a professional qualification. The importance that is attached in Portugal to the evaluation of education results was the reason for the creation of a Bureau for Information and Evaluation of the Education System (following the process of restructuring of the Ministry of Education). It is also the reason for the revision of the rules and procedures for the evaluation of secondary education students, to be followed by change to the evaluation system for the basic education level ([www.min-edu.pt](http://www.min-edu.pt)). Reference should also be made to the approval by the Portuguese Parliament of the proposal for a new law on the autonomy of higher education institutions and a new law on their funding. These laws stem from the on-going process of rethinking the role of tertiary education in a global economy ([www.mces.gov.pt](http://www.mces.gov.pt)).

## RUSSIAN FEDERATION

### Evaluating and improving outcomes of education

Following a government reform, responsibility for quality assurance will lie within the Federal Service for Supervision over Education and Science. It will inherit from the former ministry tools of quality control: accreditation, attestation and licensing. Development of monitoring programmes in the education system is initiated by Ministry of Education and Sciences. The goal of all monitoring programmes is to gain information on emerging changes in the education system. As to international monitoring of secondary education outcomes, Russia has participated in the PISA survey since its inception. The results of PISA 2000 are being widely discussed now. The data of PISA 2003 were analysed for presentation in December 2004.

### Promoting quality teaching

A measure to promote the quality of teaching is the creation of the all-Russian information portals system. The federal target programme “Development of a common education information area” will be completed in 2005. A federal programme to restructure rural schools is aimed at promoting quality and equity in education for disadvantaged territories. In addition a national programme “Informatisation of schools”, managed by the Ministry of Education and Sciences and the Ministry of Telecommunications and Informatisation is to be completed in 2010.

### Rethinking tertiary education in a global economy

Russia joined the Bologna Declaration on higher education in September 2003 and by 2010 the transition to a two-tier degree structure should be completed. The objective is specified as one of the ultimate goals of the country’s educational reforms. At present about two-thirds of Russian higher education institutions practice a two-tier educational system, and the ECT system is introduced in the leading universities.

### **Building social cohesion through education**

The education reform programme aims to alleviate the transitional barriers between secondary and tertiary education and to promote equity in higher education. The introduction of a Unified National Test (UNT) is a step toward enhancing the choices of learners and building social cohesion. UNT is an assessment of school leavers' knowledge, administered at their graduation from secondary education. It is an external quality control tool of the secondary schools' education. The UNT results are used for applications to, and enrolment in, tertiary education institutions. UNT will become compulsory in 2006.

### **Building new futures for education**

Amalgamation of the Ministry of Sciences and the Ministry of Education in March 2004 has provided a stimulus to the programme aimed at integration of research and education.

## **SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

In June 2002, the Parliament of the Slovak Republic adopted a national programme to improve the country's education system over a ten-to-15-year period (the MILENIUM project). Its implementation schedule until 2006 is based upon the following basic strategic priorities: reform and modernisation of the goals and content of education; development of integrated diagnostic information and advisory systems; reform of high school graduation; optimisation of the range and institutional structure of the regional school system; quality care, monitoring and evaluation of education results; improving working conditions for teachers; and development of continuous education as part of lifelong learning.

### **Evaluating and improving outcomes of education**

National measurements of the performance of students graduating from primary schools have been carried out (from 2003), and a new form of secondary school graduation exams introduced from 2001. At the school level, from 2004 school headmasters have been required to submit annual reports to school boards and to establishing organisations on education activities, results and conditions. At the system level the main school inspector submits to the minister (and the minister submits to the government and to the Parliament) a report on the state and level of education in the Slovak Republic for each relevant school year with proposals, recommendations and modifications according to the findings of the State School Inspection.

### **Promoting quality teaching**

From 2002, teachers have become public service employees with associated qualification requirements, in order to decrease the employment of unqualified and inexperienced teachers in primary and secondary schools. Performance standards for general education subjects and for secondary vocational education were included in the basic pedagogical documents. New concepts for secondary school graduation and final exams have been developed. The school inspection service has started to publish reports on results in selected subjects at primary and secondary schools together with recommendations for schools.

### **Rethinking tertiary education in a global economy**

Implementation of the Bologna strategy in the new 2002 Act on universities creates the prerequisites for increasing the mobility of students, teachers and researchers. Further support of common activities in the area of joint study programmes, in the recognition of study results and in science would help to deepen international co-operation in globalising university education and expand access to a globalising labour market.

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

### **Promoting lifelong learning and improving its linkages with other socio-economic policies**

The 2003 Skills Strategy set out a cross-government programme to tackle skills gaps. Progress includes 12 Employer Training Pilots delivering tailor-made training for low-skilled employees and an Adult Learning Grant to support adults studying for their first qualification equivalent to completion of upper secondary education. The New Deal for Skills will offer new ways of tackling the barriers between welfare and workforce development and draw in those with low, or no skills, on the margins of work.

### **Evaluating and improving outcomes of education**

The government is more closely aligning teachers' skills in assessment for learning and richer data on pupil performance with intelligent systems of accountability. These systems involve effective self-evaluation, a sharper but lighter touch, external inspection, and review and support through an experienced head teacher. The Primary Education strategy for England "Excellence and Enjoyment" was launched in May 2003.

### **Promoting quality teaching**

In England school workforce remodelling is allowing teachers more time to concentrate on their core professional responsibilities and to focus on personalised teaching and learning for all pupils.

### **Rethinking tertiary education in a global economy**

In January 2003 the government published a strategy to give universities the investment and freedom they need to compete with the best in the world, while protecting the poorest students, and widening participation. From 2006, universities may charge up to £3 000 per year in fees. Students can pay their fees after graduation, and 30% of the poorest full time students will be guaranteed at least £3 000 in grants and bursaries per year in addition to low-interest student loans. Institutions must have strategies for increasing access before they are allowed to increase their fees. In Northern Ireland a public consultation on proposals to increase funding of higher education is underway.

### **Building social cohesion through education**

Since April 2004, all 3- and 4-year-olds are entitled to a free part-time (two and a half hours daily) early education place if their parents want one. A Children's Workforce Unit has been created, bringing together responsibility for a number of sectors of the children's workforce.

### **Building new futures for education**

Building Schools for the Future launches in 2005-06 with £2.2 billion of investment to start renewing all secondary schools in England to 21st century standards. An extended National Learning Network programme is supporting colleges in technical infrastructure, e-learning content and staff development.

For further information: [www.dfes.gov.uk/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/)