



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,  
SCIENCE AND SPORT**

## **OECD REVIEW OF POLICIES TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RESOURCE USE IN SCHOOLS**

### **COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT**

**SLOVENIA**



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT, JUNE 2017

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Republic of Slovenia, established as an independent state on 25 June 1991, achieved strong and stable growth in the period of transition, especially during the period 1995–2008, reaching an average slightly above 4% of economic growth. The global financial and economic crisis has influenced the Slovenian economy markedly from late 2008 onwards. In the fourth quarter of 2008, Slovenia faced the first decrease of GDP since a decrease in the second quarter of 1993.

In the first half of 2016, Slovenia's GDP increased by 2.5%, compared to the same period of the previous year. Economic growth is largely favourably impacted by a stronger external demand (exports). The country closed the year 2015 with a deficit of 1.117 billion EUR or 2.9% of GDP, the lowest since the economic crisis years. Before the economic crisis in 2008 the deficit amounted to 537.3 million EUR or 1.4% of GDP.

With the economy recovering, the 2015 unemployment rate fell for the second year in a row; however, it remains twice as high as in 2008, i.e., 10.3% in September 2016. Slovenia is also among the countries which failed to raise the share of youth employment to the pre-crisis level.

Legislative amendments to reduce labour market segmentation and increase its flexibility were passed in 2013. The amendments reduced the protection of employment, which, as estimated by the OECD, is reflected in the reduction in the index of protection of regular employment in case of individual dismissal (EPR) from 2.39 to 1.99. This is below the OECD average.

The population of Slovenia was 2 064 188 at the end of 2015. The number increased slightly in 2015; while the number of Slovenian citizens dropped by more than 0.3%, the number of foreign nationals rose by 6.1%. Most of the immigrants come from the territories of the former Yugoslav republics. There are two national minorities, the Italian and the Hungarian National Communities, a Roma Community and several ethnic groups living in Slovenia.

In 2015, 19.2% of the population was at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion. This means that approximately 385 000 people were exposed to this risk. Compared to the year 2014, it decreased by 1.2%, but remained above the level of 2008, when the effects of the economic crisis were not yet visible. 24 000 more people were exposed to the risk of social exclusion in 2015 than in 2008.

## POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Slovenia is a democratic republic of dividing the powers into legislative, executive and judiciary authorities. The President of the Republic of Slovenia represents the Republic of Slovenia and is the commander-in-chief of its armed forces. The government represents the executive authority and is responsible to the National Assembly.

The Ministry of Education Science and Sports responsible for pre-school education, basic school education, music education, specialized education, upper secondary education and short cycle higher education, adult education, higher education, science, sport, investments in the school infrastructure, education and staff development, as well as international cooperation in education, science and sport. The Office for Youth and UNESCO Office operate within the Ministry. An affiliated body of the Ministry is also Inspectorate for Education and Sport (IES)

## PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

In Slovenia, the public sector is defined as an ensemble of organisations that carry out public functions and provide public service. It is divided into the following: public administration, state administration, local self-government and public service.

In comparison to the number of the working age population, the share of employees in the public sector increased between 2009 and 2013 from 19.7% to 20.9%. In comparison to the total number of active population, the share of employees in the public sector increased from 20.9% to 22.9% (MMC 2015).

The largest share of employees in the public sector works in basic schools. In the period from 2008 to 2013 their share has been decreasing. The decrease has been noted among upper secondary school employees, whereas numbers of those working in upper education and kindergartens have increased.

## THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Slovenian education system is composed of the following levels: ISCED 0 - pre-school education combining early childhood education and care and pre-primary education for children from age 1 to age 6, ISCED 1 and 2 - basic compulsory (integrated primary and lower-secondary) education, ISCED 3 - upper-secondary education, ISCED 5 - short-cycle higher vocational education, ISCED 6 - bachelor's level, ISCED 7 - master's level, and ISCED 8 - doctoral level. Slovenia also has a well-developed system of non-compulsory basic music and ballet education.

Pre-school education in Slovenia caters to children aged one to six or the starting age of compulsory basic education, and is not compulsory. Kindergartens provide education and care in two age groups: children aged 1 to 3 (public kindergartens welcome children from 11

months) and children aged 3 years to basic school age. In addition to care, one of the key objectives of pre-school education in Slovenia is to provide every child with high quality and age-appropriate learning and social experiences. Pre-school education is provided by public and private kindergartens. Public kindergartens are established by local communities. In the school year 2015/16, pre-school education was provided by 978 kindergartens and their units. Most kindergartens, i.e. 91%, are public; 89 kindergartens, or 9% of all kindergartens, are private. Pre-school education is also provided for children in hospital care.

Primary and lower-secondary education is organised as a single-structure nine-year basic school attended by students aged 6 to 15 years. Children enroll in the first grade of basic school in the year when they reach the age of six. The key basic education goals include providing students the opportunities to acquire knowledge and develop skills consistent with their abilities and interests, fostering personal development, developing the ability for life-long learning, fostering the sense of belonging to one's state, national identity and cultural heritage, as well as educating on common cultural values, human rights, diversity and tolerance, developing skills of communicating in Slovenian and foreign languages, educating for sustainable development, for taking responsibility for one's actions, one's health, for other people, and environment, developing entrepreneurial skills, innovation and creativity. Basic school education is compulsory and financed from public funds. Public basic schools are established by municipalities. There are 452 basic schools in Slovenia, five of those are private (Waldorf, Catholic and Montessori). The Ministry currently covers 85% of the required funds for the implementation of a state-approved basic school education programme in a private school. Four schools in Slovenia provide international basic school programmes; one of them is public. In the school year 2015/2016 539 students were enrolled in such international programmes.

Upper-secondary education lasts from 2 to 5 years and is not compulsory. As a rule, it begins at the age of 15. The main goals of upper-secondary education in Slovenia are to allow the entire population to attain a general educational qualification and an occupation, allowing the largest possible share of the population to attain the highest level of creativity and educational qualification. It encompasses general education, with different types of four-year gimnazija programmes, technical and vocational education. The system of upper-secondary education is centralised; decisions on establishing and financing of upper-secondary schools, and approving and allocating education programmes are adopted at the national level. However, schools and teachers enjoy autonomy (subject to regulations) in some areas, such as implementing teaching content, choosing teaching methods, and managing employment relationships. There are 117 upper-secondary schools in Slovenia, of which 6 are private. There are also 6 special education needs schools.

A major curricular reform was implemented between 2008 and 2011. VET curricula (2008/2011) were revised to introduce a competence-based approach and a modular structure in teaching and learning, as well as increase the share of practical training. Following the reform of vocational education (2008–2011), the share of practical training in

the work place (employer based practical training) increased and 20% of the curriculum is now designed in cooperation with social partners, particularly local companies.

The Law on the Slovenian Qualifications Framework entered into force in January 2016, which provides for a unified qualifications system in the Republic of Slovenia (Slovenian Qualifications Framework - SQF). The emphasis of the upcoming vocational education reform to be carried out in 2016-2021 is on developing models of practical training, which will be adapted to the specific conditions and needs in Slovenia, and will be implemented in close cooperation with social partners.

Governance of the education system is regulated by a number of laws, regulations and guidelines. Education policy is defined by the central government and adopted by the parliament. As a rule, norms and standards are determined by national authorities in close cooperation with social partners and are in force at the national level. Since 2012, the preparation of regulations, their monitoring, analysis and implementation for all levels of education are under the responsibility of one ministry: the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. Other ministries (mostly the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Culture) and government bodies are involved in education policy development and implementation, among these the National Education Institute, the Inspectorate for Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, the National Examination Centre, the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, the National School of Leadership in Education and the Educational Research Institute. Several councils of experts established by the government, such as the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Professional Education, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education and the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education, support the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in specific areas of education planning and implementing education policies.

The state also has a regulatory and supervisory role in educational institutions established by a municipality (kindergartens, basic schools). The state oversees the operation of the education system with financial mechanisms, such as the system for balancing local budgets and the provision of funds for salaries of employees. As public institutions have no property of their own (they only manage assets of the founder), it is the founder who is responsible for investment and development. The state and municipalities (with the financial support from the state) perform the development and investment roles.

Regarding the contribution of parents to their children's education, Slovenia ranked somewhere around the average of OECD countries. Data from the OECD show that private contributions in 2013 amounted to 3.7% of GDP for pre-school to tertiary education.

The data on the educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds (EAG 2016, Table A 1.1.) show for Slovenia that 1 % of this population have below upper secondary level of education, 12% lower-secondary, 57% upper-secondary, and 31% tertiary education as the highest level

attained. In the population aged 25 - 34, 54% are upper-secondary school graduates (of whom 42% have completed a professionally or vocationally oriented educational programme) and 41% have completed a tertiary education programme (EAG 2016, Table 1.4.).

The data on the performance of the education system based on international research show that the achievements of Slovenian students are (statistically significantly) above the OECD average in mathematics and science literacy. While reading literacy was assessed below the OECD average in the PISA 2009 and PISA 2012 surveys, the PISA 2015 survey results place Slovenia markedly above the OECD average in these competencies. In TIMSS 2011, the achievements in mathematics and science of four- and eight-graders were above average, while in science the eight-graders were sixth (behind Asian countries and Finland). Good performance of Slovenian students in those subject areas have been confirmed by the TIMSS 2015 survey results. The ICILS study (information and computer literacy, 8th grade) ranked Slovenian students slightly above the international average. However, a vast majority of students (84%) in Slovenia reached only the second level of computer and information literacy or less. The ICCS survey results (civic education, 8th and 9th grades) showed that the achievement of civic knowledge in 2009 was above the international average, while in 1999 there was no statistically significant difference compared to the international average. The level of confidence in individual institutions normally associated with democracy was lower than the international average and students showed a slightly lower level of willingness to engage in the fundamental democratic process of elections than the average of students at the international level.

Main challenges for the future are revolving around the heightened complexity of the educational system which consequently demands a higher and faster adaptability of teachers, educational processes, and educational institutions along with their management. With this, a challenge remains in how to appropriately value and evaluate teachers' endeavours and their professional development. Such circumstances along with the austerity measures of the Fiscal Balance Act, which were implemented in 2012 and are still partially in force, hinder further efforts for efficiency and quality of the educational system.

## GOVERNANCE OF RESOURCE USE IN SCHOOLS

Public expenditure on formal education (measured in accordance with the UOE methodology) in 2014 amounted to EUR 1,991 million, or 5.3% of GDP. 96% of the total public expenditure for formal education was allocated directly to educational institutions, 4% was spent on public transfers to households and other private entities. The largest share of public expenditure was allocated for compulsory basic education (43%). Trends in public spending on education show a decline over the past years.

The reasons for this decline lie in the austerity measures imposed by the Fiscal Balance Act (FBA) adopted in 2012. Although austerity measures were adopted for all public expenditure (public sector) and did not specifically target the educational system, the education sector

was still affected. Some of these measures included restrictions on the creation of additional classes, introduction of a +2-standard for group size in kindergartens (the standard allowed 40 children per group, the FBA allowing for 2 more children to be allocated to a group), cutting material costs in schools or keeping a linear budget for professional development of teachers. There were also changes in the methodology for organising after-school classes, amendments to expanding teachers' workload in order to minimise new employment, closing down or merging (small) schools and residence halls for students.

The educational system in Slovenia is financed from the state and municipalities budgets. At the level of pre-school education (ISCED 0), municipalities are the sole funders except for extra costs relating to bilingual classes (the Italian and Hungarian national communities and Roma children), special needs students in kindergartens, and 50% of salaries for kindergarten teachers who work with children in hospital care. These are funded by the state.

At the level of basic schools (ISCED 1-2), the central authority covers operating costs which are related to the educational programme, local authorities cover operating costs which are not directly related to the educational programme. Upper-secondary education (ISCED 3) is fully financed by the state.

The state's share in all the resources allocated to education in 2014 amounted to 75%, while the share of the local level was 25%. The state is the predominant funder in the areas of basic school (82%) and upper-secondary education (99%), while the municipalities finance pre-school education (92%). For basic and upper-secondary schools (ISCED 1-3), the local level can give additional funds for higher standards of education and other additional services.

Public pre-school institutions are established and partly financed by local communities. They are also financed from parents' contributions (from 0 to 80%, depending on their income), from the national budget (for specific purposes like transport of pre-school children) and from donations and other sources. At all other levels of education, there are no tuition fees in public schools and parents' contributions are not compulsory.

Public service in the field of education is organised as a public network, consisting of public kindergartens and schools, private kindergartens and schools as well as individuals who are registered (child-minders). The public network of basic schools must provide all children with the opportunity of compulsory basic education; a public network of music schools is organised so as to enable students to attend basic music education and prepare for further music education.

Efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system is measured by achieving indicators defined by the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (OFEA). These include: attained level of education, drop-out rate, share of young people attending schools, share of adults

participating in life-long learning. Indicators resonate with those proposed by the Europe 2020 strategy such as the target for early school leaving to be less than 10% and the share of 30 to 34 year olds having completed tertiary education reaching at least 40%. Slovenia has reached both goals, having set its national targets in early school leaving at 5%.

In terms of measuring efficiency and effectiveness, schools implement self-evaluation, discuss and adopt reports on the realisation of the annual work plan and the financial and human resources plans. However, achieving proposed goals does not influence the budget planning or allocation of funds.

There are several mechanisms that allow schools to exchange information and experience, which also include the effective management of resources: the cooperation of schools with the National Education Institute, the Association of School Leaders, the Educational Research Institute and other institutions that do monitoring, analyses, research, reports and projects in the field of education.

One of the current challenges relating to the governance of school resources is the funding of the implementation of a state-approved basic school education programme in a private school, which is according to the OFEA entitled to 85% of the funding received by a public school. The challenge of raising financing of private schools to 100% from public funds with austerity measures still in place affects the question of and efforts towards assuring appropriate conditions, including remuneration for teachers and educational staff.

## RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION

The largest part of the funds for education, 43% in 2014, was earmarked for basic education, followed by pre-school education with 22% showing a visible growth in 2012 due to a methodology change in the integration of expenditure into the statistics. In the field of upper-secondary education, in 2015, approximately 37% of financial means were earmarked for the implementation of general-education programmes, and 63% for other types of upper-secondary education. The share of funding for general programmes has decreased recently (in 2013, it was around 41%), while it has increased for vocational programmes (in 2013, it accounted for about 59% of all funds for upper-secondary education).

As mentioned, the financing of pre-school educational institutions is left to the local authorities and parents. For the part of basic-school education financing where means are provided by the local community (costs not directly related to the implementation of educational programmes), the allocation of funds to schools is also left to the discretion of the local level. For the part of basic-school education financing where means are provided by the state (costs directly related to the implementation of educational programmes) the allocation of funds is calculated by using a formula. The formula takes into account the number of participants, the location of the school (only for funds for professional development of teachers), the number of teachers and their qualifications (salary grades) and the number of students with special needs. In other words, these criteria are based on

the actual needs of schools and the real costs incurred by them. The criteria also incorporate the number of students with special educational needs (SEN students) and pupil's linguistic background (migrants, minorities, Roma). The formula does not take into account socio-economic backgrounds of students and is the same for the whole country.

The state also finances the upper-secondary level according to a formula that similarly takes into account the number of students and the type of educational programme. Each programme has its own value, which is calculated upon several factors, such as number of teachers and support staff. Again, the formula does not take into account socio-economic background of students.

Private educational institutions co-financed from public funds, fall under the same rules, which apply to public educational institutions. Public financing of private schools is intended to cover the costs of implementing educational programmes, including salaries of teachers and other employees and material costs for the provision of education. Private schools must not use funds for purposes other than the implementation of educational programmes for which they have received funding.

The initial amount for private schools is calculated in the same way as it is for public schools. Private schools (kindergartens) at ISCED level 0 get 85% of the calculated amount, private schools at ISCED levels 1 - 2 get 85% of that amount and private schools at ISCED level 3 get either 100% or 85% of that amount (depending on the legislation in force when the school was established). Private schools do not get funds for capital investments.

Between school years 1998/1999 to 2015/2016, the number of upper-secondary school students decreased by almost 30%, which represents approximately 50 average-sized upper-secondary schools with an average of 629 students. In anticipation of an increased enrollment in the coming years, the schools which were most affected by the decline in enrollment generations in recent years, were preserved by means of various measures, such as additional financing, reorganisation and the distribution of some new educational programmes.

The state has been participating in the provision of textbooks to basic school students for approximately 20 years. Textbook funds, from which the vast majority of Slovenian students borrow textbooks, were originally designed so that a quarter of the price of new textbooks was annually paid for by parents, while schools independently took care of renewing textbook funds. In 2007, the parents' share was taken over by the state, and ever since the children have borrowed all textbooks in schools free of charge. Recently (2015 - 2017), the state has allocated additional funds for a full renewal of the textbook fund. The textbook market otherwise guarantees professional autonomy as teachers independently choose between competing textbooks of various publishers. 43 e-textbooks are available free of charge for general or core subjects in compulsory basic and upper-secondary schools.

Between 2009 and 2013, a system of e-education was developed, which included training of teachers and school leaders (to achieve the e-standard). In 2011, the first four pilot e-textbooks were designed, now there are more than 40 of them for basic subjects in natural sciences in basic school.

In 2015, there were 5 174 preschool teachers, 5 727 preschool-teacher assistants; while there were 6 826 teachers in the first and second triads (educational cycles, each covering three grades) and 6 957 teachers in the third triad in 2014.

Pre-school teachers complete at least a three-year qualification at bachelor's level. Teachers in primary and secondary schools complete, with a few exceptions, a five-year qualification at master's level. Statutory conditions of the qualifications for teachers in primary and secondary schools are mostly the same. Teachers of specialised subjects and teachers of practical skills in vocational and adult education must fulfill additional requirements of relevant practical experience, professional skills or specialised knowledge. In addition to the level of education, the law also stipulates pedagogical-andragogic competences for teaching in kindergartens and schools. Teachers in vocational and technical schools are required to have working experience as well. Further training courses last mostly one year (up to 60 ECTS credits) and do not confer degrees, but professional qualifications. They are designed for those who already have degrees obtained in study programmes of the first and second degrees and wish to upgrade their professional qualifications.

Teachers and other teaching staff on all educational levels are civil servants. They are employed in accordance with the procedure provided by law. Salaries of public servants, labour relations and retirement are uniformly regulated for the entire country. The Employment Relationship Act provides for employment with entering and terminating the contract, the common 40-hour working time, the types and forms of employment, rights, obligations and responsibilities in relation to working time, pay, leave, etc. Teachers obtain jobs in two ways: by applying to public tenders of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport for trainee positions, or to public tenders of vacancies put out by kindergartens and schools. In that case, the selection is done by school leaders and tender board or committee.

There are several types of aid for students and students: subsidised transportation and school meals, and some additional forms of assistance, depending on the socio-economic status of their families.

Education of children with special needs (SEN children) takes place in regular basic schools and specialised facilities for students with profound impairments or disabilities when regular schools cannot provide appropriate adaptation and assistance. These children are included in special education programmes implemented by institutions for children with special needs. Schools with regular programmes are provided with additional resources for students with special needs who are included in their programmes. Institutions for children with special needs are funded separately.

One of the challenges for resource distribution is the allocation of funds for pre-school education. Whereas the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport strives to achieve a high quality pre-school education, which includes more than child-minding, the municipalities argue that funds allocated by the state do not suffice for reaching such goals. Another challenge for resource distribution in pre-school education is the discrepancy between the municipalities and the Ministry of Finance regarding the development of the criteria for determining the poll tax in municipalities, which is the basis for additional financing of municipalities by the state (appropriate use).

In basic education, the main challenge is the provision of after-school classes. There are differences in views between the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and schools regarding the number of after-school classes that should be offered. Parents, and consequently schools, have an interest in increasing the number of those classes to assure the care of their children while they have duties, while the ministry requires a more efficient use of resources. An increase in the provision of after-school classes implies a higher workload for teachers. With the stagnation of funds available for education, the increased and more complex workload of teachers is not reflected in their salaries.

In the field of upper-secondary education, the largest part of funding is obtained according to the formula, which, however, cannot take into account all the specificities of individual schools. Schools give initiatives to change or supplement the formula, so that it does take into account the specificities of individual schools (empty units, the location and importance of the school to the environment, the employee structure, etc). In upper-secondary education, the main challenge is therefore how to include specificities of particular schools and their goals, which are not related to the number of students, in an existing system of financing (formula).

## RESOURCE UTILISATION

Instruction in schools is conducted in classes and study groups (*študijski krožki*). Norms mostly determine the maximum number of students in a class or group, exceptionally they determine the minimum number of students required to form a class or group. The class can include a maximum of 28 students. There are lower standards for classes in bilingual basic schools and basic schools with Italian as the language of instruction, for classes, which include students with disabilities or Roma students, and for combined classes.

In upper-secondary education, the norms for the formation of classes are generally higher than the norms for the formation of classes in basic education. Special additional resources are allocated for the work with students with special needs at the system level.

The Slovenian education system does not have any specific programmes at the lower-secondary level. The so-called lower-secondary level forms part of a single nine-year basic education. Learners decide on the branch of their education after completing basic school, choosing between enrolling in upper-secondary general education (the gimnazija

programmes) or in vocational and technical upper-secondary education. In the school year 2016/2017, upper-secondary schools offered possibilities to enroll into 13 short vocational programmes, 62 vocational education programmes, 47 technical programmes, 29 vocational-technical programmes, 3 vocational courses, 6 programmes of professional gimnazija, one of them - the art gimnazija - offering 4 different branches and 5 modules, 5 programmes of general gimnazija and 1 programme of the matura course. Students who successfully complete basic school are free to choose where they will enroll. Vocational guidance in basic and upper-secondary schools is coordinated by the counselling service, which offers professional information, diagnostic, vocational counselling, vocational education, information feedback and monitoring of trainees.

The school year lasts for both basic and upper-secondary education from 1 September to 31 August. The allocation of classes and the duration and distribution of school holidays is determined by the Minister responsible for education, with the Rules on the school calendar and with annual detailed instructions for their execution.

Organised educational work (instruction and other planned educational activities) takes place in basic schools and gimnazijas for 38 weeks maximum (approximately 190 days in a school year), in the 9th year of basic school and 4th year of gimnazija for 35 weeks (approximately 175 days in a school year). In vocational and technical upper-secondary schools, organised educational work can take a maximum of 42 weeks (approximately 210 days in a school year).

The school year is divided into assessment periods; in basic schools there are two assessment periods per year: the first lasts from 1 September to 31 January and the second from 1 February to 24 June, or to 15 June for 9th year students.

There are two assessment periods in gimnazijas and in vocational and technical schools; the first runs from 1 September to 15 January and the second from 16 January until the completion of classes, that is, until June 24, except for students of vocational schools with individual learning contracts with employers - they end up practical training with the employer in the second half of July, depending on the number of additional weeks of practical training. In their final year of schooling, students end their instruction in the last days of May; the exact date is determined by the Minister, responsible for education, with a yearly directive on the implementation of the school calendar.

The allocation of school holidays and school-free days is the same for primary and secondary schools. The total number of hours of instruction for each subject is determined by educational programmes, the maximum number of hours per week for students is limited by law.

In basic schools, students' weekly obligation is determined by educational cycles. In the first triad (educational cycle from 1st to 3rd year) the obligation is a maximum of 24 hours per

week; in the second triad (from 4th to 6th year) a maximum of 26 hours per week; and in the third triad (from 7th to 9th year) a maximum of 30 hours per week.

In gimnazijas and vocational and technical schools the students' obligation, without hours of sports education, can be a maximum of 30 hours per week; the extent of all forms of educational work may not exceed 36 hours per week. In vocational schools, theoretical and practical education can amount to no more than 8 hours daily, while the weekly load should not exceed 38 hours.

Schools carry out programmes on the basis of the Catalogue of compulsory elective courses, prepared by the National Education Institute or created by schools themselves. They carry them out by themselves or in cooperation with external contractors. Elective courses give students opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills according to their individual wishes and inclinations in accordance with their values and life goals. Compulsory electives are activities that the school offers students very autonomously, and are usually carried out in a concise form.

The school system is facing various pressures and ambitions to increase pupil time obligation on a daily and weekly basis. There are particularly noticeable and persistent attempts to increase teaching hours of certain subjects (second foreign language as a compulsory subject, science subjects, technical and computer literacy, more hours of sports in basic school). Currently there are intensive deliberations underway on changing the concept of the extended programme. The goal would be to develop a different model of additional organised activities that would replace the current concept.

Teachers' full working time under the general law is 40 hours per week. Full-time includes the right to a 30-minute break for lunch. The school leader can assign to a teacher additional 5 hours of instruction within the 40-hour working week, which is recompensated by a salary supplement. School leaders can also reduce the load of a teacher for 3 hours a week and reduce the salary accordingly. The 40-hour working week includes a statutory obligation of 30-hour educational work of pre-school teachers in kindergarten, and of 35-hour obligation of their assistants.

Within the 40-hour working week, teachers have a statutory teaching load defined by teaching hours per week. A lesson in school generally lasts 45 minutes. The teaching load of a teacher in basic school is 22 hours, in after-school classes it amounts to 25 hours. Teachers of the language of instruction (Slovenian, Hungarian and Italian) in basic schools teach 21 hours per week.

The teaching obligation of the teachers of theoretical subjects in upper-secondary schools is 20 hours, with a few exceptions. Teachers' work obligation generally comprises preparation for classes, instruction, other individual and group work with students and correcting and evaluating their products. In addition, teachers must work with colleagues, with professional

bodies of the school, with experts outside the school and parents. Teachers must perform the tasks of the class teacher, a mentor to their students and to trainee teachers. Their duties also include arranging cabinets, collections, educational workshops, gyms, playgrounds, plantations, etc. They participate in in-service teacher training, organise cultural, sporting and other actions, prepare and lead field trips, excursions, competitions, open-air schools, camping, etc. Individual tasks are not time-codified.

In-service teacher training is a right and duty of all professionals in education; it is defined by law and the collective agreement for the activity of education and further regulated by rules. The collective agreement provides for the right of the teaching staff to 5 days of in-service teacher training per year, or up to 15 days in three years. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport organises and finances in-service teacher training with the aim of their professional development, the development of public kindergartens and schools and the development of the whole education system, thereby increasing its quality and efficiency.

Educators can seek the help of a specially organised counseling service; furthermore, they have several sources of help and counselling throughout their time of service. Trainees consult with a mentor who is assigned to them during the traineeship or in the period of initial work and their preparation for the teaching certification examination. Educational advisers of the National Education Institute constitute another permanently accessible source of professional assistance. The units of the Institute are positioned in all regions of the country. Teachers' circles are organised according to school subjects and subject areas, where pre-school and school teachers meet, develop new ideas, share experience and solve expert problems. Teachers of vocational schools can be linked with pedagogical advisors of the Centre for Vocational Education. Teachers in adult education can rely on the experts of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

Additional assistance is offered by the Slovenian Education Network (SIO), which provides online classrooms for various school subjects and topics. The portal of the online classroom helps each pre-school and school teacher find his or her online community in which to exchange experience, find a list of seminars and advice for his or her area and links to useful addresses.

In general upper-secondary schools, one teacher teaches 13 students on average, while in vocational and technical programmes, he or she teaches 14 students, which is fully in line with the OECD average. In higher vocational education, this ratio is 1:22. In school year 2014/15, the average number of students in a class was 24.7. However, there are significant differences between individual categories of educational programmes.

The managing authority of schools and kindergartens is the institution's council and the management body of the institution is the school leader. A public kindergarten or school can appoint an assistant, who helps the school leader in the performance of management and teaching duties. Institutions may also have an expert council, which deals mainly with the issues of professional work of the institution; decides on expert issues within the mandate

set out by the constitutional document; provides expert bases for programmes of work and development of the institution; gives opinions and proposals to the institution's council, director and expert head for the organisation of work and conditions for the development of activities; and performs other tasks determined by law or the constitutional document.

The TALIS survey (2009) showed that Slovenian school leaders often carry out activities associated to the so-called index of educational leadership; the biggest differences in comparison with other countries in the survey appeared in the monitoring of students' work and observation in classrooms, where Slovenian responses achieved maximum values. Slovenia was among the countries which were above the OECD TALIS average within the index of pedagogical management, which also means that Slovenian school leaders worked more together with teachers to eliminate deficiencies and address educational problems and played an important role in informing teachers about the possibilities of updating their knowledge and teaching skills. In terms of leadership style, Slovenia belongs to the group of countries where school leaders largely accept the pedagogical leadership style, but at the same time do not neglect the administrative/management style.

Public institutes were established in order to support the implementation of management and teaching duties of school leaders, with the School for Leadership as the central public institute. The School for Leadership carries out numerous programmes to support school leaders and has an elaborate "lifelong learning system" of school leaders in educational leadership and management.

School leaders' salaries are determined according to the criteria related to the size of the institution (the number of students, programmes, branches, etc.). The school leader's assistant is a legally provided position, where the employee is entirely or partly exonerated from the obligation of teaching or working in the class while performing this function. The position is appropriately evaluated in the wage system.

The kindergarten curriculum (1999) is a national document, intended for kindergarten professionals which provides for professional planning and high-quality pre-school education in kindergarten. It is based on the development-process approach, is open and flexible, it evolves and changes at the implementation level, and allows for a rapid response of children in the kindergarten group, the organisation of life in kindergarten and its interaction with the wider environment. Manuals, teaching materials and aids for kindergarten activities are not prescribed. Kindergarten are autonomous in the procurement of teaching and learning materials and tools, which are available free of charge for the teaching staff.

The child's achievements are not assessed. Pre-school teachers observe, analyse and guide children's learning through play. They encourage children in their learning in a variety of ways, assist them, direct and motivate them, explain and clarify. Parents are given verbal information about their child's achievements.

The basic school programme consists of a mandatory part (compulsory subjects, electives in the third educational triad and class meetings) and an extended one (after-school classes, early-morning care service, additional classes, remedial classes, extracurricular activities), in which students are free to take part or not to take part. The curriculum is set out in the timetable and syllabi for compulsory and elective subjects as well as the guidelines and concepts defining other forms of work with students (early-morning care, after-school classes, extracurricular activities) and optional elective subjects, open-air school and cross-curricular areas, library and IT skills, and other documents guiding the work of the school staff.

Teachers test and assess students' knowledge throughout the time when the school subject is carried out. In the first and second years teachers assess the progress of students with descriptive grades. From the third year onwards teachers assess the achievement of standards of knowledge prescribed by the syllabi, with numerical grades on a scale of one to five, with grade one being negative, others positive.

The national assessments of knowledge at the end of the 6th and 9th years test the knowledge of the mother tongue and mathematics; in year 6 also of the foreign language; and in year 9 of the subject chosen by the minister, responsible for education. Assessments are mandatory for students. Achievements do not affect the grades and represent only additional information on the knowledge of students.

Upper-secondary education is divided into general education, which includes different types of gimnazija and the matura course, and vocational and technical education. General education is intended to prepare students for further education at universities. Vocational and technical education is intended for the acquisition of a profession to enter the labour market, with technical education intended for a continuation of education in tertiary education programmes as well. Changes between vocational and general education tracks are enabled by special one-year courses (*Matura* course and vocational course) funded by the state.

The timetables determine the weekly and annual number of hours for each subject. They slightly differ between various types of gimnazija programmes, but all are characterized by the basic division into compulsory and elective parts. The scopes of the first and the second parts vary according to the type of programme. The compulsory part comprises from 81% (in general gimnazija) to 93% of all hours (in some orientations of art gimnazijas) with the remaining time left to the discretion of the student. The smallest choice of electives is in the first year, and the largest in the fourth, when students prepare for the matura examination.

Expert Councils for general education and for vocational education and training adopt syllabi or catalogues of knowledge for each subject from the curriculum. In addition to goals and didactic recommendations, the syllabi and catalogues include guidelines on cross-curricular links which help teachers to structure the learning content. Didactic recommendations for each subject also contain guidelines for teachers to use information and communication

technology (ICT) in the classroom or homework of students when obtaining information, learning, communicating, preparing presentations etc. and for developing their digital capabilities. There are various forms of teaching - lectures, exercises, seminars, workshops, fieldwork, research camps, seminar papers, etc., where the methods are largely left to the discretion of teachers. They use textbooks and other teaching materials in school. Four in ten teachers in basic schools use ICT in their lessons for more than 25% of the time. In upper-secondary schools about one in two teachers use ICT in their lessons for more than 25% of the time.

General rules on testing and assessing knowledge of upper-secondary school students are determined by the Gimnazije Act and the Act on Vocational and Technical Education, with more specific rules included in the Rules on the assessment of knowledge in upper-secondary schools adopted by the minister, responsible for education. Based on these regulations, each school prepares its own assessment rules established by the school leader after a preliminary hearing in the teachers' assembly.

The system of Quality assessment and assurance in education in Slovenia is based on the internal evaluation of quality, i.e. self-evaluation. Internal evaluation is one of the regular activities of the school. The evaluation can take place at the level of the individual and / or a smaller unit within an educational organisation, as well as at the level of the entire educational institution. In order to support these processes and build a unified national evaluation system in education, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport was in the process of implementing a major pilot project to gradually set up a comprehensive quality assessment and assurance framework at the time of drafting this report. This project is supported with resources from the European Structural Funds.

OFEA stipulates that schools should provide a safe and supportive learning environment, where corporal punishment of children is prohibited together with any other form of violence against and among children and unequal treatment based on gender, sexual orientation, social and cultural backgrounds, religion, race, ethnicity and national origin, and particularities of physical and mental development.

In the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum, educators must observe the principles of the curriculum, as well as be mindful of daily activities in the kindergarten, since they are just as important as written goals and content.

The Elementary School Act provides for the preparation of the school's educational plan, which contains educational activities and forms of cooperation between school and parents and their involvement in the implementation of the educational plan. Educational activities are proactive and preventive activities, counselling, guidance and other activities (praise, recognition, awards, educational measures, etc.), with which the school develops a safe and supportive environment. The cooperation between school and parents is implemented through school councils which consist of representatives of parents, school employees and the founder of the school.

The fundamental objective of all participants in the educational process is the optimal development of the child. The fundamental objective of the counselling service in kindergarten or school is to support all participants, so that they can achieve the common objective. All children regardless of their individual or group differences have a right to equal opportunities for optimal advancement in education. The counselling service in kindergarten or school is involved in ensuring, establishing and maintaining the conditions for optimum development of every child in kindergarten or school.

Promoting cooperation between teachers and the development of learning communities in schools takes place through the participation of teachers in study meetings (upper-secondary education), which are an established form of active learning and participation of practitioners in individual subjects or areas. Thematic conferences are shorter, 8-hour forms of education, aimed at the entire school staff, while seminars are shorter or longer forms of training designed for the acquisition of new skills, upgrading already acquired knowledge and professional and personal growth of the individual and the entire staff.

In addition to the basic activity of education, schools can also carry out activities that are not related to education, as long as they are in accordance with Article 72 of the OFEA and only with the permission of the school leader. Thus, the school can rent its premises (eg. the gym) to various sports organisations, clubs and other groups for a variety of purposes.

Teacher assessment is carried out by the school leader in accordance with the Public Sector Salary System Act and the Decree on the promotion of civil servants to salary grades. Acquired ratings have a direct impact on the possibility of promotion of employees in salary grades. Due to the economic and fiscal crisis, various restrictive measures and intervention regulations have been in force since 2010, which have restricted or even prevented advancement in salary grades.

The performance review of school leaders is regulated by Rules on criteria for establishing work performance of directors in the field of education. In accordance with the rules, a director of a public institution can gain up to two additional salaries due to job performance. However, intervention rules are in force in this case as well, according to which the school leaders are not entitled to job performance supplement as long as austerity measures imposed by the Fiscal Balance Act are in place.

The basic dilemma is how to ensure the optimal method of financing ISCED levels 1-2 level which would ensure all participants optimal and comparable educational conditions irrespective of the size and status of the school, taking into account limited budgetary possibilities. The normative system of financing by individual class or learning group is currently in force. During this time, attempts have been intensified to find an acceptable financing model based on the number of students.

An additional challenge is imposed by the increased complexity of teachers' work and the environment that demands a heavier workload, while the budget for education is stagnating.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The association of school leaders offers support to schools and their leadership in the management of resources. The association helps to link school leaders to regional associations, other schools and organise mentoring networks of schools.

The monitoring and control of spending at various levels of the education system is carried out as follows: the school council confirms the financial plan and annual account of the school. The Inspectorate of Education supervises the implementation of educational programmes at the school. The Court of Audit conducts financial reviews of the management of the education system and of individual schools. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport keeps financial and content controls over the business operations of the school. Municipalities carry out financial and substantive controls over the operations of schools funded by municipalities. Each school can hire an external audit (a private audit firm).

At the national level, the spending of financial means for early childhood education is monitored by the Ministry of Finance, which collects expenditure in specific areas of all municipalities on the basis of their annual accounts. At the local level, each municipality prepares an annual account, showing the amount of funds earmarked for kindergartens. The regularity of expenditure in kindergartens and municipalities is controlled by the Court of Audit. The regularity of expenditure in kindergartens is supervised by municipalities, which are the founders of kindergartens; it can also be supervised by their supervisory boards.

Information on the extent of activities is the basis for the systemization of jobs in basic schools, which the school leader proposes to the Minister, responsible for education, for approval. Schools' suggestions are reviewed and coordinated by the ministry and then approved by the Minister.

An upper-secondary school records the spending of annual funds in their books of accounts, so that the destination of funds, the economy and effectiveness of spending can be seen at any time.

The successfulness of a school leader is assessed by the school council. Assessment is done annually; one of the criteria is the evaluation of financial results of activities. The assessment has certain impact on the possibility of promotion and also a financial impact in terms of pay, but the latter was frozen at the time of drafting this report.

Schools must submit reports on the use of funds (balance sheets) to the Agency for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES). The financial data from the annual accounts of

public institutions are published on the AJPES website. The same applies to the system of adult education.

Upper-secondary schools must submit reports on the use of funds received and on the realisation of their financial plans to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports.

All public institutions must send semestral reports to their founders (the ministry or municipality) on the basis of which it is possible to monitor the operations of the individual user of the budget and, in case of finding an interim deficit of funds, take steps to ensure that the amount of funds set out in the financial plan will not have been exceeded by the end of the year.

# 1. NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

## 1.1. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

- 1 The Republic of Slovenia, established as an independent country on 25 June 1991, saw a strong and stable economic growth during transition. In particular, during 1995 and 2008 when it reached approximately 4%. The world financial and economic crisis has significantly affected the Slovenian economy since 2008. In the fourth quarter of 2008, the country faced its first drop in GDP since the second quarter of 1993.
- 2 In the first half of 2016, its GDP increased by 2.5% compared to the previous year. Economic growth has been largely influenced by an increase in external demand (export). Slovenia finished 2015 with a deficit of €1,117 billion or 2.9% of GDP, which is the lowest deficit since the beginning of economic crisis. The deficit before the crisis of 2008 was at €537.3 million or 1.4% of GDP.

**TABLE 1.1 REAL GDP GROWTH, 2005–2015 (% CHANGE COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS YEAR; % PER ANNUM)**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average 2005–2015
EU-28	2.1	3.3	3.0	0.4	-4.4	2.1	1.7	-0.5	0.2	1.5	2.2	0.9
Euro area (EA-19)	1.7	3.2	3.0	0.4	-4.5	2.1	1.5	-0.9	-0.3	1.1	2.0	0.8
Belgium	2.1	2.5	3.4	0.7	-2.3	2.7	1.8	0.2	0.0	1.3	1.4	1.2
Bulgaria	7.2	6.8	7.7	5.6	-4.2	0.1	1.6	0.2	1.3	1.5	3.0	2.3
Czech Republic	6.4	6.9	5.5	2.7	-4.8	2.3	2.0	-0.8	-0.5	2.7	4.5	2.0
Denmark	2.4	3.8	0.8	-0.7	-5.1	1.6	1.2	-0.1	-0.2	1.3	1.0	0.3
Germany	0.7	3.7	3.3	1.1	-5.6	4.1	3.7	0.5	0.5	1.6	1.7	1.4
Estonia	9.4	10.3	7.7	-5.4	-14.7	2.3	7.6	4.3	1.4	2.8	1.4	1.5
Ireland	5.8	5.9	3.8	-4.4	-4.6	2.0	0.0	-1.1	1.1	8.5	26.3	3.4
Greece	0.6	5.7	3.3	-0.3	-4.3	-5.5	-9.1	-7.3	-3.2	0.7	-0.2	-2.1
Spain	3.7	4.2	3.8	1.1	-3.6	0.0	-1.0	-2.6	-1.7	1.4	3.2	0.4
France	1.6	2.4	2.4	0.2	-2.9	2.0	2.1	0.2	0.6	0.6	1.3	0.9
Croatia	4.2	4.8	5.2	2.1	-7.4	-1.7	-0.3	-2.2	-1.1	-0.4	1.6	0.0
Italy	0.9	2.0	1.5	-1.1	-5.5	1.7	0.6	-2.8	-1.7	-0.3	0.8	-0.5
Cyprus	3.9	4.5	4.9	3.7	-2.0	1.4	0.4	-2.4	-5.9	-2.5	1.6	0.3
Latvia	10.7	11.9	10.0	-3.6	-14.3	-3.8	6.2	4.0	3.0	2.4	2.7	1.6
Lithuania	7.7	7.4	11.1	2.6	-14.8	1.6	6.0	3.8	3.5	3.0	1.6	2.4
Luxembourg	3.2	5.1	8.4	-0.8	-5.4	5.7	2.6	-0.8	4.3	4.1	4.8	2.7
Hungary	4.4	3.8	0.4	0.8	-6.6	0.7	1.8	-1.7	1.9	3.7	2.9	0.7
Malta	3.8	1.8	4.0	3.3	-2.5	3.5	1.8	2.9	4.5	3.5	6.2	2.9
Netherlands	2.2	3.5	3.7	1.7	-3.8	1.4	1.7	-1.1	-0.2	1.4	2.0	1.0
Austria	2.1	3.4	3.6	1.5	-3.8	1.9	2.8	0.7	0.1	0.6	1.0	1.2
Poland	3.5	6.2	7.0	4.2	2.8	3.6	5.0	1.6	1.3	3.3	3.6	3.9
Portugal	0.8	1.6	2.5	0.2	-3.0	1.9	-1.8	-4.0	-1.1	0.9	1.5	-0.2
Romania	4.2	8.1	6.9	8.5	-7.1	-0.8	1.1	0.6	3.5	3.0	3.8	2.7
Slovenia	4.0	5.7	6.9	3.3	-7.8	1.2	0.6	-2.7	-1.1	3.1	2.3	1.1
Slovakia	6.4	8.5	10.8	5.7	-5.5	5.1	2.8	1.5	1.4	2.5	3.6	3.6
Finland	2.8	4.1	5.2	0.7	-8.3	3.0	2.6	-1.4	-0.8	-0.7	0.2	0.4
Sweden	2.8	4.7	3.4	-0.6	-5.2	6.0	2.7	-0.3	1.2	2.3	4.2	1.8
United Kingdom	3.0	2.5	2.6	-0.6	-4.3	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.9	3.1	2.2	1.2
Iceland	6.7	5.0	9.4	1.5	-6.9	-3.6	2.0	1.2	4.4	1.9	4.2	1.8
Norway	2.6	2.4	2.9	0.4	-1.6	0.6	1.0	2.7	1.0	1.9	1.6	1.3
Switzerland	3.0	4.0	4.1	2.3	-2.1	3.0	1.8	1.0	1.8	2.0	0.8	1.9
Montenegro	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	-2.7	3.5	1.8	:	:
FYR of Macedonia	4.7	5.1	6.5	5.5	-0.4	3.4	2.3	-0.5	2.9	3.5	3.7	3.2
Albania (*)	5.5	5.9	6.0	7.5	3.4	3.7	2.5	1.4	1.0	1.6	:	3.7
Serbia	5.5	4.9	5.9	5.4	-3.1	0.6	1.4	-1.0	2.6	-1.8	0.7	1.5
Kosovo (*)	:	:	:	:	3.6	3.3	4.4	2.8	3.4	1.2	:	:
China (including Hong Kong) (*)	11.3	12.7	14.2	9.6	9.2	10.6	9.5	7.7	7.7	7.3	:	9.8
Japan	1.3	1.7	2.2	-1.0	-5.5	4.7	-0.5	1.7	1.4	0.0	0.5	0.5
United States (*)	3.3	2.7	1.8	-0.3	-2.8	2.5	1.6	2.3	2.2	2.4	:	1.4

(\*) Based on chain linked volumes.

(\*) Average 2005–2014 instead of 2005–2015.

(\*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Source: Eurostat, OECD and World Bank

- 3 According to data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURS, GDP in the second quarter, 2016), the **gross domestic product** (GDP) in the second quarter of 2016 was 2.7% higher than the GDP in the same quarter of 2015. In the first half of 2016, GDP increased by 2.5% in comparison to the same reference period in 2015. In the second quarter of 2016, economic growth benefited from external demand. The export and import increased by 7.5% and 7.2%, respectively. The overall domestic consumption increased by 2%. Gross investment in fixed assets declined by 3.6% due to, among other reasons, an 18% decrease of investment in buildings and structures.
- 4 Following the annual audit for 2015, the overall economy finished the year with a surplus of €2,452.2 million or 6.4% of GDP (SURS, Positive trends, 2016). In the first half of 2016, the export and import of goods and services continued to increase, and, compared to the first half of 2015, the balance of goods and services increased by 25.5% to €2,081.9 million or 10.7% of GDP. The rest of the world account, which includes goods, services, primary income, current transfers and capital transfers, recorded a surplus of €1,510.8 million or 7.7% of GDP.
- 5 Slovenia finished 2015 with a deficit of €1,117.7 million or 2.9% of GDP, which is the lowest deficit since 2008 when it totalled €537.3 million or 1.4% of GDP. The deficit is an important indicator of the public finance situation. In 2016, the public finances showed a gradual improvement. In the first half of 2016, the deficit totalled €298.7 million or 1.5% of GDP. In the second quarter of the same year, the general government sector alone recorded a surplus of €52.3 million or 0.5% of GDP. After the third quarter of 2008, this is the first time the sector recorded a surplus.
- 6 In 2015, the household **disposable income** totalled €23,535.6 million and increased by 1.5% compared to the previous year. In the first half of 2016, it further increased by 2.9% compared to the first half of 2015. The household disposable income is spent mostly for consumption and saving. Household consumption represents a large part of domestic demand and thus affects the economic growth. Economically speaking, household saving also plays an important role: it accumulates the surplus of funds available for the investment financing in other sectors. In 2015, the household surplus totalled €2,179.2 million or 5.7% of GDP and, in the first half of 2016, to €1,477.1 million or 7.6%. In 2015, the household saving rate (a share of gross saving in the gross disposable income) was at 14.8%. Households usually save more in the first half of the year, which was also the case in 2016: the saving rate was at 18.5%.
- 7 In **2015**, compared to 2014, the income from the taxes on products saw the largest increase (SURS, General government tax revenues, 2015): by 3.1% or from €156 million to €5,237 million. The largest share of this increase belongs to a higher income from the value added tax. Compared to 2014, the income from VAT increased by €63 million and totalled €3,219 million. The excise duty revenue increased (to €1,594 million), as did the revenue from insurance transaction tax (to €82 million), the income tax revenue (for 4.8% to €117 million) and the revenue from corporation tax (for €39 million or 7.4% from €568 million).
- 8 Compared to 2014, the revenue from social security contributions in 2015 increased by €240 million or 4.4% and totalled €5,725 million. This was largely due to an increase in actual household social security contributions (of employed, self-employed and unemployed), which increased by €129 million or 3.8% and totalled €3,471 million. The actual employer social security contributions also increased: by €109 million or 5.4% and totalled €2,135 million. Among other reasons for higher revenue from the social security contributions are the newly introduced social and health contributions from temporary upper secondary student and higher education student

work. In total, €67 million more than the previous year was collected in 2015 from this source (SURS, General government tax revenues, 2015).

- 9 The average **household** expenditure in 2015 was €19,496 or €1,625 per month. Consumer prices represent €17,334 (88.9% of the total expenses) or €1,444 per month. The rest of expenses totalled €2,163 (or 11.1%). These include the expenses for the purchase of a flat or house, the purchase of land for construction, the realisation of major works and other expenses. Compared to 2012, consumer prices increased by 3.2%. Transport costs (€3,601 or 20.8%), costs of food and non-alcoholic beverages (€2,671 or 15.4%) and housing-related costs represent the largest portion (€2,558 or 14.8%). Other large costs were the costs for certain goods and services (2,062 or 11.9%) and the costs of recreation and cultural events (€1,466 or 8.5%) (SURS, Consumer prices, 2015).
- 10 European price comparison of food and drink for household purposes indicates that the prices of food and drink in Slovenia in 2015 ranked as average in the EU28 (SURS, Food and drink, 2015). Prices of tobacco products, however, rank below average (for 31%). Countries with similar prices are the Netherlands and Portugal. A price comparison of food, drink and tobacco in countries bordering to Slovenia indicates the following: prices in Hungary and Croatia are 20% and 11% lower, while prices in Austria and Italy are 20% and 17% higher, compared to prices in Slovenia. Prices of alcohol drinks represent an exception, however, because they are lower in all four neighbour countries compared to Slovenia (SURS, Food and drink, 2015).
- 11 **Import** remains a key factor of economic growth. “With a significant improvement in the labour market, where the growth of employment and wages is on the rise, stronger growth has also been recorded for household disposable income, which is reflected in stronger growth in private consumption. Investment activity is lower, primarily owing to the significant contraction in government investment as a result of the reduced absorption of EU funds during the transition to the new financial perspective. After last year’s turn, we expect the weak recovery in housing investment to continue with a rebound of the real estate market, while good business performance and the prospects for stable economic growth in the future contribute to further growth in private investment in machinery and equipment. Government consumption will also rebound, largely as a result of higher employee compensation owing to the relaxation of some austerity measures and the growth in spending on goods and services in the health sector. [...] The broad-based economic growth will continue in 2017 and 2018; the rise in 2017 will result from renewed growth in government investment. Government consumption will also rise in the next two years, but this growth will be somewhat weaker than in 2016. Higher employee compensation and expenditure on goods and services in health sector public institutes will remain the main growth factors in 2017–2018” (IMAD, Autumn Forecast, 2016, 11-12).
- 12 In the second quarter of 2016, the number of active people in the **labour market** was 997,000, which is 16,000 (1.6%) more than the previous quarter. Out of this number, the number of self-declared unemployed participants decreased by 9,000 (10.7%), while the number of active participants increased by 25,000 (2.8%). The number of inactive participants also decreased: by 16,000 (2.1%) (SURS, Unemployment rate, 2016). In the second quarter, there were 40,000 unemployed women and 38,000 unemployed men. The number of employed men (493,000) was higher than the number of employed women (426,000). The activity rate and the employment rate were higher among men, while the unemployment rate was lower. Out of 793,000 inhabitants in employment, 82.4% had open-ended employment agreement.
- 13 Out of all inhabitants in employment, the share of those with open-ended employment agreements was the highest among those aged over 50: there were 93.9% or 186,000 in the

second quarter of 2016. Out of 142,000 employed persons in the age group 15–29 years, 75,000 (or 52.8%) had fixed-term and 67,000 (or 47.2%) had open-ended employment agreements (SURS, Unemployment rate, 2016). In the second quarter, the age group 15–29 years totalled 327,000 persons. Out of those, 150,000 were employed. The number of persons who were not involved in education and did not participate in the labour market was 34,000 (age group 15–29 years). In the second quarter of 2016, there were 23,000 unemployed young people. The share of fixed-term employees in the age group 15–29 years was 22.9% and the share of employees on open-ended employment agreement was 20.5% (SURS, Personal communication, 21 November 2016). Slovenia ranks among the countries that failed to raise the youth unemployment rate to the pre-crisis level.

- 14 In terms of unemployment rate by level of education, Slovenia ranks slightly above the OECD average: 6% of those with a tertiary education were unemployed, while the OECD average was at 5.3%. The share of unemployed master's degree holders is 5.8%, while the OECD average is 4.4%. The share of unemployed doctorate holders was 3.4%, while the OECD average is 3.3%<sup>1</sup>. The share of unemployed persons with upper secondary educational attainment was 9.4%, while the OECD average is 7.2% (OECD, EAG, 2016, 106). Over the 2005–2015 period, the unemployment rate in the age group 55–64 years (below upper secondary educational attainment) significantly increased: by 6.1%. In the age group 25–34 years, the unemployment rate among persons with upper secondary educational attainment increased from 6.7% (ISCED 95) in 2005 to 13.3 in 2015 (ISCED 2011). In this age group, the unemployment rate of those with a tertiary education doubled: from 5.2% in 2005 to 10.5% in 2015 (ISCED 2011) (OECD EAG, 2016, 108). The employment rate of these persons thus saw a marked decrease: from 91% in 2005 (ISCED 97) to 82% (OECD EAG, 2016, 107).
- 15 According to data from the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD), the employment rate has been increasing slowly since the end of 2013. There has been a continuous growth of employment rate since the second quarter of 2014; however, it was less prominent at the time: it ranged from 0.4% to 0.9% in 2014 and from 1.1% to 1.2% in 2015 (IMAD, Development Report, 2016). In the first half of 2016, the growth of employment rate strengthened (by 1.8% in comparison to the previous year) due to a larger number of employees in the majority of activities in the private sector: manufacturing, accommodation and food service, wholesale and retail trade, as well as professional, scientific and technical activities. The growth in employment activities that supply the workforce to other activities also continued. According to the IMAD, favourable trends are mainly attributable to higher employer confidence in the recovery of economic activity, but are also due to greater use of more flexible forms of employment. Provided that growth in economic activity continues, employment is expected to increase further in the next two years. Alongside further growth in activity and employment in export-related sectors, a gradual increase is expected in employment in market services focusing mainly on the domestic market and in construction. In addition to weaker economic growth, the expected moderation of total employment growth will also be increasingly influenced by demographic trends, because the decline in the working-age population affects the decline in labour force supply (IMAD, Autumn Forecast, 2016, 15).

*TABLE 1.2 % INTER-ANNUAL CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT RATE, SLOVENIA*

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the unemployment rate among the employed inhabitants in the age group 25–64 years.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
In total	3.0	-2.4	-2.7	-1.3	-1.7	-2.0	0.5	0.9
Activities of public services (O-Q)	1.8	2.0	2.1	0.8	0.8	-0.9	0.5	0.7
Private sector (A-N, R-T)	3.2	-3.4	-3.8	-1.9	-2.4	-2.3	0.5	0.9

Source: SURS.

- 16 In 2013, new legislative amendments were adopted to reduce the segmentation of the labour market and enhance its flexibility (in April 2013, the new Employment Relationship Act [ZDR-1<sup>2</sup>] and amendments to the Labour Market Regulation Act [ZUTD-A<sup>3</sup>] entered into force). They reduced the level of employment protection, which, according to the OECD's estimate, is reflected in the decrease in the employment protection legislation index for regular workers against individual dismissal (EPR) from 2.39 to 1.99, which is below the OECD average (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, 55). The share of temporary employment in total employment decreased after the passing of the legislative amendments in 2013; it increased again in 2014 and 2015, in particular, among young people. The volume of student work is increasing despite the fact that this form of work was made more expensive for employers. This is also the main reason why the share of temporary employment is the highest among young people (aged 15–24) and the highest in the EU. Similarly, after decreasing in 2013, the share of new fixed-term contracts in the total number of employment contracts increased in the last two years (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, 55–56). Partly this was also due to companies exercising caution when it comes to employment in an economically unstable environment.
- 17 **The employment rate** is increasing in all **age groups**. A higher share of economically active among persons aged between 55 and 64 is due to pension reform and the demographic effect of ageing among the economically active population which raises the employment rate in this age group. However, the employment rate in this age group remains one of the lowest in the EU and jeopardizes the long-term sustainability of the pension system. In recent years and after a large decrease during the economic crisis, the employment rate of those with a lower educational level has been increasing the most. This is the result of economic recovery that is mainly based on the export of manufacturing products which employs a large proportion of those with a lower educational level. Consequently, the share of low wage employees increased and the growth of the average wage in the private sector slowed down. In line with the economic recovery, the unemployment rate in 2015 decreased for the second year in a row. However, it remained almost twice as high as in 2008: in September 2016, it was at 10.3% (in September 2008, the unemployment rate was at its lowest to date at 6.3%) (Trading Economics, 2016).
- 18 During the economic crisis, the youth unemployment rate (aged 15–24) **increased** more than the EU average and reached its peak in 2012 (32,523 persons or 26.2%). It has decreased since then, although it remains high (21,521 or 22.2% of the unemployed) (Employment Service of Slovenia, Registered unemployment, 2016). The youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in both the EU and OECD (OECD SAG, 2016, 19). Slovenia thus ranks among the countries deeply affected by youth unemployment.

<sup>2</sup> **ZDR-1** <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=112301>

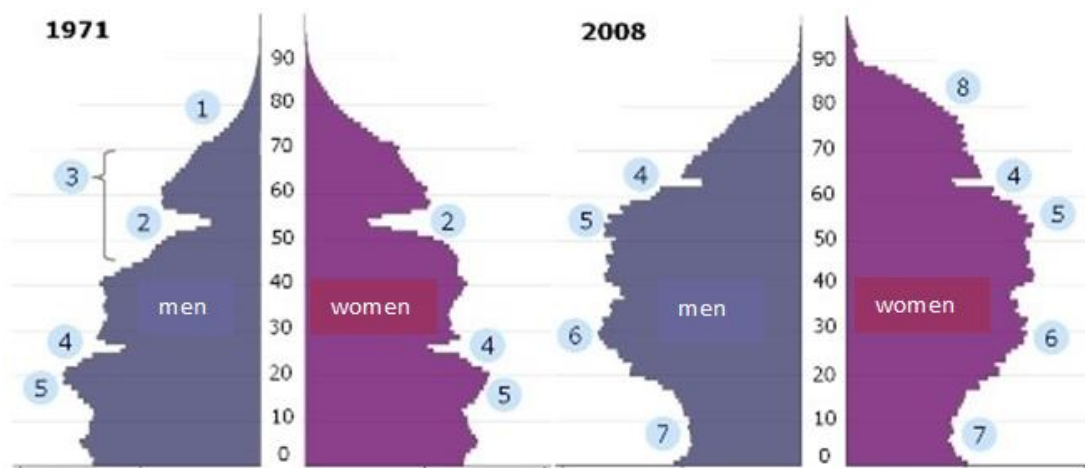
<sup>3</sup> **ZUTD-A** <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=112302>

- 19 IMAD notes that the deterioration in the situation of young people during the crisis was also due to fact that young people are more likely to be employed on temporary contracts, such as fixed-term employment contracts and student work (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, 54). According to the IMAD, the reduction in the unemployment of young people in the last two years is attributed to the increased demand for student work, to the fact that the active labour market policy focused more on young people, and to demographic trends (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, 54).
- 20 The IMAD estimates that at present, **social protection systems** still provide a high level of social security and the above-average availability of the health care system, and reduce the risk of poverty (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, 56-59), as well. However, due to a slowdown in economic growth and the ageing of the population, there have been growing pressures on public funds for the financing of such systems. The 2013 pension reform temporarily slowed down the rise in the number of old-age pensioners, but failed to considerably improve the sustainability of the pension system in the long run. The needs in health care and long-term care have been rapidly growing, whereas the reforms of the respective systems have been in preparation for over a decade (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, 56-59).
- 21 The challenges facing social protection systems are linked primarily to the adjustment of their financing to the reduction in the share of economically active population and the ageing of the population, continuous improvement in the efficiency of the health care system and the strengthening of preventive activities, and the regulation of a comprehensive long-term care system. After the increase at the beginning of the crisis, social protection expenditure declined in 2012 and 2013 as a result of changes to social legislation and intervention measures. After a significant decline in economic activity at the beginning of the crisis, social protection expenditure, compared to GDP, increased from 21% in 2008 to 24.9% in 2013. The largest share is accounted for by expenditure on old age (42.3% or 10.3% of GDP), which increased significantly in the period 2008–2013 for demographic reasons and due to the increase in the number of pension recipients before the entry into force of the pension reform in 2013, with further increase being prevented by the restriction of pension indexation. The decrease in total expenditure in 2012 and 2013 was attributable to amended social legislation and austerity measures towards fiscal balance (the Fiscal Balance Act).
- 22 Slovenia is one of the countries whose social protection expenditure is lower than the EU average but, according to the IMAD, nevertheless ensure a high level of social security and above-average accessibility of the health care system. The ageing of the population, along with unchanged policies and systems, exacerbates the problems in ensuring stable funding of social protection expenditure. The transfer from the government budget to the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of Slovenia (PDII), which accounts for 30% of all the revenue of the PDII, indicates that there are already problems related to financing the pension system. The projections of the European Commission generated in March 2015 show that, without changes to the relevant policies, the effect of ageing on public expenditure would be very strong, because in 2013–2060 the share of age-related expenditure in GDP would increase the most among all the EU Member States. This is why a new reform, one that will address the issue of long-term sustainability of the pension system to a greater extent, will have to be prepared, according to the IMAD (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, 58).
- 23 After four years of decline, **public expenditure on health care** increased in real terms in 2014 and 2015 and did not change significantly relative to GDP. However, in order to increase the long-term sustainability of the system, structural measures need to be adopted.

## 1.2. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

24 On 1 January 2016, the total number of inhabitants in Slovenia was 2,063,371. The share of foreign citizens was 5.3% (SURS, Number of population, 2016). The share of population aged 0–14 was 14.8%, the share of those aged 15–64 was 66.7% and the share of those aged 65 and over was 18.4%. The data from 1 January 2016 indicates that the average population age in Slovenia is 42.7 years. On 1 January 2016, the population consisted of 1,023,333 men and 1,040,855 women. The share of women was at 51.3%; however, it has been declining slowly in the last couple of years. The share of women among foreign citizens was 34.6% and has increased for 3.8% in the last four years (SURS, Population, 2016). According to data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the number of inhabitants of Slovenia increased by 1,300 in 2015. However, the number of Slovenian citizens decreased by 4,900 (0.3%) and the number of foreign citizens increased by 6,200 (6.1%). The total share of foreign citizens was 107,766 or 5.2% of the population.

*GRAPH 1.1 COMPARING THE AGE PYRAMIDS OF 1971 AND 2008*



Legend: 1 losses during WW1, 2 decrease in birth decline during WW1, 3 losses during WW2, 4 decreases in births during WW2, 5 post-war baby boom generation, 6 high fertility in the 70's, 7 decrease in births, 8 surplus of female

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Pyramid, 2009.

25 The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia released on their site (<http://www.stat.si/PopPiramida/Piramida2.asp>) the population pyramids since 2008 and population projections for Slovenia until 2080 (SURS, Pyramid, 2009). According to the population census in 2011, every ninth inhabitant was an immigrant. Out of those, two thirds had Slovenian citizenship. On 1 January 2011, there were 229,000 (11.1% of the total population) immigrants, i.e. persons whose first residence (immediately after their birth) was abroad. At the end of March in 2002, there were almost 170,000 (8.6%) immigrants. Out of these, there were 88.9% of persons whose first residence immediately after birth was in one of the former Yugoslavian republics. On 1 January 2011, there were 86.7% of such persons, despite the additional migratory flows from the EU member states and non-European countries.

- 26 The most important country of origin remains Bosnia and Herzegovina: 40% of those whose first residence immediately after birth was in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not hold Slovenian citizenship. In comparison to the period before Slovenian independence, immigration from Croatia decreased the most. The age structure of Croatian immigrants (55.7 years or 14 years senior to the average population) differs significantly from the age structure of other immigrants. In addition, 87% of them are Slovenian citizens. Other countries of origin are Kosovo and FYR Macedonia: typically temporary labour migration flow of young people (the average age of those from Kosovo is 34.3 years and of those from FYR Macedonia is 39.4 years). Consequently, only 22% and one third of immigrants, respectively, from Kosovo and FYR Macedonia hold Slovenian citizenship. 80% of immigrants whose first residence immediately after birth was in Montenegro have Slovenian citizenship. Out of immigrants from Kosovo, men prevail significantly (72%), and the same goes for the immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina (80% of them are men).
- 27 Among the immigrants from other EU members (slightly over 21,000 in Slovenia), there is 70% of persons whose first residence was in Germany, Austria or Italy. Almost 90% of them have Slovenian citizenship. These residents can be divided into three groups: persons born abroad to mothers expatriated during WW2, persons of the second generation of Slovenian emigrants, and workers abroad who repatriated to Slovenia, i.e. the country of their parents' original residence, as a rule, and persons who moved to Slovenia after it joined EU.
- 28 The basic characteristic of **spatial distribution of inhabitants whose first residence was abroad** is a pronounced concentration in relatively small parts of the country. Almost a quarter of them live in Ljubljana and almost a third of them in other ten municipalities. In three of the ten municipalities (the municipalities of Koper/Capodistria, Izola/Isola and Piran/Pirano) the immigration from the countries of the former Yugoslavia (initially mainly from Croatia) started after the mass departure of indigenous Italian residents. Later on, it was based on the economic attractiveness of the region. The remaining seven municipalities (the municipalities of Maribor, Kranj, Celje, Velenje, Jesenice, Novo mesto, and Nova Gorica) represented the centres of Slovenian industrialisation in the former Yugoslavia. Consequently, they required labour that the local environment was unable to provide.
- 29 Among the municipalities with at least 10,000 inhabitants, only three (the municipalities of Šentjur, Šmarje pri Jelšah and Laško) have less than 3% of inhabitants whose first residence is abroad. A relatively high number of people whose first residence is abroad (in Croatia, in most cases) live in small municipalities (the municipalities of Osilnica, Kostel and Rogatec) near the Slovenian-Croatian border. In these areas, residents would regularly move from one side of the border to the other side before Slovenian independence (SURS, Migration, 2011).
- 30 Two traditional national minorities live in the Republic of Slovenia: Italian and Hungarian national communities, as well as the Roma community. All three communities are protected by the Constitution (Article 64 and Article 65) (Office of the Government for National Minorities of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016). In 1991, 2,959 persons declared to be of **Italian ethnic origin** and 3,882 persons stated that Italian is their mother tongue. In a nation-wide census of 2002, 2,258 persons declared to be of Italian ethnic origin and 3762 persons stated that Italian is their mother tongue. Ethnically mixed areas include the municipalities of Koper, Izola, Piran and Ankaran (Office of the Government for National Minorities of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016). This is where traditionally the members of the Italian national community live and where Italian is the second official language in addition to Slovenian.
- 31 Kindergartens in the ethnically mixed areas where the language of instruction is Italian are the following: "Delfino Blu" in Koper, "Dante Alighieri" in Izola, and "La Coccinella" in Piran. Basic

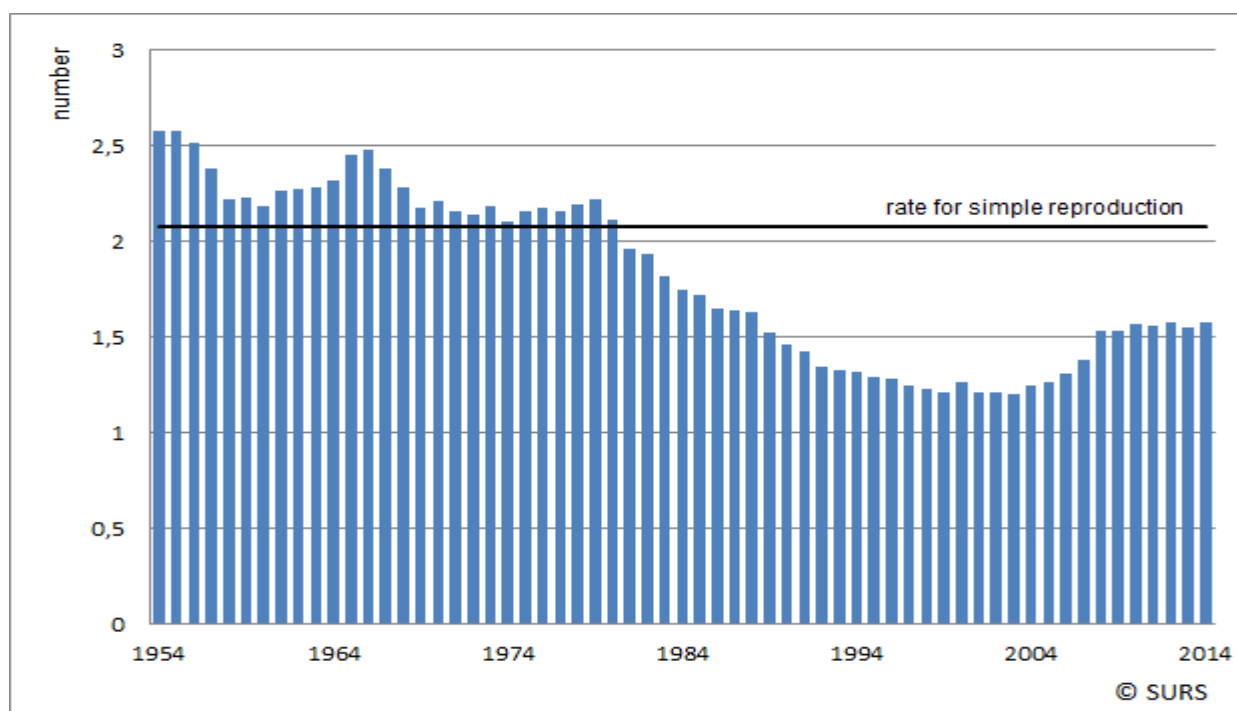
schools and their branches where the language of instruction is Italian are: OŠ Dante Alighieri in Izola, OŠ Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio in Koper with branches in Samadela, Bertoki and Hrvatini, and OŠ Vincenzo e Diego de Castro in Piran with branches in Lucija and Sečovlje. Upper secondary schools where the language of instruction is Italian are Gimnazija Antonio Sema in Piran, Gimnazija Gian Rinaldo Carli in Koper and Srednja šola Pietro Coppo in Izola. Italian language and literature can be studied at the University of Ljubljana (Department of Romance Languages and Literature at the Faculty of Arts) and at the University of Primorska in Koper (Chair of Italian Studies at the Department of Applied Languages at the Faculty of Humanities). Members of the Italian ethnic origin can study at the universities in Italy (especially if they wish to study in non-linguistic fields) and Croatia (in Reka and Pulj) (Office of the Government for National Minorities of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016).

- 32 According to the statistical data from 1991, 8,000 persons declared to be of **Hungarian ethnic origin** and 8,720 persons stated that Hungarian is their mother tongue. In a nation-wide census of 2002, 6,243 persons declared to be of Hungarian ethnic origin and 7,713 persons stated that Hungarian is their mother tongue. Ethnically mixed areas include the municipalities of Hodoš, Moravske Toplice, Šalovci, Lendava and Dobrovnik (Office for National Minorities of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016). This is where the members of the Hungarian national community traditionally live and where Hungarian is the official language in addition to Slovenian.
- 33 As opposed to the schools of Italian national community that have Italian as the sole language of instruction, the schools of Hungarian national community are, as required by law, bilingual (education is provided in both Slovenian and Hungarian for all residents in the above-mentioned municipalities). Bilingual kindergartens are the kindergartens of DOŠ Dobrovnik, DOŠ Prosenjakovci, Lendava and Moravske Toplice. Bilingual basic schools and their branches are the following: Dvojezična OŠ Lendava I with branches in Gaberje, Petišovci and Čentiba, Dvojezična OŠ Lendava II with adapted programme, Dvojezična OŠ Genterovci, Dvojezična OŠ Dobrovnik, Dvojezična OŠ Prosenjakovci with branches in Domanjševci and Hodoš. A bilingual upper secondary school is in Lendava. Members of Hungarian national community can study Hungarian at the University of Maribor (Department of Hungarian Language and Literature at the Faculty of Arts which is divided into Chair of Hungarian Language and Literature and Hungarian Language Class) and at the University of Ljubljana (Hungarian Language Class at the Faculty of Arts). They can also study in Hungary on the basis of bilateral agreement between Slovenia and Hungary.
- 34 Different institutions (social work centres, local administrative units and non-governmental organisations) estimate that 7,000 to 12,000 **Roma** live in Slovenia. They live in the Prekmurje region, the Dolenjska region, the Bela Krajina region and the Posavje region, as well as in large towns such as Maribor, Velenje, Ljubljana, Celje, Jesenice and Radovljica. In the 2002 census, 3,246 persons declared to be of Roma ethnicity and 3,834 persons stated that the Roma language is their mother tongue. In the 1991 census, 2,259 persons declared to be of Roma ethnicity and 2,752 persons stated that the Roma language is their mother tongue. It can be concluded from the comparison of the figures from 1991 and 2002 that a larger number of self-declared Roma is due to their improved situation.
- 35 The **births** in Slovenia varied between 1.53 in 1.58 since 2008. In 2013, 21,111 children were born, which was 3.8% less compared to 2012. Despite the lower number of women of child-bearing age, the births decreased to 1.55 children per woman of child-bearing age (from 1.58 in 2012). On a long run, the births are below the EU average. Infant mortality (children under the age of 1 year) in Slovenia is one of the lowest in the EU (2.9 per 1,000 live births in 2013) and is due to good health care of pregnant women and their children. The average pregnancy age

remained around the EU average in 2012. In 2013, the average pregnancy age remained the same as the previous year (30.5 years), while the age at first pregnancy increased again for a month (to 29.0 years). Since 2001 to 2012 (the available data for the EU), the age at first pregnancy increased more (by 1.6 years) than the EU average (by 1.1 years) in this period and remained at the EU average in the last two years (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, p. 134).

- 36 The **quality of life and social inclusion** are two important factors of prosperity which is the main goal of social development (through cooperation with other institutions IMAD created a system of prosperity factors covering material, social and environmental prosperity) (IMAD, Prosperity indicators, 2015). Several factors affect the quality of life: material possibilities for life, health, accessibility to public services, and quality of environment, social capital and social inclusion. By reanimating the economic activity and increasing the employment, the downward trend of disposable income (material possibilities for life) stopped, which indicates there is a possibility for a gradual improvement of quality of life. Health indicators have improved in the last years, while the indicators of healthy lifestyle deteriorated. Despite the increase during crisis, the risk level of social exclusion remains below the EU average. One of the challenges is to prepare the measures to reduce the number of socially excluded persons by improving their material situation, reduce the poverty risk of certain groups (the elderly and the children) and improve the lifestyle factors (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, p. 62).

TABLE 1.3 ALL BIRTHS IN SLOVENIA



Source: SURS.

- 37 The Development Report for 2016 by IMAD states that Slovenia retained a relatively high social inclusion and accessibility to public services and a low income inequality despite the crisis which led to a deterioration of material conditions for life (IMAD, Development Report, 2016, pp. 53-56).

- 38 **Social prosperity** had been improving until 2012, whilst 2013 and 2014 saw deterioration in the sub-fields of social climate and personal safety. A good accessibility to public services significantly contributed to a relatively favourable social prosperity. For a long period of time, leading indicators have been showing (including 2013) an improvement or at least no signs of deterioration in education, health, communications, culture and free time. The social climate, measured by trust in the parliament, saw a considerable decrease after 2008, which continued until 2013. Leading indicators and supplementary factors of personal safety deteriorated in 2011 and 2012. Guiding factors in the sub-field of trust/happiness had been deteriorating for a long time until 2013 (with the exception of 2012); however, the demonstrated satisfaction was still relatively high. The first data for 2014 show a continuation of deterioration of certain factors of personal safety, social climate and certain factors in the field of health. Life satisfaction slightly improved in 2014, which is probably a result of greater expectations of respondents at the prospect of economic recovery, which contributed to employment and payment growth (IMAD, Prosperity indicators, 2015). The Gini coefficient was set at 0.255 in 2013 (OECD SAG, 2016).
- 39 The **material prosperity** decreased significantly between 2008 and 2013 in comparison to the EU average. However, until 2008, it increased in the majority of guiding and supplementary factors. Until 2008, Slovenia achieved inferior results in guiding factors of resident assets and economic security, resident income, consumption and apartments compared to the EU. However, Slovenia achieved better results in work and employment as it exceeded the EU average, and in poverty and social exclusion, which were significantly lower than the EU average. The economic crisis, which had been deeper and lasted longer than in other countries, affected the material well-being far more than the EU average, especially in 2012 and 2013. While the economies in the majority of EU countries were already recovering, the economic growth in Slovenia dropped again significantly following a modest growth in 2011. At the same time, the unemployment increased faster than the EU average. These trends had an impact on deterioration of material prosperity in all sub-fields compared to the average prosperity the EU member states saw at the time. The only exception was the housing deprivation, where the gap between the EU and Slovenia decreased. In 2013, the deprivation in Slovenia was already lower than the EU average (IMAD, Prosperity indicators, 2015).
- 40 In 2013, the residents of Slovenia rated their overall satisfaction with life with 7 (out of 10). Low satisfaction was reported by 24.4% of respondents, high by 20.4% and medium by 55.2% (Eurostat, Quality of Life). Satisfaction with personal relations was assessed by 8.3 (on the scale from 0 to 10).
- 41 **The at-risk-of-poverty rate** was at 14.3% in 2015. The annual threshold for at-risk-of-poverty for single-person household was €7,399.00. In comparison to the previous year, the at-risk-of-poverty rate decreased by 0.2%. The threshold for at-risk-of-poverty increased by €253 per year (SURS, Poverty, 2015<sup>4</sup>). **The at-risk-of-poverty rate** was the highest in the Savinja (16.8%), the Posavje (16.1%) and the Podravje (15.9%) statistical regions. It was the lowest in the Primorsko-Notranjska (10.6%) and the Central Slovenia statistical regions (11.8%). The highest share of population under **the threshold for at-risk-of-poverty** lived in the Central Slovenia (59,000), the Podravje (50,000) and the Savinja (41,000) statistical regions. The lowest share was in the Primorsko-Notranjska (5,000) and the Zasavje statistical regions (8,000). Expressed in percentage, this means that the highest share of population under the threshold for at-risk-of-poverty lived in the Savinja region (16%), the Podravje region (15%) and the Zasavje region (14%). The lowest

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<sup>4</sup> The calculation is based on the income received in 2014, which was the referential year for income for the 2015 research

share was in the Primorsko-Notranjska region (9%). In 2015, the risk-at-social-exclusion rate was at 19.2%, which means that 385,000 persons were at risk of social exclusion. In comparison to 2014, it decreased by 1.2%, however, it remains above the level from 2008 when the effects of the economic crisis were not yet fully felt. In 2015, 24,000 more persons were exposed to the risk-at-social-exclusion than in 2008. A smaller number of people, exposed to the risk-at-social-exclusion in 2014, was the result of the decrease in all three factors of social exclusion: the risk-at-poverty rate decreased by 0.2, the rate of serious material disadvantage for 0.8% and the rate of very low work intensity for 1.3% (SURS, Poverty, 2015).

## 1.3. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

- 42 As specified by the Slovenian constitution as of 23 December 1991, Slovenia has the parliamentary system of governance and is the highest instrument adopted and amended by the National assembly under a special procedure (two-thirds majority). Other instruments in hierarchical order are the laws adopted by the National assembly, government decisions for law implementation, ministry regulations, guidelines and ministerial decrees to implement laws , as well as government decrees, regulations of local self-governing bodies to amend matters under in their jurisdiction. Slovenia is a democratic republic of dividing the powers into legislative, executive and judiciary authorities.
- 43 The **President of the Republic of Slovenia** represents the Republic of Slovenia and is the commander-in-chief of its armed forces. The President of the Republic is elected for a maximum of two five-year terms by direct elections. The highest legislative body is the National Assembly (90 deputies). The National Council (40 members) has an advisory role and represents social, economic, occupational and local interests.
- 44 At the elections to the **National Assembly**, the State Electoral Commission distributes the seats based on the results. First, it determines which lists of candidates have received at least 4% of all votes which is the prescribed threshold for the National Assembly. The lists of candidates that reached the threshold are allocated the seats at two levels: at the level of electoral unit using the Droop Quota and at the state level the d'Hondt method.
- 45 The **electoral procedure** starts when the elections are called. The elections are called by the President of the Republic (Source: National Assembly). Elections are held in constituencies into which the entire electoral area is divided before the elections. The law establishes that constituencies are formed in such manner that each is guaranteed an equal number of seats according to the number of inhabitants. For the elections to the National Assembly, there are eight constituencies, each having eleven electoral districts. For the election of deputies of the Italian or Hungarian national communities, special constituencies are formed in those areas in which these communities reside. The organisation and conduct of elections are provided for by different bodies. The highest electoral body is the State Electoral Commission, which is appointed by the National Assembly. The commission nominates the constituency electoral commissions and the district electoral commissions, which designate the electoral committees.
- 46 The government represents the executive authority and is responsible to the National Assembly. It consists of the Prime Minister and ministers and is approved by the National Assembly. The current government coalition, appointed on 18 September 2014, consists of the Party of Modern Centre (SMC), Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (Desus), and Social Democrats (SD).

The current government consists of 14 ministries: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport<sup>5</sup>, Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government's Office for Slovenians Abroad and Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy (Source: Government).

- 47 The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is responsible for pre-school education, basic school education, music education, specialised education, upper secondary education and short-cycle higher education, adult education, higher education, science, sport, investments in the school infrastructure, education and staff development, as well as international cooperation in education, science and sport. The Office for Youth and Unesco Office operate within the Ministry. An affiliated body of the Ministry is also the Inspectorate for Education and Sport (IES<sup>6</sup>).
- 48 In accordance with the law that regulates the financing and organisation of education, **the local community** acts as a founder of public kindergartens, basic schools and music schools and adult education organisations. The state acts as a founder of public upper secondary schools, higher vocational colleges, universities, educational institutions for SEN children and residence halls for students. Upper secondary general schools the *gimnazije* are founded by the state, but they can also be founded by the city municipality with a prior agreement by the state. In accordance with the law regulating the work of the Government, the Government exercises the rights and obligations that belong to the state as the founder, unless otherwise provided by a special law. The founding rights of public universities are exercised by the National Assembly. The founder is represented in the managing authorities of public kindergartens and schools (the council, the management board). In the case of educational institutions founded by the state, it is the Government that appoints its representatives in the managing authorities on a proposal by the Ministry of Education.
- 49 Public kindergartens are financed by the local community, parents and other sources. Public basic education, short-cycle higher education and higher education are state-funded (implementing different methodologies), namely the state funds cover teacher salaries, investment and certain scope of material costs. By law on public finances, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has the authority to monitor the spending, namely if the educational institutions spend the funds received justifiably and as planned.
- 50 In Slovenia, there are 212 municipalities **at the local level** (data as of July 2016) (SURS, Administrative, 2016). Municipalities consist of local, district and village communities. The main body of local self-government is the representative body which adopts fundamental decisions and is elected directly by the local community. The law on local elections specifically regulates the mayor elections, the municipality council elections and the local, village and district council elections. In the municipalities with members of the Italian and Hungarian minorities and the Roma population, there are also elections for their representatives in the municipal council.
- 51 In the **local elections**, each voter has the right to vote in their respective municipality. Residents of EU member states holding a permanent residence permit and whose principal place of residence is Slovenia, residents of the EU member states holding a residence registration certificate and a temporary residence permit and foreign nationals holding a permanent

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<sup>5</sup> A list of former Ministers of Education and Sport and former Ministers of Science is available on the website of Ministry of Education: [http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/o\\_ministrstvu/](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/o_ministrstvu/)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.iss.gov.si/>

residence permit and whose principal place of residence is Slovenia also have the right to vote in the local elections.

- 52 A majority voting system is required by law in all municipalities with small municipality councils (7–11 members). A proportional voting system is used in the municipalities with large municipality councils. A majority voting system is always used when voting the members of the municipality council that are representing the Italian and Hungarian minorities and the Roma population. In this case, individual candidates are voted, whereas lists of candidates are voted in the proportional voting system.
- 53 Based on the election system, the law provides for the candidacy that is adapted to the election system. The candidates and the lists of candidates can thus be selected by the political parties in the municipality and by the voters in the constituency. The voters can select the candidates and the lists of candidates by signature collection or at voters' meetings (Source: State Electoral Commission). The last local elections were held in 2014 (Local elections, 2014).
- 54 The primary self-governing local units are municipalities that manage autonomously their matters within the framework of the constitution and laws, and assume obligations and duties imposed to them by law. Municipalities address local matters that are of public interest ("original duties and responsibilities") and specified by the municipality's general act or law. Among the more important original duties and responsibilities of the municipalities are setting up conditions for adult education and promoting educational activities on its territory. The local community (municipality) establishes public and music schools, public kindergartens and residence halls for students. The criteria for establishing public kindergartens and schools and the public network of public kindergartens and schools, private kindergartens and schools and private providers with concession are laid down by law. The criteria for establishing a public network are determined by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia by considering the number and the age of children in the area, population density and territory's specific features of development. Municipalities are thus autonomous in establishing public kindergartens and schools, but within the criteria determined by the Government.
- 55 Public kindergartens are founded by municipalities based on the local demand with due consideration of the public network of kindergartens set up by the Slovenian Government. Based on the parents' needs, kindergartens may provide all-day, half-day or shorter programmes. Kindergartens receive local funds in the amount to cover the difference between total cost of the programme and the contribution by parents.
- 56 Basic schools are in fact founded by municipalities, but the majority provider of funds is the state. In accordance with the norms and standards in public schools, local community provides funds for costs of facilities and equipment and certain operating expenditure, the transport costs for pupils and SEN pupils, capital costs of property and equipment and, the costs of supplementary activities of basic schools, investment cost of basic schools, music schools and adult education organisations, as well as part of the funds to cover the investment in schooling of national communities. As the founder, the municipality has its representatives in the managing bodies of public kindergartens and schools.
- 57 In addition to the above-mentioned responsibilities of the state and local communities, every Government of the Republic of Slovenia specifies respective **priorities in education**. The Coalition Agreement (2014, 48–49) states that the coalition partners will "strive for an education system that will give open, creative, self-confident, assertive and supportive citizens. They will thus ensure that all students will have the possibility to access high educational achievements. They

will do so by following a clear distinction between the public and the private implementation of educational activity. Public education is thought to represent the public good, whereas private education is considered as a complement to the public one and that ensures the rights of parents and children to choose. One of the priorities will be to strengthen the educational role of schools and kindergartens through modern approach to teaching and learning and to boost the quality of management of the entire educational system and individual schools and kindergartens. The set norms and standards will only be altered in exceptional cases. They will also encourage an increase in professional responsibility and autonomy of teachers. The coalition partners will strive for the recognition of different educational paths, to reinforce lifelong learning, which will include intergenerational transmission of knowledge and experiences, and to reinforce the cooperation between schools and their wider environment, the local community, the economy, and non-governmental organisations.”

## 1.4. PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

- 58 In Slovenia, the **public sector** is defined as an ensemble of organisations that carry out public functions and provide public service. The organisations work in the public interest and provide for the public needs. Certain organisations do not hold their own legal personality (the status of legal entity), while certain are legal entities. Legal entities or bodies governed by public law are legal persons that are subject to special (public) legal system. The organisations are founded in order to carry out public functions. They are financed by public funds (often also by paid services; however, the prices, the contributions and other sources of revenue are regulated) and hold a monopoly position. They also have a special regime for the employees (who have the status of public employees) and a special supervision regime (Brejc, 2000).
- 59 The public sector is divided into the following: public administration, state administration, local self-government and public service. The public administration consists of bodies and organisations that engage in public affairs or activities related to the administration of public affairs (state administration, local self-government). Due to its many institutions, **public administration** is best defined by naming its main characteristics. The state operates through the public administration, which consequently includes the executive branch (the government and the state administration), representative bodies (local communities), the holders of public powers and public service operators. These bodies perform the tasks in the public interest in order to provide public goods that meet the public needs. The public needs are determined in the process of political decision-making. The public administration organisation and functioning are regulated by administrative law. Some of the fundamental organisation and functioning norms of the public administration can be found in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia<sup>7</sup>.
- 60 The **state administration** is part of public administration that represents the state as a group of people living in a certain area and meets their needs. It is an instrument which allows the state to carry out its function of authority. This function consists of the implementation of law and other regulations, of decision-making in the field of administrative matters and of administrative supervision. In terms of institutions, this task is carried out by the government and the ministries at the state level and by the local administrative units at the local level. The task of the state administration is delivering on and supervising the tasks and policies developed by the government. These usually include: the implementation of regulations, preparation and

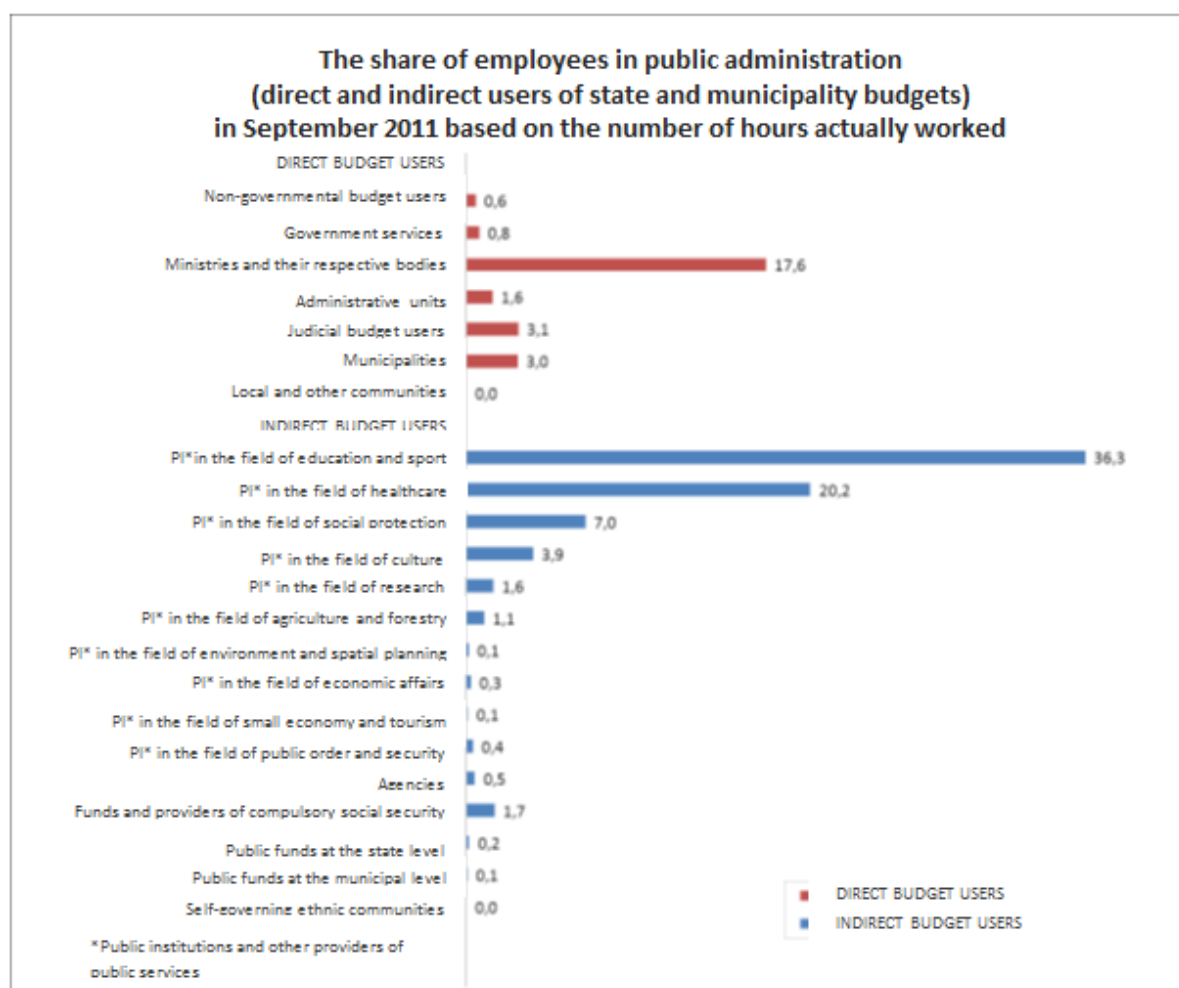
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<sup>7</sup> THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=199133&stevilka=1409>

publication of administrative acts, inspection and administrative supervision, supervision over the regularity of work in local community bodies, provision of public service implementation under the state jurisdiction, promotion of economic, social, cultural, ecological and general social development, preparation of laws and other regulations and acts, provision of administrative services to the government, implementation of professional and other services in the field of immovable property and other state assets under the government authority.

- 61 The **local self-government** indicates the right of co-deciding in the matters of local interest. The local self-government is autonomous entity in managing social matters at the local level protected with constitution and international treaties.
- 62 The term of **public economic services** covers the state and local community service activity, since it does not contain any authority function. This includes organised provision of goods and services, which the market system cannot provide and which are essential for the functioning of society. Generally speaking, this is a special legal system, which provides accessibility to each and every one under the same conditions, and, in some cases, the management duty. Forms of public utilities in Slovenia are public holding companies, local establishments, public companies, public economic societies, concessions, capital investments, public societies and societies with the public's right.
- 63 Public services are divided into state and local services and economic and non-economic ones. Economic public utilities provide material public goods in the field of energetics, waste and water economy, transport and connections. When it comes to the management of non-economic public utilities, such as health care and education, their social effects need to be taken into consideration, because the implementation and funding of its activities from the state budget provide at least the minimum level of their services to each citizen, regardless of their financial position.
- 64 In comparison to the number of the working age population, the share of employees in the public sector increased between 2009 and 2013 from 19.7% to 20.9%. In comparison to the total number of active population, the share of employees in the public sector increased from 20.9 to 22.9% (Source: MMC, 2015).
- 65 In 2012, Slovenia lagged behind the EU members in the share of persons in employment in public services, in particular, in general government, as well as systems of health care and social security. However, in education, Slovenia was above the EU average share of persons in employment by 0.5% and the EU average working hours by 1.1%. The latter is likely the outcome of fewer employments of reduced working hours (Čelebič, Kajzer, Zver, 2015).
- 66 The largest share of employees in the public sector works in basic schools. In the period from 2008 to 2013, their share decreased to 37.7% of all employees in education. The share of employees in upper secondary schools also decreased. However, the share of employees in kindergartens and in tertiary education increased to 23.3% and 23.2%, respectively. With the increase in births, the share of children attending kindergarten, which is above the EU average level, increased in the period of 2008 to 2013 and the share of employees increased accordingly. This subject is more closely covered in the following sections.

GRAPH 1.2 THE SHARE OF EMPLOYEES IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



Source: AJPES.

Methodological note: the number of employees is calculated on the basis of the number of hours actually worked and rounded to one decimal place; the number of employees is reported by legal persons, together with the rest of data about salaries paid for each month on the form 1-ZAP/M, in accordance with Instructions for content and means of disclosure of data about salaries paid in relation to legal persons for the needs of statistic research; these figures do not include: 1) employees on sick leave for more than 30 days or on maternity leave (refunded benefits), 2) employees included in public works and 3) posted workers.

- 67 Different governments were considering reforming the public administration on a small or large scale. A reform in the direction of new public management would bring user-orientation, transparency, management methods of work and competitive mechanism from the private to the public sector (Kovač, 2000, 281).
- 68 During its meeting of 29 April 2015, the government adopted the Development Strategy of Public Administration in the period from 2015 to 2020 period (Ministry of Public Administration, 2015) and approved the Development and Quality Policy of a Modern Public Administration. The operationalisation of key strategic objectives includes: effective organisation of public administration, improvement of the programme budget (efficient use of staff, financial, environmental and energy resources), introduction of project-based approach, flexible staff

management (management of human resources), improvement of skills and competences of public employees, rationalising government procurement, effective management of tangible assets, improvement of legislation, minimisation of regulatory burdens, as well as inclusion of key stakeholders (Ministry of Public Administration, 2015).

- 69 By intensified activities in the field of public management at all levels of authority, Slovenia strives to achieve long-term effects that will reflect in improved quality of public services, better business environment, and competitive economy. In order to meet the goals of improved quality and efficiency, the social agreement provides for the improvement of the quality and efficiency assurance systems, introduction of systematic staff management, mechanisms of well-defined duties and responsibilities as well as motivation criteria, competency model as well as well-defined criteria of career path and training, improved transparency of the government procurement system and funding and managing public institutions, rotation of public employees, setting up central administration for information technology and state tangible property, as well as efficient operations of inspection services, etc.
- 70 On the large scale of public administration, actions will be aimed at developing, adopting and establishing clear standards and norms of public services; setting up the network of public service providers, providing a stable and sustainable funding of the quality network of public services; defining the principle of public funding, status organisation and changes in the status, contractual position of the employees and their participation in the public society management and systemic possibilities/constraints in accessing the labour market, with regard to a possible reform of the Society Act (Source: Public sector).
- 71 In the case of education, the measures support the transfer of research results on the market, in companies and in the public sector and will be carried out “in such a way that will encourage the development of research organisations and the growth and development of companies with high added value and a further employment potential” (Source: Public sector).
- 72 The measures in the field of salaries were implemented by the Act Amending the Public Sector Salary System Act (ZSPJS<sup>8</sup>), the Implementation of the Republic of Slovenia Budget for 2013 and 2014 Act (ZIPRS13/14<sup>9</sup>) and the Implementation of the Republic of Slovenia Budget for 2014 and 2015 Act (ZIPRS14/15<sup>10</sup>). The following measures were taken: further linear reduction in salary grade by 0.5%, namely by through a compression of the salary scale, end of basic salary adjustments, closure of increased seniority bonus for public servants and high officials, reduction in specialist training bonuses, a master's degree or a doctorate, freeze of promotion to a higher pay grade and title or higher title, freeze of performance-related bonuses for regular work, as well as limited performance-related bonuses for increased workload.
- 73 To stabilise public finances, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the public sector's representative unions have signed the Agreement on measures in the field of salaries and other labour costs in the public sector aiming to balance public finances for the year 2016<sup>11</sup>, according to which the Act Regulating Measures Relating to Salaries and Other Labour Costs for 2016 and other Measures in the Public Sector (ZUPPJS16<sup>12</sup>) was adopted. The majority of measures, decided upon in this act, expired on 31 December 2016. The relaxation of all measures would

<sup>8</sup> **ZSPJS** <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=113380>

<sup>9</sup> **ZIPRS13/14** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6297>

<sup>10</sup> **ZIPRS14/15** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6666>

<sup>11</sup> **AGREEMENT** <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=120038>

<sup>12</sup> **ZUPPJS16** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO7303>

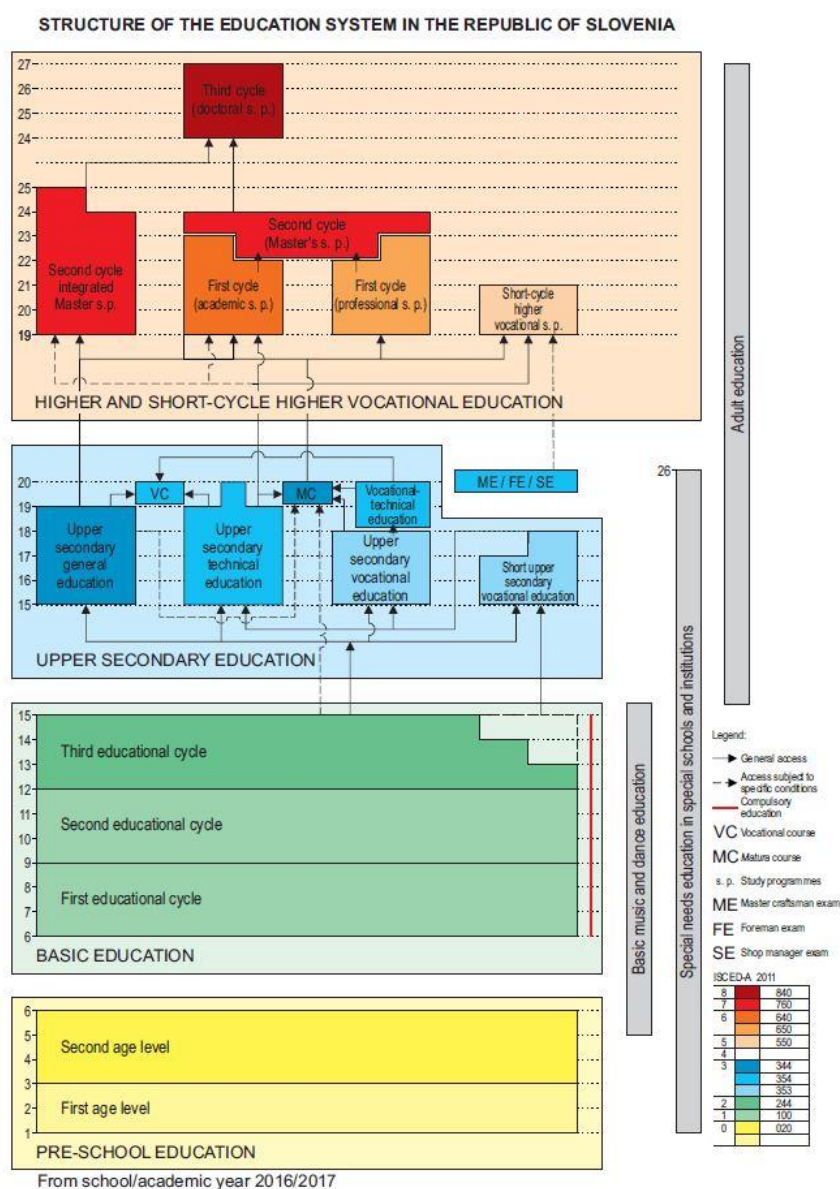
mean that the expenses of work in the public sector in 2017 would increase by €215 million. For reasons of public finances stated above it is the opinion of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia to keep the salaries and other cost of labour restricted temporarily in 2017, as well, namely by extending all measures specified by law (ZUPPJS16) and by specifying the delay in payment of the promotion of public employees and high officials in 2017.

- 74 The purpose of the draft Act Regulating Measures Relating to Salaries and Other Labour Costs for 2017 and other Measures in the Public Sector is to ensure and determine the basic salary adjustment, regular merit points and merit points due to increased workload, the amount of holiday allowance, the delay in payment of the promotion of public employees and high officials, wage compensation for absence from work due to illness or injury, restrictions on jubilee payments, possibility of a lower payment of collective additional pension insurance, termination of employment contracts on the fulfilment of conditions for a retirement pension, restriction on the number of days for paid annual leave, and restriction on signing contracts for copyrighted work and work contracts.
- 75 Concerning the government guidelines in the field of public sector, the Coalition Agreement for the 2014–2018 (*Koalicijski sporazum o sodelovanju v vladi Republike Slovenije za mandatno obdobje 2014–2018*) mandate highlights the needs, such to ensure suitable environment for public employees, set clear goals and performance criteria, ensure procedure optimisation with emphasis on transparency, the implementation of quality standards and procedure-based approach (Coalition Agreement, 2014).

## 2. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

### 2.1. ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

76 The levels of education in Slovenia are as follows: pre-school education (ISCED 0), basic education (ISCED 1–2), upper secondary education (ISCED 3) and tertiary education (ISCED 5–8) (Source: Eurydice, 2016). The system of **music and ballet lessons** is well developed and gives an additional chance to children and youngsters to develop their artistic talent. Adult education is also well developed.



Source: Eurydice.

- 77 **Pre-school education** consists of childcare—and child education and is optional. Public kindergartens are established and financed by the municipalities. **Pre-school education system is unified** and is open to children aged between 11 months and 6 years. From 11 months of age onwards, the child is legally entitled to a place in subsidised public pre-school education. The ministry responsible for pre-school education is the Ministry of Education.
- 78 Pre-school education is regulated by two key laws: Organization and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI<sup>13</sup>) and Kindergarten Act (ZVrt<sup>14</sup>). They stipulate the conditions for establishing, organising and operating kindergartens. All public kindergarten and kindergartens with concession are required to follow the principles, objectives and guidelines of the National Kindergarten Curriculum<sup>15</sup> (1999). Kindergartens are also required to follow the norms on the number of children (Rules on standards to conduct pre-school education activities<sup>16</sup>) and regulations on spatial planning, which is important for the health and safety of children (Rules on norms and minimal technical conditions for kindergarten premises and equipment<sup>17</sup>). According to data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, there were 978 **kindergartens** in the 2015/2016 school year (SURS, Kindergartens, 2015). The majority of kindergartens are public (91%) and only 89 kindergartens or 9% of all kindergartens are private.
- 79 Compulsory **basic education** is organized in a **single-structure nine-year basic school** attended by pupils aged 6 to 15 years. The children can enrol in the 1st grade of basic school in the year they reach the age of 6. Compulsory education lasts 9 years. Public basic schools are established and financed by the municipalities. Basic education is financed from municipal and state budget. The ministry responsible for basic education is the Ministry of Education Science and Sport. There are around 450 basic schools in Slovenia without their branches (Public Institution Records, 2016). At the beginning of the 2015/2016 school year, regular basic education was implemented in 777 basic schools and their branches, while the specialised programme was implemented in 57 basic schools and their branches. There are 5 private schools that implement the officially recognised education programme (Pre-school and Basic Education Directorate, MIZŠ, 2016). At the beginning of the 2015/2016 school year, more than 172,000 children were enrolled in basic education (SURS, Basic school, 2015), around 2,000 of which were enrolled in a specialised programme (SURS, Youth, 2014).
- 80 **Several laws** represent the legal framework. The conditions for providing basic education and the management and funding arrangement are regulated by the Organization and Financing of Education Act (1996; last amendment in 2015). The Basic School Act (ZOsn<sup>18</sup>) defines general basic education objectives, gives the parents the right to choose the educational method for their child, prescribes components and the scope of compulsory and extended basic school education programme, regulates enrolments, rights and responsibilities of pupils, basic assessment and testing rules, conditions for pupils progression to the next year and the reporting on end-of year results. The act also regulates the basic education of SEN children, the rights of migrant children, home schooling and adult basic education. The act enables the Minister to devise detailed rules, instructions, and guidelines for specific areas. The special School Meals Act (ZŠolPre-1<sup>19</sup>) regulates organisation and quality of meals, duties of schools to educate pupils to

<sup>13</sup> **ZOFVI** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO445>

<sup>14</sup> **ZVrt** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO447>

<sup>15</sup> **Curriculum** [http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/vrtci/pdf/vrtci\\_kur.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/vrtci/pdf/vrtci_kur.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> **Rules** <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=117119>

<sup>17</sup> **Rules** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV3140>

<sup>18</sup> **ZOsn** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO448>

<sup>19</sup> **ZŠolPre-1** <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=111596>

eat healthy food, and subsidised meals. Subsidised meals are linked to the Exercise of Rights from Public Funds Act (ZUPJS<sup>20</sup>).

- 81 **Upper-secondary education** takes two to five years. The upper-secondary education welcomes generations of 15-year olds, as a rule. There are vocational, technical and *gimnazija* education programmes. The system of upper-secondary education is centralised; decisions on founding and financing of upper-secondary schools, and approving and allocating education programmes are adopted at the national level.
- 82 The upper-secondary education encompasses general education, i.e. different types of *gimnazija* programmes and the *matura* course, and vocational and technical education. Upper secondary education is implemented by upper secondary schools. There were 111 public upper secondary schools, 6 private upper secondary schools and 6 institutions for youth with special needs. The schools may be specialised in the provision of a single programme type (i.e. *gimnazija*) or provide several types of programmes that cater for wider education interests in a certain geographical area. This is why vocational and technical schools offer all types of programmes, ranging from short upper secondary vocational programmes to upper secondary technical programmes.
- 83 Upper secondary education is regulated by the **following legislation**:
- Organization and Financing of Education Act regulates the performance of educational activity and stipulates the management and funding arrangements;
  - Gimnazije Act (ZGim<sup>21</sup>) regulates education in general and technical *gimnazija* programmes, which allow the students to continue their education at universities;
  - Vocational Education Act (ZPSI<sup>22</sup>) regulates short upper secondary vocational education, upper secondary vocational education, upper secondary technical education and training;
  - Matura Examination Act (ZMat<sup>23</sup>) regulates the completion of education in upper secondary general education and upper secondary technical education. It specifies the content of the general *matura* and vocational *matura*, composition and competencies of the *matura* bodies, and procedure for the completion of *matura*;
  - Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (ZUOPP-1<sup>24</sup>) governs the guidance of children and youth with special educational needs within the education process and lays down the manner and form of education provision;
  - Act Regulating Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Communities in the Field of Education (ZPIMVI<sup>25</sup>) specifies the implementation of special rights of the indigenous Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities;
  - School Meals Act specifies the organisation and subsidizing of school nutrition.
- 84 The **overall changes in the education system** were made in the 90's. Slovenia's independence in 1991 and the transition to a new constitutional and political system were related to the public services reform, which included the educational system. Conceptual changes in the education system, the general principles and theoretical baseline were presented in the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia (1995), which provided the basis for the legislation in education. Curricular reform was extensive and introduced several changes in the field of

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<sup>20</sup> ZUPJS <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4780>

<sup>21</sup> ZGim <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=20071&stevilka=2>

<sup>22</sup> ZPSI <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4325>

<sup>23</sup> ZMat <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?stevilka=3&urlid=20071>

<sup>24</sup> ZUOPP <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=201158&stevilka=2714>

<sup>25</sup> ZPIMVI <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO2611>

organisation, objectives, content, planning, the implementation of educational process, the role of the teacher and the child/pupil/secondary school student/tertiary education student. Curricular reform covered pre-school education, basic education, upper secondary education and adult education.

- 85 In 2011, a new White Paper on Education was presented. Its objective was a systemic reflection on the structure and functioning of education (White Paper, 2011). Between 2008 and 2011, the subject curricula of compulsory subjects in basic school were modernised. The modernisation was linked to the development of key competences, the so-called ~~the~~ competency approach (Eurydice, 2016).
- 86 After this period, certain major reforms followed in individual segments of the educational system. In January 2016, the Slovenian Qualifications Framework Act (ZSOK<sup>26</sup>) entered into force, which stipulates uniform qualification system as the Slovenian qualifications framework. One of the most important changes in the last years was the Implementation of International Education Programmes Act (ZIMPVI<sup>27</sup>), adopted in June 2016, which stipulates the conditions on the implementation of international programmes, provided in foreign language, and do not holding public validity in accordance with the law regulating the organisation and functioning of education. In the period from 2016 to 2021, a reform of vocational education is planned to take place. The emphasis will be on developing and apprenticeship model that will be adapted to the conditions and needs in Slovenia and carried out in close cooperation with social partners. An act on apprenticeship should ensure an easier and faster transition towards employment for upper secondary students, allow the employers to train their future staff (through mentorships) and thus strengthen links between educational system and economy.
- 87 The key moments of education development in Slovenia can be summarised by listing the following important documents:
- Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2011–2020<sup>28</sup>
  - Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia for 2013–2020<sup>29</sup>
  - Resolution on the National Research and Development Programme 2011–2020<sup>30</sup>
  - Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2014–2018<sup>31</sup>
  - Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022<sup>32</sup>
  - Resolution on the National Programme of Sport of the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2023<sup>33</sup>
  - Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2020<sup>34</sup>
  - Resolution on the National Programme on Nutrition and Physical Activity for Health 2015–2025<sup>35</sup>
  - National Strategy for Roma Integration<sup>36</sup>

<sup>26</sup> **ZSOK** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6958>

<sup>27</sup> **ZPIMVI** <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=127088>

<sup>28</sup> **NPVŠ** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO71>.

<sup>29</sup> **ReNPIO** [http://arhiv.acs.si/dokumenti/ReNPIO\\_2013%E2%80%932020.pdf](http://arhiv.acs.si/dokumenti/ReNPIO_2013%E2%80%932020.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> **ReRISS** <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=103975>.

<sup>31</sup> **ReNPJP** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO91>.

<sup>32</sup> **ReNPM** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO93>.

<sup>33</sup> **ReNPŠ** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO99>.

<sup>34</sup> **ReNPMEŽM** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO108>.

<sup>35</sup> **ReNPPTDZ** [http://www.mz.gov.si/fileadmin/mz.gov.si/pageuploads/javna\\_razprava\\_2015/Resolucija\\_o\\_nac\\_programu\\_prehrane\\_in\\_in\\_tel\\_dejavnosti\\_jan\\_2015.pdf](http://www.mz.gov.si/fileadmin/mz.gov.si/pageuploads/javna_razprava_2015/Resolucija_o_nac_programu_prehrane_in_in_tel_dejavnosti_jan_2015.pdf).

- Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Slovenia<sup>37</sup>

## 2.2. EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- 88 The role of education in Slovenian society is best demonstrated by the importance of formal education in employment: collective agreement is tied to formal education and the difference in employment is based on the level of education. Recognition of informally acquired skills is becoming gradually acknowledged, especially in individual sectors according to the needs of the labour market (National Vocational Qualifications), but less so in the formal education system. Access to tertiary education is only possible by way of formal path: with completed *matura* and final examination, the only exception being art academies. Teachers are public employees and are bound by collective agreement on educational activity in the Republic of Slovenia.
- 89 Slovenian educational system is relatively centralised, regulated by several regulations (laws, regulations and rules) and extensively documented at the level of educational institutions. As a rule, the standards and norms are laid down by national bodies and applied at the national level.
- 90 Educational policy that is based on a “culture of trust”, of which **pedagogical autonomy** forms a part (improving teacher autonomy), was constituted by law in Slovenia with a major reform in 1996 (Eurydice, 2008). Programmes and subject curricula are adopted by the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education<sup>38</sup>. The programme includes conceptual and process knowledge, pupil activities, content suggestion, didactic recommendations and compulsory cross-curricular links. It can also feature the assessment standards of learning objectives. Teachers can concretise the contents at their own discretion, because the curriculum only provides the general framework. This change of teacher responsibility regarding curriculum implementation was adopted together with the new school legislation in 1996. Although teachers cannot always decide on the content or education objectives, they can autonomously plan the activities in the framework of annual work programme (often together with the teachers teaching the same subject) and arrange the learning themes by days or weeks (Eurydice, 2008, 19).
- 91 “Authentic tasks, which represent a learning challenge and boost inner motivation, are in the centre of education in today's school. The role of the teacher shifted from being the only source of information to being a guide, advisor, facilitator, tutor, listener, moderator, and organiser. The teacher is not just an expert in a certain field, but also an observer who has a lot of knowledge on mutual relations in order to adjust the learning process to children's capacities, needs and interests.” While using active methods, teachers must be attentive these do not become an aim in themselves. The teacher has to carefully choose and link the methods/strategies (and create a learning environment) that will lead to the desired objectives (educational and functional ones) (Kendl, 2010, 105).
- 92 Regarding the culture of evaluation and responsibility, a mandatory self-evaluation was introduced in kindergartens and schools in 2008 (see Organization and Financing of Education Act) (upper secondary vocational schools introduced it beforehand) and the lawfulness of

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<sup>36</sup> NSVR [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/slovenia/national-strategy/national\\_sl.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/slovenia/national-strategy/national_sl.htm)

<sup>37</sup> SVZU [http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/razvoj\\_solstva/IU2010/Strategija\\_VZU.pdf](http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/razvoj_solstva/IU2010/Strategija_VZU.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> COUNCIL OF

EXPERTS [http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna\\_podrocja/urad\\_z\\_razvoj\\_izobrazevanja/strokovni\\_sveti/strokovni\\_svet\\_rs\\_z\\_a\\_splosno\\_izobrazevanje/](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/urad_z_razvoj_izobrazevanja/strokovni_sveti/strokovni_svet_rs_z_a_splosno_izobrazevanje/)

institution was inspected. The field of self-evaluation is under autonomous assessment of the institution (the head master) and its structure and quality indicators are not prescribed. The head master is responsible for determining the quality by carrying out self-evaluation and preparing an annual report on self-evaluation. Reports on self-evaluation can be published on the kindergarten or school website, but it is not mandatory. As the education leader and manager, the head master is responsible for monitoring the work of teachers (see Organization and Financing of Education Act). The head master thus directs the work of kindergarten, school and university board, he/she encourages professional education and training of professional staff, takes part in the educational work of pre-school and school teachers, monitors their work and advises them. At the national level, it is not allowed to rank the national examination results and *matura* results of individual schools. However, schools may make public their results in their own reports.

- 93 According to data from the OECD for 2013, **parental spending on children's education** from pre-school education to upper secondary education (defined as private spending on education referring to expenditure funded by private sources which are households and other private entities) was at 3.7% of GDP, putting Slovenia in the middle of the OECD rankings. Private spending on tertiary education amounted to 0.2% and is among the lowest in the OECD countries. There are no data on **private tutoring** in Slovenia (OECD, Spending, 2016).
- 94 Concerning **media coverage of educational themes**, the public relations service of Ministry of Education believes that the Slovenian media have an important influence on the public perception of education, especially from the point of view of giving priority and attributing significance to certain topics. With the development of social networks, the stakeholders following closely the field of education can be addressed directly to a greater degree. However, according to our estimation, the general public still obtains the majority of information and opinions from the media and thus adopts the media perception towards education.

## 2.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND ITS STAKEHOLDERS

- 95 Objectives and aims of the educational system are specified in the Organization and Financing of Education Act and include the following: providing the optimal development of the individual, irrespective of gender, social background or cultural identity, religion, racial, ethnic or national origin, and regardless of their physical and mental constitution or disability; educating for mutual tolerance; developing awareness of gender equality, respect for human diversity and mutual cooperation, respect for children's and human rights and fundamental freedoms; developing equal opportunities for both genders; and, thereby, developing the skills needed to live in a democratic society; developing linguistic skills and raising awareness of the Slovenian language as the official language of the Republic of Slovenia; in areas defined as ethnically mixed, fostering and developing along the Slovenian language the Italian and Hungarian languages, as well. Among other objectives is ensuring quality provision of education at all levels, promoting awareness of the individual's integrity, raising awareness of citizenship and national identity and broadening the knowledge of Slovenia's history and its culture.
- 96 There is an emphasis on enabling inclusion in European integration processes, providing equal educational opportunities to children from less favourable social environments and to SEN children, youth and adults.

- 97 Educating for sustainable development and active participation in a democratic society is also one of the objectives of the Slovenian educational system and includes a deep understanding of and a responsible attitude to oneself, one's health and other people, one's own and other cultures, the natural and social environment and future generations. Other objectives are promoting lifelong learning and allowing as many people as possible to develop and achieve the highest possible level of creativity.
- 98 In accordance with the democratic process, the **current political priorities** are presented in the Coalition Agreement (see Section 1.2). The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport ~~thus~~ aims to ensure an accessible and quality education and an improvement of basic student skills. The Ministry will continue to plan forms of flexible learning and provide support to quality career guidance for the young people in school at all levels of the educational system. It will direct its attention to the modernisation of the vocational education and training system, as well as the developments in line with the reintroduction of the system of apprenticeship. It will set up a model of comprehensive support to schools in the process of integrating children with special needs, as well as the model of social inclusion of children and young people with special needs to approach the labour market. It shall ensure the continuity and upgrading of the project of successful integration of Roma children in education, by pursuing activities of Roma assistants and promoting the operations of Roma incubators as well. Other priority fields include: developing a culture of quality and a supporting environment for the implementation of self-evaluation, monitoring student academic achievements by way of international researches and studies, renewing the role of national examinations, introducing national examinations to grade 3, introducing a sustainable model of textbook fund, developing an educational model of entrepreneurship, integration of migrant and refugee children (the children of asylum seekers or children claiming international protection and children under international protection) and developing education of Slovenian as a foreign language, renewing the educational model of second foreign language in basic schools, a greater role of school libraries in educational system in order to support the educational process, renewing the concept of after-school care, computerising the public school management, arranging the funding of private basic schools and others.
- 99 The Kindergarten Curriculum does not specify **knowledge levels and skills** that children are required to attain in individual developmental stages. Children's products are not assessed. Pre-school teachers observe, analyse and direct child's learning through play. They encourage children to learn, guide them and motivate, explain and clarify issues. They orally convey information on child's performance to parents.
- 100 The individual subject curriculum in basic school includes minimum standards that are required to achieve. Teachers assess pupils throughout the period when the subject is taught. In years one and two, teachers assess pupils' progress in verbal form as descriptive grading. From year three onwards, teachers assess how well pupils meet knowledge standards in accordance with the prescribed curriculum with numerical grades on a scale from 1 to 5, whereby 1 is a negative grade and all others are positive grades. Pupils from year one to year six progress from one year to another automatically. Pupils in years seven and eight may progress to the next year if they are awarded positive grades in all subjects at the end of the school year. The pupil who successfully completes year nine is issued a final certificate which includes final numerical grades in all subjects, pupil's results in the national assessment expressed in percentage points, and a declaration that the pupil fulfilled the requirements of the basic school. A successful completion of the basic school is a prerequisite for enrolment in a short upper secondary vocational, an upper secondary technical education or a *gimnazija* programme.

101 In **upper secondary general education**, teachers assess the knowledge of all subjects in the syllabi and compulsory optional content. In **short upper secondary vocational education, upper secondary vocational education and upper secondary technical education**, teachers assess the knowledge of all subjects and technical modules of the syllabi and of extra-curricular activities. Knowledge of practical lessons is assessed by employers and the results reported to the school. By assessment teachers ensure that learning objectives are being met. The knowledge assessment criteria are brought into line by the school's expert working groups on the basis of subject-curricula and catalogues of knowledge. The assessment grades are numerical (from 1 to 5) and descriptive ("pass"/"fail"). Students advance to a higher year if they receive positive grades in all subjects and fulfil all requirements. Students finish their upper secondary general education with the general *matura* and receive a certificate of general *matura* "*Spričevalo o splošni maturi*". In the upper secondary technical education, students take the vocational *matura* at the end of the programme. Students who pass the vocational *matura* receive the certificate of vocational *matura* "*Spričevalo o poklicni maturi*". Students in upper secondary vocational and short upper secondary vocational education end their studies by taking a final examination. Successful students receive a school leaving certificate "*Spričevalo o zaključnem izpitu*".

## 2.4. RESPONSIBILITY DISTRIBUTION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

102 Regarding **the governance of public institutions**, the **state** serves as the regulator, founder, main funding source and supervisor. As the owner, the state manages the institutes in terms of ownership and structure through direct administrative regulations. It also participates in the process of appointing the head master through its representatives (gives its opinion) and serves as the overall supervisor. The state also serves as the founder of public upper secondary schools, higher educational institutions, educational institutions for SEN children and residence halls for upper secondary and university students. In addition professional institutes in education are founded and financed by the state.

103 In public institutions, founded by municipalities, the state holds the role of a regulator and supervisor. It exercises its authority through financial mechanisms such as a system of balancing out municipality budgets and providing funds for salaries. Since public institutions have no assets of its own and only serve as the asset managing properties of the founder, the founder is responsible for investments and development. The state and municipalities (with financial support from the state) provide development and investment.

104 Laws, regulations and national programmes are adopted by the National Assembly. Government regulations are adopted by the Government or by the competent ministry. Since 2012, one ministry is responsible for preparing, monitoring, analysing and implementing regulations: the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (ISCED 1–6). However, regulating social situation of children and their families, pupils, upper secondary students and higher education students falls under the responsibility of Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The said ministry is also involved in regulating vocational education. Ministry of Finance regulates public accounting and manages the budget, whereas the Ministry of Public Administration manages public procurement. In certain fields (such as army, internal affairs, public administration) or in certain common matters (health care, culture) ministries work together.

105 Expert, technical and administrative tasks related to the implementation of the EU education and training and study mobility are the responsibility of the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for

Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS). In order to carry out different tasks (preparation of technical base for taking decisions in matters under the responsibility of scientific councils and the Ministry, development, introduction, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, development research work on education, counselling on education, implementation of guidance for SEN children, implementation of external assessment, school and extracurricular activities, implementation of museum activity in the field of education and sport) in accordance with Article 28 of the Organization and Financing of Education Act the following institutions were founded: National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (ZRSŠ<sup>39</sup>), National Examinations Centre (RIC<sup>40</sup>), Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI<sup>41</sup>), Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (ACS<sup>42</sup>), National School of Leadership in Education (ŠR), Centre for School and Outdoor Education (ČŠOD), and CMEPIUS.

106 The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has the authority over pre-school education, basic education, music education, upper secondary and short-cycle higher education, higher education, adult education, as well as science and sport. To manage education policy, develop regulations and national programmes the Ministry relies on the support of governmental consultative bodies<sup>43</sup>:

- Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education;
- Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Professional Education;
- Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education;
- Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education (it addresses matters of higher vocational education to a certain extent).

107 School inspection, provided by the **Inspectorate for Education and Sport**, does not carry out regular professional supervision (only in exceptional cases) and does not have an advisory role. It is limited to inspection over the implementation of regulations. Supervision over the implementation of short-cycle higher education student rights during their vocational training is carried out by the Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia. Professional supervision, quality monitoring and counselling is shared by the institutions themselves (as mentioned before, by regular self-evaluation) and by public development institutions that offer support and advice. These are the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (ZRSŠ), Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) and Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (ACS).

108 In managing education policy, preparation of regulation and national programmes, the Ministry is assisted by **governmental consultative bodies**:

- Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education<sup>44</sup>;
- Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Science and Technology<sup>45</sup>;
- Council for Student Questions;

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.zrss.si/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.ric.si/>,

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.cpi.si/>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.acs.si/>

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna\\_podrocja/urad\\_za\\_razvoj\\_izobrazevanja/strokovni\\_sveti/](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/urad_za_razvoj_izobrazevanja/strokovni_sveti/)

<sup>44</sup> COUNCIL [http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna\\_podrocja/direktorat\\_za\\_visoko\\_solstvo/sektor\\_za\\_visoko\\_solstvo/svet\\_rs\\_za\\_visoko\\_solstvo/](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/direktorat_za_visoko_solstvo/sektor_za_visoko_solstvo/svet_rs_za_visoko_solstvo/)

<sup>45</sup> COUNCIL [http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna\\_podrocja/direktorat\\_za\\_znanost/sektor\\_za\\_znanost/svet\\_za\\_znanost\\_in\\_tehnologijo\\_rs/](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/direktorat_za_znanost/sektor_za_znanost/svet_za_znanost_in_tehnologijo_rs/)

- Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Professional Education.

109 Managing at the local level is the responsibility of municipalities:

- Establishing **public kindergartens, basic schools, music schools and residence halls for pupils**;
- Determining programme operators of basic education, music education and education programme in residence halls for students;
- Granting concessions for performing public service to private providers;
- Establishing, funding and adopting annual programme of adult education organisations.

110 In accordance with national regulations, municipalities also provide funding for:

- Premises, equipment and maintenance of basic and music schools;
- Above-standard activities offered by basic schools;
- Investments in basic schools, music schools and adult education organisations as well as in ethnic community education;
- Transportation costs for pupils.

111 Decision-making powers on education-related issues that are under the authority of municipalities rest with municipality councils, mayors and other local community bodies. In terms of the direct management of kindergartens and schools, municipalities are involved through their representatives on kindergarten and school boards.

112 The **governance body** at the institutional level of public kindergartens, basic and upper secondary schools is the council and the head master. Kindergarten and basic school councils are composed of representatives of the founder, employees and parents, while councils of upper secondary schools also include representatives of students. The founder – municipality or state – participates in the governance of kindergartens and schools through representatives appointed to the council and directly in administrative procedures. Among other responsibilities, the council of a public kindergarten or school appoints and relieves from office head masters, adopts the development plan, annual work plan and implementation report thereof. Public kindergartens, basic and upper secondary schools also establish a council of parents. It appoints its representatives to the council.

113 The regulation, that apply to public institutions apply for the state-funded **private educational institutions**, as well. Private kindergartens are entitled to state funds if they meet the statutory requirements required for the programme, children, rooms and facilities, and accessibility for all children, as well as educational qualification of staff. The criteria for acquiring the licence to operate and its type depend on the programme they wish to offer. They may receive concession for the provision of the officially recognised education programme, they may provide internationally recognised programmes according to special pedagogical principles (Steiner, Montessori) or they implement their own programme. In the last case, they are required to obtain a favourable opinion from the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education.

114 **Private basic schools** may specify their own education programme, but it has to include several compulsory subjects set by law (Slovenian and/or Italian or Hungarian, mathematics, first foreign language, history, citizenship culture and ethics, sports, at least one natural science, one social science and one arts-related subject). Their programme should allow the pupils to achieve educational standards that are at least equal to those of public basic schools. The requirement of compulsory subjects does not apply to the programmes of private basic schools that are based

on special pedagogical principles (Steiner, Montessori). However, these schools must also meet the educational standards that will allow their pupils to graduate from basic school. Private basic schools, in general, receive 85% of their total budget from public funds.

- 115 **Gimnazije with private programme** must receive a favourable opinion by the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education that reviews the proposed programme and certifies that the programme meets the standards that apply to officially recognised programmes, or the approval by the minister of education. Private *gimnazije* are state funded between 85% to 100%. There are no upper secondary vocational or technical schools registered as private schools.
- 116 In accordance with the Organization and Financing of Education Act, Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education specifies **the syllabus and subject curriculum** or subject field curriculum of basic schools and music schools and specifies the syllabus and knowledge catalogues of the general upper secondary schools (*gimnazijegimnazije*) and the *matura* exam. Managing the programmes of upper secondary technical education programmes is the responsibility of the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training and in part (general education subjects) of the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. The programmes have to comply with common reference levels specified by the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Technical and Vocational Education with consent of the Minister of education.
- 117 To **found and close a school** is specified by the Decree on criteria for setting up a public network of basic schools, a public network of basic schools and educational institutions for children and youth with special needs, and a public network of music schools.<sup>46</sup> Public basic schools are part of the public network of basic schools. This network ensures that all children attend the closest school to their home. The criteria for setting up the network are determined by the Government.
- 118 The Rules on the School Calendar for Basic Schools<sup>47</sup> specify **the distribution of lessons and holidays and examination dates**. Furthermore, the Minister of education announces the instructions in more detail for separate school years. The school year begins on 1 September and ends on 31 August. Lessons take place until 24 June (38 weeks). For pupils in grade 9, lessons end on 15 June.
- 119 The **class size** is determined by the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic school education programme<sup>48</sup>. There may be no more than 28 students in a single class. If the minister consents, the number of students specified for a single class may be increased by two additional students. For classes in bilingual schools (Slovenian/Hungarian) and schools with Italian medium of instruction, for classes that include SEN pupils with special needs or Roma students, as well as for multigrade classes, lower quotas apply.
- 120 **Grouping of participants and strategies to support children with learning difficulties** are the responsibility of the institution. Counselling service in kindergartens and schools assists the children, pupils, upper secondary students, teaching staff, management staff and parents (Eurydice, 2016). Counsellors provide them with support in everyday life, work, learning and teaching. They help create the school culture, education, school climate and order. They offer advice with physical, personal and social development, schooling, and professional orientation,

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<sup>46</sup> **DECREE** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=URED926>

<sup>47</sup> **RULES** <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=201250&stevilka=2116>

<sup>48</sup> **RULES** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV7973>

welcoming children in the kindergarten or school and transition from kindergarten to school. Counselling service helps create and implement the strategies for helping students with learning difficulties.

In the case of SEN students, the National Education Institute of the Republic of applies the provisions of the Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (adopted in 2011 abd in force since 1st September 2013). "Placement of Children with special Needs Act in 2011 (in force since 1st of September 2013).

121to programmes. The Institute is also involved in the education of professional staff in kindergartens and schools and in the introduction of changes to the education of SEN children. Kindergartens, basic schools and upper secondary schools are required to ensure proper facilities and settings for education of SEN children: to adapt the organisation and the method of the programme implementation and to provide additional professional assistance. They may also adapt methods of knowledge assessment, progression and instruction time of classes. These conditions are determined in the decision on the placement of the SEN children that is issued by the National Education Institute.

122 **School management staff organisation** is the responsibility of the institution. The head master assumes the responsibilities of a pedagogical leader as well as the managing director. Among other things, the head master is responsible for:

- Organising, planning and managing the work at the kindergarten or school;
- Drafting the development programme of the kindergarten or school;
- Drafting the annual work plan and overseeing its implementation;
- Deciding, as the second-instance body, on appeals regarding the status of apprentices, pupils, students and adults (depending on the institution in question) as well as on appeals regarding the rights, obligations and responsibilities of employees;
- Overseeing the work of teaching staff in kindergartens and schools and the work of lecturers;
- Preparing the proposal of above-standard programmes;
- Promoting the professional development of education staff and deciding on the promotion of employees to higher salary grades;
- Organising mentoring for apprentices;
- Attending the educational process, monitoring the work of the teaching staff and advising them;
- Proposing professional staff for higher professional titles;
- Deciding on promotion of staff in higher salary grades;
- Supervising the work of counselling services;
- Ensuring parent cooperation (parent meetings, office hours and other forms of cooperation);
- Informing parents about the work of the kindergarten or school and amendments to rights and obligations of pupils, apprentices and upper secondary students;
- Encouraging and overseeing the work of communities of pupils, apprentices, upper secondary students and short-cycle higher education students;
- Deciding on corrective measures;
- Ensuring the implementation of decisions adopted by the State authorities;
- Representing the kindergarten or school and overseeing the lawfulness of work;

- Determining the systematisation of posts;
- Deciding on the establishment of employment relationships and the disciplinary accountability of employees;
- Overseeing the cooperation with school health service;
- Ensuring and determining quality through self-evaluation and an annual report on the self-evaluation of the school or kindergarten, and
- Carrying out other tasks in accordance with the law and other regulations.

123 In public institutions, the kindergarten or school council appoints the head master. Before deciding on the choice of the candidate for the head master, the Council obtains the opinion of the teaching staff, the local community, the parents council, and the opinion of students (if applicable) for all candidates who fulfil the requirements. The Minister also gives an opinion of the chosen candidate prior to his or her appointment.

124 **Financial governance and management** are arranged in such a way that the head master prepares programs and financial plans within the framework set by regulations. The head master plans, organizes, and manages the work of the kindergarten or school and is responsible for the use of money in accordance with the purpose and following the very detailed regulations. The level of funding for salaries is determined on the basis of job classifications and the number of occupied positions in a school; they must comply with relevant regulations. The head masters make decisions that have financial implications, such as job classification, promotion of the teaching staff, and classifying personnel in wage brackets. Criteria for the systemisation of jobs and the rules for staff promotion are required. The head masters of upper secondary schools are financed according to the number of students and have slightly more autonomy in spending the money.

125 The head master of a kindergarten, basic school and upper secondary school receives money intended for salaries of the employees and material costs from the state budget. The head master is free to allocate other resources (e.g. grants, kindergarten or school fund, funds received by renting rooms) at his or her own discretion, but not for salaries. In principle, management of real estate is in the jurisdiction of the founder (the municipality), but in practice the head masters are free to dispose with school/kindergarten premises – they can rent them to interested parties (e.g. renting the classrooms and the gym in the afternoon or in the evening). Nevertheless, some municipalities deprived the head masters of this possibility.

126 **Pre-school programmes** are funded by municipalities, parent payments and other sources. The programme financial structure is developed by the kindergarten and approved by the Municipality Council. The kindergarten submits a financing request to the municipality every month for the reimbursement of expenses. The municipality partly funds the programme costs and provides funds for investments, equipment and maintenance.

127 The scope of funding allocated to **basic schools** is calculated on the basis of criteria from the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic education programme. The rules are adopted by the Minister in accordance with the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education and unions. Norms and standards include teaching duty of pedagogical staff, criteria for setting up counselling service, library, administrative, accounting and technical service and criteria for class and group forming. The state provides funding for material costs of the programme, namely for teaching aids, trips, and care for children with special needs, and developmental and other supporting activities, such as research, development, information and experimental activities in schools; in-service training for teachers, ICT and other means of instruction, international activities, functioning of school libraries, textbook and literature

subsidies, meals subsidies, pupils' competitions and work with talented pupils, out-of-school activities, Roma children education, Slovenian language lessons and mother tongue lessons for foreigners in basic schools, research and innovative activities by pupils, transportation of pupils and care for children who need transport due to wildlife threats on their route to school. Municipalities provide funding for basic schools' capital investments, pay maintenance costs and material costs for buildings and equipment, for the so-called above-standard programme, and transportation and care for children who need transport. The above-standard programme can also include the presence of the second teacher at all lessons, additional sports classes, a foreign language from year one, and similar. Kindergartens and schools can apply for funding for above-standard programmes at national competitions and by participating in national projects.

128 **Upper secondary education** is funded by state, contributions from industrial associations and chambers, direct contributions from employers for the provision of on-the-job lessons, student fees, student fees in private schools, from the proceeds from sales of services and products, from donations, sponsorships and other sources. The government provides funding for salaries of staff employed in upper secondary schools, for material costs, for buildings and grounds, their maintenance and renovation, and equipment. Funding is regulated by national regulations, such as relevant laws; the methodology to determine the level of funding per student, and the relevant collective agreement. The government also provides funding for supporting and developmental activities, such as pension and disability insurance for apprentices and students, continuous professional development of educational staff, operations of school libraries, student competitions and work with talented students, research and innovative activity by students, student transportation and school meals etc.

## 2.5. MARKET MECHANISMS IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

129 There are no private educational institutions for children and youth in Slovenia that implement officially recognised programmes and receive full funding from private sources. An exception is private schools and kindergartens providing foreign programmes, which are not publically alid. These providers are registered in the kindergarten and school register, however, they are not eligible for co-funding. On 15 July 2016, the Implementation of International Education Programmes Act (Uradni list RS, official gazette No. 46/2016), entered into force, which grants private kindergartens and schools offering international programmes in foreign language in Slovenia the legal basis to be included in the register at the Ministry of Education. Despite their registration, these kindergartens and school are not part of the Slovenian educational system, they are not subject to any sectoral legislation on education and are thus not eligible to public funds (Ministry of Education, Register, 2016). In the field of **pre-school education**, all public kindergartens, including private kindergartens with concession, pursue the Kindergarten curriculum. Parents can enrol their children in private kindergartens that implement the internationally recognised pre-school programmes according to special pedagogical principles (Steiner, Montessori) or implement their own programmes. These are required to obtain a favourable opinion from the Council of Experts for General Education of the Republic of Slovenia. Slovenia has set up a wide and accessible network of kindergartens. Its legislation stipulates that the public kindergarten network is required to be organised in such a way that it offers accessibility and choice of pre-school programme to parents and children. In the case when there is no kindergarten with public programme in the municipality or there are no vacant places and there is enough interest to fill at least one unit, the municipality is required to start the

procedure to ensure additional places in a public kindergarten or open invitation to tender for concession. In certain towns the offer of kindergarten places doesn't meet the demand, especially for young children (age group from 1 to 3 years). The majority of children (95%) attend public kindergartens (SURS, Kindergarten inclusion, 2016). Private kindergartens are funded by the municipalities. They are funded 85% of the public kindergarten programme price, which is reduced by the amount that parents would pay for public kindergarten programme. In school year 2015/2016, 978 kindergartens and their units offer pre-school education programmes. The majority of them, 91%, are public, while 89 or 9% of all kindergartens are private (from which 33 with concession) (SURS, SURS Database, 2016).

130 In the field of **basic education**, all public schools offer the same basic education programme. Parents enrol their child in the district where the child lives. They can transfer the child to another school if that school agrees with the transfer. Private basic schools determine their own programme, which has to feature the prescribed mandatory subjects. Programmes based on special pedagogical principles (Steiner, Montessori) only have to ensure the achievement of minimal knowledge, required for a successful completion of basic schooling. Private basic schools are part of the educational system which allows the parents to choose their child's education in accordance with their worldviews. However, there is a safeguard that prevents the founding of a private school in a certain district should it compromise the existence of public schools in that district. Almost all pupils attend public schools (99.3%) (SURS, SURS Database, 2016). Private basic schools are state-funded at 85% of sources the state and municipalities provide for the implementation of the public programme.

131 Different programmes are available in **upper secondary education** (see Section 2.1). The network of public schools with total number of vacancies at the national level caters secondary education to all who successfully completed basic school education. Upper secondary schools tend to be under a higher market pressure than basic schools, because they are funded based on the number of students enrolled (and student cohorts are smaller each year), who also have more choice (regardless of school districts). That is why a lot more attention is given to school profiling. The state tries to provide programmes in regional environments that meet the human resources needs and interests of learners. The selection of programmes is wider in larger regional centres. Students who attend schools in remote locations are eligible to live in student residence halls. The majority of students (97.5%) attend public upper secondary schools (SURS, SURS Database, 2016). Enrolment process is determined by the Rules on Secondary School Enrolment. The rules are adopted by the Minister of Education. Enrolment follows a common invitation to enrol, which also includes admission requirements. The number of students enrolled in Year 1 may be limited if the number of candidates exceeds the staff and spatial capacities of the school. In such cases, the school is required to obtain the consent from the Minister. The selection process is carried out through national application "Enrolment in upper secondary schools". Private *gimnazije* are state-funded at 85% by the state and municipalities for the implementation of the public programme.

132 There has been a lot of pressure from the public in the recent years to publish the results of national examinations in basic schools. However, competition among kindergartens and basic schools is not encouraged (classification of schools is not allowed and the results of national examinations and the *matura* results are not databased; however, schools are allowed to publish them in their reports at their discretion). Upper secondary schools can publish performance results of the general and vocational *matura*, and of the final examinations.

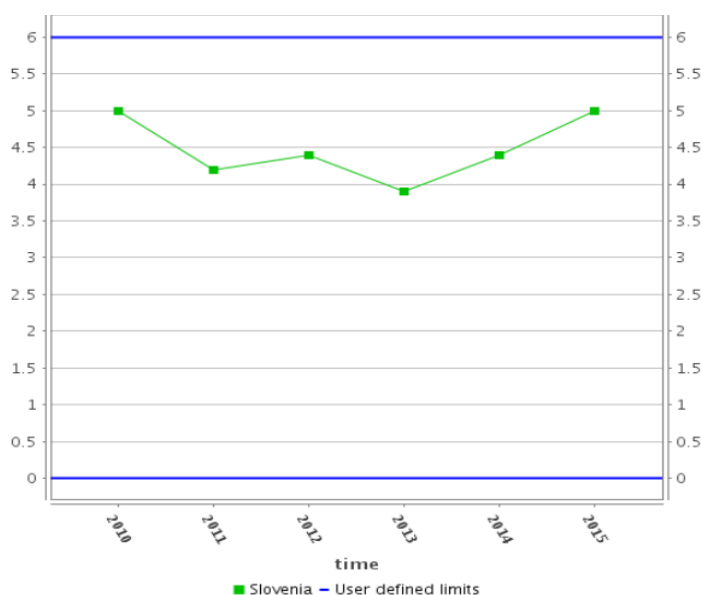
133 A mechanism for raising responsibility in the educational system was the introduction of mandatory **self-evaluation**; however, institutions are not required to publish their self-evaluation reports. School inspection, provided by the Inspectorate for Education and Sport, does not carry out regular professional supervision (in exceptional cases) and does not have advisory role. It is limited to monitoring the implementation of regulations. The supervision report is available to the staff concerned in it, the head master and, if needed, the founder. It can be published on request; however, personal data remains hidden (Eurydice Quality, 2015). Professional supervision, quality monitoring and counselling is shared by the institutions themselves (as mentioned before, by regularly carrying out self-evaluation) and by public development institutions that offer support and advice (National Education Institute, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education).

## 2.6. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

134 According to data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 78.1% of all children from 1 to 5 years are included in pre-school education (SURS, Kindergarten inclusion, 2016). According to data from the OECD (EAG 2015), 97% of pupils are included in the mandatory education, and 92% of students are included in the upper secondary education (according to data from the Statistical Office, 99.8% of young people from 15 to 18 years old take part in upper secondary education). The proportion of the population from 19 to 24 years old that is studying is almost half of the young people (47.8%) (SURS, Number of students, 2016). Data on the education of the population (EAG 2016) show that in the 25–64 age group 1% of the population has not completed basic school, 12% of the population completed basic school, 57% upper secondary school, and 31% tertiary education. Among young people from 25 to 34 years old, 54% completed upper secondary school (of which 42% completed technical or vocational school) and 41% completed tertiary education.

135 As explained in Section 2.3, there are no criteria for the success of the children when it comes to pre-school education. In basic education, students that have successfully finished grade 9 are given a leaving certificate, and students in upper secondary education complete their education with *matura* or a final examination.

### GRAPH 2.1 YOUNG EARLY LEAVERS FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING (AGE GROUP 16–24)



Source: Eurostat

136 The National Examinations Centre presents the data on the differences in the performance of students with special needs in basic education in annual report on the implementation of national examinations in a given school year (National Assessment, 2015).

137 The National Examinations Centre presents the data on the differences in student performance in the general *matura* depending on the type of upper secondary school (general and technical upper secondary school) in annual report on general *matura* (General *matura*, 2015). The Center also develops a report on vocational *matura* (Vocational *matura*, 2015) and on the final examination (Final examination, 2016).

138 Data on the performance of the educational system on the basis of international research:

- PISA (numeracy, reading literacy and science literacy, 15-year-olds): the latest data from PISA 2015 show that based on the achievement of its students, Slovenia is above the OECD average in all three types of literacy. Significant progress is especially noticeable in reading literacy, in which Slovenia improved its result compared with PISA 2012 by 24 points and went from the group of countries with results below the OECD average in the group of countries with above-average results. In the field of numeracy and science literacy, the achievements of Slovenian pupils were above OECD average already in the past (PISA 2009 and 2012).
- TIMSS (Mathematics and Science, grade 4 and 8): the results of TIMSS 2015 show that mathematical and science education is reaching excellent knowledge among Slovenian pupils in basic school, because Slovenia has achieved above-average or high scores from mathematics and science subjects in basic schools – science knowledge placed pupils in grade 8 among the very best, in the group where only the remote Asian countries are placed. The results of TIMSS 2011 also showed that mathematical and science achievements of pupils in grade 4 and 8 are above average; the latter placed sixth in science (after the Asian countries and Finland). Monitoring the results over a longer period of time shows that knowledge in mathematics and science of pupils in grade 4 has been progressing since 1995. Mathematical achievements are lower than the achievements in science in the same population, but they are now all higher than the international average. For pupils in grade 8

the knowledge of science has been progressing since 1995 also by individual subjects. Mathematical achievements largely stagnated from 1995 to 2011 (with the exception of a slight increase between 2003 and 2007). Mathematical achievements are otherwise lower than the achievements in science, but in 2011 both of them were above the international average. The trends also show that knowledge has been increasing steadily among pupils with different success. Slovenia is one of the few countries where from 1995 to 2015 onwards, the proportion of all pupils who made it in each group (milestone) and met the basic, middle, high, and very high knowledge of mathematics and science increased in grades 4 and 8. For the year before entering the university, the results of the TIMSS Advanced showed the highest knowledge of physics among the nine great educational systems in the world, the highest knowledge of mathematics of those entering the STEM studies and the largest proportion of the population, which demonstrates a good knowledge of advanced mathematics among all participating systems.

- PIRLS (reading literacy, fourth grade): the achievements of Slovenian pupils in grade 4 were close to the international average in the first cycle (2001), and in the following cycles (2006, 2011) they were significantly above international average. The trends in reading achievements show that reading literacy of Slovenian fourth grade pupils is increasing significantly.
- ICILS (information and computer literacy, grade 8): Slovenian pupils are placed slightly above the international average; however, a great majority of pupils (84%) in Slovenia only reaches the second level of computer and information literacy or less. Slovenian teachers have received extensive training in computer literacy, but the country is at the same time lagging in other forms of professional training (hosting other teachers and cooperating with them).
- ICCS (civic and citizenship education, grades 8 and 9): achievements in civic competences were above international average in 2009, whereas in 1999 there was no statistically significant difference compared with the international average. In a decade, Slovenia advanced most when it came to pupils' knowledge (based on participating education systems in cycles 1999 and 2009). The level of confidence in individual institutions, which are normally associated with democracy, was lower than the international average. The pupils showed a slightly lower willingness to engage in fundamental democratic process (the elections) than the pupils at the international level, but the difference is small.
- ESLC (foreign language skills, grade 9): Based on the average of countries/regions that were included in ESLC 2011, Slovenian pupils in the ninth grade demonstrated outstanding achievements in listening comprehension and writing for both English and German. The achievements of Slovenian pupils in reading comprehension are average for both languages. Data show that in English and German a relatively large percentage of pupils in grade 9 exceeds the objectives set in the curriculum, while a significant percentage of pupils in grade 9 does not meet the level of knowledge set in the curricula of both languages. The knowledge of foreign languages will continue to grow, amendment to the Basic School Act is pending, which will introduce a mandatory second foreign language in the last three-year cycle of the basic school.

## 2.7. PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION

139 Equal rights and opportunities in education for all, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, social and cultural background, religion, political or other beliefs, education, social status, disability or any other personal circumstance, are guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. The White Paper (1995) listed “equal opportunities and non-discrimination” among the principles on which the public education system is based, whereas the White Paper (2011) listed “justice” and in this context of this principle the provision of equal educational rights. A series of regulations on education, health care, and elimination of obstacles in the environment, the provision of financial assistance, employment, and social inclusion was adopted. Important solutions for ensuring equal opportunities were implemented in various national and development programs in different fields.

140 With the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act (ZUNEO<sup>49</sup>), which was adopted in 2004, the authorities, educational institutions and other entities were given the opportunity to take measures to ensure equality for all. Special attention is given to those who are in a less favourable position because of personal circumstances. ZUNEO was replaced by the Protection against Discrimination Act (ZVarD<sup>50</sup>) as of 1 April 2006.

141 Education of children with special needs is based on the following goals and principles:

- Ensuring the child’s best interests;
- Completeness and complexity of education;
- Equal opportunities while taking into account children’s various needs;
- Involvement of parents, adoptive parents, foster parents and guardians in the process of placement of children and forms of assistance;
- Individualised approach;
- Interdisciplinarity;
- Maintaining a balance between different areas of child’s emotional, physical, and cognitive development;
- Direction to an appropriate education program as soon as possible;
- Immediate and continuous support and professional help in the education programmes;
- Vertical transition and integration of education programmes;
- Organisation of education as close to the place of residence as possible;
- Ensuring appropriate conditions that enable each child optimal development.

142 Education of children with special needs is integrated in all specific laws and these in turn are completed by the Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (ZUOPP). In Slovenia, the inclusive paradigm or the concept of integration is becoming increasingly implemented in the

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<sup>49</sup> ZUNEO <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO3908>

<sup>50</sup> ZVarD <https://www.uradni-list.si/glasilo-uradni-list-rs/vsebina/2016-01-1427?sop=2016-01-1427>

teaching profession and curriculum documents. Families and children with special needs are given additional assistance provided by the country.

143 **Italian and Hungarian national communities** are guaranteed the right to use their own national symbols as well as the right to establish institutions and provide education in their own language. Members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities have the right to be educated in their own language and the right to establish and develop education in ethnically mixed areas. The detailed definition of the rights is set out in the Act Regulating Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Communities in the Field of Education (ZPIMVI).

144 The Constitution also protects the position and ensures special rights to the **Roma community** living in Slovenia. Implementation of special rights shall be governed by the Roma Community Act (ZRomS-1<sup>51</sup>), and in the field of education by the Pre-School Institutions Act (ZVrt) and Basic School Act (ZOsn). Education of Roma children is directed by the strategy, adopted in 2004 and amended in 2011, which proposed additional measures to enhance their educational level and their successful integration in the educational system.

145 **Children of immigrants** have the right to education under the same conditions as the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia and they are required to receive basic compulsory education as specified in the Basic School Act. The guidelines<sup>52</sup> are provided and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport hosts a website dedicated to this particular topic (see below). Taking into account the particular dimension when dealing with the integration of children claiming international protection and children under international protection, whose primary need is to obtain basic living conditions and who originate from non-Slavic regions, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport advises to schools to apply a two-step model of integration of two periods: “introductory class” (*uvajalnica*) and “advanced class” (*nadaljevalnica*). Before entering regular classes, these children attend an introductory class, which takes place during a continuous 20-hour period. Afterwards, they start attending regular classes, while also having the right to additional professional assistance to learn Slovenian, which is suggested to be carried out in a continuous manner (advanced class). The introductory class can be organised at each individual school or at one school where pupils gather from different schools in a municipality or region.

146 During two school years, the pupil will receive additional support as part of the advanced class because the programme includes activities that are offered both by the school and the local environment (learning Slovenian as a second language, learning assistance, individual programmes for pupils, adaptations of methods and teaching approaches as well as adjustment of the assessment of knowledge during the school year, assistance with integration into extracurricular activities inside and outside the school, various vacation opportunities and activities in the local environment, advanced language classes and support with the organisation of supplementary classes of the native language and culture of the immigrant children).

147 In addition to the above, the Ministry introduced the following measures after the arrival of particularly vulnerable groups:

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<sup>51</sup> **ZRomS-1** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4405>

<sup>52</sup> **GUIDELINES** [http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna\\_podrocja/direktorat\\_za\\_predsolsko\\_vzgojo\\_in\\_osnovno\\_solstvo/predsolska\\_vzgoja/#c17792](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/direktorat_za_predsolsko_vzgojo_in_osnovno_solstvo/predsolska_vzgoja/#c17792)

- Recommendations for schools and a special website ([http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/vkljucevanje\\_priseljencev\\_v\\_sistem\\_vzgoje\\_in\\_izobrazevanja/](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/vkljucevanje_priseljencev_v_sistem_vzgoje_in_izobrazevanja/)) for school management, educational staff, parents and other stakeholders;
- education programme Literacy in Slovenian for adult speakers of foreign languages (with an addition for minors claiming international protection), aged from 15 to 18, facilitating the integration of students in the basic school programme for adults;
- Materials for learning and teaching Slovenian as a second language; <http://www.zrss.si/objava/vkljucevanje-otrok-beguncev>
- project “Enhancing social and civic competences of educational staff,” which will strive for a successful integration of immigrant and refugee children, which includes adequate methods of work with children from mainstream, into the education process through programmes of continuous professional development of teachers;
- setup of a special Advisory group for questions concerning the integration of immigrant and refugee children into the Slovenian educational system;
- adoption of the following documents: Types and content of professional work with unaccompanied minors in residence halls for students, and Protocol and standard operation procedure on unaccompanied minors living in halls of residence;
- Protocol for assessing young people without official certificates on the achieved education, namely as an admission requirement for the enrolment into upper secondary education.

148 Furthermore, Slovenia has a social security scheme for **participants with low-income background**. It includes state aid as well as health, retirement and invalidity insurance. In accordance with the Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act (ZSDP-1<sup>53</sup>), economically vulnerable families can get various family benefits (depending on their socio-economic status and financial situation). Depending on the financial situation of the family, children may have the right to a free spot in pre-school education (or even a priority entry into a kindergarten), whereas in basic schools they may get free or subsidised meals.

149 Various guidelines and supplements to the curriculum for kindergartens and curricula that help with the education work were prepared for some of the groups listed above.

150 An issue that has been topical lately is the question of gender in education, particularly concerning the enrolment into upper secondary education and the completion of tertiary education. Data on upper secondary education shows that more girls enrol into general upper secondary schools (60% vs. 40%), while more boys enrol into technical and vocational schools (58% vs. 42%) (Eurydice, 2016). The EAG 2016 data on tertiary education shows that differences occur between the genders in regard to the second-cycle-programme completion, which equals to 55% for men and 63% for women (or 45% and 48% for first-cycle programmes). The ET Monitor data paints a similar picture with 56% of women and only 32% of men obtaining their higher education degree. This puts Slovenia at the second place among European countries for the greatest difference between men and women in higher education degrees (ET2020, 2016).

151 The gender related differences in international studies do not show a consistent image. Some studies and cycles do not show any differences between the genders, while some show higher scores for boys and others for girls. In all cycles and all countries, including Slovenia, the PISA study shows much higher scores in reading literacy for girls. In Slovenia, there are no differences in mathematic literacy between the genders in any cycle. In all cycles, girls scored (slightly) higher

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<sup>53</sup> ZSDP-1 <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6688>

in science literacy. The PISA 2015 study shows that girls were more successful than boys in science literacy, while there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of girls and boys in mathematic literacy. Examining the PISA 2015 data on reading literacy, we notice that Slovenia still has one of the biggest differences in the OECD, which resembles the one in Finland. TIMSS does not show any differences between the genders in grade 4 mathematics, while boys were better in science in 1995. By 2011, there were no differences, while after 2011 the score is turning again in favour of boys. In grade 8, there is no difference in mathematics. However, it is in favour of boys in science classes between 1995 and 2003, whereas there is none between 2007 and 2011. The results of the TIMSS 2015 show that all achievements improved since 2011. There are no differences between the genders except in grade 4 science and in all measurements in *gimnazija* upper secondary schools, where boys got better scores. PIRLS showed in all cycles that reading literacy was much higher for girls. ICILS measured differences in achievements in all education systems in favour of girls (in the large majority of cases, the difference is also statistically typical); this difference was particularly large in Slovenia. ICCS showed that girls were more successful in civics than boys. ESLC did not show differences between genders in foreign language knowledge.

## 2.8. MAIN CHALLENGES

- 152 One of the main challenges in education is keeping track of different legal background documents for pursuing educational activity. Several acts amending laws and other instruments were enacted aiming to rationalise, increase efficiency and eliminate deficiencies (Eurydice, 2016).
- 153 From the systemic point of view, the accessibility of education is an important issue and it is currently regulated adequately, in terms of inclusion of children claiming international protection and those with the status of international protection as well. Possible increase in the number of these children applicants would be a challenge for the educational system.
- 154 One of crucial challenges in connection with the inclusion of SEN children in kindergartens and schools is providing adequate support to schools (an overall support to institutions in terms of inclusion of SEN children is planned).
- 155 Generally speaking, it is necessary to highlight the challenges brought by a greater complexity of society. On the one hand, teachers are no longer merely professionals of a specific content field, but they also need vast knowledge on interactions and relations to be able to adapt in a flexible manner the teaching process to abilities, needs and interests of students. On the other hand, we strive for a more active role of students; we want them to have the opportunity for a well-balanced physical, mental, emotional and social development and for developing creative and critical thinking skills. Students are not just listeners, but also young people with an increasingly large spectrum of needs that are also being addressed in the educational context. At the same time, school as a system needs to adapt to the increasing complexity, which is a great responsibility for school management and calls for further professionalization. In such circumstances there is a fear that the consequences will be visible primarily in the field of system quality and efficiency. That is why continual funding is all the more important.

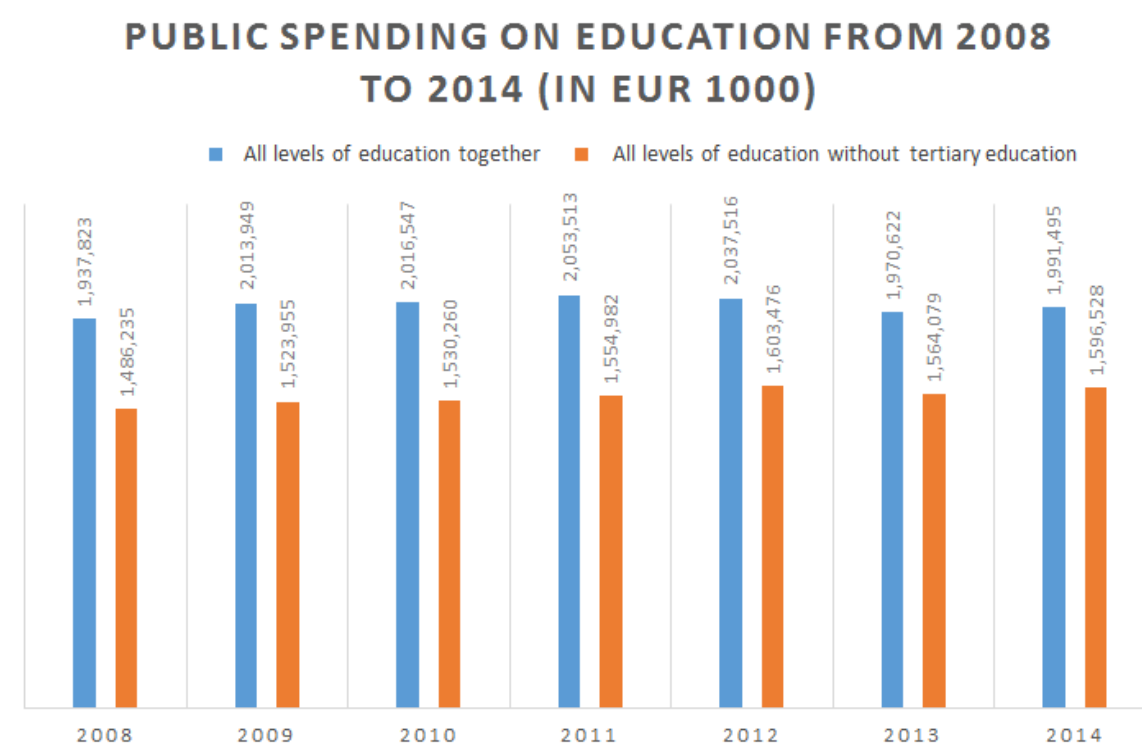
## 3. MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCE CONSUMPTION IN SCHOOLS

### 3.1. AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS

156 In 2014, **public expenditure on formal education** (prepared on the basis of the UOE methodology) totalled €1,991 million or 5.3% of GDP. 96% of all public spending on formal education was allocated directly to educational institutions, while 4% (€87 million) was spent as public transfers to households and other private entities. The largest share of public spending was designated to basic education (43%). In 2014, total public, private and international spending on educational institutions was at 5.9% of GDP or €2,207 million.

157 Without taking into account tertiary education, **public spending** on formal education in 2014 amounted to €1,596 million or 4.28% of GDP.

GRAPH 3.1 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE FOR FORMAL EDUCATION



Source: SURS.

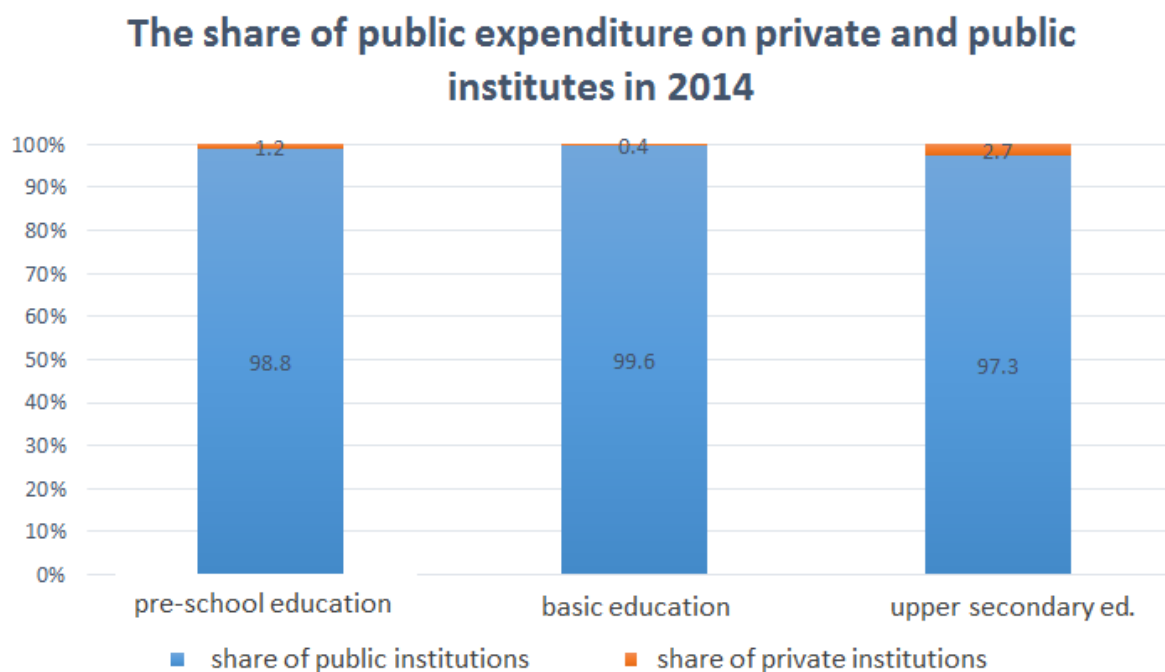
Notes: 2012 saw a break in time series.

1. According to the revised international definition of formal education which is in line with the revised international classification of levels of education ISCED 2011, the expenditure for formal education for 2012 takes into account the expenditure for the 1st age period of education in kindergartens, while according to the previous definition (ISCED 97) only expenditure for the 2nd age period programs of education in kindergartens was considered.
2. In the preparation of data on expenditure for formal education for 2012, the allocation of expenditure between

upper secondary education expenditure and short-cycle higher vocational education has been improved. The estimated expenditure for short-cycle higher vocational education (in upper secondary schools which have also sections/units of short-cycle higher vocational education) was transferred to the short-cycle higher vocational expenditure. Until 2011 expenditure for these upper secondary schools was fully taken into account as expenditure of upper secondary education.

158 In the last years, the trend of public expenditure on education shows a decrease in total assets at all levels of education as well as at levels without taking into account tertiary education. Based on the education level, the share of assets on private school funding is the following:

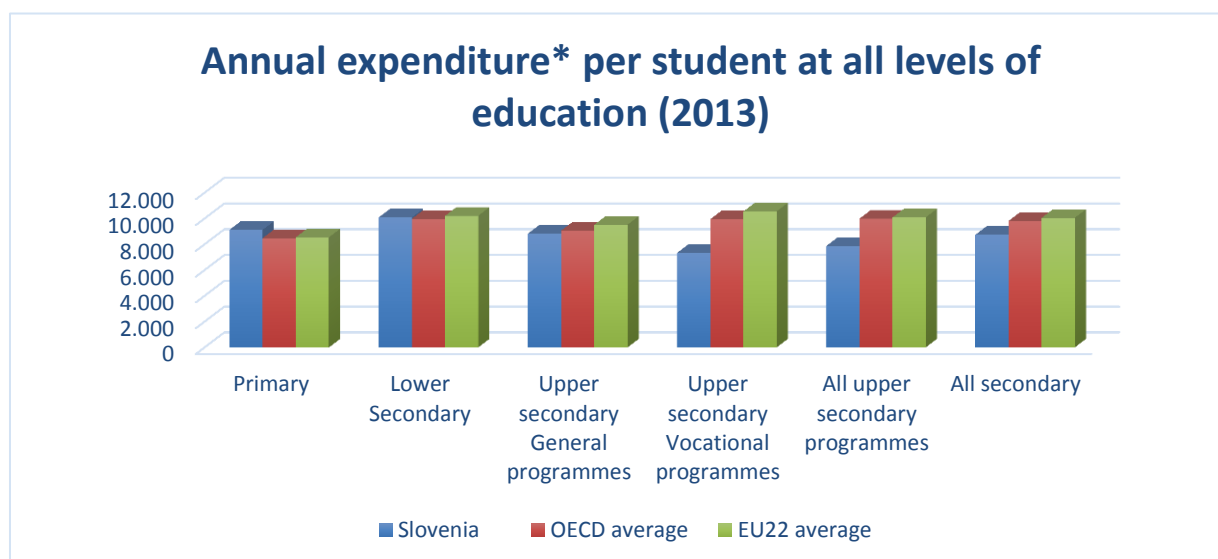
*GRAPH 3.2 EXPENDITURE FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*



Source: SURS.

159 Total expenditure on educational institutions, which includes public, private and international expenditure, was at 5.9% of GDP in 2014. Public expenditure represents 86%, private expenditure around 13% and the assets from international sources less than 1%.

GRAPH 3.3 ANNUAL EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT AT ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION IN 2013  
(FOR MORE DETAILS SEE ANNEX I)



Source: Education at a glance 2016, OECD.

\* USD equivalents converted by parity purchasing power for GDP according to education level based on full-time equivalents.

TABLE 3.1 CHANGE IN EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR ALL SERVICES

	Educational institutions in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education														
	Change in expenditure (2008 = 100)					Change in the number of students (2008 = 100)					Change in expenditure per student (2008 = 100)				
	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
Slovenia	96	99	97	94	92	108	97	97	96	96	89	102	100	97	95
OECD average	93	105	104	105	106	102	99	99	99	99	91	105	105	107	108
EU22 average	94	104	101	103	102	103	99	98	98	97	91	104	103	105	105

Index of change (GDP deflator 2008 = 100, constant prices)

Source: Education at a glance 2016, OECD.

160 Annual expenditure per student for primary and secondary education together show that the expenditure per students has been decreasing since 2010, while they slightly increase in the EU and OECD members. Expenditure on primary and secondary education is decreasing faster than the number of students. Slovenia ranks above the OECD average in the field of basic education that comprises primary (1st and 2nd educational period) and lower secondary education (3rd educational period). However, it ranks below the OECD average in terms of annual expenditure on education per student. Similarly, Slovenia only ranks above the EU average in the field of primary education.

161 Public and private expenditure on education (in % of GDP) do not significantly derogate from the international average rate. The growth of GDP before the crisis and its decline afterwards had a great impact on expenditure rate, because the expenditure on education did not follow the growth or decline of GDP. Public expenditure has been decreasing nominally since 2012. The reasons behind the decrease can be found in measures following the adoption of the Fiscal Balance Act (ZUJF<sup>54</sup>) in 2012 (these measures were not targeted at education, but were applicable to the public sector in equal measure) and other measures that introduced rationalisation at all levels of education, such as: reduction of operating expenditure, restrictive allocation of additional departments, freezing of funds for continuous professional development of professional staff in education, introduction of the “+2 norm” in kindergartens (the possibility of increasing the number of children in a group by 2 or to 42; 99% of kindergartens exercises this right), amended methodology of distributing organised after-school classes, raise the possibilities of extra workload for teachers in order to avoid creating new posts, closing down of school branches and residence halls for students, merging of upper secondary schools, and restriction on new employment.

162 As to **pre-school education**, the Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act entered into force on 1 January 2012. Due to a more thorough insight data on family financial situation, the parents with higher income started paying higher kindergarten fees and thus less public funds were spent (kindergarten fees increased from 32% to 36.2%). The Fiscal Balance Act entered into force in June 2012 and introduced changes in the Kindergarten Act: suspension of the benefit of lower fee for the older child, namely for one payment grade as specified by law for parents having two or more children in a kindergarten at the same time. By suspending this benefit the state spending decreased, namely by roughly €4 million, and the same is true for municipal spending.

163 Rules on standards to conduct pre-school education activities entered into force on 1 September 2014 (Uradni list RS, official gazette No. 27/14) brought some new solutions for better organisation of work in kindergartens and thus a possibility to save public funds (e.g. the head master can exceptionally accept one more child despite the full occupancy if extraordinary circumstances in the family call for an immediate enrolment of the child; the age range in a unit is no longer counted on a calendar-year basis but on the actual age of children). Financial effects depend on the conditions in each municipality. However, the majority of municipalities lowered the programme prices, which resulted in a decrease of state subvention and a decrease of state budget funds.

164 The Municipality Fiscal Balance Act (Uradni list RS, official gazette No. 14/15) entered into force on 1 June 2015 and changed two provisions in the Kindergarten Act. The first provision redefines the municipality as the payer of kindergarten subvention, whereas the second one authorises municipality to obtain a specified request from the kindergarten that states all data determining the municipality obligation to cover the difference between the programme price and parent fees. This solution establishes a complete transparency of municipal obligation towards kindergartens and thus the possibility for the municipality to control the requests drawn up by kindergartens. Financial effect will depend on the municipality using this provision. It is estimated that the total savings can be considerable (from €3 to 4 million).

165 In basic education, activities for reducing the costs have been on the increase since 2010 when the first broader draft measures for rationalisation of resources were created.

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<sup>54</sup> ZUJF <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6388>

**TABLE 3.2 SAVINGS TO DATE IN BASIC EDUCATION (IN €1000)**

Year		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>A:</b> Departments achieving norms	Number	5	3	8	10	10	14	19	60
	Value	151	91	242	302	302	423	574	1,812
<b>B:</b> Smaller number of new jobs created	After-school classes	0	0	0	193.5	246.7	287.2	424.4	167.1
	Value	0	0	0	4,838	6,168	7,180	10,610	4,178
<b>C:</b> Lower operating expenditure	Value	0	0	2,633	5,140	3,548	6,058	6,239	9,035
<b>D:</b> Not creating teaching groups under Article 40	Less jobs	0	0	0	0	27	24	33	40
	Value	0	0	0	0	815	725	997	1208
<b>E:</b> Lower expenditure on textbook funds	Value	0	205	2,972	3,617	4,969	4,082	4,234	3,621
<b>IN TOTAL*</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>5,847</b>	<b>8,757</b>	<b>12,254</b>	<b>12,410</b>	<b>16,415</b>	<b>10,819</b>

\* Total value for the 2008–2015 period amounts to €66,949,000.

Source: MIZŠ.

166 As to over the norm classes, the schools were advised to set up classes rationally, that meant: if the number of pupils in a class was over the norm by only one pupil, the school applied to the Ministry for an increase in the number of students per class, as specified under Article 39 of the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic school programme.

167 Since 2011, the Ministry has been verifying the composition of after-school classes of each school and demands that the pupils are merged into classes that meet the norm on the number of pupils in one class. Pupils are merged or split for each lesson, if need be. Before 2011, the classes of after-school care were composed of the same classes that took place during the school time. Consequently, the number of classes has been increasing significantly slower despite the growing number of pupils included in after-school care. The Organization and Financing of Education Act abolished after-school care for the pupils in grade 6.

168 Operating expenditure has been decreasing. Since 2010, funds for programme costs (teaching aids, textbooks, staff education, out-of-school lessons, daily allowances, and contractual value payments) decreased each year. Funds for the functioning of textbook funds have been decreasing since 2009.

169 As specified by law amended, schools are no longer required to provide ability grouping (learning groups according to Article 40, Basic school act). Lessons are organised in smaller teaching groups in Slovenian, first foreign language and mathematics from grade 4 (since April) to grade 9 (whole school year).

- 170 As to **upper secondary education**, there have been several attempts made throughout the years to rationalize the use of funds, in particular by changing the method of funding and reforming the network of upper secondary school and residence halls for students, and much has already been done in the last years. A **new method of funding** (block grant) rationalised the expenditure of funds and encouraged the economic use of funds on schools, because they can spend a part of funds on equipment with the consent from the Ministry.
- 171 The cost-saving measures introduced in the public sector by the Fiscal Balance Act and decrease in the number of pupils led to a decline in funding of upper secondary education, which can also be observed in internationally comparable data. These show that upper secondary education receives the lowest funding per student in the entire educational system (see Graph 3.3).
- 172 In the past, certain measures were adopted in the upper secondary education. On 1 January 2013, a new way of allocating finances to the upper secondary education for all upper secondary schools and halls of residence entered into force, which finances all upper secondary schools using the lump sum system or by taking into account each individual student in accordance with the new Rules on Methodology for Financing Education programmes in Upper Secondary Education (Uradni list RS, official gazette No. 107/12). This is a verified system that was taken over from the Dutch system and is now reputed as one of the most economical and efficient financing systems for education. It was gradually introduced after 2004, first into professional and vocational schools and certain *gimnazija* upper secondary schools, and in 2013 into all upper secondary schools and halls of residence.
- 173 In 2012, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia also introduced the following measures on the suggestion of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and in connection with the status and legal changes of public institutions in the category of upper secondary and higher education:
- On the merger of 14 schools: 13 public institutions (schools) merged into 7 new public institutions (schools), and one school was merged to a school centre;
  - On the reorganisation of 4 schools (abolishment and reduction of organisational units): organisational units were abolished in 3 schools, which were reorganised into unified schools while one school centre saw the number of its organisational units decrease through a merger from 5 to 3;
  - On the establishment of 1 school: one upper secondary school (unified) was established, namely by detaching one organisational unit from a school centre, and creating a unified autonomous school.
- 174 In 2014, two schools split into two independent schools, because the merging was not successful. In 2015, one dislocated unit merged into school centre and one pupil residence hall closed.
- 175 In 2015, an analysis of school network was carried out and served as the basis for distribution of programmes. Enrolment in vocational courses, *matura* examination courses and vocational technical education was limited on the basis of this analysis. In the 2014/2015 school year, enrolment in vocational and *matura* examination courses declined by 27% and 20%, respectively, compared to the previous school year. This decline is planned to continue in the next years.
- 176 In the Education and Training Monitor 2015 report, the European commission warned Slovenia that it is positioned among the countries where the reduction of funds for education is particularly problematic from the demographic perspective. In fact, between 2010 and 2013,

Slovenia decreased the funds for pre-school, basic and upper secondary education, despite larger generations of children who are entering the system.

- 177 Measures or special programmes that would be focused in particular on the cost reduction in any of the items for education do not exist. However, the above listed measures did and are still delivering a reduction in costs. The effort to lower costs, in particular in view of the government budget, is always present, but in view of the current demographic trends that indicate an increase in number of participants in education they are not practical nor attainable. The stagnation of the education budget alone presents a decrease of costs per pupil/student.
- 178 One of the main goals or challenges is to allow everyone to access education under the same conditions. Slovenia enables this through an appropriate network of public institutions and officially recognised education programmes as well as with different types of social aid. The enrolment of children in pre-school education has been increasing over a longer period. By 2020, it is predicted that **95%** of children from the age of four to the school age will attend kindergarten. Due to the fact that basic education is compulsory for all children over the age of six, and that it lasts nine years, the percentage of children enrolled in basic school in regard to the entire generation is 100% for all years. It is also important what percentage of pupils continues their education in general and vocational upper secondary education. In 2014, this percentage was 99.1%. In Slovenia, a general raise of the education level is the current trend, particularly with the youth. At the break of the century, the percentage of youth with education lower than upper secondary education was distinctly lower than the average in the OECD countries. By 2014, this percentage decreased more than the average in other OECD countries.

## 3.2. SOURCES OF FUNDING

- 179 As mentioned in Section 2, the Slovenian education system is funded by the state (national level) and municipalities (local level). When it comes to the funding of different levels of education, the role of national and local level authorities is the following:
- 180 At the level of pre-school education (ISCED 0) municipalities cover all costs, except the education of SEN children in kindergartens that were set up by the state, special expenditure on bilingual classes (Italian and Hungarian national communities) and Roma classes and 50% of salaries of pre-school teachers who work in state funded hospital kindergartens.
- 181 At the level of basic education (ISCED 1–2) national government covers the operating costs directly related to education programmes, whereas local government covers the operating costs not directly related to education programmes. Upper secondary education (ISCED 3) is entirely funded by the state.
- 182 The share of the state in funding designated to education was at 75% in 2014 and the share of municipalities to 25%. The state is the major funding body in the field of basic (82%) and upper secondary education (99%), whereas municipalities are the major funding body in the field of pre-school education (92%) (SURS, Public expenses, 2015). Local level authority can allocate additional funds to basic and upper secondary schools (ISCED 1–3) in order to achieve higher educational standards and to provide additional services. In 2015, municipalities planned to allocate €56.3 million for salaries in basic education. Compared to the state budget, which planned to allocate €620 million for salaries in basic education, this represents 8.3% of the total expenditure on salaries. There is no data available for upper secondary schools. The share of national and local level authorities did not change significantly over the years, with the exception of 2012 when the share of local level authority noticeably increased. However, this was the result

of the inclusion of data for the first age group programmes in kindergartens among the data for expenditure on formal education. Based on the previous definition (in accordance with ISCED 97), the only data taken into account until 2012 were the data for the second age group programmes in kindergartens.

183 The largest share of **parental contribution to the funding of educational system**<sup>55</sup> is in pre-school education. Kindergarten fee is determined in accordance with the scale that divides the parents in 9 income grades and in the form of percentage rate of the total programme price. Parents with the lowest income are exempt from paying the kindergarten fee, whereas parents with the higher income pay 77% of the total programme price. The price of the programme is determined by the municipality. Parents who have 2 or more children enrolled in kindergarten at the same time pay 30% of the fee for the younger child, which is determined by the decision of the Centre for Social Work, and are exempt from paying for any further children. The share of parental contribution out of the total expenditure on pre-school education stands at 24% (OECD EAG, 2016, Table C2.3). At all the remaining levels of education (ISCED 1–3) there are no fees to pay for in public schools and parental contribution is not mandatory.

184 The total spending for educational institutions for primary and lower secondary education from private sources is at 9% and from public sources at 91%. The percentage of spending for educational institutions for upper secondary education from private sources is at 10%. All private spending for educational institutions as mentioned above come from household spending, because there is no other expenditure from private sources (OECD EAG, 2016, Tables 3.1a and 3.1b).

**TABLE 3.3 TRENDS IN THE RELATIVE PROPORTION OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND INDEX OF CHANGE IN EXPENDITURE**

	Share of public expenditure <sup>a</sup> on educational institutions (%)						Index of change between 2005 and 2013 in expenditure on educational institutions (2008 = 100, constant prices)									
							Public sources					Private sources <sup>b</sup>				
	2005	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
Slovenia	92	92	91	91	91	91	96	99	96	93	91	94	103	104	101	101
OECD average	92	92	92	92	92	91	92	105	104	105	106	92	102	106	110	116
EU22 average	94	94	94	94	93	93	94	103	101	101	101	91	105	105	112	117

Source: Education at a Glance 2016, OECD.

<sup>a</sup> Excluding international funds.

<sup>b</sup> Including subsidies attributable to payments to educational institutions received from public sources.

185 The share of public expenses for primary and secondary education out of the total expenses for educational institutions remained quite constant throughout the years. However, this funding

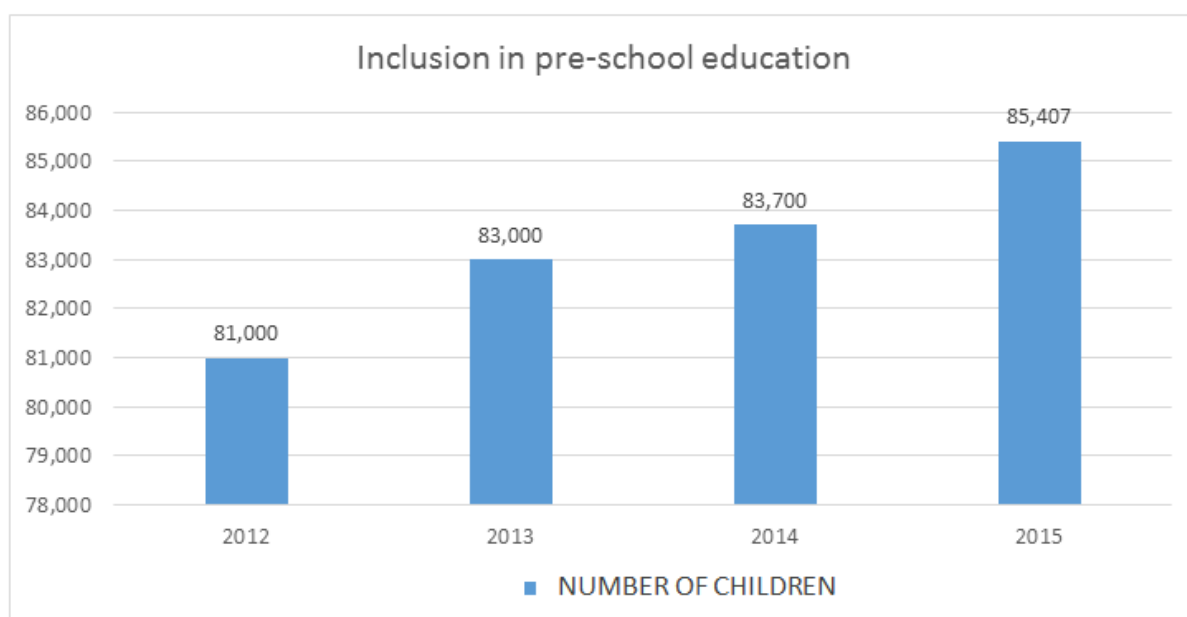
<sup>55</sup> Also see Section 4.8.

has been decreasing after 2010 and is under referential value from 2008, whereas the funding from private sources figures slightly above the rate from 2008.

### 3.3. PLANNING OF RESOURCE CONSUMPTION

186 Compared to the previous school year (2014/2015), **the number of children in kindergartens** has increased<sup>56</sup> particularly in the second age group (children aged from 3 years old to the age when they enter school), namely for 0.9%. Therefore, 88.5% of children falling in this age category attended pre-school education. The number of children in the first age period (children aged 1 to 2) increased only very slightly compared to the previous year, and more than half of these children went to kindergarten.

GRAPH 3.4 INCLUSION IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION



Source: MIZŠ; for more details see Annex I.

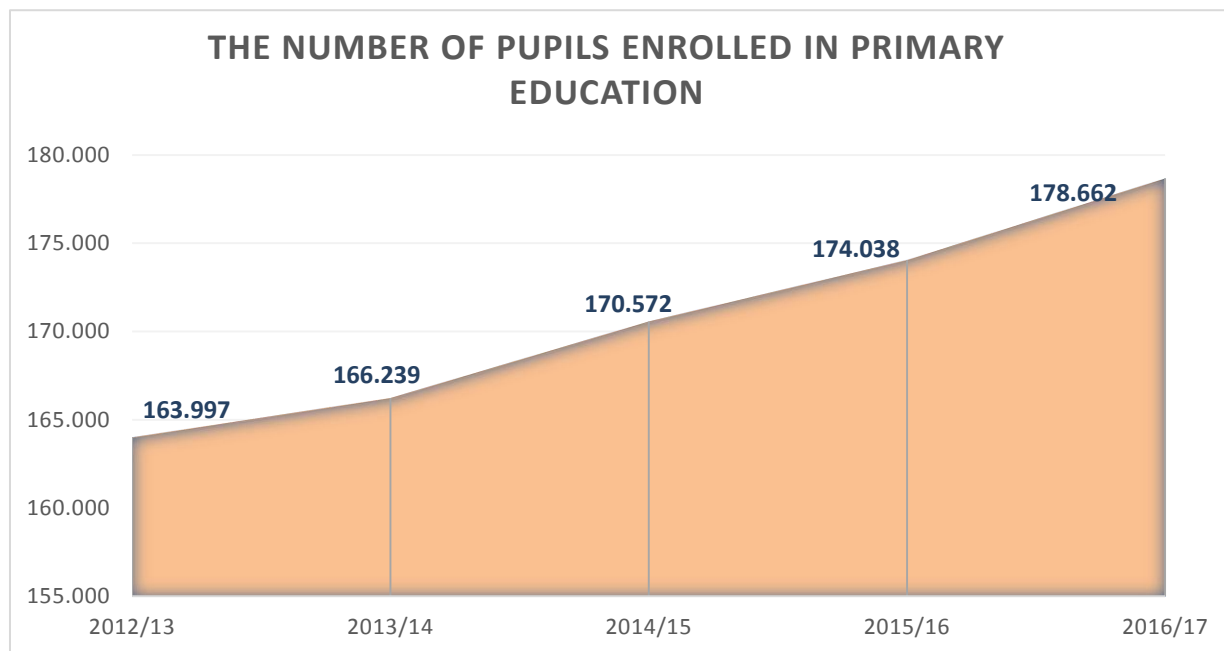
187 There were 40,774 4- and 5-year-olds included in kindergartens, which amounts to 90.8% of all children in this age group. The European strategic goal, defined in the framework of the Education and Training 2020 document, supposes that there is 95% of the children in this age group enrolled in pre-school education (SURS, Kindergarten inclusion, 2016). In the 2015/2016 school year, 10,901 members of education staff carried out pre-school education and education in kindergartens, 5,174 of which were pre-school teachers and 5,727 pre-school teacher assistants. There were **8 children assigned** (SURS, Kindergarten inclusion, 2016) per pre-school teacher and pre-school teacher assistant. Slovenia is ~~also~~ striving to ensure that pre-school education is of high quality and accessible to all children wishing to enrol in a kindergarten.

188 In the 2016/2017 school year, there were 178,662 pupils **enrolled in basic schools**. In 2015/2016 there were 174,038 pupils enrolled, 170,572 in 2014/15, 166,239 in 2013/2014, in 163,997 2012/2013 and 161,046 pupils in 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2016). There is an upward trend in

<sup>56</sup> See Section 1.1., Education, Pre-school education.

the number of pupils in basic schools. Their total number is increasing due to growing new generations of first graders (SURS, Basic education, 2014).

GRAPH 3.5 ENROLMENT IN BASIC SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMME



Source: MIZŠ, for a detailed table divided by regions see Annex I.

189 In 2015, there were a total of 74,759 students **enrolled in upper secondary schools** in Slovenia, 75,352 in 2014, in 76,714 in 2013, 78,208 in 2012, 79,901 in 2011, and 82,267 students in 2010 (SURS, SURS Database, 2016). In general, a downward trend is noticeable in the number of students in upper secondary schools (SURS, SURS database, 2016).

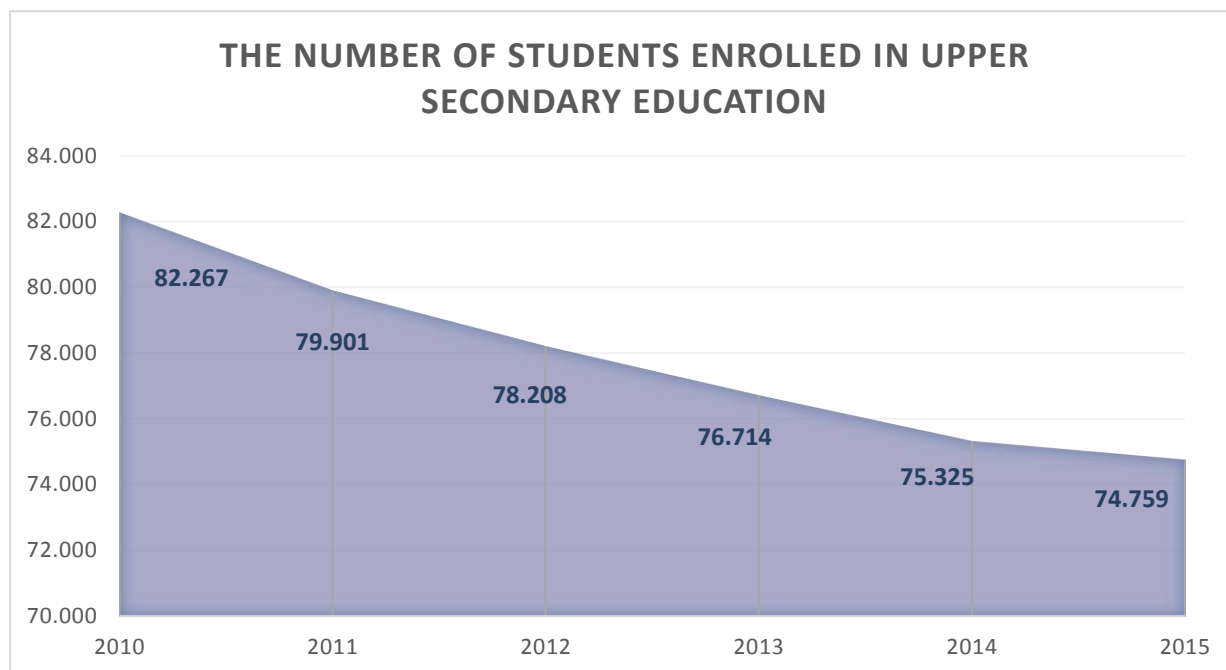
190 Over the last six years **there has been a decline of interest for enrolment** in upper secondary general education programmes and an increased interest in the three-year vocational and four-year technical education programmes (see Annex I: Movement of the share of enrolled newcomers in individual types of programmes). Students are most interested in the programmes in the field of health, gastronomy, pre-school education, veterinary medicine and cosmetics, but the labour market cannot accept such a high number of new job seekers, which is why the country is regulating the number of enrolled students in these fields. There is also an increased interest in computer science and engineering, where there are no limitations for the number of vacancies due to increased demand in the market and there are even additional vacancies available.

191 In the preparation of the annual call for new enrolments in upper secondary schools, social partners are also active, among others the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GZS<sup>57</sup>), the

<sup>57</sup> GZS ([www.gzs.si](http://www.gzs.si)) in cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSZ), National Education Institute Slovenia and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training is organising an event: career day <http://www.danzakariero.si/>

Chamber of Crafts (OZS<sup>58</sup>), the Chamber of Commerce, and others. Their suggestions and opinions have a significant impact on the offer of any new education programmes and the number of vacancies.

**GRAPH 3.6 ENROLMENT IN THE UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES**



Source: Ministry for Education, Science and Sports

Note: A detailed table by regions is included in Annex I.

192 Employers highlighted that young people who enter labour market should have more practical training, while at the same time, these young people seek more practical knowledge. Slovenia therefore joined the initiative for the introduction of apprenticeship, as one of the forms of vocational education. Slovenia participates also in the CEDEFOP project Apprenticeships and work-based learning (Thematic country review on apprenticeship in Slovenia). In autumn 2015, an inter-ministerial working group was established by the Minister of Education, including representatives of employers (Chamber of Commerce), trade unions, ministries responsible for the areas of education, labour and economy and the CPI. The working group has prepared a proposal for the act on apprenticeship, which regulates basic questions relating to the status of the apprentice, the rights and obligations of employers, schools, employers' organizations, trade unions and ministries. Following the adoption of the proposal by the Government on 13.1.2017, it has been submitted for consideration and adoption by the National Assembly.

193 In the call for enrolment in vocational programmes for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 school years, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport encouraged in particular the conclusion of individual learning contracts between students, their parents, and employers. Individual learning contracts enable to have more vocational trainers of students at their employers (up to 52 weeks

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.ozs.si/>

in three years) and have many elements of apprenticeship, but they do not define the status of an apprentice.

194 As written in the Operational programme 2014–2020,<sup>59</sup> the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport will support the introduction of apprenticeship in vocational programmes by the following measures within the European Cohesion Policy programmes:

- developing two new models that will offer vocational education (one of them is apprenticeship);
- encouraging employers to partake in the educational process (funds for practical education through work based learning) and give priority to those who will take on apprentices;
- training mentors at the employers to provide practical education along job shadowing.

195 Regarding the question of planning the use of resources, it is necessary to emphasize that this role is divided between the national level (Ministry of Education) and the local level (municipalities) as is the case with the allocation of resources when it comes to the **responsibility for the use of resources**. The process of planning or determining the scope of funds for education is as follows: the Government prepares a draft of the state budget, which also includes resources to ensure legal obligation to finance education. The amount of funds may be partially amended in the negotiations between the government and the relevant ministries, in the case of education between the Government or the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education, respectively. A coherent proposal of the state budget is then adopted by the Parliament. The relevant Ministry is free to allocate funds by programmes within the funding for education; however, most of the funds are used to cover legal obligations and the Ministry cannot freely use them for other purposes. The Ministry of Education, which gives funds to public institutions and private schools, is responsible for the use of state budget for education. Municipalities are responsible for the use of their own local budgets and funders also monitor the use of funds. Financing mechanisms of public institutions and funding bodies vary depending on the level of education or types of institutions and with regard to the financing purpose (salaries, material costs, investments). They are described in Section 4.4.

196 Sources of funds for teaching and non-teaching staff in basic schools and upper secondary schools are provided at the national level, whereas the local level ensures a potential higher standard. The funds for educational staff in kindergartens are provided mostly at the local level (partially also at the national level). For further details see Section 3.2.

197 The head ~~clerk~~ of the public institute is the head master that answers to the institution's council and is responsible for the **use of funds at the kindergarten and school level**. Schools directly procure goods and services and pay staff salaries themselves. The schools also ensure on-going maintenance of the premises by using funds they receive for the implementation of education programmes. Investments in schools and major maintenance are bound to the funding body: they are the duty of local community or the country. The schools have their own accounting, which ensures the regularity of the operations and reports about the financial operations of the institution.

198 Work posts in schools must be determined and organised in accordance with the norms and standards for the implementation of educational and vocational programmes. The head master of the institution is responsible for the **organization and staff management**; however, he or she

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<sup>59</sup> Operational programme for the period 2014–2020, <http://www.eu-skladi.si/kohezija-do-2013/2014-2020/operativni-program-za-obdobje-2014-2020>

needs the approval from the ministry before publishing a vacancy notice. Graphical diagrams of financing currents in basic schools and *gimnazije* (the same applies for all other upper secondary schools) are available in the Eurydice report: Financing Schools, Mechanisms, Methods and Criteria in Public Funding<sup>60</sup>.

199A public network<sup>61</sup> is established for the public service in education. It is composed of public kindergartens and schools, private kindergartens and schools as well as private individuals who have a concession (private kindergartens and schools are not a part of the public network, but they do receive funds in accordance with the law). The public network of basic schools must provide all children the opportunity of basic education, and a public network of music schools must be structured in such a way that it provides all pupils willing to learn the basic music education and to the particularly talented students skills needed for continuing music education.

**TABLE 3.4 INSTITUTIONS OF BASIC EDUCATION EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION2017 (DATA AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2016)**

Type / School year	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Basic schools	448	448	447	447	448	449	449	451	450	450	450	450	452	453
Basic schools with specialised classes	17	17	18	18	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Branch schools	358	353	350	346	341	338	334	335	333	332	330	330	325	319
Private basic schools	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	5	5
Basic schools with adapted programme	32	32	31	31	30	29	28	28	27	27	27	27	27	27
Public music schools	53	53	53	53	53	53	53	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Private music schools	3	3	4	5	6	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14
Institutions for education of SEN children and youth	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16

Source: Ministry for Education, Science and Sports

200To pursue educational activities, **public kindergartens and schools** must have educational staff with prescribed educational attainment, as well as spaces, facilities and equipment as specified by the minister or the chamber authorised by law.<sup>62</sup> Schools carrying out state-approved education programmes and kindergartens carrying out programmes for pre-school children may begin to perform educational activities after they are included in the database led by the Ministry responsible for education. The system of **upper secondary education** and the system of short-cycle higher technical schools is centralised (see Section 2). The establishment and funding of schools as well as the approval and distribution of education programmes is decided at the national level. Schools and teachers are autonomous in the concretisation of educational content, the choice of teaching methods, staffing and regulation of working conditions, as well as the recruitment of newcomers. Schools perform **self-evaluation**, study and adopt reports on the implementation of the annual work plan and the financial and human resources plan. School

<sup>60</sup> [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic\\_reports/170EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/170EN.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> More in Section 4.5.

<sup>62</sup> See Section 2.1.

business is monitored and overlooked by other external institutions, namely the Inspectorate for Education and Sport, Court of Audit, Budget Supervision Office, and the National Education Institute Slovenia.

201 As way of establishing **mechanisms** to exchange information and experience of managing resources efficiently schools cooperate with various institutes that monitor, analyse, research, report and undertake projects in education, namely with the National Education Institute, Association of Head masters, Education Research Institute and other institutions.

202 When addressing efficiency and effectiveness, it has to be highlighted that **the concept of assessing efficiency in the educational system** is based on measuring the achievement of educational objectives as defined under Articles 2 and 3 of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (see also Section 2.3 and Annex I for a complete list of goals set out by law). However, the achieving of goals and objectives does not relate to the allocation of funds; one allocates funds in terms of standards set.

203 In terms of these goals, kindergartens, schools and other education institutions for SEN children have to ensure a safe and supporting learning environment, where corporal punishment of children and all other forms of violence against and among children are prohibited. The same applies to unequal treatment based on gender, sexual orientation, social and cultural background, religion, race, ethnicity and national origin and peculiarities in physical and mental development.

204 Monitoring the effectiveness of the system in achieving these goals mainly focuses on the goals where there is possible to measure achievement of individual goals via indicators: educational attainment levels, dropout rates, inclusion of youngsters in education and the involvement of adults in lifelong learning. The indicators related to monitoring these goals correspond to the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, which lists the following two goals for education:

- Less than 10% of the young that leave the school too early;
- At least 40% of the people between 30 and 34 years old with higher education.

205 Slovenia has already achieved both goals.

*TABLE 3.5 KEY INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ET 2020, SLOVENIA, EU*

			Slovenia		EU average		ET 2020 benchmark
			2011	2014	2011	2014	
<b>Basic skills' attainment</b>							
Share of 15 year-olds with underachievement in:	Reading	:		21.1%	:	17.8%	15%
	Maths	:		20.1%	:	22.1%	
	Science	:		12.9%	:	16.6%	
<b>Education attainment levels of young people across Europe</b>							
Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)	Men		5.7%	6.0%	15.2%	12.7%	Below 10 %
	Women		2.5%	2.7%	11.5%	9.5%	

	Total	4.2%	<b>4.4%</b>	13.4%	11.1%	
Tertiary education attainment (age 30-34)	Men	29.4%	30.0%	31.0%	33.6%	At least 40%
	Women	47.3%	53.7%	38.7%	42.3%	
	Total	37.0%	<b>41.0%</b>	34.6%	37.9%	
Participation in pre-school education						
Early childhood education and care (participation from age 4 to starting age of compulsory education)		89.8%	89.8%	93.2%	93.9%	95%
Adult participation in lifelong learning						
Share of adults participating in lifelong learning	ISCED (0-8)	<b>15.9%</b>	11.9%	8.9%	10.7%	15%
Graduates' employability						
Employment rate of recent graduates by education attainment (age 20-34 having left education 1-3 years before reference year)	ISCED 3-4	68.7%	62.5%	71.3%	70.8%	82%
	ISCED 5-8	80.3%	74.3%	82.5%	80.5%	
	ISCED 3-8	76.0%	70.1%	77.1%	76.1%	

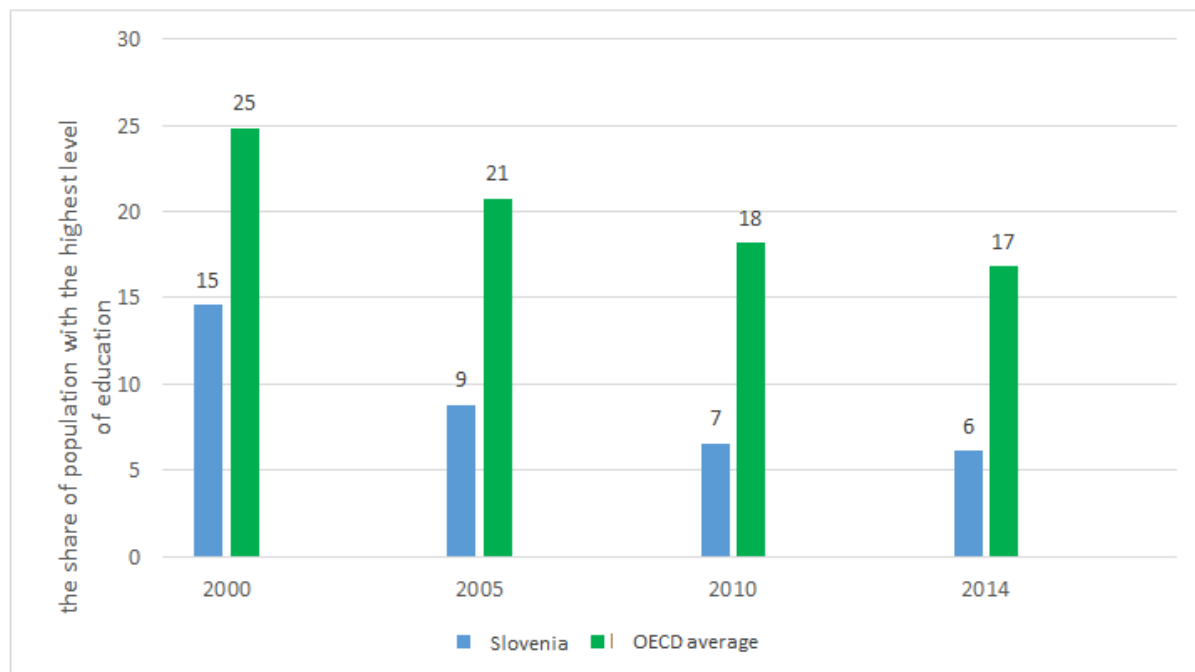
Sources: Eurostat (LFS, GFS), OECD (PISA).

Note: ET 2020 benchmark: data refer to weighted EU average, covering a different number of Member States depending on the source.

\* The data in bold indicate the ET 2020 benchmarks that Slovenia has achieved. Source: Education and Training Monitor 2015, Slovenia.

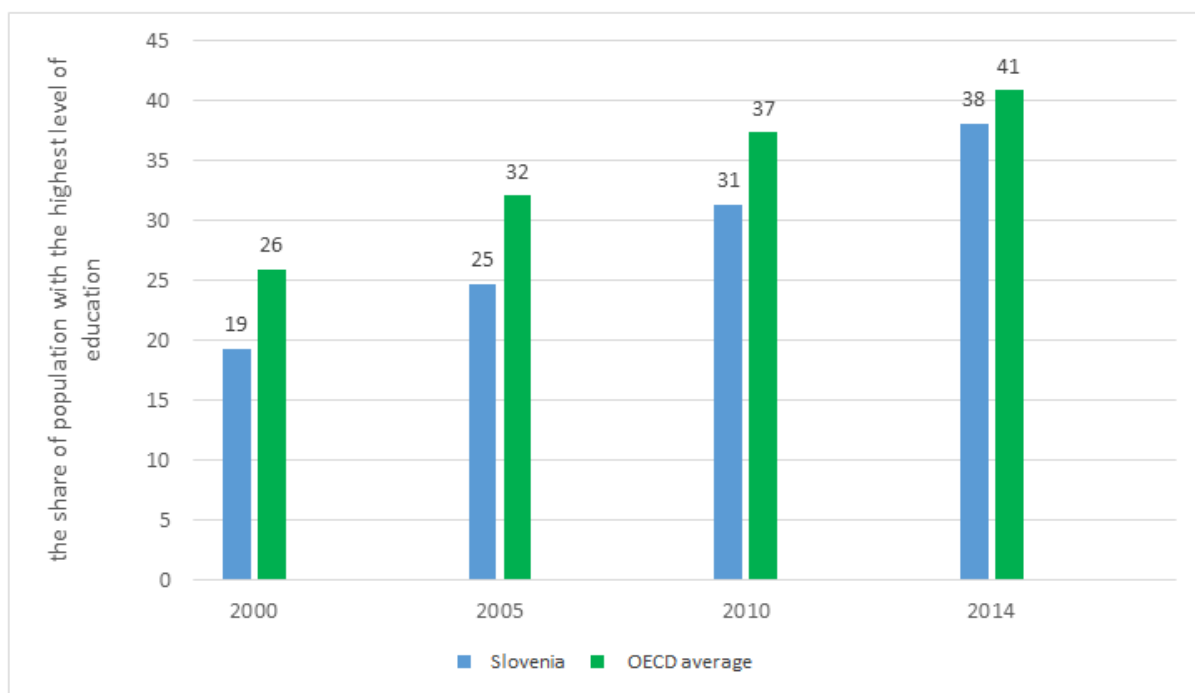
206 During 2000 and 2014, Slovenia witnessed a trend in raising the educational attainment of the population in general and in particular of young people. At the turn of the millennium, the proportion of young people with less than upper secondary education was distinctly smaller than the average of the OECD countries. By 2014, this share has decreased more than in the average of the OECD countries. A similar trend has also been seen when it comes to achieving tertiary education of the 25–34 year olds. In the said period, Slovenia has lowered the difference with the average of OECD countries from 7% to 3%. In the chosen observation period, the number of those with tertiary educated increased compared to the OECD countries.

*GRAPH 3.7 TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF 25–34 YEAR- OLDS – BELOW UPPER SECONDARY*



Source: EAG 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933284763>

*GRAF 3.8 TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF 25–34 YEAR-OLDS – TERTIARY*



Source: EAG 2015.

207 In 2014, Slovenia has already achieved and even exceeded the EU goals related to early school leaving, the proportion of young people between 30 and 34 years with tertiary education, and the achievements of 15-year-olds in science (PISA). However, other benchmarks have yet to be achieved. Participation in pre-school education, employability of graduates, and participation of adults in lifelong learning remain the areas in need of further improvements. We also need to work on maintenance and improve the achieved state given the values obtained in the learning achievements of mathematic, scientific and reading literacy.

208 In 2009, the participation rate of pre-school children in kindergartens was 73.9%. At the end of the 2014/2015 school year, the number reached 76.8% (an increase of 1.3% over previous year); therefore, presuming the dynamics stay the same, we can expect a slight increase of the participation rate in 2016 and 2017.

209 Basic education is compulsory for all 6-year-old children and lasts nine years. Based on the entire population, the percentage of the pupils enrolled in the basic education has always been 100%.

210 Also important is the percentage of pupils who continue their education after they completed basic school. Since 2010, when it was at 98.5%, it has been increasing constantly. In 2014, it was 99.1%.

211 As explained above, achieving the set objectives of performance or efficiency does not affect the planning of the amount of funds received by each school. Efficiency at the level of individual school is presented in a series of reports: the report on the realisation of the financial plan, the report on the realisation of teaching, the report on the realisation of learning support, the report of the school on the implementation of individual elements of compulsory and extended program. Funders monitor the use of funds in schools, their business and ensure the regularity of spending. However, they do not monitor their success or efficiency of the operation of individual

school in relation to the amount of funds received by the school. Section 5.1 describes the norms for the formations of classes relevant for resource planning.

### 3.4. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF THE USE OF RESOURCES

212 In accordance with the law, the government establishes various professional bodies and institutions that provide expertise for decision-making and preparation of the regulations for certain fields of education (see Section 2.4). Governmental authorities include the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Professional Education, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Science and Technology.

213 In accordance with the Organization and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI, Article 28), public institutions may be established to perform a variety of tasks, including the provision of expertise for decision-making on matters within the responsibility of expert councils and the ministry; developing, introducing, monitoring and evaluating curricula; research and development in education; developing quality at all levels of education; monitoring and evaluating educational practice, management and leadership of educational institutions and so on. Several public institutions were established in accordance with this article: National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (ZRSŠ), Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI), National Examinations Centre (RIC), Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (ACS), CMEPIUS, Centre for School and Outdoor Education (CŠOD) and National School of Leadership in Education (ŠR).

214 In accordance with the Organization and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI, Article 20a), the Minister responsible for education also nominates the Council for Quality and Evaluation. The Council's main task is to adopt criteria and procedures for the assessment and the assurance of quality at kindergartens and schools at the national level; however, it also proposes the topics of national evaluation studies that may help in shaping evidence-based policy (EYPA, 2016).

215 The National Educational Institute (ZRSŠ), the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI), councils of experts, Council for Higher Education, Council for Science and Technology, Education, Science and Culture Trade Union of Slovenia (SVIZ<sup>63</sup>), National Examinations Centre (RIC), and Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS<sup>64</sup>) are the ones that **most often cooperate when it comes to developing educational policies and they also influence their development**. However, broader policy-making process, especially in what concerns various consultations, also includes other interest groups, such as parents, trade unions, associations of head masters and teachers, and students, for example the Government Council for Student Affairs,<sup>65</sup> Slovenian Student Union,<sup>66</sup> School Student Organisation of Slovenia,<sup>67</sup> the Association

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.sviz.si/>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.arrs.gov.si/en/index.asp>

<sup>65</sup> [http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna\\_podrocja/direktorat\\_zavisoko\\_solstvo/sektor\\_zavisoko\\_solstvo/svet\\_vlade\\_rs\\_zastudentstva\\_vprasanja/](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/direktorat_zavisoko_solstvo/sektor_zavisoko_solstvo/svet_vlade_rs_zastudentstva_vprasanja/)

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.studentska-org.si/en>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.dijaska.org/>

of Working Groups of Parent Councils,<sup>68</sup> Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS), and the Chamber of Crafts of Slovenia (OZS) (EYPA, 2016).

- 216 The Educational Research Institute (PI<sup>69</sup>) was established by the government and is an independent research institute. It has carried out several extensive international surveys (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, Talis, ICILS) and other research ordered by the ministry. The Educational Research Institute also serves as the national coordination point for evaluation studies, ordered by the Council for Quality and Evaluation.
- 217 Specialist background documents for both the legal framework and curricular content are usually developed by a public institution, depending on the area/topic of policy development. Professional basis for new legislation or changes to the system is developed in close cooperation with the Ministry. Usually they include analysis of the situation and proposed new solutions. The Ministry also analyses the solutions of other national systems and provides legally binding elements of the proposed legislation – a description of the arrangements in legal systems of at least three countries of the European Union.
- 218 Depending on the topic, the Minister may ask the relevant professional council for the opinion on proposed solutions (in some cases, acquiring an opinion of the councils or trade unions is legally binding, see above). If needed, the Minister may also consult with interested parties. In addition, the drafts may be presented at various events where head masters, teachers and others meet.
- 219 For the general public proceeding, the draft regulation is then published online in the form of a legislative proposal with all mandatory elements, as is required by the National Assembly of Slovenia's Rules of Procedure.<sup>70</sup> After the public proceeding is completed and the comments taken into account, the legislative proposal is submitted for approval to the government. After that, it is sent to the National Assembly, which begins the legislative process (more information on the legislative process is on the website of the National Assembly). The legal framework stipulates a public debate before any legislative changes, and the political bodies must take into account the profession and law.
- 220 Resolution on Legislative Regulation includes guidelines for cooperation with professional and general public, which should reduce the democratic deficit and enable the adoption of the regulations of the highest quality. Minimum recommendations include: a period of 30 to 60 days for proceeding of each draft law, accompanied by documentation on key issues, proposed technical solutions and goals that the regulation wishes to achieve; after the public proceeding, a report on the impact of public hearings on major solutions should be prepared; a call for public hearing should be published and encouraged in order to ensure a response of the target groups and experts as well as the general public. In order to increase transparency of the legislative process, a sub-portal of e-government, entitled e-Democracy,<sup>71</sup> has been established. Every new draft law prepared for public hearing is published on that portal (EYPA, 2016, 5).
- 221 Prior to determining the norms and standards and the methodology for determining financial resources per participant in education, the Minister obtains the opinion of the responsible council of experts and the representative unions in the field of education (ZOFVI, Article 84) (EYPA, 2016, 7).

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<sup>68</sup> <http://www.zasss.si/>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.pei.si/>

<sup>70</sup> **RULES OF PROCEDURE** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=POSL34>

<sup>71</sup> **PORTAL** <https://e-uprava.gov.si/drzava-in-druzba/e-demokracija/predlogi-predpisov.html>

222 Criteria for the establishment of a public network (kindergartens, basic schools and upper secondary schools, basic music schools, higher education, adult education, student homes, institutions for the education of children with special needs) are determined by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. In the process of criteria adoption it is necessary to obtain the opinion of the competent expert council (ZOFVI, Article 11) (EYPA, 2016, 7–8). The conditions for the foundation of a public kindergarten or school and for the establishment of organisational units shall be specified in detail by the Minister. In the drafting process, the Minister shall seek the opinion of the responsible council of experts (ZOFVI, Article 44).

223 In some cases, new educational policies are being implemented or tested via pilot projects. In recent years, the new way of financing upper secondary schools (equal amounts per student) as well as the healthy lifestyle project were tested and implemented in this manner. Currently, the apprenticeship in vocational secondary schools is also being implemented this way. Introducing new changes to the educational system is based on the provisions of Article 20 (ZOFVI) and the rules on updating. Since 2014, Rules on updating the educational process<sup>72</sup> now place a greater emphasis on the introduction and monitoring of the programs (although some “experiments” may happen occasionally), and the experiments are intended primarily for individual program elements or for the specific cases of implementation of the teaching process.

## 3.5. MAIN CHALLENGES

224 In the field of resource management, the implementation of the decision of the Constitutional Court on the 100% financing of compulsory basic education in private schools remains one of the challenges. For this, an amendment to the Organization and Financing of Education Act and additional funding sources are needed.

225 In the field of upper secondary vocational education, an important challenge is the introduction of the apprenticeship system. The Ministry of Education wishes to use the apprenticeship to bring the vocational education and training of the youth closer to the needs of employers and to link the educational system even closer with craft and industry. This will contribute to smoother integration of young people into the labour market and, consequently, to reducing the unemployment rate among young people. The apprenticeship will begin its trial period in the 2017/2018 school year.

226 In adult education, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport set out to improve the skills of the adult population. The results of a recent international study PIAAC showed that Slovenia is below the OECD average when it comes to the skills of the adult population. In view of this, the Ministry plans to establish an appropriate basic educational structure, which will enable a stable and predictable financing of public institutions for adult education. In the time of drafting this report, the Ministry was preparing draft amendments to the Adult Education Act, which would, inter alia, legally define public service in this area. It would be carried out by the public network of public institutions, to be arranged so as to take account of the population characteristics (especially the vulnerable target groups), settlement, development areas, transport connections and other characteristics that define the scope of needs for these programs and activities. This would allow more adults to participate in education and training programs.

227 For Slovenia, one of the remaining challenges is also the elimination of austerity measures brought by the Fiscal Balance Act (ZUJF). In December 2016, Slovenian Government and the

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<sup>72</sup> **RULES** <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlurid=2014170>

public sector unions signed an agreement, in which they agreed to eliminate the anomalies in the evaluation of job positions and titles, as well as lower austerity measures for holiday allowance and supplementary pension funds in 2017. The total impact on public financing expenditure in 2017 is thus expected to total €56 million. In the time of drafting this report, some austerity measures remained despite the economic growth.

228 In this period, the Ministry of Education, Science and sport has been responding also to the challenges posed by the Court of Auditors in their Report on the working hours of teachers (2016) in the beginning of 2016. The auditors accused the Ministry of being inefficient in regulating the overall working time of teachers in basic schools (complaints related to the regulations requiring regular overall working time of the teachers, the duration, as well as the uniform rules on the organisation of working hours and overall working time of teachers). In July 2016, the Court of Auditors evaluated the proposed measures of the Ministry in its following post-audit report with remedial measures (2016) as appropriate (for example, the preparation of the draft of the annual working time of teachers).

229 The Court's report indicates a more pressing issue, perceived by the Ministry. The pedagogical process is becoming more and more unpredictable and complex, so there is a great need for rapid adjustment of teachers, schools and school management. The limitations are often posed by the legal framework and financial capabilities of the schools. From the perspective of the system and the allocation of resources, there is another, more problematic issue, because the evaluation of the work of teachers and head masters is not clearly specified. The same applies to the work that individuals in such complex situations invest in the functioning of the system and in the achievement of good results comparable to the EU.

## 4. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

### 4.1. DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES AMONG THE LEVELS OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

230 The scope of financing of educational levels, whether it comes from central or local government, can be seen from the table.

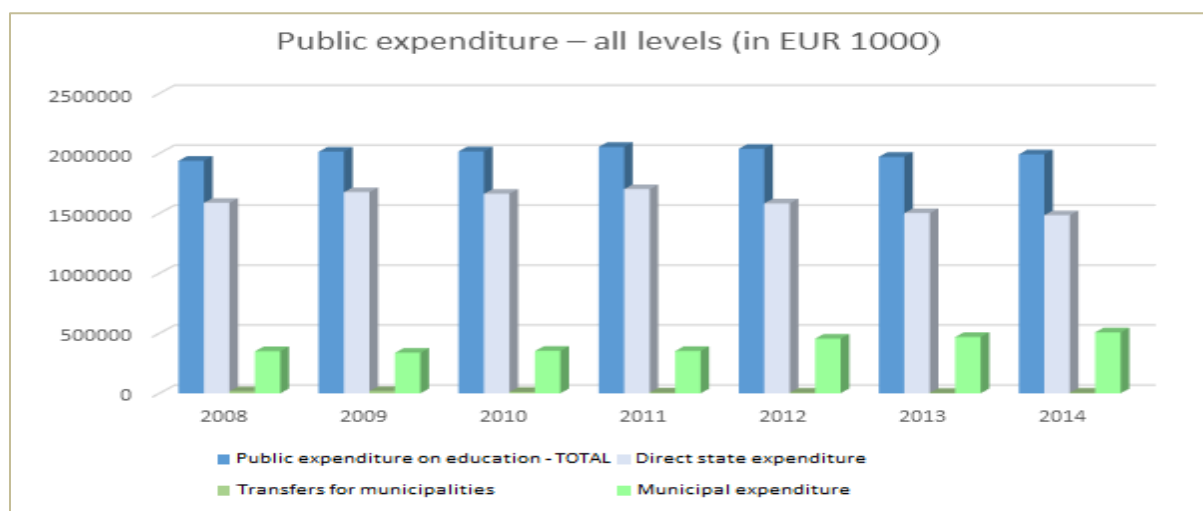
*TABLE 4.1 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AT THE STATE AND MUNICIPAL LEVEL RELATING TO FORMAL EDUCATION FROM 2008 TO 2014 (IN €1000)*

	Level of education - TOTAL				Pre-school education			Basic education			Upper-secondary education		
	Public expenditure for education - TOTAL	State expenditure	... of which transfer for municipalities	Municipal expenditure	State expenditure	... of which transfer for municipalities	Municipal expenditure	State expenditure	... of which transfer for municipalities	Municipal expenditure	State expenditure	... of which transfer for municipalities	Municipal expenditure
2008	1,937,823	1,603,951	16,330	350,202	8,785	1,083	174,579	725,631	14,548	165,356	424,871	700	3,344
2009	2,013,949	1,694,156	17,884	337,677	17,015	1,053	182,925	748,185	15,167	147,850	442,582	1,664	3,282
2010	2,016,547	1,674,941	11528	353134	17467	281	214449	761716	5506	128610	428255	404	12752

2011	2053513	1707126	5786	352173	17467	281	214449	761716	5506	128610	434839	...	3688
2012	2037516	1587577	5113	455052	27938	453	325967	753691	4660	121687	376508	...	2799
2013	1970622	1504799	2920	468743	25915	255	321167	708916	2665	138316	368989	...	3695
2014	1991495	1488088	4201	507609	31492	3136	344245	706799	1066	157027	357377	...	3789

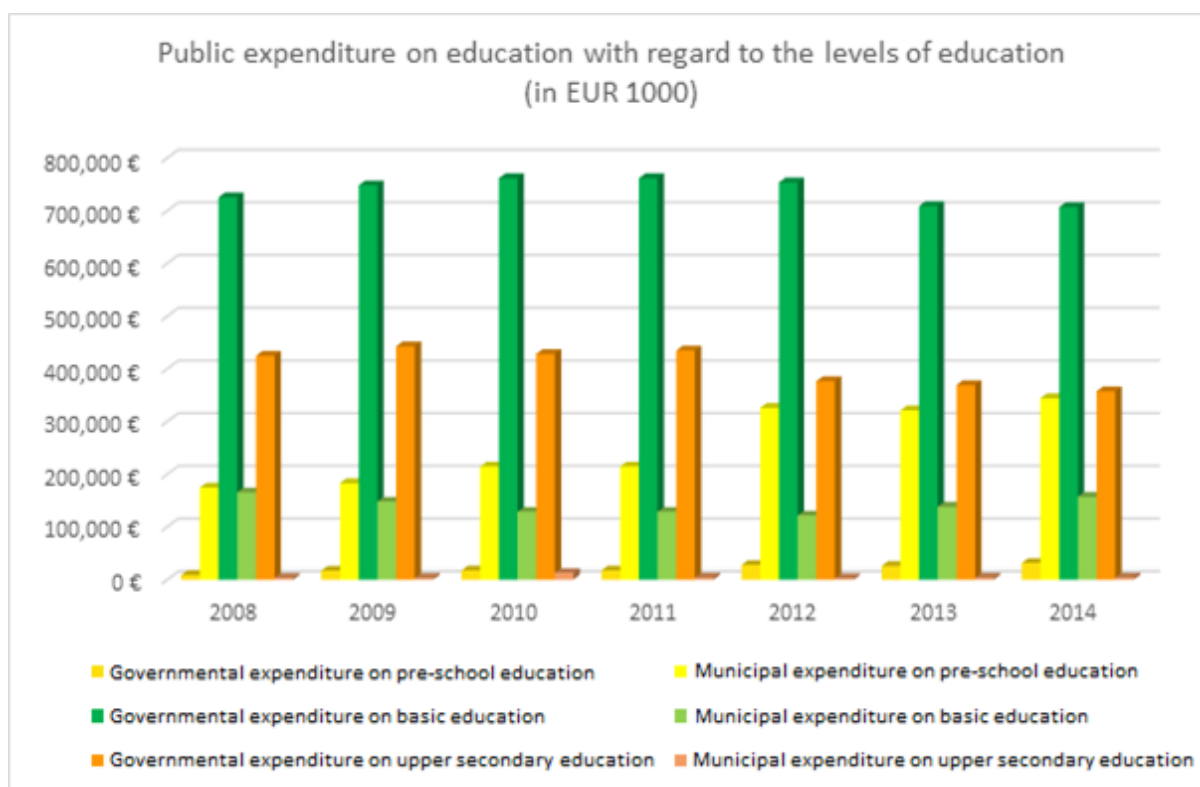
Source: SURS.

*GRAPH 4.1 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION*



Source: SURS.

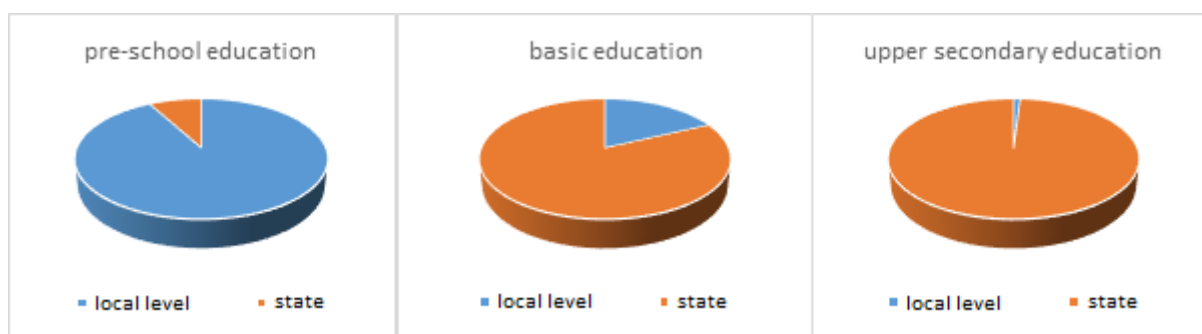
*GRAPH 4.2 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO THE LEVELS OF EDUCATION*



Source: SURS.

231 Decentralised financing is mainly present in pre-school education, where local government finances 92% of funding for education. However, financing of basic and upper-secondary education is fairly centralised – the state is the main source of financing for basic (82%) and upper-secondary education (99%).

*GRAPH 4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR EDUCATION*



Source: SURS.

232 State resources for education are earmarked in the annual government budget, namely to comply with legal obligation to pursue public service for education through a public network and state-approved programmes. The scope of funding for education in the annual state budget is planned by taking into account the past expenditure, budgetary starting point, such as salary

development, material costs and assets for investment purposes, the size of population and possible amendments to the legislation which have an effect on the scope of funding.

233 Municipalities have their own budgets financed by resources independent from the state: building land usage fee, inheritance and gift taxes, games of chance, real estate transfers and other sources which belong entirely to the municipality on the territory of which the sources of the subject of taxation or permanent residence of the taxable person are collected. Among other resources are also municipality utility tax, contributions, voluntary contributions, environmental taxes, fines, concession fees, payments for public services as well as a 54% personal income tax from the previous year or the proportion which belongs to the municipalities in an amount of the appropriate total consumption of municipalities in each financial year. When planning the scope of funding, the municipalities are taking into account similar criteria in the same way they are taken into account at the state level.

234 The state provides additional resources to municipalities in case they do not meet the “adequate absorption” of their own sources. Additional funding is not intended for or directly linked to education, but it is an integral part of the municipal budget which also provides resources for education. There is no mechanism which would distribute funding for education among the levels of education management. An exception is capital transfers which the state provides to the municipalities.

235 Most of the public money intended for education goes to kindergartens and schools which receive funding from the central and local government as well as from parents and, in some cases, sponsors or the market. The administrative body of the kindergarten or school – the head master – is responsible for the management of funds. The state and local community do not directly pay the salaries of teachers and other employees or for material costs; kindergartens and schools or head masters are responsible for payments. The only exception are large investments. Besides additional financing of the primary spending, the central government is also granting capital transfers to the local government in cases when the state is co-financing a certain investments. Investment funds are earmarked only, so it is safe to say that all funds intended for education that the central government devotes to the local government are earmarked funds. The arrangement of co-financing investments has implemented the measures in the law promoting a balanced development. They aim at ensuring a level playing field to fulfil the needs of residents regardless of the municipality in which they live. This applies to all investments and not exclusively to education-related investments. Other increasing needs of individual municipalities are taken into consideration in the setting of the scope of funding for each school and not through transfers from the central to the local level.

## 4.2. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING ACCORDING TO ITS TYPES

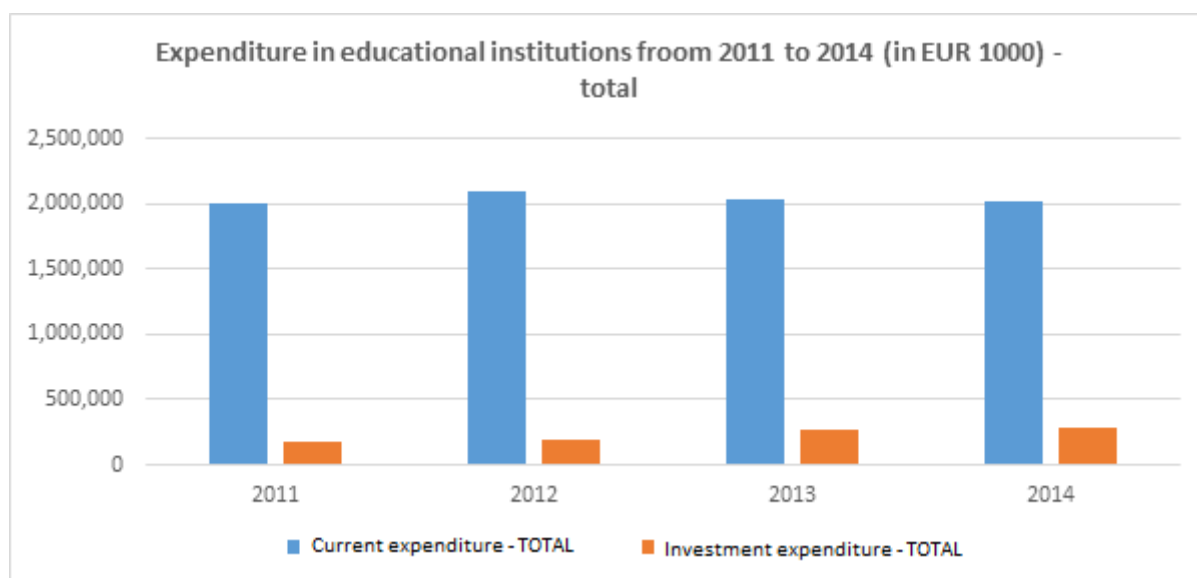
236 The data on consumption of resources in educational establishments shows that the current expenditure in relation to the total expenditure on all levels of education represented 88% in 2014, 12% of which were capital expenditures. The percentage throughout the years is relatively stable. The percentage of the current expenditure according to the level of education in 2014 is 84% for pre-school education, 89% for basic education and 92% for upper secondary education. However, the percentage of capital expenditure in education according to the level of education in 2014 is 16% for pre-school education, 11% for basic education and 8% for upper secondary education. The data apply to the central and local level together.

**TABLE 4.2 EXPENDITURE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FROM 2011 TO 2014 (IN €1000)**

YEAR	Level of education - TOTAL		Pre-school education		Basic education		Secondary education	
	Current expenditure	Investment expenditure	Current expenditure	Investment expenditure	Current expenditure	Investment expenditure	Current expenditure	Investment expenditure
2011	1,995,509	181,613	249,204	37,739	886,758	72,955	400,359	24,215
2012	2,097,189	190,435	410,220	44,289	870,431	64,570	350,540	27,298
2013	2,025,594	268,105	403,309	56,814	849,678	85,117	347,053	47,751
2014	2,017,633	282,129	407,250	79,442	840,965	102,882	343,283	31,017

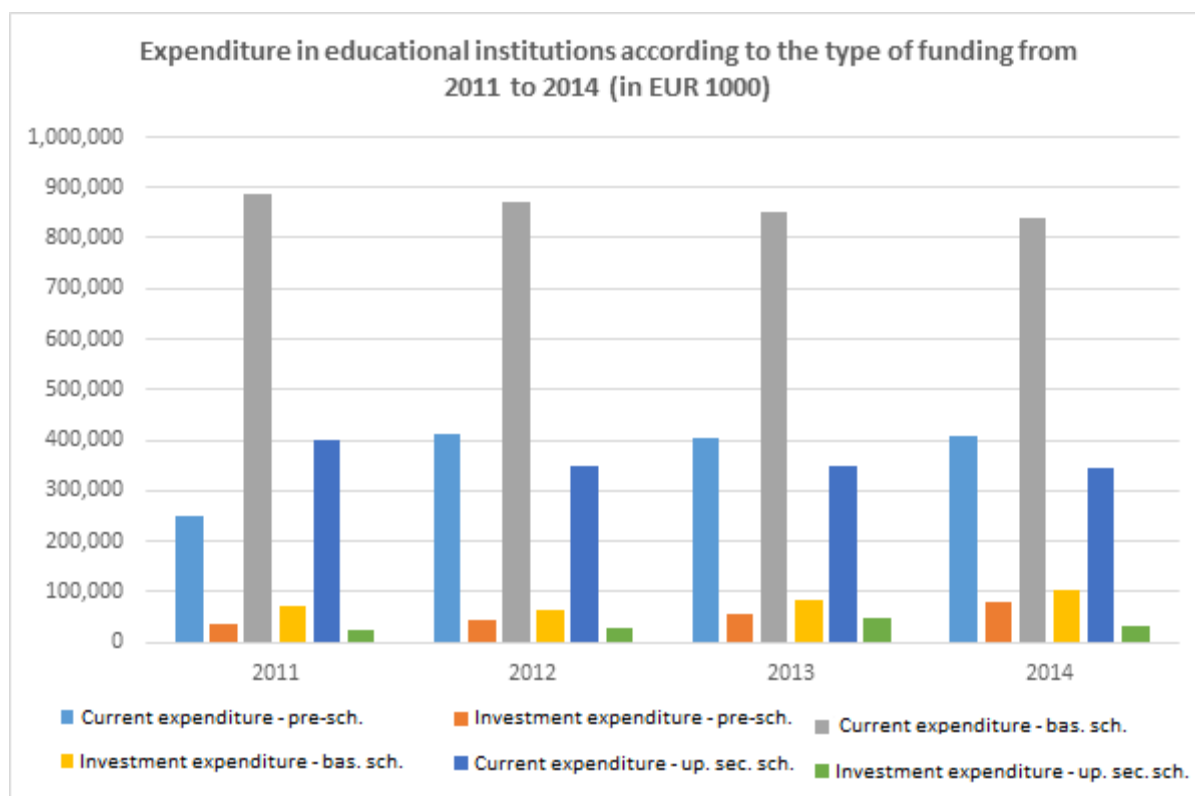
SOURCE: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

**GRAPH 4.4 EXPENDITURE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FROM 2011 TO 2014 – TOTAL**



Source: SURS

GRAPH 4.5 EXPENDITURE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE FROM 2011 TO 2014



Source: SURS.

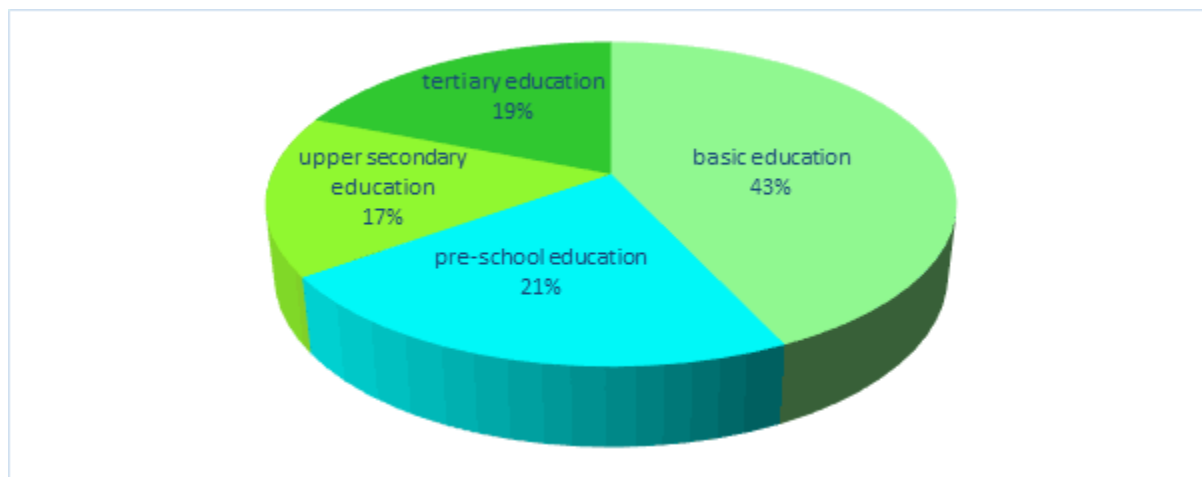
237 Kindergartens dedicate 76% of their current expenditure to salaries and 24% to material costs and services, which includes costs of around 10% for meals. Basic schools dedicate 80% of their current expenditure to salaries and 20% to material costs and services (AJ PES, 2016). The largest part of upper secondary schools' current expenditures is personnel costs, which account for 74% of all the expenditures. These 74% represent the costs of school professionals (64%), the costs of other technical-administrative workers and accountants (8%) and the costs of management staff (2%). In addition to personnel costs, running costs also include costs of services amounting to 16%, material costs amounting to 7% and other costs amounting to 2% (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, 2016).

### 4.3. DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES AMONG THE LEVELS AND SECTORS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

238 The major share of funding for education, 43% in 2015, is granted to basic education. Pre-school education is next with 21%, where an increase in funding in 2012 can be noted due to the already mentioned change in the way in which expenditure is included in statistics. Tertiary education

receives 19% of the total funds and upper secondary education receives 17% of the total funds in 2015.

*GRAPH 4.5 TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION IN 2015*



SOURCE: SURS.

*TABLE 4.3 TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FROM 2011 TO 2015*

Total (public, private and international) expenditure on educational institutions from 2011 to 2015 (in €1000)					
	Level of education - TOTAL	Pre-school education	Basic education	Upper secondary education	Tertiary education
2011	2,140,107	285,096	962,421	414,443	476,629
2012	2,227,186	453,536	951,624	382,257	438,533
2013	2,193,563	457,943	927,359	387,570	418,791
2014	2,207,495	479,887	948,152	362,590	415,490
2015	2.114.500	437.552	915.059	358.147	402.229

Source: SURS.

In 2012, there was a break in the time series. Given that the international definition of formal education was modified in accordance with the revised international classification of levels of education ISCED 2011, the expenditure related to formal education for 2012 also includes the programmes for education of the first age group in kindergartens, whereas only the

expenditures of the second age group education programmes in kindergartens were taken into account in the previous definition (in accordance with ISCED 97).

**TABLE 4.4 TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN RELATION TO EDUCATION LEVELS FROM 2011 TO 2015**

Total (public, private and international) expenditure on educational institutions in relation to education levels from 2011 to 2015 (in comparison to the overall expenditure)					
	Level of education - TOTAL	Pre-school education	Basic education	Upper secondary education	Tertiary education
2011	100%	13%	45%	19%	22%
2012	100%	20%	43%	17%	20%
2013	100%	21%	42%	18%	19%
2014	100%	22%	43%	16%	19%
2015	100%	21%	43%	17%	19%

Source: SURS.

In 2012, there was a break in the time series. Given that the international definition of formal education was modified in accordance with the revised international classification of levels of education ISCED 2011, the expenditure related to formal education for 2012 also includes the programmes for education of the first age group in kindergartens, whereas only the expenditures of the second age group education programmes in kindergartens were taken into account in the previous definition (in accordance with ISCED 97).

239 The situation in public expenditure is as follows:

**TABLE 4.5 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN RELATION TO EDUCATION LEVELS FROM 2011 TO 2014**

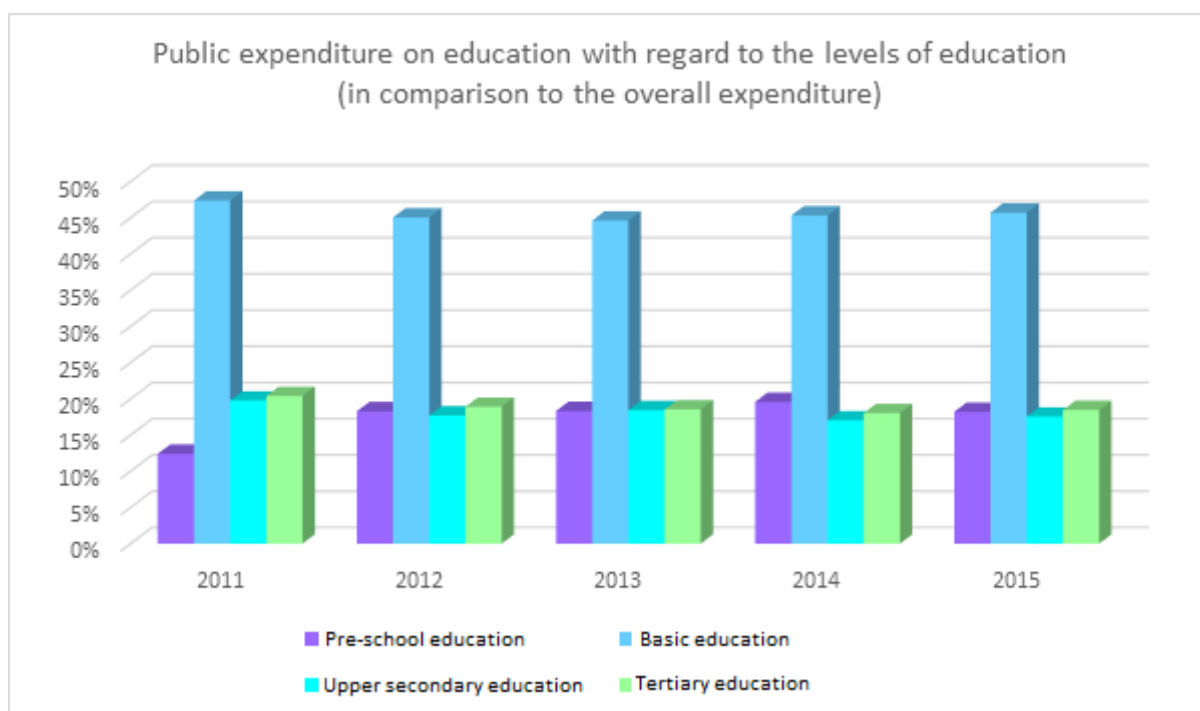
Public expenditure on education with regard to the levels of education from 2011 to 2014 (in comparison to the overall expenditure)					
	Level of education - TOTAL	Pre-school education	Primary education	Upper secondary education	Tertiary education services
2011	100%	12%	47%	20%	20%
2012	100%	18%	45%	18%	19%

2013	100%	18%	45%	18%	19%
2014	100%	20%	45%	17%	18%

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

In 2012, there was a break in the time series. Given that the international definition of formal education was modified in accordance with the revised international classification of levels of education ISCED 2011, the expenditure related to formal education for 2012 also includes the programmes for education of the first age group in kindergartens, whereas only the expenditures of the second age group education programmes in kindergartens were taken into account in the previous definition (in accordance with ISCED 97).

#### *GRAPH 4.6 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO THE LEVELS OF EDUCATION*



SOURCE: SURS.

240 As for **upper secondary education**, 37% of all the funding intended to upper secondary education were allocated for programmes of general education and 63% for all other types of education in upper secondary education in 2015. The proportion of funding intended for general programmes has been decreasing in recent years (amounting to 41% in 2013) and increasing for vocational programmes (amounting to 59% in 2013 of all funding for upper secondary education). As for tertiary education, the proportion of funding for the implementation of upper secondary education programmes represents 6% of the funding, whereas 94% of the funding goes to the implementation of higher education programmes.

## 4.4. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS

241 The financing mechanism of public schools and state-funded schools varies according to the level of education and financier. In **pre-school education**, which is mainly financed by the local government, the financing of educational institutions is in the domain of the local level. The kindergarten fee is determined by taking into account the socio-economic status of the family and the cost of the kindergarden's programme (kindergartens calculate the cost of the programme and submit it to the municipality for confirmation). Kindergarten is co-financed by the parents and by the municipality, which has to provide other funds that are not covered in the costs but are necessary for the functioning of the kindergarten (major maintenance, compensations and other costs).

242 In the field of **basic education**, the local government provides funding (costs not directly connected with the implementation of education programmes) and has the mechanism for the allocation of funds to schools.

- 243 Beside the funding for basic education, provided by the state (for the costs directly related to the implementation of education programmes), is determined using a calculation formula. The **formula** takes into account the number of participants, the location of the school (but only with regard to professional development opportunities for teachers), the number of teachers and their qualifications (salary grade) as well as the surface area of the school. In other words, these criteria are based on the real costs and needs of the school. In addition, the criteria take into consideration the number of children with special needs as well as children with the need for language assistance (children of Roma ethnicity, minorities, and migrants/asylum seekers). These criteria are based on the actual needs of schools and actual costs. This includes the number of children with special needs and the children's linguistic background (migrants, minorities, the Roma). The formula does not address the socio-economic background and is the same for the whole country. However, it is not the same for schools attended by national minorities which have different standards for forming classes.
- 244 As for **upper secondary education**, the state is financing schools according to the formula. The **formula** takes into account the number of participants and the type of education programme (every upper secondary school's education programme has a designated price). The number of teachers and other employees is taken into consideration in the calculation of the costs of individual programmes through norms and standards for the organisation of school time. This formula does not include the socio-economic background of students and is the same for the whole country.
- 245 A specific calculation is carried out for upper secondary schools to determine the scope of funding in support of upper secondary school students with special needs and school meal costs. The calculation is made based on school data on the number of students with special needs or the number of students eating at school.
- 246 In case students with special needs attend a mainstream school, the school receives additional funding. If they attend a special educational institution, the state finances the institution regardless of the educational level. In contrast to mainstream schools, these institutions follow different standards of organisation and implementation of education and proportionately receive more funds.
- 247 The rules on financing of upper secondary schools<sup>73</sup> allow the Ministry to provide additional funding on the basis of the information on schools and their own assessments. The location of the school is also taken into consideration (border areas and areas at risk).
- 248 Public funding is ensured for ISCED level 0 if the kindergarten meets certain criteria: that the programme lasts at least half a day and is available for all children, that there is at least one class of children and that the staff have the education level as it is required for public kindergartens.
- 249 Private schools have to provide officially recognised education programmes for ISCED levels 1–3 in case they want to receive public funding.
- 250 The starting amount for private schools is calculated in the same way as for public schools. Private schools (or kindergartens) receive 85% of that amount for ISCED level 0, 85% for ISCED levels 1–2 and 100% or 85% of that amount for ISCED level 3 (depending on the legislation in force at the time the school was established). Private schools do not receive funding for equity investments.

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<sup>73</sup> RULES <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=111372>.

251 Public resources for funding private schools are allocated to cover the costs, run education programmes while covering the salaries of teachers and other staff as well as the material costs related to the implementation of education programmes. The funding is provided in the form of lump sum in the same way as it is provided to public schools and the school can choose how to allocate them. Private schools are not allowed to use resources for other purposes than for the implementation of education programmes for which they received funding.

## 4.5. DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL PREMISES AND MATERIALS

252 The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI-NPB19) states that public service in education is **organised by a public network** formed by public kindergartens and schools, private kindergartens and schools as well as private providers that hold a concession.

253 The criteria for the public network are drawn up by the government of the Republic of Slovenia with regard to:

- The number and age of children in a given area;
- Agglomeration characteristics;
- Characteristics of the area in terms of development.

254 The Slovenian Government adopted the Decree on criteria for setting up a public network of basic schools, a public network of basic schools and educational institutions for children and youth with special needs, and a public network of music schools (Uradni list RS, official gazette Nos 16/98, 27/99, 134/03 and 37/16), setting out the criteria to create the public network of basic schools and the criteria for establishing school districts.

255 The **basic education** programme in the 2016/2017 school year is implemented in 772 basic schools in the Republic of Slovenia, 453 of which are independent schools (5 private) and 319 branches (2 private).

TABLE 4.6 BASIC SCHOOLS IN THE 2016/2017 SCHOOL YEAR

	Single and central basic schools			Branch basic schools		
	Classes	Pupils	Flooring surfaces (m <sup>2</sup> )	Classes	Pupils	Flooring surfaces (m <sup>2</sup> )
Average	16.74	349.54	4,544	3.47	52.78	772
Minimum	2	28	794	1	5	83
Maximum	40	1,002	10,689	19	369	3,595

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

256 An average single or central school has 350 pupils, just under 17 classes and 4,500 m<sup>2</sup> of cleaning surface areas. Branch schools have an average of 3.5 classes and 53 pupils as well as 772 m<sup>2</sup> of cleaning surface areas.

- 257 **Adapted basic education programme** for children with special needs is implemented in 27 independent schools for 2.235 pupils. In addition, children with special needs are attending 21 basic schools with units for children who follow an adapted curriculum (50 classes) and special curriculum (28 classes).
- 258 **Small schools** providing basic education programmes are not problematic as the data shows that the results are equally impressive as those of large schools. They may struggle in lower secondary education due to the complexity of the curriculum and the need to increase the number of teachers in terms of both quality and costs.
- 259 As for **upper secondary education**, there were 111 public and 6 private schools as well as 6 institutions for those with special needs across 12 regions in 2016 in Slovenia. In all of these institutions, 174 education programmes are provided in the 2016/2017 school year. This includes all education programmes along with adapted programmes for specific groups. Every year, more vacancies for new entrants are available in each region than the actual number of candidates in the generation. The existing network of upper secondary schools is well developed, diverse and comprehensive in terms of programmes, and offers many opportunities for education. As a result, there are no foreseeable changes to be expected in the upper secondary school network.
- 260 The establishment of public upper secondary schools is regulated by the Organization and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI), the central piece of legislation in education. According to Article 41 of the act, the state establishes public vocational, technical and professional upper secondary schools. Public general upper secondary schools (*gimnazije*) are also established by the state or by the urban municipality in agreement with the state. In accordance with the aforementioned act, self-governing national communities may also co-establish public schools for children to receive education in the language of the national community or a bilingual education.
- 261 Article 44 further states that a public school can be established if there are enough candidates enrolled for at least two classes for Year 1 and every other Year. This criterion does not apply to the establishment of organisational units and to areas with several nationalities and border areas as well as areas with developmental problems. In addition, the same rule is applied if only one school for the implementation of a certain education programme in the country is to be established or if the school is intended for education of children and adolescents with special needs.
- 262 The size of schools varies. Schools in large urban centres tend to have more students, whereas this is not the case for schools in rural areas. Around 450 to 650 students normally attend each upper secondary school.
- 263 Due to a continuous decrease in enrolment numbers in recent years, from the 1998/99 school year to the 2015/2016 school year, the **number of students** has fallen by nearly 30%, which amounts to approximately 50 average upper secondary schools with 629 students.
- 264 Significant **differences in average school sizes** can be seen across regions and municipalities. In major urban areas, school centres with several organisational units have developed and they can accept more upper secondary school students, even as many as 3,000. Schools situated outside city centres or even in areas suffering from depopulation or border areas tend to have a significantly lower number of students.
- 265 **Small upper secondary schools** are not a pressing problem in national and regional education policies. Schools that ensure full classes despite a lower number of pupils do not pose problems.

Where necessary, the state tries to stabilise the finances and redefine the programmes in schools in areas suffering from depopulation.

266 As for **upper secondary education**, the Rules on Methodology for Financing Education programmes in Upper Secondary Education present the basis for the funding of upper secondary schools since 2013. The amount of funds allocated to institutions or schools depends on the cost of the implementation of education programmes and the number of enrolled pupils. Although the number of pupils has been decreasing in recent years in Slovenia, the established schools were not closed. In anticipation of an increased enrolment in the coming years, various measures were adopted, such as additional funding, reorganisation and allocation of some new education programmes, in order to keep the schools that were most affected by a decrease in enrolment open.

267 In relation to the **innovative use of ICT** with the aim to bring the advantages of big schools to small schools, there is a model for the transfer of experiences from advanced to less experienced schools. In e-teaching head masters and teachers are able to give advice to managerial staff and provide teaching advice and support to schools in their local area or region.

268 As for **investments in educational premises** and materials, the Ministry (MIZŠ) is co-financing kindergartens and basic educational institutions owned by local communities and fully financing the upper secondary and short-cycle higher vocational educational institutions owned by the Republic of Slovenia. The co-financing programme currently involves 4 investment projects for kindergartens and 14 investment projects for basic education.

269 The Rules on standards and minimal technical conditions for kindergarten premises and equipment have to be taken into account in the planning of investments for kindergartens. As for the construction of basic and upper secondary schools, the instructions of the Ministry (MIZŠ) have to be followed. By following these guidelines, the quality and adequacy of the school premises are assured.

270 Co-financing of investments in kindergartens and basic education is based on the selection of projects for funding in public tenders. One of the ongoing projects is the programme to fund the refurbishment of kindergartens and basic schools due to natural radiation sources (radon). The aim to meet the infrastructure needs in upper secondary and short-cycle higher vocational education is carried out in conformity with the needs and the available budget resources. The Ministry is also investing in the ICT infrastructure.

271 The Ministry provides recommendations on standards and norms of the programme on digital literacy and information science in kindergartens and schools for co-financing ICT equipment. The Investments Directorate is responsible for the development and modernisation of recommendations, which are then signed by the minister. The recommendations determine the computer hardware for every classroom within an educational institution, for users and for computer classrooms (static and mobile equipment). (Guidelines for informatization, 2014)

272 The systematic introduction of the **use of ICT** in Slovenian education began as early as in 1994 through the information literacy programme *Računalniško opismenjevanje*. The aim of the project was to provide computer hardware and software (systemic and didactic) to Slovenian educational institutions, offer computer teacher training for the use of ICT in teaching as well as science and research projects to develop new approaches for the use. Between 2009 and 2013, the e-teaching project was developed for the training of teachers and head masters (to meet the e-standard). Around 8,000 head masters and teachers attended the seminars every year and more than 50% of the time, these seminars were in the form of webinars. Between 2006 and

2010, 128 various multimedia and interactive e-materials for different lessons were provided for basic, upper secondary and short-cycle higher vocational schools as well as for kindergartens. In 2011, the first four pilot e-textbooks were created. Today, there are more than 40 textbooks for the basic natural science subjects and basic schools.

273 In 2016, the **Information Society Development Strategy to 2020**<sup>74</sup> was adopted. Its aim is to accelerate the development of information society which will have an impact on the level of innovation and competitiveness of the Slovenian economy and society. It also seeks to increase the number of high-added value jobs, boost the quality of life and promote balanced regional development. The SI2010 strategy addresses the field of education and emphasises the following challenges of the information society: a low use of ICT in the learning process and a low level of knowledge and skills in the field as well as a lack of e-content and e-services in Slovenian language. In January 2016, the Minister's college confirmed the Strategic orientation for further promotion of ICT in Slovenian educational institutions by 2020<sup>75</sup>, drawn up by the Programme Council for Computerisation of Education.

274 International Computer and Information Literacy Study (**ICILS**) examining computer and information literacy of pupils in basic schools in different countries was carried out in 2013. A total of 14 countries out of 22 surveyed, including Slovenia, reached all the standards for the inclusion of their data in international comparisons.

275 Textbooks used in schools are approved by the Council of Expert for General Education of the Republic of Slovenia. A number of textbooks are available for individual subjects. The school can make an autonomous decision on which textbooks, workbooks and other teaching aids to use at school and it has to seek and receive the approval by the council of parents. Pupils and students may borrow textbooks free of charge from the textbook fund at the respective school.

276 It has been almost 20 years since the state took active part in the provision of textbooks to basic school pupils. At first, the **textbook funds**, the source of borrowing textbooks for most pupils, were set up to be co-financed annually by parents at a quarter of the new textbook price and schools would have autonomy over the modernisation of textbooks in the fund. In 2007, the state settled the parents' portion and since then, pupils have been borrowing textbooks at school free of charge. In the last two years (2015-2017), the state has provided additional funds for a complete modernisation of textbook funds and has been developing a new, comprehensive and sustainable model of textbook policy. The aim is to organise textbook funds in a more systematic way.

277 Similar textbook funds are established in most upper secondary schools in Slovenia. Nonetheless, the expenses are covered by contributions from the students. When upper secondary school textbook funds were established, the state provided a part of start-up funds, nowadays, the state does not fund them, which may jeopardises its smooth functioning. **Professional autonomy** is guaranteed with regard to textbooks as teachers may choose among competitive textbooks from different publishing houses themselves. However, these textbooks, offered by different publishing houses, have to be approved by the competent councils of experts. There are **43 textbooks** available free of charge for general subjects in basic and upper secondary schools.

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<sup>74</sup> **Digital Slovenia** [http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/Informacijska\\_druzba/DSI\\_2020.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/Informacijska_druzba/DSI_2020.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> **ORIENTATION**

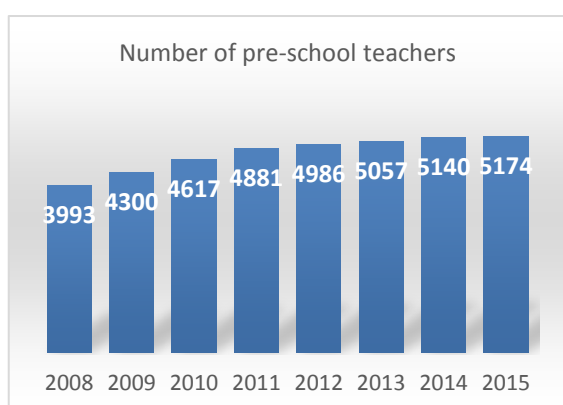
[http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/StrateskeUsmeritveNadaljnegaUvajanjaIKT1\\_2016.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/StrateskeUsmeritveNadaljnegaUvajanjaIKT1_2016.pdf)

## 4.6. TEACHERS AND EDUCATION STAFF

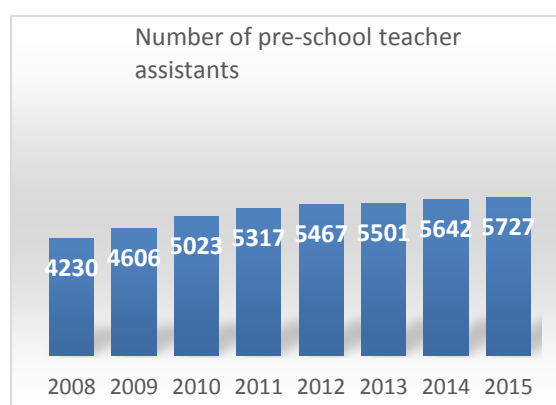
278 According to the statistical data in 2014 (SURS, Day, 2014), some 47,000 teachers, pre-school teachers and other professionals or 5.8% of the working population were providing education. Teachers, childcare workers and special education teachers are also engaged in education of children and adolescents who live in dormitories or educational institutions, and education, work and care centres.

279 In average, 43% of unemployed education professionals were aged between 30 and 39<sup>11</sup>.

*GRAPH 4.6 INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS AND THEIR ASSISTANTS BETWEEN 2008 AND 2015*



Source: SURS.



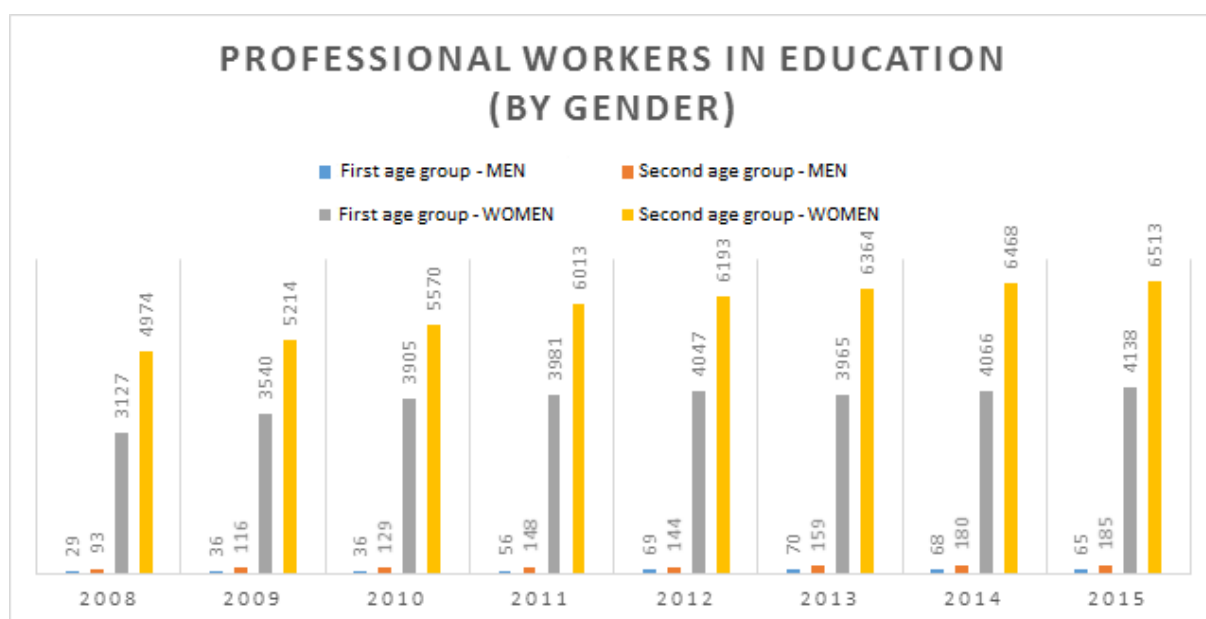
Source: SURS.

Size and composition of teachers and education staff

Figures for a given year (e.g. 2012) are related to the current school year (e.g. 2012/2013).

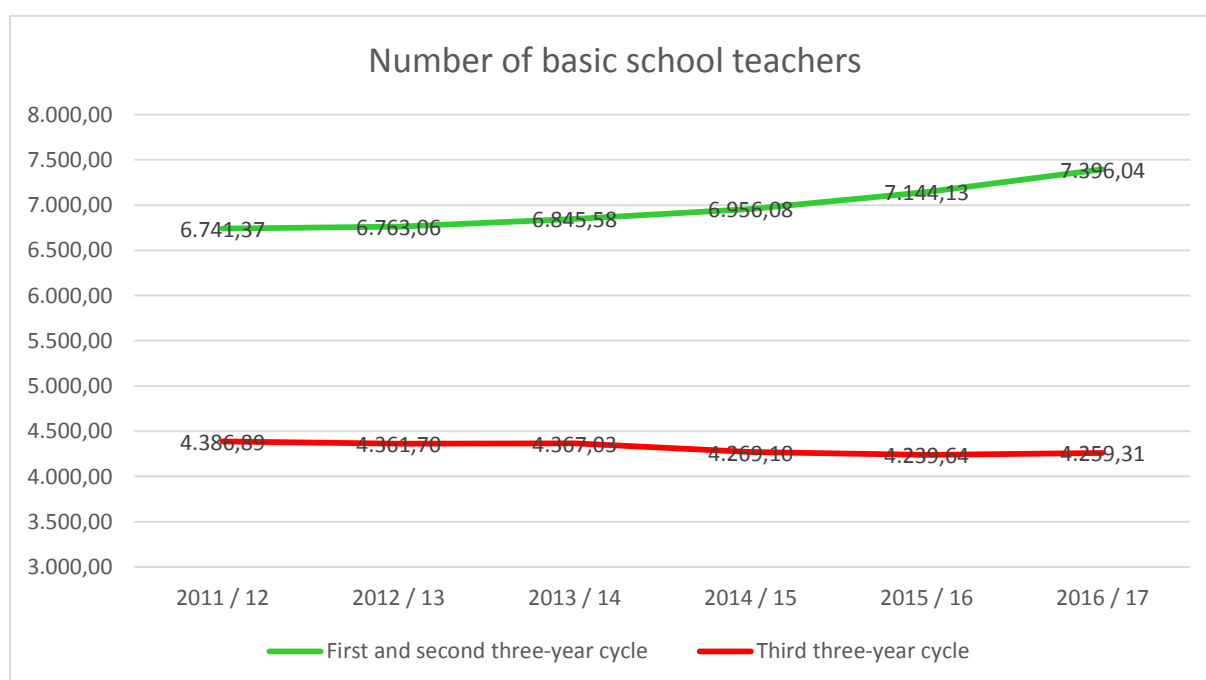
280 In pre-school education, 65 men and 4,138 women were providing education in the first age-group in 2015. In 2014, there were 68 men and 4,066 women employed in the same field (SURS, SI-Stat Data Portal, 2016).

GRAPH 4.7 EDUCATION STAFF IN KINDERGARTENS BY GENDER BETWEEN 2008 AND 2015



Source: SURS.

GRAPH 4.8 NUMBER OF TEACHERS BETWEEN 2011 AND 2017 (TEACHERS IN THE COMPULSORY PROGRAMME ONLY)

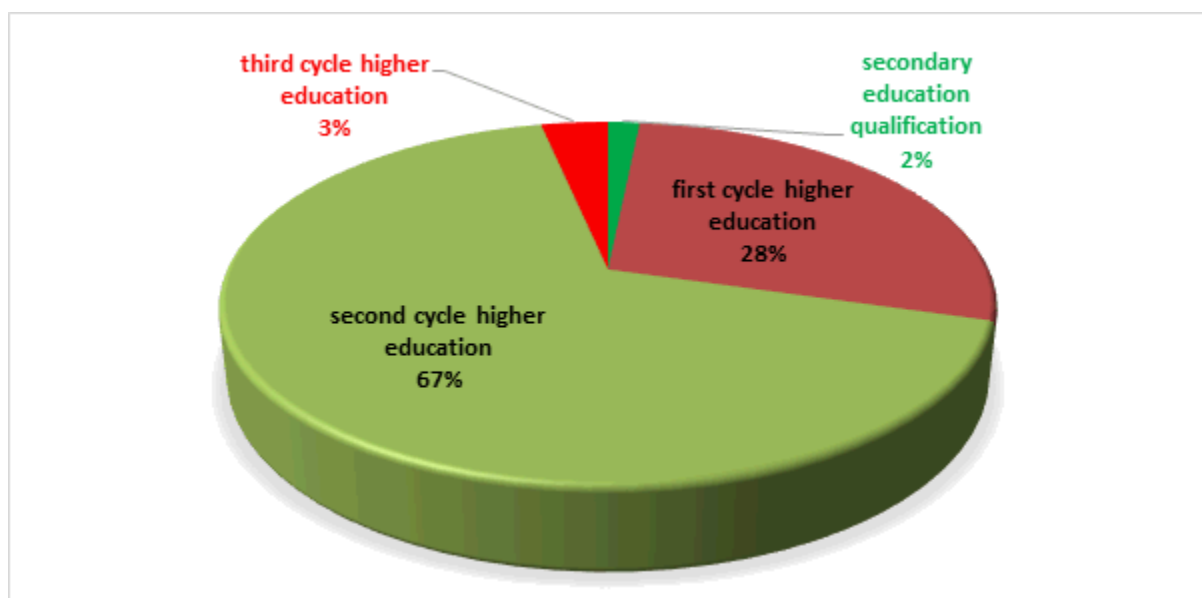


Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

281 In 2014, there were 282 teachers with upper secondary education qualification, 4,950 with undergraduate (first cycle), 11,916 with postgraduate (second cycle), and 593 with a third cycle

higher education (including the teachers of the extended programme and other educational staff). In 2014, 193 men and 6,633 women taught in the first and in the second cycle of basic school, and 1,439 men and 5,518 women in the third cycle (teachers in the compulsory programme only). In the first and second cycle of basic education, women predominated in the teaching profession in 2014.

*GRAPH 4.9 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF TEACHERS IN BASIC SCHOOL PROGRAMME IN 2014 (INCLUDING THE TEACHERS OF THE EXTENDED PROGRAMME AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL STAFF)*

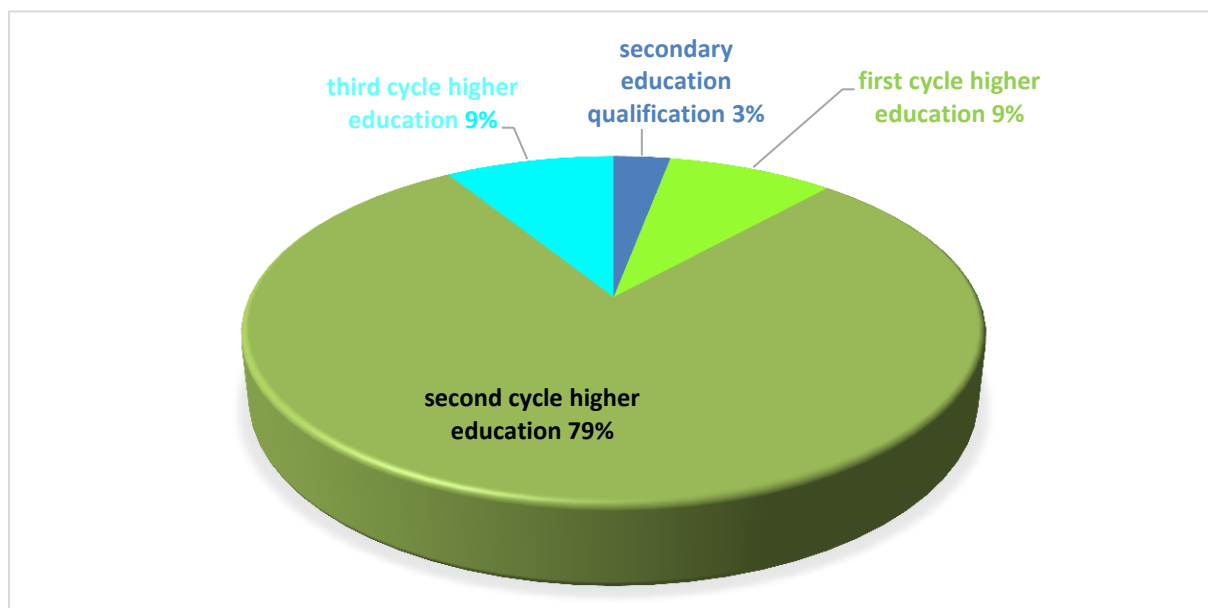


Source: MIZŠ.

282 In 2014, there were 87 teachers, counsellors, members of the management staff and other educational staff employed at Italian and bilingual basic schools. That same year, there were 141 teachers, counsellors, members of the management staff and other educational staff at the Slovenian–Hungarian bilingual basic schools.

283 In the same year, 6,088 teachers were employed in upper secondary schools. 179 of them held an upper secondary education qualification, 527 a first cycle higher education, 4,805 a second cycle higher education (master's degree), and 535 a third cycle higher education. There are 2,069 men and 4,019 women teaching in upper secondary schools.

GRAPH 4.10 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF TEACHERS OF THE UPPER SECONDARY PROGRAMME



Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

284 According to the Employment Service of Slovenia and Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2,505 professionals in education were officially registered as employment seekers in 2014. These numbers have increased for the third consecutive year (July 2012: 2,017, July 2013: 2,387). At that time, the majority of the unemployed education professionals were teachers of general subjects in basic and upper secondary schools as well as teachers in dormitories (on average 32%). On average, 43% of unemployed education professionals were aged between 30 and 39 years.

285 Slovenia is currently facing a surplus of teachers due to labour market conditions (economic crisis) and a young age structure of teachers some years ago, which is the reason the turnover of teachers has been low in recent years. In addition, a steep decline in birth rate in the period prior to 2004 is also one of the reasons. However, a turning point is near: regarding positive economic indicators and data from 2014 showing that the proportion of teachers over the age of 50 in basic and upper secondary schools is above 35%, it can be said that in the next 10 years, an increased retirement of teachers and a higher turnover are to be expected. In addition, a substantial increase in the number of children enrolled in basic school each year can be noted since 2004 (see Graph 3.5), which already has an influence on the need for teachers in primary education.

286 The Ministry is also seeking to increase employment opportunities in the framework of projects co-financed by the European Social Fund which offer new opportunities to access employment in education. The Your First Job in Education programme (*Prva zaposlitev na področju vzgoje in izobraževanja*) is mainly targeting young people seeking their first employment in education. They require more intensive and comprehensive support for integration into the labour market, training to carry out work independently and help to gain competencies and experience for working in education. Other programmes, which are also co-financed by the European funding, offer additional employment opportunities along with the aim to improve the competencies of educational staff to carry out their work efficiently. To mention just some programmes launched

in 2016: the Enhancing social and citizenship competences of professional staff in education (*Krepitev socialnih in državljanjskih kompetenc strokovnih delavcev*),-including activities aiming at supporting continuing professional development of professional staff in education, particularly on competencies that are needed for further development of a culture of inter-personal relations based on the principles of constructive and respectful communication and participation of all, acceptance of diversity, respect of human rights and freedoms, and solidarity; the Enhancing competencies of professional staff in education for leading and teaching in a modern innovative educational institution (*Krepitev kompetenc strokovnih delavcev na področju vodenja inovativnega vzgojno-izobraževalnega zavoda*), which is intended to support the development of competencies of educational staff in areas such as: entrepreneurship, lifelong learning, lifelong career orientation, language competencies, mobility, learning difficulties and learning to learn, innovative education methods, management of a public institution with the use of ICT, supporting self-evaluation processes, improving learning and teaching; and the Liven up the School Initiative - Training professional staff in education to foster competences of students (*Popestrimo šolo*), which has been training educational staff since 2011 to enhance the learners' competence, particularly in terms of reading literacy and social literacy, the learning to learn competencies, thinking at higher taxonomic levels, research, innovation, creativity, sustainability, use of smart technologies, and entrepreneurship in relation to career orientation.

**287 Training and working conditions of education staff** in kindergartens and schools are specified in national regulations (law on employment relationships, public employees and salary system of public employees) and in the rules regulating the education. The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI) is regulating the area of education and staff from pre-school education to higher vocational education. Specific characteristics of individual areas of educational system are further regulated in Elementary School Act, Pre-School Institutions Act (ZVrt), Post-Secondary Vocational Education Act (ZVSI<sup>76</sup>) and Adult Education Act (ZIO<sup>77</sup>).

**288 Regulations on education specify:**

- Types of educational staff providing education in individual areas of education;
- General qualification requirements (education with an emphasis on teacher training and Professional knowledge, knowledge of the language of instruction);
- Decision-making competencies about their qualifications according to the subjects or subject areas;
- Undergoing traineeship and taking the teaching certification examination,
- Competencies and procedures regarding employment and dismissal;
- Specific characteristics of working conditions (field of work, teaching time, promotion);
- Professional development.

**289** These areas are stipulated in greater detail by the regulatory provisions issued by the Minister of Education in collaboration with the competent expert councils and after consultation with the education trade union.

**290** Regulations on education prescribe the qualifications of the teaching staff and those working conditions that are typical of a particular area of education. Pre-school teachers must have at least a first cycle professional degree or a degree of an equivalent programme. Teachers in basic and upper secondary schools, with a few exceptions, are required by law to have second cycle

<sup>76</sup> **ZVSI** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4093>

<sup>77</sup> **ZIO** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO449>.

qualifications or equivalent. The conditions for formal qualification of teachers required by law are the same for teachers in basic and upper secondary schools. Teachers of technical theoretical subjects and practical classes and skills in vocational schools and adult training should also have practical skills and appropriate professional and specific knowledge.

291 Teachers, pre-school teachers and other educational staff at all levels of public education are public employees. Public employee salaries, labour relations and retirement are unified across the state. The Employment Relationships Act determines employment with concluding and terminating contracts, single 40-hour weekly workload, types and forms of labour relations, payments, holidays and similar subjects. Individual rights from labour relations are subject to negotiations between the government and unions and are regulated by collective agreements. A special law regulates the obligatory pension and disability insurance by virtue of intergenerational solidarity.

292 The system of **initial education of pre-school teachers and teachers** is autonomously determined by universities or higher educational institutions. The curriculum or syllabi of the initial teacher education is not prescribed by any regulations. The Higher Education Act regulates all issues of higher educational institutions and fields of study in the same way. Higher educational institutions are not restricted in their planning and development. Generally, any higher educational institution can conduct pedagogical study programmes prepared and accredited by the National Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS<sup>78</sup>) in accordance with the Study programme accreditation criteria for teacher education<sup>79</sup>. The criteria specify the scope of pedagogical training as part of the study programme of at least 60 ECTS credits, which has to provide pedagogical and psychological skills (psychology, pedagogy, didactics, andragogy, methodology of pedagogical research) as well as competencies in social sciences and humanities (philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and others). It also has to cover some subject-related and special didactics in relation to the primary area of study and a teaching practice of at least 15 credits.

293 The requirement for admission into initial education of teachers is a successfully completed *matura* examination. In the event of surplus of applications to these programmes, the success at the *matura* and the overall success in Years 3 and 4 of upper secondary school are taken into account. There are no other selection criteria. Admissions to individual programmes of faculties of education, such as fine arts pedagogy, music pedagogy, speech therapy, surdopedagogy, and sports training programmes, are subject to results of an evaluation test. It consists of evaluating special talents, abilities or skills.

294 The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport shall deliver an opinion on the accreditation of the pedagogical study programme. A higher educational institution that successfully accredited pedagogical study programmes can award professional titles to pre-school teachers and teachers in accordance with the Professional and Academic Titles Act (ZSZN-1<sup>80</sup>).

295 School legislation determines general qualification requirements of pre-school teachers and teachers seeking employment in pre-school institutions and schools. The law determines the level of education and statutory regulations determine the branches of study Basic and upper secondary school curricula determine the professional knowledge that teachers of a particular

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<sup>78</sup> SQAA (NAKVIS) <http://www.nakvis.si/>.

<sup>79</sup> CRITERIA <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=MERI41>

<sup>80</sup> ZSZN-1 <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4294>

subject or subject area must have. On this basis the Minister of Education decides which actual degrees are appropriate for teaching.

296 In addition to the level of education, the law also requires pre-school teachers and teachers to have **pedagogical and andragogic skills**. Teachers in vocational and technical school should also have appropriate work experience. General educational and pedagogical professional requirements are also required for teachers involved in adult education and special needs education. Special needs teachers must have an appropriate special needs education. The law only determines that teachers and pre-school teachers must have relevant professional knowledge; however, it does not determine the syllabi, which are independently determined by higher educational institutions.

297 Higher educational institutions, especially faculties of education, are mostly responsible for graduate employment so the study programmes include syllabi that are relevant to future pre-school teachers and teachers. Programmes of some multi-disciplinary higher educational institutions offer a teacher training module comprising 60 credit points. Post-graduate supplementary pedagogical courses are also available for those who have already graduated but did not acquire adequate knowledge for the profession. The amount of 60 credit points was determined by the regulation of the National Council for Higher Education in 2004–2009 when the Bologna reform and most of the new study programmes were accredited.

298 Pre-school teachers and teachers at the **primary level of basic schools** train exclusively at faculties of education. On the other hand, subject teachers in basic and upper secondary schools train at faculties of education and multi-disciplinary higher educational institutions. They are required to hold a degree in education or a degree from their subject field and a supplementary teacher training qualification. Teachers of children with special needs have a qualification in special needs education or can be regular subject teachers who have completed professional training in special needs education. Initial education of pre-school, basic school and upper secondary school teachers is carried out by universities or their members. First cycle degree and second cycle degree study programmes are available. All second cycle degree study programmes allow students to enrol in the third cycle degree study programme at the same or another higher educational institution. The **study programmes at faculties of education** are integrated or semi-integrated. The study programmes at multi-disciplinary faculties offering teacher training courses are arranged by concurrent or consecutive model.

299 All first cycle pedagogical study programmes enable a transition to the second and third cycle study programmes. Traditionally, initial pre-school teacher education is a 3-year professional degree programme. Other first-cycle programmes for school teachers are 3- or 4-year academic type. Master's degree programme takes place over the course of one or two years. Both cycles of the programme last five years altogether. Study programmes for pre-school teachers and teachers in the first and second cycle of educational periods (for children aged 6 to 12) in basic schools are both integrated: professional, general and subject components are inseparable. Study programmes for teachers in the third cycle of educational periods (for pupils aged 12 to 15) in basic schools and specialist teachers in upper secondary schools are designed according to the concurrent module: they can be partially integrated at the first cycle degree level (hybrid) and modular at the second cycle degree level. The modular structure of the second cycle degree study programme enables students a concurrent or consecutive form of study. The standard pedagogical module comprises from 20% to 40% practical and theoretical professional contents.

300 The study program delivers initial education to specialist subject teachers who teach two subjects at basic or upper secondary schools. Only teachers of mathematics, physics, biology and

chemistry at upper secondary schools *gimnazije* pursue education in a single-subject study programmes. The education and training of teachers of technical-theoretical subjects and teachers of practical lessons and skills in vocational and technical education is usually designed according to the sequential model. Specialists who have work experience in a particular field, an undergraduate or postgraduate degree and have relevant subject knowledge enrol in the study programme of pedagogical-andragogic education and training. **Faculties of education** deliver education and training of pre-school teachers and teachers of the first and second cycle basic education. The Faculty of education Ljubljana <https://www.pef.uni-lj.si/12.html> delivers the initial education of specialist two-subject teachers of mathematics, computer science and natural sciences, fine arts (single-subject study programme), home economics and technics, as well. The faculty also offers initial education for specialised social pedagogues for special needs children (social pedagogy, rehabilitation therapists, speech and hearing impaired therapists and vision rehabilitation therapists). The Faculty of education Maribor <http://www.pef.um.si/145/home> delivers the initial education of pre-school teachers and teachers in the first and second cycle basic education, as well as teachers of fine arts and music. The Faculty of education Primorska <http://www.pef.upr.si/eng/><sup>81</sup> delivers the initial education of pre-school teachers and primary generalist, as well as other pedagogical staff to help students.

301 Teachers of the Slovenian language, foreign languages, geography and history are trained at the **faculties of arts**. The Faculty of sport <https://www.fsp.uni-lj.si/en/> delivers initial education and training of sports teachers, music teachers pursue initial education and training at one of the faculties of education or at the Academy of music academy [http://www.ag.uni-lj.si/index.php?lang=en&page\\_id=4100](http://www.ag.uni-lj.si/index.php?lang=en&page_id=4100). Teachers of art subjects are often graduates of **art academies** with a completed supplementary pedagogical course at the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Education. Teachers of technical theoretical subjects and practical subjects in vocational upper secondary education acquire the initial knowledge of the subject mostly at universities and partially also at vocational colleges. **Pre-school teacher study programmes** take 3 years in first cycle degrees (180 credit points) and 2 years (120 credit points) in second cycle degrees. The first cycle degree already qualifies teachers for employment. The programme is integrated: theoretical professional and special subject syllabi are inseparable with the majority being professional syllabi (at least 85%). Practical training in a pre-school institution is compulsory (12 credit points). The main aim of the study programmes is to prepare graduates for future work with pre-school children (age-group of children: 11 months to 6 years) and children in the first year of basic school and cooperation with their parents, colleagues and other experts. Therefore, students of pre-school education acquire knowledge of various concepts relating to childhood and education and gain basic theoretical and practical knowledge in particular pre-school activities as prescribed by the National Curriculum for Pre-school Institutions which is operated as a programme for pre-school children in public kindergartens.

302 The second cycle pre-school education programme aims at training experts in the development of the pre-school education system, quality, policies and professional and ethical standards. It also involves research in pedagogy and scientific research methodology.

303 **Study programmes for teachers** in the first and second cycle of educational periods of the basic school take 5 years (300 credit points). The first cycle study programmes take 4 years and the second cycle study programmes take 1 year. Students can complete a part of their studies abroad. A completed first cycle study programme does not fully prepare students for

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<sup>81</sup> The Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska <http://www.pef.upr.si/>

independent pedagogical work in the first and second cycle of educational periods of basic school. For employment, a second cycle degree is needed.

304 **First cycle study programmes** are integrated: theoretical, professional and subject contents are inseparable. Subject components and didactics are connected with the National Basic School educational programme. The study comprises: pedagogical and psychological theories, philosophy and sociology of education, inclusive education, subject-specific didactics, a foreign language, ICT, a wide selection of elective subjects and compulsory practical training in basic schools (15 credit points).

305 Second cycle study programmes train graduates for independent teaching of all subjects or fields in the first and second cycle of educational periods of basic school and for the research of school practice. The programme features learning about scientific research methods based on direct research practice in basic schools (12 credit points).

306 **Study programmes for subject specialists and other teachers** are also two-subject programmes. They are carried out in combination 3 + 2 and 4 + 1. Together they take 5 years and are worth 300 credit points. Students can complete a part of their studies abroad. A completed first cycle study programme does not fully prepare students for independent pedagogical work in terms of a particular subject or a subject area. For employment a second cycle degree is needed.

307 Education study programmes train two-subject specialist teachers of mathematics, physics, computer science, technical education, biology, chemistry and home economics and single-subject specialist teachers of fine art and music. First cycle degree study programmes consist of 25% specialist components (didactics, general subjects, practical training). Pedagogical subjects are also included in the second cycle study programme where they intertwine with teaching practice research and theory.

308 Second cycle degree study programmes for teachers of a particular subject or a subject area, who study at multi-disciplinary faculties, are two-year one or two-subject study programmes. They are worth 120 credit points including 60 to 90 credit points of professional training.

309 **Supplementary study programmes** mostly last one year (up to 60 credit points) and are not degree courses but a professional qualification. They are intended for graduates of first and second cycle study programmes who wish to progress their professional qualification.

310A **general pedagogical-andragogic course** is intended for basic and upper secondary school teacher candidates whose initial education did not include any pedagogical content. The special needs pedagogical course is intended for those pre-school teachers and teachers who wish to work with special needs children. The supplementary programme in librarianship allows basic and upper secondary school teachers to find employment as school librarians. General teachers can attend supplementary courses for foreign language education in the first and second cycle of educational periods of basic school. Teachers of natural science subjects can take a supplementary course for professional qualification to teach an additional (second or third) natural science subject. Graduates of second cycle study programmes of education, fine art, humanities or social sciences can take a course for professional qualification to gain the vocational qualification in pre-school education for children in kindergarten.

311 In Slovenia there are no **other pathways to obtain a teaching profession** as offered by an appropriate higher education study programme. The law permits exception in the following cases:

- If not possible to obtain the required level of education in a certain field, other experts can teach; however, they must have relevant accomplishments in their profession (e.g. teacher of photography, ballet teacher);
- Foreign guest teachers with lower qualifications can teach or assist in classes if they meet the requirements to work as teachers in their country of origin.

312 **Teachers in public pre-school institutions and schools are public servants.** They are employed according to the procedure prescribed by law. Candidates for pre-school teachers and teachers apply for open recruitment positions published by pre-school institutions and schools. Candidates are selected by school head masters and open recruitment commissions.

313 Working conditions in pre-school institutions and schools are roughly determined by general labour legislation, legislation on public servants and school legislation. Individual aspects such as traineeship, teaching certification examination and advancement are stipulated by executive acts issued by the Minister of Education. The scope of individual rights is subject to negotiations between the Minister and teachers' unions. Negotiations are concluded with the Education Collective Agreement. Pre-school teachers and teachers enter the pedagogical profession in two ways: by applying for open recruitment trainee job positions advertised by the Ministry of Education or by applying for open recruitment job positions advertised by pre-school institutions and schools.

314 Pre-school and graduate teachers should enter the profession by initially undergoing practical training under the mentorship of an experienced teacher, gradually taking over more responsibility. The Ministry of Education advertises traineeship positions at least once a year. The open recruitment includes qualification requirements and candidate selection procedures. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available trainee positions, these procedures indicate the order of priority. The selection and placement of candidates is under the domain of the Ministry. The interests of the pre-school institution and school are taken into consideration.

315 Applicants selected and placed by the Ministry enter employment relationships as trainees in a pre-school or a school for a maximum of 10 months, which is the duration of traineeship. Before the traineeship concludes, they need to take the teaching certification examination. Open-ended employment is only possible after they pass the professional examination and if there is a vacancy at a pre-school or a school.

316 Pre-school institutions and schools usually select between applicants with appropriate qualifications and professional skills and who have already completed traineeship and the teaching qualification examination. In rare cases, when there are no other applicants, the pre-school institution or a school can accept a pre-school teacher or a graduate teacher who has not yet or has partially completed the traineeship and teaching professional examination. In these cases they can employ them for a fixed duration. **Induction into teaching** is determined by two rules which stipulate traineeship<sup>82</sup> as well as teaching professional examination<sup>83</sup> of pre-school teachers, teachers and other teaching staff in terms of education. They are issued by the Minister of Education.

317 The induction period can be organised as a **traineeship**. According to the prescribed programme, trainees familiarise themselves with the contents so they can work independently and prepare for the teaching certification examination. The traineeship takes from 6 to 10 months. Under

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<sup>82</sup> **RULES** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV6697>

<sup>83</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV6698>

special circumstances it can be extended or shortened. The traineeship programme is prepared by the mentor who has to comply with certain requirements ensuring their expertise in cooperation with the trainee. The mentor is appointed by the head master. The mentor prepares the trainee for the teaching certification examination and writes the final report on the trainee's capabilities and assesses their abilities for individual work. The traineeship program includes the familiarization with the actual subject-specific teaching processes in the pre-school institution or school and with various methods and forms of teaching. Trainees deepen their knowledge of and improve their skills in subject-specific didactics. They learn to design lesson plans, prepare lessons and execute them while observing the mentor's lessons and other pre-school teachers and teachers. They cooperate with classroom management and the leadership of the pre-school institution or school, organising parent meetings and consultations. In addition, they gain knowledge and skills outside their pre-school institution or school, particularly in areas important to the teaching professional examination.

318 In case the induction is organised differently, it is still based on the programme of induction and interaction between pre-school teacher or teacher beginner, mentor and head master. The programme is adapted in line with the teaching time and overall working hours of pre-school teachers or teacher beginners.

319 The competencies of young teachers or pre-school teachers for individual work in education are being examined at the teaching professional examination, which is a national examination. Conditions for taking the **teaching professional examination** – the scope, contents, organisation and the procedure – are determined by the rules issued by the Minister of Education. The teaching professional examination is a national examination and is taken at the Ministry of Education. Applicants must have appropriate educational experience and the required level of education. Moreover, they have to carry out certain activities which have to be submitted before making an application for teaching professional examination (successfully assessed teaching presentations graded by the mentor and the head master in the pre-school institution or school). In early September 2015, the Rules on the teaching certification examination have been amended and supplemented with a view to make entering the educational system more accessible. Amendments of the Rules extend the forms of relevant work experience as the candidates can now take the teaching certification examination after performing indirect educational activities for a specified period of time outside public education, or student teaching practice.

320 The teaching professional examination is oral and it is taken before the examination committee. Specific topics are determined by the Minister of Education. It comprises three parts:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and the EU and regulations on human rights and the rights of a child;
- School regulations;
- Knowledge of the language of instruction.

321 After a successfully completed examination, the applicant receives a certificate with which they can apply for a job position in pre-school institutions and schools.

322 A pre-school institution or a school concludes employment agreements based on a vacant job position. The agreement stipulates the rights and obligations of the teacher as prescribed by regulations and the collective agreement. The employment agreement usually concludes the working relationship for an unlimited period but in some circumstances may also be for a limited period. Employment may be concluded full or reduced working hours. An employment

agreement can also be concluded with several pre-school institutions or schools if there are insufficient hours for full time employment in a single school. Irrespective of the duration of employment or working hours, the agreement stipulates certain legal rights and rights determined by the collective agreement. The employment agreement can stipulate a 6-month trial period at most.

323 The employment agreement can be revoked by common agreement or the employee can unilaterally break it. In legally permitted cases the pre-school institution or school can also break the agreement.

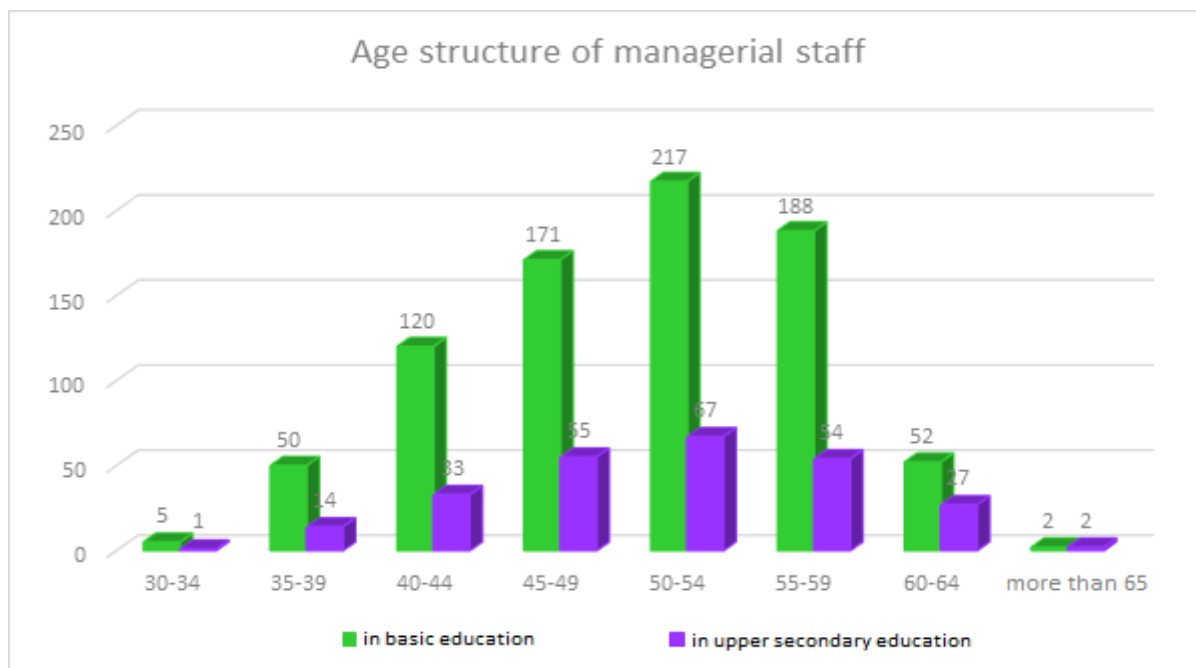
## 4.7. MANAGEMENT STAFF

324 In 2014, there were 228 men and 630 women on **management staff in basic school programmes** (regular and adapted programmes). In regular basic school programmes, all were older than 29 years: 5 of them were aged between 30 and 34 years, 50 of them between 35 to 39 years, 120 of them between 40 to 44 years and 171 between 45 to 49 years. 217 members of the management staff were aged between 50 to 54 years, 188 members between 55 to 59, 52 between 60 to 64 years and 2 members were aged over 65 years (SURS, SURS Database, 2016).

325 In upper secondary schools, there were 110 men and 143 women on the management staff in 2014. Two ~~members~~ were over 65 years of age, 27 were between 60 and 64 years of age, 54 between 55 and 59, 67 between 50 and 54, 55 between 45 and 49, 33 between 40 and 44, and 14 between 35 and 39 years of age. In 2014, only one was aged between 30 and 34 years (SURS, SURS Database, 2016).

326 Anyone who acquires at least a master's degree or equivalent and satisfies other conditions for a teacher or a school counsellor on the school where they will hold the position of a head master, has at least five years of work experience in education, the title of counsellor or advisor or has held the title of mentor for five years and has completed the school leader examination can be named a **head master** of a public school.

*GRAPH 4.10 AGE STRUCTURE OF MANAGERIAL STAFF IN BASIC AND UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION*



Source: SURS.

327 In some cases, candidates who have not completed the school leader examination can be appointed to the position of a head master, but they have to complete the examination within one year of the beginning of the term. If the head master fails to complete the examination in the one-year period, the mandate has to stop as specified by the law. Head masters or candidates for a head master have to pass the examination at the National School of Leadership in Education. The training programme consists of 144 hours. The programme provides head masters with the skills, information and help in the field of legislative, organisational and financial content needed for a successful leadership of the institution. The council of the institution or school appoints the head master.

328 Before deciding for a particular candidate for a head master, the council has to seek the following:

- The opinion of the teaching staff;
- The opinion of the local community where the public kindergarten or school is situated and the opinion of the self-governing national community in case they establish the public kindergarten or school;
- The opinion of the Parent Council.

329 If the opinion is not given within 20 days following the date of the request, the council may take a decision without this opinion. When the council selects a candidate among the candidates for a head master who applied, a reasoned proposal is forwarded to the Minister. If the Minister fails to deliver an opinion within 30 days following the request, the council can decide on the appointment of the head master without this opinion.

330 The council appoints the head master by decision upon receipt of the opinion or after the expiry of that period. Head masters serve for a term of five years. Head master enters into a contract of employment for the term of office. In the contract of employment, the employment status of the head master, which may be for a fixed or an indefinite period, is determined. This provision

affects their right for admission to work in the same institution after the termination of their mandate at the post that corresponds to their professional education and skills, and their right to return to their previous position of employment of professional staff (suspension of rights). Most head masters who have previously been employed by the same institution have open-ended employment agreements. A small number of head masters who come from other institutions have fixed-term contracts. Concluding contracts and establishing the employment status of the head master is under the employer's responsibility, i.e. the institution and the head master.

331 In 2006, head masters were the first public servants to be part of a new salary system; other public servants joined them in 2008. As that was the time the economic and fiscal crisis came about, the anomalies that were found particularly regarding low salaries of head masters of small schools have not been remedied at the time of writing this report. In addition, it may be noted that there are not enough approaches and measures aiming at attracting the best staff for the management position, at the systemic level.

## 4.8. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AMONG GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS IN EDUCATION

332 The participants in education can benefit from **different forms of support**. Subsidised kindergarten fees in ISCED level 0: fees are determined in accordance with a nine-level scale of earnings – those with the lowest income are exempt from payment of the fee and other parents do not pay the full fee either. Parents with the highest income (99% of the average net salary) pay 77% of the fee. The municipalities can additionally reduce the fees according to their social policy.

333 If more than one child from a family attends the kindergarten at the same time, the legislation provides additional funds from the national budget. The parents thus pay 30% of the determined amount for the second child and no fee for younger siblings.

334 Each pupil can attend at least one out-of-school class and each pupil can benefit at least once from financial support for attendance. In addition, different subsidies depending on the family economic background are available for economically disadvantaged pupils.

335 Pupils who use public transport to travel to school are eligible for subsidies. For ISCED levels 1 and 2 the transportation is subsidised if the distance to the school exceeds 4 km. In the brown bear areas, the transport is always subsidised. For ISCED level 3, the transportation is subsidised taking into account the economic background of the pupil. Travel costs are reimbursed to the parents of those attending institutions for children with special needs in cases when the institution does not organise the transportation.

336 Participants at ISCED levels 1–3 receive subsidies for school meals, which depend on the economic background of the student's family. At the time of writing this report, subsidies for compulsory basic education were the following:

- Students whose income per family member amounts to 53% net of the average earning in the Republic of Slovenia are entitled to the total price of one light school meal (snack) per day;
- Students whose income per family member amounts to 18% net of the average earning in the Republic of Slovenia are entitled to the total price of one school lunch and one light school meal (snack) per day;

- Students whose income per family member amounts from over 18% and 30% net of the average earning in the Republic of Slovenia are entitled to a subsidy of 70% of the price for one school lunch and one light school meal (snack) per day;
- Students whose income per family member amounts from over 30% and 36% net of the average earning in the Republic of Slovenia are entitled to a subsidy of 40% of the price for one school lunch and one light school meal (snack) per day.

337 From February 2017 all students in basic (primary and lower-secondary) schools, whose family income (by family member) doesn't exceed 36% of the average net salary, are entitled to a free daily lunch (beside a free school snack). In upper secondary schools, the state subsidises school meals as well and the amount depends on the economic background. Subsidies for upper secondary education are the following:

- Students whose income per family member amounts to 42% net of the average earning in the Republic of Slovenia are entitled to the total price of one school meal per day.
- Students whose income per family member amounts from over 42% and 53% net of the average earning in the Republic of Slovenia are entitled to a subsidy of 70% of the price for one meal per day;
- Students whose income per family member amounts from over 53% and 64% net of the average earning in the Republic of Slovenia are entitled to a subsidy of 40% of the price for one meal per day.

338 Upper secondary schools are obliged to organise for their students a warm meal or a nutritious and energy-rich cold meal.

339 For parents with more than one student simultaneously boarding in a dormitory, boarding costs and meal costs for the second child (and all the other children) are funded by the state.

340 Families can receive child allowance, a supplementary benefit for maintenance, care and education of children. One of the parents can exercise the right to child allowance until the child reaches 18 years if other conditions of the law governing family allowances are met.

341 Students can apply for scholarships which can be provided on the basis of economic background of students – scholarships for the socially disadvantaged students, or on the basis of the students' success – scholarships for the most talented students. Students can receive other special scholarships, such as:

- Regional scholarship schemes (employer scholarships);
- Scholarships for shortage occupations;
- AD Futura Scholarships for upper secondary technical education of citizens in the Western Balkans in Slovenia;
- Scholarships for specialist professions and shortage occupations in the cultural sector.

342 Foreign students can benefit from learning support for Slovenian as a foreign language at entering the education and training system at levels ISCED 1–3.

343 The basic school is entitled to additional teacher or counselling specialist support in order to offer Roma children learning and other assistance they need. A share or number of additional professional staff allocated to schools is increasing depending on the number of Roma children enrolled in a school (from 0,1 for 4-8 students to 2 teaching assistants in a school with more than 45 Roma students). In the 1st grade of basic school two teachers are present in the class for

longer time than in regular class groups (see also 362). Schools with Roma students receive also additional funds to cover certain material costs for them, such learning aids and out of school activities.

344 **Education of children with special needs** takes place in mainstream schools as well as specialised institutions for those participants with serious impairments, disorders or disabilities who cannot be provided with appropriate adjustments and assistance in mainstream schools. These children attend adapted education programmes in institutions providing education for children with special needs.

345 The provision of special needs education in mainstream basic schools in Slovenia embraces the approach to inclusion originating from the right of all children to be able to reach their potential with the principle of non-discrimination.

346 Different types of programmes and levels of education with adapted implementation and additional expert care are performed in mainstream classes in kindergartens and schools. The majority of children with special needs are enrolled in these classes (75%). At the beginning of the 2016/2017 school year, 6.2% of all the pupils in the mainstream basic school programme were children with special education needs. These children are, based on a placement decision, entitled to an individualised programme with additional professional assistance. The professional assistance includes activities for their optimal development, in particular, activities designed to overcome impairments, disorders and disabilities, and learning assistance to create a supportive environment. The organisation of teaching and methods of knowledge assessment, progression and instruction time of classes can be adapted. In addition, the room and teaching aids can also be modified. A permanent or temporary assistant can be assigned to a child with special needs to provide assistance.

**TABLE 4.6 HOURS OF ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE BY TYPE OF DECISION AND PER WEEK**

School year	Total – additional professional assistance	Learning assistance	Assistance in overcoming impairments, disorders or disabilities	Counselling service
2016/2017	35,654	8,024	21,421	6,209
2015/2016	34,154	8,136	21,969	4,050

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

347 Schools that implement the mainstream programme receive additional funds for students with special needs who attend their programme. Institutions for education of special needs children are funded separately.

348 In 2014, 433 children with intellectual disabilities lived in training, work and protection centres. These children pursued special education programmes. In 2014, there were five such centres in Slovenia (the number was the same from 2010 to 2014). In the same year, 101 children with functional disorders or intellectual disabilities in institutional care pursued education in adapted or special basic school education programmes or upper secondary schools). Furthermore, 240 children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in institutional care pursued education in

basic or upper secondary schools). 129 children are participating in education in the centres (SURS Database, 2016).

349 Pre-school education of children with special needs takes place in mainstream classes in kindergartens, for which they receive additional professional assistance, or in developmental classes of kindergartens. Parents of special needs children pay the same fees as parents of other children of the same age.

## 4.9. MAIN CHALLENGES

350 In **pre-school education**, remain divergences over the allocation of resources between the municipalities and the Ministry of Finance with regard to establishing the criteria to determine tax rate per capita resident of the municipality. These taxes present the basis for additional state funding of municipalities (adequate absorption of funds). The state funding becomes part of the municipal budget, which finances education, as well. The Financing of Municipalities Act, which is under the authority of the Ministry of Public Administration, should have incorporated an additional criterion for the calculation of adequate expenditure on children aged up to 6 years (the current criterion focuses on children up to 15 years) to resolve this issue. What is problematic is the fact that quality early childhood education and care is primarily education and not merely care, which tends to cause problems resource-wise to municipalities.

351 In **basic education**, there is a gap between growing demands and needs of schools on one hand, and limited public funds for assuring the implementation of the desired scope of the after-school care programme. The state finances 25 hours of this programme a week for 50 minutes per class. Care of children after this time is not paid from the state budget. Classes for the after-school care programme are created based on valid norms and standards and the number of applications. Schools are trying to provide quality after-school care programme in schools mainly to respond to the needs and wishes of parents (working day in Slovenia usually starts between 8:00 and 9:00 in the morning and ends between 16:00 and 17:00 in the afternoon). The increase of working tasks resulting from this leads to increasing pressure on the budget.

As for **upper secondary education**, the major share of the resources is determined by the formula that unfortunately cannot cover all the specific characteristics of individual schools. The schools have therefore initiated a modification of the formula in order to take into account specific features of individual schools, such as classes with very few pupils, the location of the school and its significance for the surrounding area and the staff structure. In addition, financing in line with the formula mainly provides the funds for the implementation of the education programme. However, its development is unfortunately not sufficiently funded due to the lack of resources.

## 5. USE OF RESOURCES

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### 5.1. ADAPTATION OF RESOURCES TO LEARNING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

352 Educational institutions organise the educational process on the basis of different criteria. Education in **kindergartens** takes place in classes and learning groups. Norms, which have to be taken into account when organising classes and groups, are set by regulations adopted by the Minister. The norms mainly limit the maximum number of children, pupils or upper secondary school students in individual classes or groups, and, in some cases, lay down the minimum number of learners needed in order to create a class or a group.

353 The kindergarten determines the type and the number of classes as well as the number of children in the individual class in agreement with the municipality founded the institution. The classes are arranged before the beginning of the school year and for the whole school year. When determining the maximum number of children per class, the area of playground per child defined in the regulation providing the information on the space and equipment of the kindergarten has to be taken into account.

354 The kindergarten can form homogenous groups, groups of varied age and combined groups. Homogenous groups can include children of the first or second age group within the one-year age range, groups of varied age can include children of the first or second age groups, whereas combined groups can include children of both age levels. When forming classes, it should be taken into consideration that the second age level consists of children who will turn three by the end of the calendar year.

355 Homogenous groups have to be formed as follows:

- In a group of the first age level, there must be no less than 9 and no more than 12 children;
- In a group of the second age level with three- and four-year-olds, there should be no less than 12 and no more than 17 children;
- In other groups of the second age level, there should be no less than 17 and no more than 22 children.

356 Groups of varied age can be formed as follows:

- In a group of the first age level, there must be no less than 7 and no more than 10 children;
- In a group of the second age level, there must be no less than 14 and no more than 19 children.

357 In a combined group, there should be no less than 10 and no more than 17 children.

358 As a founder, the municipality can set a lower norm for the number of children in individual classes. It can also set the beginning and the end of operating time adapted to the minimum number of children in the kindergarten at the time. The maximum number of children per class can be increased for up to two children in line with the situation in pre-school education in the municipality. A kindergarten branch with only one class can form combined groups with regard to the norm to form combined groups in case up to five children would be rejected. The Rules on standards to conduct pre-school education activities manage the norms of pre-school educational provision.

359 The **basic school** comprises three three-year cycles. In the first three-year cycle, children are taught by a generalist teacher. It is recommended that the same teacher teaches the class for all three years. Half of the lessons in year one, a pre-school teacher is also present. In the second cycle, the generalist teacher still delivers most lessons; however, individual subjects are gradually taken over by specialist subject teachers. In the third cycle, lessons are delivered by specialist subject teachers. In each of the three-year cycle, children of the same age are grouped together. Pupils of the same grade are grouped in classes; in smaller schools there are also multigrade classes that combine pupils of two or more years. There may be no more than 28 pupils in one classroom. For classes in bilingual schools (Slovenian/Hungarian) and in schools where Italian is the language of instruction, for classes that include SEN children or Roma children and multi-grade classes lower quotas apply.

360 Three rules cover the norms for the implementation of the basic school education:

- Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the elementary school programme (Uradni list RS, official gazette Nos 57/07, 65/08, 99/10, 51/14 and 64/15);
- Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic school programme in bilingual basic schools and basic schools with Italian as the language of instruction (Uradni list RS, official gazette Nos 75/05, 85/06, 68/07, 73/08, 18/11, 51/14, 79/14 - corr. and 64/15)<sup>84</sup>;
- Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of education programs for children with special needs (Uradni list RS, official gazette Nos 59/07, 70/08, 5/11, 56/14 in 66/15)<sup>85</sup>.

361 The norms of dividing children into classes in schools are rather complex and standardised (see Annex VI that includes a chart on norms of dividing children into class groups in basic schools). For example, there may be no more than 28 pupils in one classroom. If there are three or more Roma pupils in the classroom, the maximum number of pupils may be 21. Furthermore, ability grouping is an option for which one may plan 28 pupils for the first level of ability (heterogeneous group) and 21 pupils for the second level of ability. Specific standards and norms which apply to all the different categories on the organisation of classes in bilingual basic schools, basic school for adults, adapted programmes with an equivalent educational standard (particularly the programme for pupils with emotional and behavioural disorders), programmes with lower educational standards as well as adapted programmes for pupils with moderate or severe mental disabilities.

362 Schools can organise classes depending on the number of students in each class. Considering the norms for the organisation of classes in basic schools, each school can organise as many classes of each year as indicated in the table below:

**TABLE 5.1 NUMBER OF CLASSES AS TO THE NUMBER OF PUPILS**

Number of pupils in one class	≤ 28	29–56	57–84	85–112	113–140
Number of classes	1	2	3	4	5

Source: MIZŠ.

<sup>84</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV6689>

<sup>85</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV7972>

363 A relatively low number of pupils can be sufficient to form a class. For example, if a school welcomes 29 children in one generation, it may set up two classes: one with 14 and the other with 15 pupils. If there are 56 children in one generation, the school may set up two classes of 28 pupils.

364 Schools may set up multi-grade classes if the total number of pupils of two classes does not exceed 21 (or the number of three classes does not exceed 14 or the number of four and more classes does not exceed 10). Schools often set up multi-grade classes at their branches, which are usually smaller and organised to implement the basic school education programme at different locations.

365 In **upper secondary education**, the norms for the organisation of classes tend to be higher from those in basic schools. Norms are set out in the following rules:

- Rules on Norms and Standards for Implementation of Education programs and a Schooling Program in Upper-secondary Education (Uradni list RS, official gazette Nos 62/2010 and 99/2010)<sup>86</sup>;
- Rules on Norms and Standards for Implementation of Education programs and a Schooling Program in Upper-secondary Education (Uradni list RS, official gazette Nos 85/2003, 100/2007, 67/2008, 21/2011 and 55/2011)<sup>87</sup>;
- Rules on Criteria and Standards for Upper Secondary Schools with the Italian Language of Instruction (Uradni list RS, official gazette Nos 85/2003, 103/2007, 67/2008, 5/2011 and 55/2011)<sup>88</sup>.

366 The rules specify the norms for the organisation of classes and the maximum number of students that can be part of an individual class. In addition, they allow the school to form a class with a higher number of pupils in agreement with the Ministry. In short upper secondary vocational education, the norm for the number of students in a class is 20; in vocational upper secondary education, the norm is 28; in upper secondary technical education, the norm is 30; in the general upper secondary schools (*gimnazije*), the norm is 30; in a sports department, the norm is 22; in upper secondary technical education, the norm is 28–32, in the *matura* course, the norm is 30–36; and in the vocational course, the norm is 28–34. Special conditions are prescribed for Year 1 or the initial year, for schools delivering instruction in Italian and for adapted programmes. The table in Annex VII shows the norms for the organisation of classes for the implementation of different upper secondary school programmes.

367 If students with special needs are enrolled in an upper secondary school and the placement decision states that the norm has to be changed, the number of students in a class reduces by 4 with one student with special needs, by 6 to 7 with two students with special needs, and by 8 to 10 for three students with special needs. For details, see Annex VIII.

368 In *gimnazija* upper secondary schools, students are arranged in groups smaller than classes for some exercise courses and sports education. The organisation in groups aims at ensuring work safety. For sports education, students are normally organised in groups of up to 20 and divided by gender. For practical exercises in informatics, biology, chemistry and physics, classes are organised into groups of up to 16 students at most. In technical *gimnazije*, students participating in practical exercises in specialised-theoretical subjects and laboratory work are organised into

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<sup>86</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV10249>

<sup>87</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV5229>

<sup>88</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV5230>

groups of up to 16 students at most. In *gimnazije* of arts, option music and dance, students are organised in groups (of 3 to 17 students) for lessons in music subjects, while they have individual lessons in playing musical instruments and singing.

369 In upper secondary technical education, students participating in practical exercises in informatics, biology, chemistry and physics are organised into groups of up to 16. For practical lessons in school workshops, students are organised into groups of 10 to 17, depending on the nature of the practical training. Special consideration is given to work safety. In vocational upper secondary education, students participating in practical lessons in Computer Science and Science classes are divided in groups of up to 16 students. In practical training school workshops, students are organised in groups of up to 17 (Year 1), 14 (Year 2), and up to 13 (Year 3). If safety is a concern, smaller groups are also an option (for example, in forestry, mining, glass blowing, agriculture). In short upper secondary vocational education, students participating in practical lessons in school workshops are organised in groups of up to 10. If safety is a concern, smaller groups are also an option (for example, glass blowing, agriculture). In the same way as in the case of *gimnazije*, students in sports education in vocational upper secondary and upper secondary technical education are normally organised in groups of 20, whereby groups are organised by gender.

370 In **basic school education**, the expanded programme allows **pupils with learning difficulties** to attend individual assistance or group assistance for half an hour, and remedial classes for one hour per week.

371 Pupils from Grades one to six progress from one year to another automatically. They may repeat a year due to poor school results, illness, having to move or other reasons, on the proposal of his or her parents and upon school's agreement with their proposal. When parents do not agree, the teachers' assembly can make a decision that due to poor school results, a pupil enrolled in Grades three to six must repeat a year. Pupils in Grades seven and eight may progress to the next Grade if they are awarded positive grades in all subjects at the end of the school year. If a pupil has three negative grades, he or she must repeat the Grade. Pupils with one or two negative grades must be given an opportunity to take a repeat exam at the end of school holidays. If they fail the exam, they must repeat the Grade. A pupil who has one or more negative grades in Grade nine is allowed to take repeat examination in all subjects where he or she was awarded negative grades throughout the following school year. Parents have the right to appeal the decision that their child must repeat the year. Their appeal is considered by a three-member committee. The pupil who fails to complete year nine within nine years has the right to another two years of education in the basic school.

372 On a parental recommendation or with their consent, a pupil can advance from year to year faster if he or she achieves above average results. Such pupil does not take additional examination. The decision is taken by the teachers' assembly.

373 In **upper secondary education** students may progress to the next year if they are awarded positive grades in all subjects at the end of the school year. Students with a fail grade in up to three subjects at the end of school can sit re-take exams.

374 Students who fail to fulfil all requirements may retake the Year. The special needs students, students enrolled in several programmes in parallel, prospective sportsmen, and students who failed to fulfil all study requirements on account of parenting, exceptional social and family circumstances, as well as illness or other valid reasons may retake the same Year more than once. Head masters may decide that a student who failed to fulfil all study requirements due to

unknown reasons may progress to a higher Year. If this is the case, head masters specify terms and conditions for the student to fulfil the remaining requirements.

375 Students may complete their education sooner as specified by the programme. The school's assembly of teachers decides on this right. Students take subject examinations to fulfil their requirements.

376 Specific and additional funding is provided for work with **pupils with special needs** at the systemic level. This area is regulated by the Placement of Children with Special Needs Act. Additional professional assistance is provided to children with special needs attending an adapted pre-school and basic education programme and, in rare cases, in other education programmes for children with special needs.

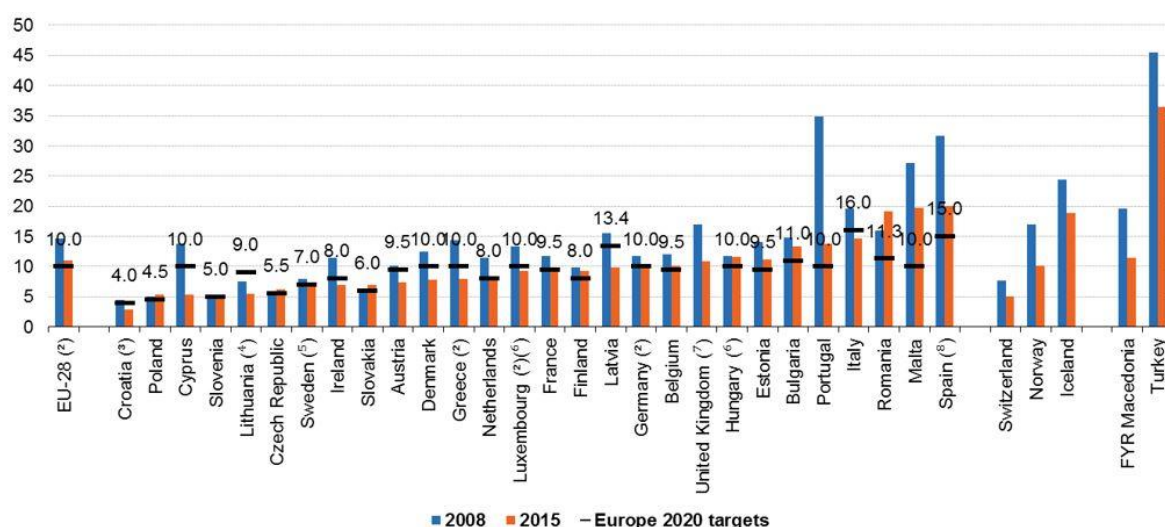
377 Additional professional assistance can be provided in form of:

- Helping with overcoming disabilities, impairments and deficiencies;
- Counselling service;
- Teaching assistance.

378 Teaching assistance is only provided in basic schools and in short-term vocational and vocational programmes, in cases when a child was absent from school for two months or more because of illness, and in other upper secondary education programmes.

379 In comparison with other EU countries, Slovenia has a relatively positive statistics regarding early school leaving, so no preventive measures to reduce the numbers are taken. However, the mechanisms and measures to return those who left school to education are developed, such as the *Mladi in podjetni* programme organised by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education for young people who left school.

GRAPH 5.1 EARLY LEAVERS FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING (EU COMPARISON)



(<sup>1</sup>) All countries: break in time series in 2014 (switch from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011).

(<sup>2</sup>) Target: less than 10 %.

(<sup>3</sup>) 2015 data with low reliability.

(<sup>4</sup>) Target: less than 9 %.

(<sup>5</sup>) Target: less than 7 %.

(<sup>6</sup>) Break in time series in 2015.

(<sup>7</sup>) No target in National Reform Programme.

Source: EUROSTAT. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>

380 As for the diversity of **education programmes**, the **opportunity of choice** and a limited admission, it can be said that educational options are generally diverse, particularly in upper secondary education, whereas the Slovenian education system does not provide any specific programmes on the upper secondary level. The lower secondary level is part of a single structure nine-year basic education. Pupils can choose among different study options after completing basic education when they enrol in upper secondary general education, such as the *gimnazija* programme, or in upper secondary vocational and upper secondary technical education.

381 In the 2016/2017 study programme, upper secondary schools offered 13 short upper secondary vocational education programmes, 69 upper secondary vocational education programmes, 46 upper secondary technical education programmes, 35 upper secondary vocational-technical education programmes, 4 vocational course programmes, 11 general *gimnazija* programmes (one of them follows special pedagogy principles), 6 technical *gimnazija* programmes (4 tracks and 5 modules in the *gimnazija* of arts), and 3 *matura* examination course programmes. Schools in vocational and technical education provide education programmes in food science, agriculture, gardening and floriculture, forestry, wood-engineering, metalwork and mechanical engineering, metallurgy, administrative activities, commerce and economics, health and health

care, construction, electrical engineering, computer science and mechatronics, catering and hotel activities, personal care, textiles and industrial and fashion design.

382 Pupils who complete basic education are free to choose in which secondary school to enrol. Career guidance in basic and secondary schools is coordinated by the **counselling service**, which provides information on career choice, counselling and education on educational choice and occupations, evaluation of the intellectual capacity, abilities and talents of students, placements' inquiry, advocacy, feedback and follow-up of the counselees.

383 The counselling service together with teachers and other professional school staff gives all pupils access to information they need to decide on further education and choice of an occupation. Access to various information media is provided within the school library. Other information points (panels, notice boards) are available to all. Pupils and students obtain information personally from school counselling staff and teachers. Schools organise and coordinate individual and group career counselling, lectures and discussions with external experts, representatives of various occupations, careers advisers of the Employment Service of Slovenia, as well as visits to companies and other employers. Pupils, parents and school staff can find exhaustive information on the web portal *Moja izbira*,<sup>89</sup> which can be helpful in deciding on further educational and training paths. Information on occupations and vocational education is also provided by the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, Chamber of Craft and Small Business, and others.

384 Pupils who successfully complete Grade 7 out of 9 within nine years of compulsory basic education can enrol in short upper secondary vocational education programmes. Pupils who complete the basic school programme of a lower educational qualification standard and pupils with special needs may continue their education in short upper secondary vocational education programmes as well. Short upper secondary vocational education programmes allow upper secondary students to obtain the first profession at the level 3 of the European Qualifications Framework. Students who complete the short upper secondary vocational education programme can seek employment or continue their education through enrolment in Year 1 of the upper secondary vocational education or upper secondary technical education.

385 Pupils who successfully complete basic school meet the general application requirements to enrol in any upper secondary education programme. To apply to certain programmes, candidates have to show additional enrolment qualifications, such as artistic or psychophysical abilities required for successful education and work performance in a specific occupation or profession. If the number of applications to certain programmes or schools surpasses the vacancies or capabilities of the staff or space capacities, the respective schools can limit enrolment and start the selection procedure on the basis of the students' success in previous education.

## 5.2. ORGANISATION OF LEARNING TIME

386 The **school year** is the same for basic and upper secondary education and begins on 1 September and ends on 31 August. The law stipulates that the school year in vocational and technical upper secondary schools may start on 1 March and end at the end of February, but this provision is not applied. The organisation of school time, distribution of holidays and other days off school are specified by the Minister with Rules on the School Calendar for Basic Schools (separate rules for

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<sup>89</sup> **PORTAL** <http://www.mojaizbira.si/>

basic schools and secondary schools)<sup>90</sup>. The Minister also issues detailed guidelines (by the end of June for basic schools and by the end of May for upper secondary schools for the following school year). In the annual work plan, basic and upper secondary schools may determine two school days in the year which take place on other days than specified in the school calendar. If a basic school cannot implement the education programme due to extraordinary circumstances and other reasonable grounds, a basic school can derogate from individual provisions of the prescribed school calendar in agreement with the Minister and implement that programme at a time and in a manner as determined by the ministry. In circumstances where there are reasonable grounds, an upper secondary school may derogate from individual provisions of the prescribed school calendar if the school can ensure an appropriate realisation of the education programme.

387 The organised educational work (instruction time and other education activities) encompasses no more than 38 weeks in basic schools and *gimnazije* (around 190 days in the school year) and in Grade 9 of basic school and in around 35 weeks Year 4 of secondary school (around 175 days in the school year). In vocational and technical secondary schools the instruction time encompasses no more than 42 weeks (around 210 days in a school year).

388 The school year is organised in assessment periods. **In basic schools**, the first assessment period starts on 1 September and ends on 31 January, and the second one starts on 1 February and ends on 24 June or 15 June for pupils in grade 9. **In *gimnazije* and vocational and technical upper secondary schools**, the first assessment period starts on 1 September and ends 15 January, and the second one starts on 16 January ends 24 June, i.e. end of school, except for students of vocational schools with an individual study contract with an employer – these students finish the work-based training in the second part of July, depending on the number of additional weeks of work-based training. Students of final Year finish the classes at the end of May and the specific day is determined by the Minister in the annual guidelines on the implementation of the school calendar. However, school assembly may propose several assessment periods and determine their duration in the evaluation plan. The proposal is confirmed by the school council in the annual work plan of the school. If the students in vocational schools take work-based practical classes at employers for at least 4 months, this period may count as one assessment period.

389 **School holidays** and days off school are the same for basic and upper secondary schools. Autumn holidays take one week and include two national holidays, the Reformation Day on 31 October and the Remembrance Day on 1 November. New Year's break lasts from 25 December until 2 January. Winter holidays take one week and start on the third Monday in one part of the country and on the fourth Monday in February in the other part of the country. Schools are classified into two areas according to statistical regions. Each area starts winter holidays every second year. The 1st of May break lasts from 27 April until 2 May. Summer holidays last from the end of school time until 31 August.

390 School days off are Sundays, Saturdays (if not otherwise specified by the Minister's annual guidelines or by the annual work plan of the school in order to replace a school day), 8 February (Prešeren Day, the Slovenian cultural holiday), Easter Monday and the "Day of school" specified in the annual work plan when various activities for pupils or upper secondary school students are organised. In upper secondary school, one day earmarked for systematic medical check-ups of students is organised by the school and counts as a day off school as well. Students in vocational

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<sup>90</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV11347> in <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV11348>

upper secondary schools who are participating in school for more than 9 months can have up to 8 weeks of holidays per school year.

391 A school week usually has 5 days of school if not otherwise specified by the minister's guidelines on the school calendar. One instruction period equals 45 minutes. In vocational and technical upper secondary schools, an instruction period of practical education with an employer equals 60 minutes. The weekly schedule of lessons is determined by the school timetable. The total number of instruction periods in a particular subject is determined by the education programme. The maximum number of instruction periods for pupils and upper secondary school students per week is limited by law.

392 In **basic schools**, the weekly requirement of pupils is determined by educational periods (cycles). In the first educational period (Grade 1 to Grade 3), the maximum number of instruction periods is 24, in the second educational period (Grade 4 to Grade 6), the maximum number is 26, and in the third educational period (Grade 7 to Grade 9), the maximum number is 30. In *gimnazije* and in vocational and technical upper secondary schools, students have to attend at least 30 instruction periods per week without the hours of sports education and the maximum number of all educational work should not exceed 36 instruction periods. In vocational upper secondary schools, the theoretical and practical education of students should not exceed 8 instruction periods per day and 38 periods per week. If a student has more than 5 periods of theoretical education in a day, he or she must not have any practical education with an employer that day.

393 In the **basic school** programme, there are 755 instruction periods in Grade 1 (and can be increased by 70 periods if a pupil chooses the first foreign language as a non-compulsory optional subject), 880 periods in Grade 2, 915 periods in Grades 3 and 4, and 985 periods in Grades 5 and 6 (can be increased by 70 periods in Grades 4, 5 and 6 if a pupil chooses the second foreign language as a non-compulsory optional subject or by 35 hours if a pupil chooses visual arts, computer science, sports and technics as a non-compulsory optional subject), 1,037.5 or 1,072.5 periods in Grade 7 (depending on the number of periods for compulsory optional subjects chosen by a pupil, it can be increased by 70 periods if a pupil chooses the second foreign language as a non-compulsory optional subject), and 1,055 or 1,090 periods in Grades 8 and 9 (depending on the number of non-compulsory optional subject periods of a pupil, it can be increased by 70 periods if a pupil chooses the second foreign language as a non-compulsory optional subject).

394 In ***gimnazija* programmes**, the annual instruction time varies from the minimum of 1,209 to the maximum of 1,350 periods in Year 1, and 1,210 to 1,350 periods in Year 2, 1,175 to 1,350 periods in Year 3, and 975 to 1,290 periods in Year 4. In ***matura* examination course programmes** of 1 year the average instruction time per school year includes 754 to 986 periods. In **short upper secondary vocational education** of 2 years, the average instruction time per school year includes 1,131.5 to 1,180 periods. In the programmes adapted to the education of students with special needs of 3 years, the average instruction time per school year varies from 950 to 1,158 periods. In **vocational upper secondary education programmes** of 3 years, the average instruction time per school year includes 1,232 to 1,325 periods. In programmes adapted to the education of students with special needs, which last for 4 years, the average number of instruction periods in a year is from 1,204 to 1,212. In **upper secondary general education programmes** of 4 years, the average instruction time per school year includes 1,201 to 1,257 periods. In programmes adapted to the education of students with special needs of 5 years, the average instruction time of a year includes 1,216 periods. In **upper secondary vocational-technical education programmes** of 2 years, the average instruction time per school year includes from 1,196 to 1,275 periods. In **one-**

**year programmes of vocational course** of 1 year, the average instruction time per school year includes 1,124 to 1,228 periods.

395 In **basic schools**, lessons should not start before 7:30 a.m. In upper **secondary schools**, school usually starts at 8 a.m., unless the school council decides otherwise in accordance with the council of parents and the teachers' assembly. If by reason of number of students school is not able to organise a single morning shift, it may introduce an additional afternoon shift. The school shall schedule the beginning of the afternoon shift according to its capacities to organise the instruction.

396 In addition to the **compulsory programme**, which comprises compulsory subjects, elective subjects and class discussion periods, schools can implement an **extended programme**, which includes after-school care, morning care, remedial lessons, supplementary lessons, extracurricular activities, as well as non-compulsory optional subjects. Pupils may decide not to take lessons of the extended programme. Morning care is intended for pupils in Grade 1 who come to school before the lessons start and after-school care is organised for pupils in Grades 1 to 5. In after-school classes, pupils study, complete their homework, play and participate in cultural, sporting, artistic and other activities. Supplementary lessons are organised for pupils with better than average outcomes in separate subjects, whereas remedial classes are intended for pupils in need of learning support. **Schools also organise extra-curricular activities**, which are specified in the annual work plan, **in order to develop various interests of pupils**. In addition to extra-curricular activities, schools also organise non-compulsory optional subjects: the first foreign language for the pupils of Grade 1; the second foreign language, arts, computer science, sports and technics for the pupils of Grades 4, 5 and 6; and the second foreign language as a non-compulsory optional subject for the pupils of Grades 7, 8 and 9. Schools have to offer the first foreign language lessons to the pupils of Grade 1 and the second foreign language lessons in form of a non-compulsory optional subject for pupils in Grades from 4 to 9 for two instruction periods per week. Pupils can take no more than two instruction periods of non-compulsory optional subjects per week. Schools do not implement the non-compulsory optional subject for pupils in adapted programmes of lower educational standards.

397 In **gimnazije**, **compulsory elective contents are part of the subject-curricula** and are different from subject in their form of implementation. Schools implement programmes on the basis of the **Catalogue of Compulsory Optional Contents** drawn up by the National Education Institute, or they draw it up themselves. Schools also implement these contents themselves or in cooperation with external providers. Optional contents give upper secondary school students the possibility to acquire knowledge and skills according to their preferences in line with their personal values and life goals. Compulsory elective contents are activities offered to the students by the school autonomously, but are implemented in a condensed form. Compulsory elective contents are therefore not subjects or a compensation for lessons and a detailed lesson plan does not limit their activities. They are divided on contents compulsory for all students and on contents the students can choose freely. Schools are responsible for the pedagogical and organisational part of the implementation of compulsory elective contents. They also decide on whether the contents that are chosen freely are recognised as completed for a specific school year, even if the student did not complete them at school. These can be: music school, organised sports and dance training, choral singing or activities in other cultural and artistic societies, foreign language lessons, computer science or other skills and knowledge, active participation in school groups, season tickets for the theatre, cinema or concerts, research papers, traffic course, teaching participation in a hiking or scouting organisation, competitions on a particular subject,

organised volunteering, participation in other societies (fire, ecological, interest and other societies) and other contents at the school's discretion.

398 *Gimnazije* usually organise compulsory elective contents in such a way that students can complete at least one third of compulsory elective contents in the first three years.

399 **In vocational and technical upper secondary schools**, extra-curricular activities are an integral part of programmes to obtain a vocational and technical upper-secondary education. Although the purpose of extra-curricular activities is to let students take a rest from school lessons, they present one way of improving and deepening general and specific knowledge. On the one hand, this is related to the objectives of programmes implemented by individual schools, and, on the other hand, to the new evidence in the social environment of the school. At the same time, extra-curricular activities allow students to discover areas that are not covered in their education programme and their talents in order to develop them while maintaining their characteristics or diversity. Having the opportunity to choose individual activities is thought to change the students' attitude to work and the responsibility of taking their own decisions. Extra-curricular activities are carried out as intensive courses on individual topics and not as lessons within the timetable. Students can choose freely among the offered activities which are part of the school's work plan. Although schools can determine concrete extra-curricular activities in their annual work plan, they also have to plan that content determined in the framework of the "compulsory elective content" at least to the minimum extent necessary in individual programmes. Recommended topics of extra-curricular activities which are the same as in the catalogues of knowledge for individual subjects shall not be implemented in those activities. This part of extra-curricular activities can be replaced with other topics or the school can increase the number of instruction periods for the activities the students decide for themselves. Schools may also implement individual activities specifically designed for students enrolled in the *gimnazija* programme. The scope of extra-curricular activities is laid down by the syllabus of specific programmes. Each teacher can autonomously decide on the scope, difficulty and frequency of homework.

400 As already stated in previous sections, the Slovenian school system is experiencing expansion tendencies. Parents wish to extend the time their children spend in schools because they spend more and more time in their own working environment. However, there is also a tendency to increase the number of instruction periods of individual subjects (teaching time, in particular, the second foreign language as a compulsory subject, science subjects, technical and digital literacy, to improve the competence of sports education teachers at the primary level or increase the number of sports lessons in basic school, and so forth). Given the current work overload of education staff and no additional funding, the potential expansion of teaching time is not expected at this stage. Currently, the Ministry of Education is preparing an amendment to the Basic School Act aiming, among others, at modifying the concept of extended educational programme by developing a new model of organized activities instead of the current concept of after-school care programme.

## 5.3. DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHING STAFF PER LEARNERS

401 According to the general legislation, the full workload of pre-school teachers and teachers according to the general legislation is 5 days a week, 8 hours a day, or 40 hours a week. Full time work includes the right to a 30-minute lunch break. By law, in a 40-hour working week, **pre-**

**school teachers** have an educational work load of 30 contact hours in kindergartens , while their assistants have a work load of 35 contact hours. Pre-school teachers prepare for the educational work (real-time content planning, methodical preparation, as well as provision of didactic aids and toys) and carry it out. They document it. They follow the development and progress of the children and write down their observations. They organise cultural, sporting and other events for pre-school children and prepare and lead trips and camps. They take part in organising everyday life and work in the pre-school institution, collaborate with colleagues, professional staff and external experts and parents. They take part in continuous professional development and update educational methods and contents. They work as mentors to trainees.

402 **Teacher's** overall working time may be divided into three basic categories:

- teaching time which specify the amount of time the teacher spends delivering instruction or other types of organised direct work with pupils or secondary school students;
- lesson preparation consisting of real-time content and methodical planning, provision of didactic aids, as well as assessment and grading of products;
- other work needed to implement the education programme set out in The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI): they have to cooperate with their colleagues and in the school's professional bodies, with institutes for teacher training, professionals outside of school and parents, take part in professional development and training, do teachers duties and mentor pupils, students or teacher trainees, but also collect and process data in relation to the implementation of educational and other work. Teacher's work description also includes organising studies, collections, school workshops, sports halls, playgrounds and gardens, organising cultural, sports and other generally useful and humanitarian events with the help and participation of pupils or students, organising and leading excursions, trips and competitions, camps, holidays, camping trips organised by the school and other works specified in the annual work plan. Individual tasks are not time-standardised.

403 As stated in Section 3.5, the Court of Auditors issued the Report on working time of teachers in 2016. The revision urges the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport to organise teachers' work duties in a more efficient way and provide the conditions for an equal assessment of teachers. To ensure delivery of actions, the Ministry set up a working group involving different stakeholders. Expert discussions on the detailed organisation of teachers' working time are currently taking place. In addition, a proposal for the annual working time of teachers will most likely be prepared.

404 Weekly teaching time of teachers is specified by law in periods of 45 minutes, in some cases even 50 or 60 minutes (after-school care, morning care). The pedagogical obligation of a **basic school teacher** is 22 periods or 16/17 hours of teaching and 25 periods or 18/19 hours of teaching in after school care and hospital school classes. Basic school teachers of the language of instruction (Slovenian, Hungarian and Italian) teach 21 periods or 15/16 hours of teaching per week.

405 The teaching time of **general subject and technical-theoretical subject teachers in upper secondary schools** is 20 periods or 14/15 hours of teaching, but with some exceptions. The law states that upper secondary school teachers of the language of instruction (Slovenian, Hungarian and Italian) teach 19 periods or 14 hours of teaching per week. Teachers of practical classes and skills teach 25 teaching periods or 18/19 hours of teaching per week. To set up timetables, the head master may assign additional bonus compensated 5 periods per week to an individual teacher or reduce the teaching time may by 3 periods and in so doing scale down the salary (provision of ZOFVI). **Class teacher** have their teaching time reduced by one period or half a

period. Other teachers may have their teaching time reduced if they take on special tasks, in particular, related to external examinations.

406 Annual leave of pre-school teachers and teachers is mostly 24 to 35 working days for full time employees, depending on the level of qualifications, years of service and particularly demanding work (e.g. working with SEN children). Teachers aged over 50 years of age are entitled to an additional 5 days of leave (but no more than 35 days in total). They usually take most days of leave during school holidays. Additional paid leave is also possible in the case of illness, care of a family member, training, preparation and sitting the teaching certification examination, taking part in cultural and sports events of national and international importance, natural disasters, wedding, birth of a child, death in the family, moving house and humanitarian activity.

407 Continuous **professional development** is a right and obligation of all educational staff and it is specified by ZOFVI and the Collective Agreement for Education in the Republic of Slovenia<sup>91</sup>. It is further regulated in the Rules on in-service training of educational professionals<sup>92</sup>. The Collective Agreement determines the right of pedagogical staff to 5 days of in-service training a year or 15 days over three years. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport organises and finances in-service training for education professionals. The aim is for the professional development of pedagogical staff, the development of public pre-school institutions and schools as well as the entire educational system, thereby improving its quality and efficiency.

408 The regulations regarding the professional development of teaching staff issued by the Minister of Education manage the organisation and financing of the programmes, decision-making bodies and their authorities, as well as the awarding and recognition of points for advancement of pre-school teachers and teachers.

409 The Ministry of Education annually announces the needs of the educational system. Determining and selecting priority programmes is in the domain of the Programme Council, named by the Minister of Education. The programme council selects priority programmes and proposes the Minister to finance them. The selection is made public. The published programmes are awarded points that the participants use in relation to their promotion to titles. Participation in continuous professional development (CPD) programmes is one of the conditions for title promotion.

410 Pre-school institutions and schools plan CPD for their pedagogical staff in the annual work plan, the financial means of which are allocated for this purpose by the state. The state ensures a network of providers and the programmes on offer. Since professional development is the right of professional staff, pre-school teachers and teachers must get paid study leave and covered transport costs and participant fee. This is how the state and municipalities ensure the means for covering the material costs of participation.

411 The Ministry allocates the financial means for covering the costs of participation to pre-school institutions and schools. It partially or entirely pays providers of priority and compulsory programmes. The system of collecting points for participating in programmes that are considered for title promotion additionally motivates professional staff to undergo CPD training. Pre-school teachers and teachers usually select training programmes themselves. In cases of extensive curriculum changes or reforms, training for the new innovations is either compulsory or highly advisable and awarded with points (for promotion).

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<sup>91</sup> **COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=KOLP19>.

<sup>92</sup> **RULES** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV5958>

- 412 The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport monitors the efficiency and success of the system. The Programme Council Commission conducts occasional evaluations of the CPD programmes. Some changes in further education and training of teachers are currently being planned, focusing on enhancing competencies and responsiveness to the challenges of the changed social circumstances and on increased accessibility to professional development.
- 413 Pre-school teachers and teachers have the **access to promotion** in terms of titles and salary grades. According to ZOFVI (Article 105), they may be promoted to the title of *mentor*, *advisor* or *councillor*. The Rules on the Title Promotion of the Employees in Education<sup>93</sup> issued by the Minister of Education determines the conditions of advancement, criteria for evaluation of conditions and procedures. The Minister, following a proposal by the head master or pre-school teacher or the teacher himself or herself, decides on the advancement. The conditions include a certain number of years of experience, performance at work, in-service training and additional professional work. Conditions are awarded points. In order to be promoted to a title, a pre-school teacher or a teacher needs to collect a certain number of points. The higher the title, the more points are needed. Titles are permanent and pre-school teachers and teachers can keep them even if they change a job position or find employment in another pre-school institution or school.
- 414 In accordance with Article 16 of the Public Sector Salary System Act, pre-school teachers and teachers can be promoted to a higher salary grade. On those work positions where promotion to higher titles is possible, they can be promoted to a higher salary grade within one title up to a maximum of 5 salary grades, and for ten salary grades where promotion to titles is not possible. Advancement to a higher salary grade is possible every three years for one or two salary grades. The head master, who evaluates the criteria for promotion at least once a year, decides on the advancement. Work performance is a criterion for promotion to higher salary grades. It is evaluated in terms of results of the work, independence, creativity, accuracy as well as reliability at work, quality of cooperation and organisation of work and other abilities in connection with the performance of the work. The promotion can also be in the form of management and executive job positions, which are: Head of Unit, Assistant Head master and Pre-school Head master or School Head master. The requirements for appointment to head master position are prescribed by ZOFVI.
- 415 Teachers and pre-school teachers are public servants. Their salaries are determined by the **Public Sector Salary System Act**, which stipulates common salary bases of all employees in the public sector, so that it enforces equal pay for work in comparable work positions and titles. Depending on the level of difficulty, work positions are divided into nine tariff grades. Work positions are placed on a salary grade from 1 to 65 (work positions in education are between 17 and 43). The salary of pre-school teachers and teachers are determined according to the matrix scale model in which salary grades, title grades and past work are combined.
- 416 The salary is composed of the basic salary, performance-related bonus and other bonuses. The basic salary of pre-school teachers and teachers is determined by the salary grade on which their job position is placed and the title they have acquired with promotion according to school regulations.
- 417 The salary grade scale is determined by law. The scale ranks job positions according to the qualifications needed for a particular position. The levels of salary grades are adjusted annually.

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<sup>93</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV4272>

The level of pay of pre-school teachers and teachers (as it is for other public servants) is determined by a collective agreement for the public sector. Pre-school teachers and teachers can be promoted to a higher salary grade within their job position or title up to a maximum of 5 salary grades. Advancement to a higher salary grade is possible every three years if the job performance has been creative and of high quality. The head master decides on the advancement. Pre-school teachers and teachers can be promoted to permanent titles *mentor* (mentor), *svetovalec* (advisor) and *svetnik* (councillor).

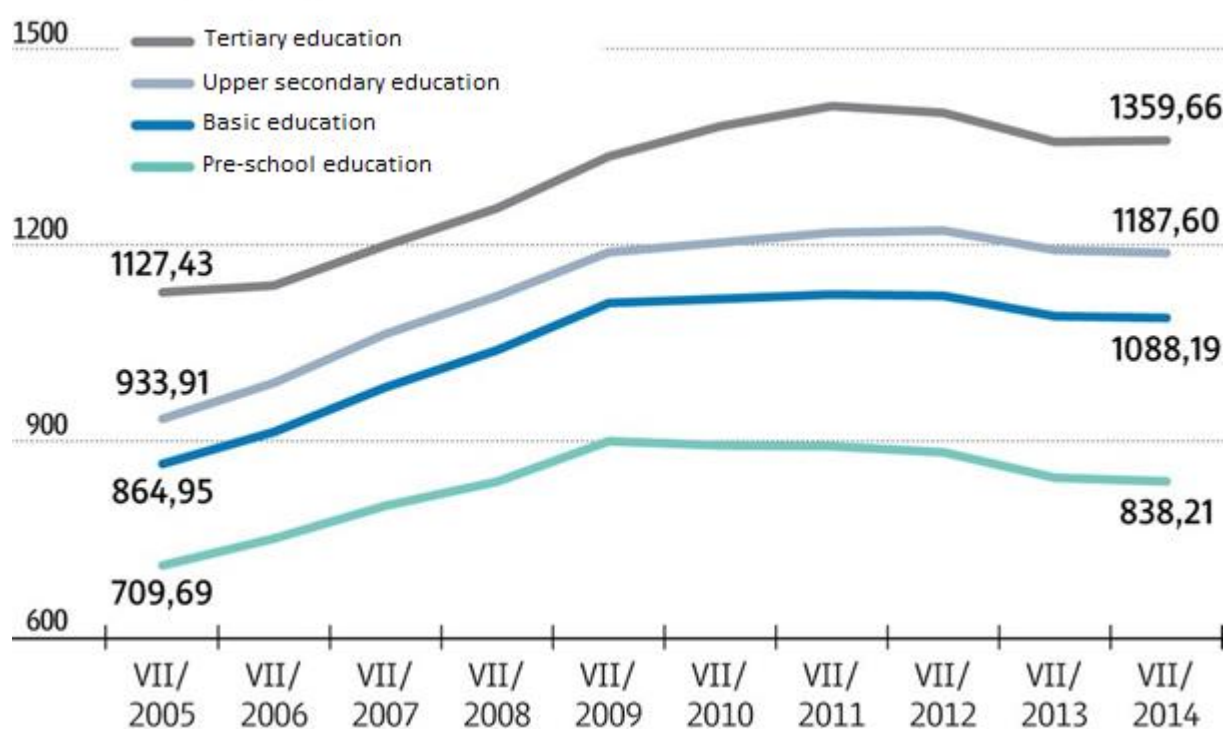
418 According to the Eurydice study on teachers' and school heads' salaries in Europe (Salaries, 2016), the situation in Slovenia is as follows (some data originate from 2014):

419 Average **gross annual salary** of a pre-school teacher in a **kindergarten** is €17,460; gross annual salary of a **basic school** teacher is €23,988 at primary level, 24,432 at lower secondary level, and €26,376 in a **secondary school** (upper secondary level). A monthly deduction for social security, which equals slightly more than 22% of gross salary, and an income tax (from 16% to 41%) shall be made from the salary. Pre-school teacher assistants, whose salaries actually decrease an average salary, are also covered in the data on salaries (separate data on the pre-school teachers' salaries are not collected).

420 According to general regulations for all public servants and the collective agreement, pre-school teachers and teachers are entitled to the following **supplements**: job position, employment period, mentorship to a trainee, class management, a completed third cycle study programme if not a requirement for the job position, bilingualism, less favourable work conditions (teaching in mixed level classes, classes with children with special needs, hospital classes, teaching three or more subjects) and special workloads (working in shifts or in the afternoon, overtime work and extensive workload).

421 The collective agreement stipulates that pre-school teachers and teachers are entitled to a **monthly food allowance and annual leave allowance**. They also get **transport allowance**, business trips and professional development seminars they are sent to by the head master. In individual cases the municipality in pre-school institutions and schools in remote places can also secure an apartment for the pre-school teacher or teacher. Pre-school teachers and teachers are entitled to an award after 10, 20 or 30 years of service. When they retire they are entitled to a severance pay at retirement. In case of death, disability, longer illness or natural disaster the family may be entitled to aid if they ask for it.

GRAPH 5.2 AVERAGE MONTHLY NET SALARY OF TEACHERS (INTERIM AVERAGE IN EUR)



Source: SURS.

422 Pre-school teachers and teachers receive wage compensation (from 70% to 100%) for sick leave, work related injuries, annual leave, public holidays, professional development and strike.

423 In addition to the gross salary and social security contributions, the state pays pre-school teachers and teachers a compulsory pension, disability or health insurance, allowances for work related injuries, and employment and parenting leave. In addition, they are also entitled to collective voluntary pension insurance since 2004.

424 The salaries actually paid to teachers are on average lower than the wages of other public servants with tertiary education in Slovenia. According to the OECD, the ratio between the salaries of teachers and employees with tertiary education in 2014 (including pre-school teacher assistants who do not have a tertiary education) is 0.63 for pre-primary level, 0.86 for primary level, 0.88 for lower secondary level, and 0.95 for upper secondary level (general education –

*gimnazija*). Compared to the average of the OECD, which amounts to 0.74 for pre-primary level, 0.81 for primary level, 0.85 for lower secondary level (general education) and 0.89 for upper secondary level (general education), teachers in Slovenia have proportionally better salaries; the exception are pre-school teachers, whose salaries, as already mentioned, are being reduced and are also included in the average (OECD EAG, 2016, 3.2).

425 Pre-school teachers and teachers do not have a specially organised **counselling service**; however, there are various sources of assistance and counselling available during their employment. Graduate teachers can consult their mentor during their traineeship or at the beginning of their employment and when preparing for the teaching certification examination. They can also receive assistance from the head master of the pre-school institution or a school or their assistants.

426 Every pre-school institution and school must have an organised counselling service intended for children, basic and upper secondary school pupils, their parents and colleagues. The counselling service mostly consists of psychologists, pedagogues, social workers, social pedagogues and SEN teachers.

427 Large kindergartens and schools may have more counsellors on staff, but smaller ones must have at least one, available for reduced work hours. The school counsellors perform three related and often entwined types of activities: support, development and prevention, and planning and evaluation. The school counsellors do the pedagogical, psychological, and/or social counselling work. They provide support to children, pupils, students, teachers, parents, and to kindergarten or school management. They work together with all stakeholders in everyday life and duties in the scope of learning and teaching (playing and teaching in kindergartens), of the educational institution's culture, education, overall climate and order, physical, personal and social development of children, pupils and students, training and vocational orientation (transition), and in the scope of socio-economic situations. They plan and apply individual support programmes for children with special needs. The National Experts Council for General education adopted guidance criteria<sup>94</sup> for counselling staff in kindergartens, basic and upper secondary schools.

428 Pre-school teachers receive help from counselling specialists, pre-school teacher assistants, organizers of health-hygiene regime, and organizers of meals as well as computer specialists or organizers of IT activities. In upper secondary schools, teachers can find assistance in school librarians, organizers of optional activities, organizers of adult education, organizers of practical classes and internship, organizers of elective subjects, organizers of practical training in a working process, estate managers and practice company managers.

429 **Pedagogical advisors of the National Education Institute** are constantly available for assistance. The units of the Institute are dispersed across Slovenia. Pedagogical advisors are in constant contact with pre-school institutions and schools. The so called Study Groups are organized in all subject areas where pre-school teachers and teachers meet, develop new ideas, exchange experiences and solve professional issues. Vocational schools teachers can collaborate with pedagogical advisors of the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training. Teachers of adults can find support in the experts from the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

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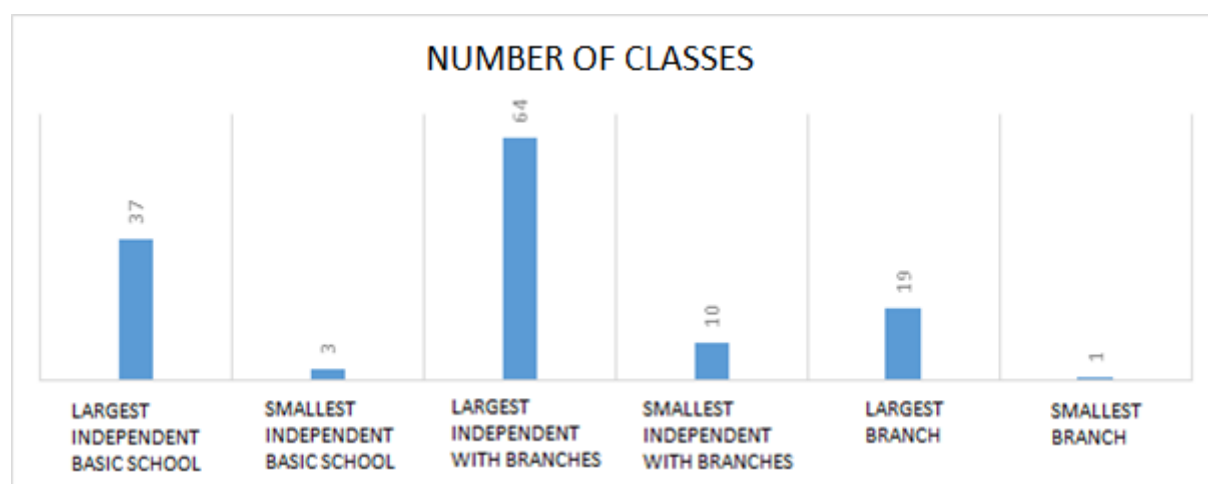
<sup>94</sup>[http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/ministrstvo/Publikacije/Programske\\_smernice\\_vrtec.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/ministrstvo/Publikacije/Programske_smernice_vrtec.pdf), [http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/ministrstvo/Publikacije/Programske\\_smernice\\_SS.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/ministrstvo/Publikacije/Programske_smernice_SS.pdf), [http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/ministrstvo/Publikacije/Programske\\_smernice\\_OS.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/ministrstvo/Publikacije/Programske_smernice_OS.pdf).

430 **Slovenian educational network (SIO)**<sup>95</sup> offers internet classrooms for individual subjects and topics. The website offers every pre-school teacher or teacher their own web community in which they can share experiences, find seminars and advice for their subject area and useful links.

431 Teachers who work with mixed classes containing students with special needs, learning difficulties or from various cultural and linguistic environments can teach in classes with a lower number of students. They have access to seminars and supplementary training courses focusing on working with students with diverse needs. They can also find assistance in experts for special needs education who can be employed at the school or from a mobile service.

432 Based on the data provided by the World Bank for 2013 (World Bank, 2013), there were 17 pupils per 1 teacher in basic schools and 10 students per 1 teacher in upper secondary schools in Slovenia (Secondary Education, 2013). Some key figures in graphs are presented below and detailed data can be found in the tables in Annex IX.

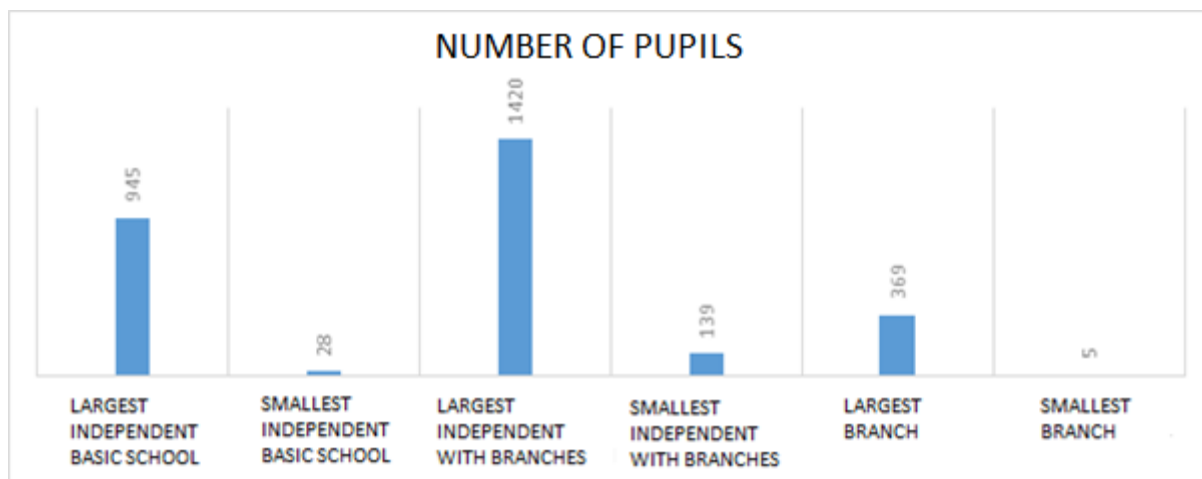
*GRAPH 5.3 NUMBER OF CLASSES BY SCHOOL TYPE*



Source: MIZŠ.

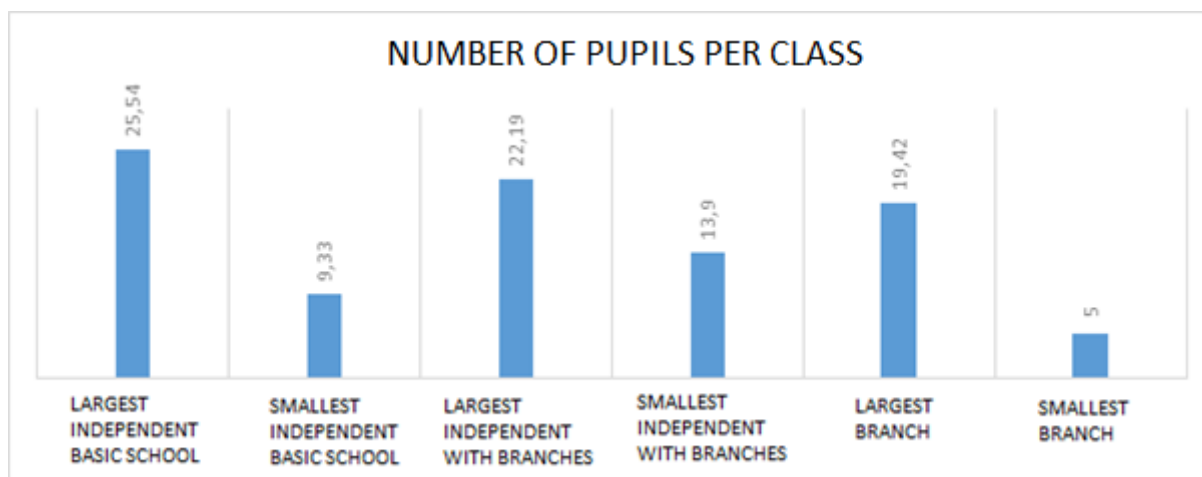
*GRAPH 5.4 NUMBER OF PUPILS BY TYPE OF SCHOOL*

<sup>95</sup> <http://sio.si/>



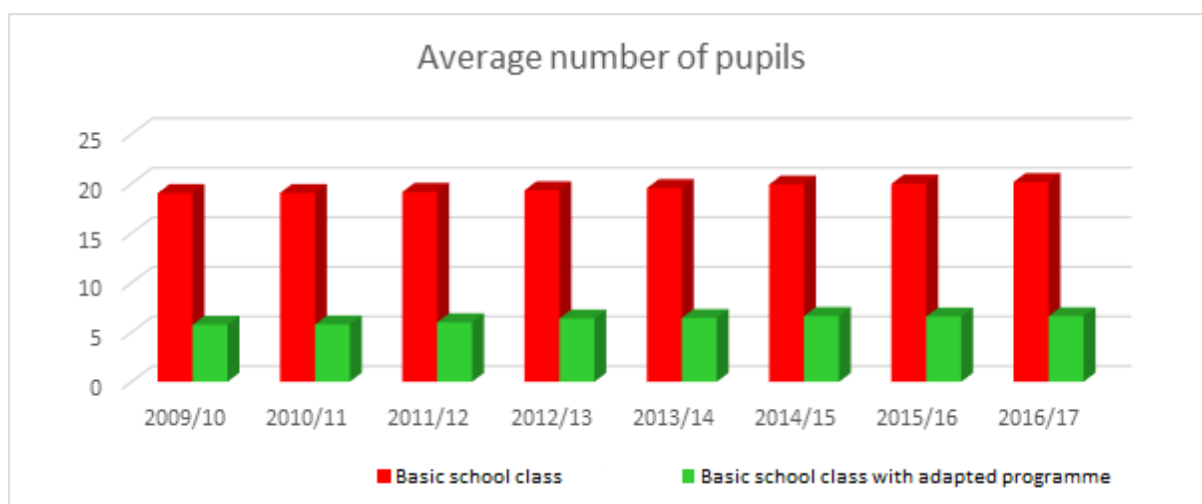
Source: MIZŠ.

GRAPH 5.5 NUMBER OF PUPILS PER CLASS BY SCHOOL TYPE



Source: MIZŠ. As of 30 September 2016.

GRAPH 5.6 AVERAGE NUMBER OF PUPILS PER CLASS IN BASIC SCHOOLS AND BASIC SCHOOLS WITH ADAPTED PROGRAMME

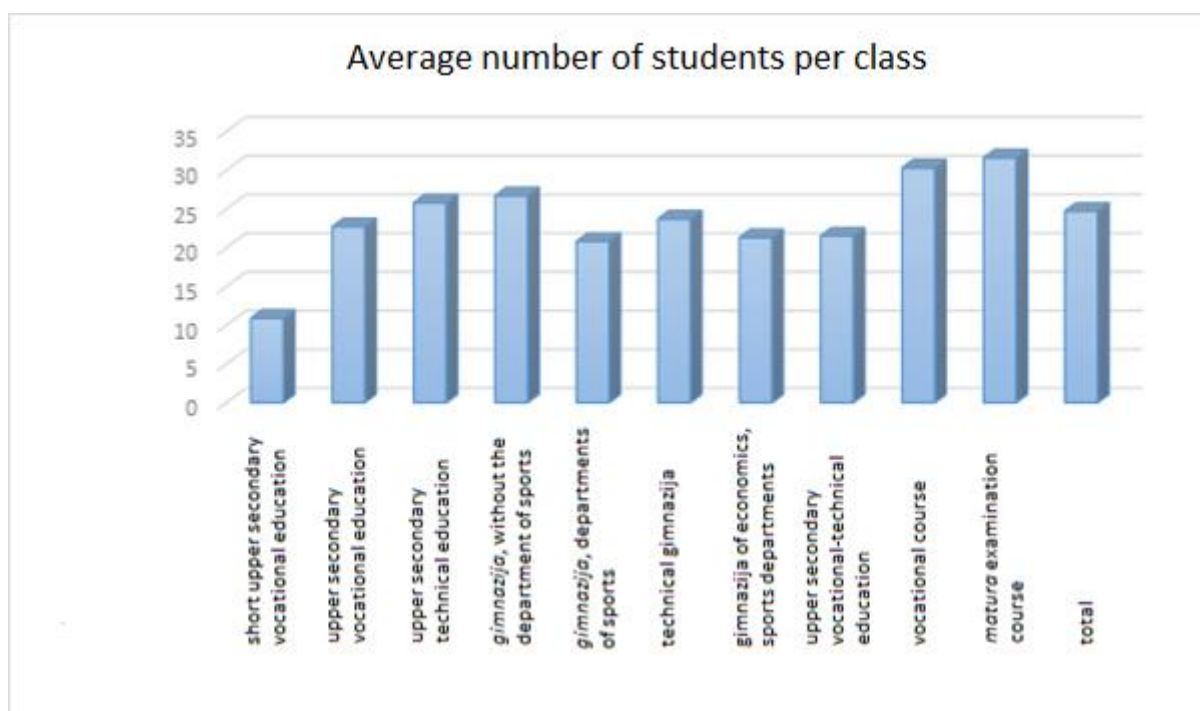


Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

433 In upper secondary schools, the size of classes or the number of students per class is determined by norms and standards that vary depending on the categories of education programmes. The standard number of students in classes of upper secondary vocational education is much lower than in *gimnazija* programmes. The standard number can be reduced if a student with a placement decision is attending a class. However, the number of students with such decisions is very low.

434 In the 2014/2015 school year, the average number of students was 24.7, but the differences among individual categories of education programmes are significant (see Annex IX).

**GRAPH 5.7 AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER CLASS IN INDIVIDUAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES**



Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

435 On average, there are 13 students per 1 teacher in upper secondary schools of general education and 14 students per 1 teacher in vocational and technical programmes, which is in compliance with the OECD average (OECD EAG, 2016).

## 5.4. ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

436 Management and governance of schools and kindergartens as public institutions are specified by law: **Institutes Act** (ZZ<sup>96</sup>) and ZOFVI.

437 **The governance body is the council of the institution** consisting of the representatives of the founder, employees and users or other stakeholders. Composition, method of appointment or election of members, duration of the mandate and the council's authorities are determined by ZOFVI and the founding acts of the institution. The council of the institute adopts the financial plan, the work programme, urgent implementation and some general acts. The council also receives annual accounts, proposes change to the founder or extends the activities, and makes proposals to the founder or director of the institution.

438 **The head master is the managerial executive of the institution.** School centres, which are part of the upper secondary education, are managed by the director who is responsible for management, and several head masters who function as educational managers. The head master is responsible for the organisation and leadership of the institution, its representation and monitoring the regularity of work. The head master steers the specialist work of the institution and is responsible for its professionalism unless otherwise specified in the founding act which states that, with regard to the nature of the activities and the amount of work in a managerial position, the managerial function of the institution and the professional work are separated (ZZ,

<sup>96</sup> ZZ <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO10>

Article 31). The director is appointed and dismissed by the founder unless the council of the institute is authorised to do so in the founding act as is the case in education (ZOFVI, Article 48). The director is appointed through advertising a vacancy for a term of five years. The procedure for appointing and discharging is laid down in detail in ZZ and ZOFVI.

- 439 A specific feature in education is the **assistant head master** as specified in Article 50 in ZOFVI. In a public kindergarten or school, the assistant head master can be appointed to help the head master in performing tasks related to management and education. Assistant head masters carry out the functions which are authorised in writing by head masters and act as deputies in the absence of head masters. The legislation also provides the head of unit or branch. In accordance with the provisions in Article 57, the association of a public kindergarten or branch of a public school is led by the head of unit or branch of a public school. The head can be appointed and dismissed by the head master of a unit of a public kindergarten or branch of a public school. The head of the association or branch performs the duties regulated by the founding act or as assigned to them in writing by head masters.
- 440 The institutions can form a **council of experts** which regulates issues related to professional work of the institution, decides on technical issues within its powers conferred by the founding act, determines scientific bases for the work programmes and development of the institution, delivers opinions and proposals on the development of the activities to the council, director and expert as head of the institution as well as carries out other tasks as set out in the foundation act (ZZ, Article 44). Councils of experts are not provided for under ZOFVI, while expert bodies are. Two expert bodies in public kindergartens are a pre-school teachers' assembly and a working group of pre-school teachers. Expert bodies in public schools are: school assembly, the assembly of the teachers of the programme, the assembly of teachers of the class, class teachers and working groups.
- 441 The jurisdiction of the head master is determined by **Article 49 of ZOFVI**. This article stipulates that a head master is the pedagogical leader and managerial executive of a public kindergarten or school and carries out a wide range of pedagogical and managerial tasks (see Annex X for all the tasks). Sectoral laws (such as the Kindergarten Act, Basic School Act, and Vocational Education Act) define the head master's tasks even further.
- 442 If a public kindergarten or school is formed as an organisational unit, the head master is responsible for the functions as a pedagogical and managerial leader. If a public kindergarten or school is created as an organisational unit of another legal person under public law, the founding act specifies for which functions the head master is responsible in addition to being a pedagogical leader. A head master may authorise in writing other employees of the public kindergarten or school to replace the head master and carry out certain tasks within the head master's power.
- 443 Individual Slovenian pieces of research (such as Špehar, 2000; Selan, 2006) state that head masters in Slovenia are progressively becoming managerial executives rather than pedagogical leaders. However, the international TALIS study (OECD 2009) and the national TALIS report (Sardoč et al. 2009) found that head masters of educational institutions in Slovenia are engaged in a function of a pedagogical leader above the OECD average. The TALIS research indicates that Slovenian head masters more frequently carry out activities that are usually part of the pedagogical leading index. The maximum difference compared to other countries can be seen in monitoring the pupils and observing the education process in classrooms where Slovenian head masters attain best results. In addition, Slovenia belongs to the group of countries performing above the TALIS average in terms of pedagogical leading index. This also means that Slovenian

head masters cooperate more with teachers in order to improve deficiencies, and play an important role in informing teachers on the possibility of updating knowledge and teaching skills when encountering pedagogical problems. In terms of leadership style, Slovenia belongs to the group of countries where head masters adopted the pedagogical style of leadership to the highest degree, but at the same time do not ignore the administration or management style. The latest Slovenian research by Čagran (2015) showed that, at the beginning of school managing, head masters dedicate most of their time to managerial duties, whereas this time decreases linearly with each year.

444 In order to support the performance of managerial and pedagogical tasks of head masters, the Slovenian Government created the **National School of Leadership in Education**<sup>97</sup> in 1995. Its core activities cover the education and training of head masters and head master candidates, the creation, development and implementation of education and professional training to perform managerial tasks, as well as the research and development activities and the advisory activity in the field of management in education.

445 National School of Leadership in Education runs various support programmes for head masters and also offers a “lifelong learning system” for head masters as pedagogical leaders and operational managers. The Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is aware that head masters need support in the implementation of their tasks. To this end, the Ministry helps them carry out tasks through budgetary and project resources. It is worth pointing out the Lifelong Learning for School and Kindergarten Management project (*Vseživljenjsko učenje za vodenje šol in vrtcev*), parts II, III and IV (2012–2015), through which the National School of Leadership in Education established an e-support for head masters who can publish samples of internal rules and Questions and Answers, designed and conducted the consultative visits in the field of management (review of the internal VIZ acts), and organised thematic workshops on the topics of pedagogical leadership and management. A number of projects have proved to be successful and are now part of regular activities of the National School of Leadership in Education. A part of the support activities is also covered by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. For the 2016–2019 period, the National School of Leadership in Education obtained the European financial aid for the implementation of the Leadership and Management of the Innovative Public Institution project (VIO), which will put to the test counselling in pedagogical leadership and management as a means of support to head masters. The support is provided through various activities by the head masters' associations (such as the Head masters of Upper Secondary Schools, Higher Vocational Colleges and Residence Halls for Students Society, the Basic and Music Schools Head masters Association of Slovenia, the Kindergarten Head masters Association of Slovenia) and education associations (such as the Kindergarten Association, regional basic school associations). Other individual companies also provide support for head masters of educational institutions (such as the *Ravnateljski servis*, *E-ravnatelj*). Head masters are also organised in the Directors and Head masters' Trade Union (SINDIR), which exercises, guarantees and protects the employment rights, their interests and other requests of the members.

446 The latest internal analysis by the **National School of Leadership in Education** concerning the participation of head masters in the programmes indicates that the majority of head masters attend at least one form of or lifelong learning support at the National School of Leadership in Education once a year (for example a consultation or legal support). International surveys also show that Slovenian head masters participate in lifelong learning activities (European

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<sup>97</sup> <http://solazaravnateljje.si/>

Commission, 2013; Pont et al., 2008). A research on 22 OECD countries (Pont et al., 2008) indicates that Slovenia belongs to the group of five countries which have regulated forms of lifelong learning during all stages of headship (before the start, at the beginning and in the later periods of headship). In recent years, the National School of Leadership in Education has been paying particular attention to other positions as well, such as the assistant head masters or working group leaders. It is also organising annual consultations for assistant head masters and has been successfully implementing a programme on leading a working group (*Vodenje aktiva*) for the past three years.

447 **Salary and other supplements of head masters** or directors of schools and kindergartens are determined by the Public Sector Salary System Act and the Decree on the Salaries of Directors in the Public Sector. In accordance with the regulation, the salary of a head master is determined according to the criteria linked to the size of the institution (number of pupils, number of programmes of the branches, and others). Each area of education is considered individually. This means that for example, basic schools with adapted basic education programme have their own specific criteria for the classification of salary grades within the salary grade range for this area of education. It also determines the rewards of the head master's performance. In accordance with Article 8 of the regulation, head masters and directors of public educational institutions are entitled to a performance-related bonus. Work performance is established on the basis of the Rules on criteria for establishing work performance of directors working in education. The disbursement is currently on hold due to austerity measures. However, their performance may be rewarded as a result of increased work.

448 **Assistant head master**, whose post is provided for in the law, is a professional who performs duties of an assistant head master and is fully or partially exempt of pedagogical obligations or work in classroom. This position is properly assessed in terms of the salary system.

449 However, one does not make provisions for special posts to manage units or branches and for class teachers. These functions are included in the workload of educational staff. The rewarding is determined by law and is provided in form of allowance (position allowance). This allowance is granted to teachers managing a branch or a pre-school teacher managing a unit – unless they are an assistant head master. The allowance may be granted to civil servants who, in addition to performing their own work, guide, coordinate and oversee the work of at least three civil servants and it is clear from the employer's act that these duties are not part of their basic salary (Article 3 of the Decree on the criteria for determining the amount of position allowance for civil servants<sup>98</sup>).

450 In line with the standardisation of **the wage system of public employees**, part of which are the members of the management staff, the salaries among management staff from different public sectors are comparable to the salaries of other professions which demand a “comparable qualification level”. In accordance with the legislation, the initial salary is based on the tariff grades which indicate the level of difficulty of work places and titles in relation to the required education qualifications and training. The classification of civil servants is based on collective arrangements, whereas the classification of management job positions is based on government decrees.

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<sup>98</sup> **DECREE** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=URED5625>

451 Managers may be promoted to titles within the same terms as other professional staff in education. There are no promotions for the position of a manager. Titles are not taken into account as far as the salary of a head master is concerned.

## 5.5. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

452 The role of educational institution in curriculum development and creation of assessment criteria for the participants of education differs in terms of the area and education level. It is mainly direct and the rules give a certain room for manoeuvre to the teacher's judgement of the contents and evaluation in the educational process. The National Education Institute organises subject-oriented groups for different subjects or areas dedicated to the development work in subjects or areas. These groups consist of development-oriented teachers together with academic experts and consultants from the National Education Institute. The results of their work are disseminated among the rest of the teachers during study meetings and other trainings organised by the Institute.

453 The Kindergarten Curriculum (1999)<sup>99</sup> is a national document intended for pre-school teachers which allows them to plan professional and high-quality pre-school education in kindergartens. The curriculum is based on the developmental process approach, is open and flexible, and develops as well as changes during the implementation of the curriculum. It also takes into account the immediate response of children in a class, the organisation of the work in the kindergarten and its position in the wider area. The curriculum is not structured in detail, but it does contain objectives and examples for each activity area for both age levels of children (1–3 years, 3–6 years). The Kindergarten Curriculum expects teaching staff to make autonomous and responsible expert decisions within the proposed principles and guidelines with regard to the selection of appropriate methods of work and techniques for pre-school children. They are free to flexibly organise life and work in kindergartens in terms of space, time and diversity. The aforementioned is determined, to a certain degree, within the scope of the Annual Work Plan of the kindergarten, and more specifically within the scope of the operative educational plans prepared by the preschool teacher and assistant for their own department. When routine activities are planned (feeding, rest and sleeping), the teaching staff must consider differences among children (in terms of gender, social and cultural background, ideological background, special needs). They must respect children's special traits and their right to choice. The curriculum emphasises the importance of communication for social learning and a flexibly managed, safe and supportive environment.

454 Instruction books, didactical material and teaching aids for individual activities in kindergartens are not prescribed. Kindergartens may autonomously buy didactic materials and aids. General safety for toys is specified by the Decree on toy safety<sup>100</sup> issued by the minister responsible for health. In recent years it has become important that kindergartens have a declared vision by setting concrete goals and continuous improvements in quality.

455 The Kindergarten Curriculum does not specify knowledge levels and skills that children are required to acquire in individual developmental stages. Children's products are not assessed. Pre-school teachers observe, analyse and direct child's learning through play. They encourage

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<sup>99</sup> **CURRICULUM** [http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/vrtci/pdf/vrtci\\_kur.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/vrtci/pdf/vrtci_kur.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> **DECREE** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=URED5326>.

children to learn, guide them and motivate, explain and clarify issues. They orally convey information on child's performance to parents.

456 The **basic school programme** is made of a compulsory part and an extended part and pupils may decide to take or not to take lessons of the extended programme. It is laid down by the syllabus and curricula for compulsory and elective subjects, which include guidelines and educational concepts that define other methods of work with children (morning care, after-school care, interest groups) and the non-compulsory optional subject lessons, out-of-school lessons and cross-curricular contents, how to use libraries and information technologies, and other documents that assist teaching staff and their work (all documents are available on the website of the Ministry of Education).

457 The school must offer at least three elective subjects in social sciences and humanities as well as at least three elective subjects in natural sciences and technics. As for the social sciences and humanities, the school must offer foreign language lessons, non-confessional religious education with ethics, and rhetoric lessons. Each pupil can take no more than two instruction periods of non-compulsory optional subjects per week, unless their parents agree to three instruction periods. The first foreign language (schools may choose either English or German) are mandatory for all pupils in grade 2 (starting in the 2014/2015 school year schools gradually started to introduce the first foreign language in grade 2, in the 2016/2017 school year all schools provided the first foreign language lessons in grade 2, while in 2017/2018 all schools will introduce the lessons in grade 3). Pupils may take a second foreign language course as a non-compulsory optional subject in second and third cycle of educational periods (pupils can choose from English, German, French, Croatian, Italian, and Hungarian). From year seven onwards they can take on the third foreign language as a compulsory optional subject (they may choose from English, German, French, Croatian, Italian, Hungarian, Chinese, Latin, Macedonian, Russian, Serbian and Spanish).

458 Any school providing education in ethnically mixed areas has an adapted syllabus. The programme also stipulates which knowledge is required for teachers of individual subjects. Lesson plans set knowledge standards, learning objectives and main contents for each subject. It is up to every teacher to choose a teaching method and adapt the subject curricula to the circumstances. The supplement to the curriculum includes special didactic recommendations encouraging teachers to apply such didactical techniques that promote pupil's active participation in knowledge acquisition and development of skills and competencies, as well as pupil-centred learning process. Textbooks used in class are approved by the Council of Expert for General Education. Several textbooks are available for individual subjects. **The school has the autonomy to select textbooks, workbooks and other learning material. However, it has to obtain consent from the council of parents.**

459 Teachers **assess and examine** pupils' knowledge throughout the duration of the subject lessons. Teachers use descriptive marks to assess knowledge in grades 1 and 2. From grade 3 onwards teachers assess the achievement of knowledge standards in line with the curricula using numerical marks ranging from 1 to 5, with grade 1 being negative and all the rest positive.

460 Parents are informed of their child's grades in parental consultation meetings during the school year, and by a written report at the end of the first assessment period. At the end of the year, pupils are given their annual report which includes their final grades for the year and a statement regarding their advancement to the next year. Parents have the right to appeal the final grade. Their appeal is considered by a three-member committee appointed by the head master.

461 At the end of grades 6 and 9, pupils are assessed in national examinations in the mother tongue and mathematics, in Grade 6 also in a foreign language, and in Grade 9 in a subject determined by the Minister. The assessment is mandatory. Results do not affect pupils' grades as they are only an additional information about their knowledge levels. The rules of assessment and examination are stipulated by the Elementary School Act and by different rules and regulations (Rules on knowledge assessment and grading and students' progress to a higher class standing in elementary schools, Rules on National Examinations in Elementary Schools<sup>101</sup>).

462 **Upper secondary education** is provided by upper secondary schools. The schools may be specialised in the provision of a single programme type (i.e. *gimnazija*) or provide several programmes. They may be single-type organisations or by reason of diversification of programmes and size, they may be organised as school centres with several organisational units (Eurydice, 2016). The **syllabus of *gimnazija* programmes** provides for the weekly and annual number of lessons of individual subjects. The syllabi of individual types of ***gimnazija*** programmes vary slightly, however, they are typically divided into a compulsory and optional part. The compulsory part accounts for 81% of the lessons (in general *gimnazija* programmes) or up to 93% of the lessons (in certain *gimnazije* of arts); it is up to the student to decide on the remaining lessons. Students have the least selection options in Year 1 and the most in Year 4 when they prepare for the *matura*. Students choose among various *matura* subjects, elective subjects, and elective content. Students opt for problem research, field work or interdisciplinary project work and work methods, such as excursions, sports and research camps and project week. Elective content includes cross-curricular and general knowledge topics, e.g.: education for family, peace and non-violence, environmental culture, health education, entrepreneurship, cultural and artistic activities, voluntary social work, translations, citizenship culture, course of effective learning, and first aid, as well as courses of traffic regulations. *Gimnazija* programmes are mostly focused on shared interaction among subjects of the core and elective part at the level of content, implementation, and learning objectives.

463 Students may attend organised extra-curricular activities (e.g. choral singing, artistic workshops, debate and literary clubs, the school radio and newsletter), as well as extra-curricular language courses. Gifted students may take classes to prepare for knowledge contests.

464 ***Gimnazija*** caters for a broad general educational qualification and attitude towards general values of culture and civilisation of European tradition. Compulsory four-year subjects, compulsory subjects, lessons of elective subjects and compulsory elective contents are further specified in the syllabus<sup>102</sup>. ***Gimnazija with a sports department*** is a type of the *gimnazija* programme that focuses on the coordination of obligations and responsibilities in sports and school education. It also provides an increased number of lessons in Physical Education. The syllabus of the **classical *gimnazija*** has the same structure as the syllabus for general *gimnazija* and students may opt for Latin and Classical Greek in addition to the compulsory four-year subjects.

465 In Slovenia, **specialised *gimnazije*** implement a wide range of programmes to suit special interests and provide specialised knowledge required to continue the study. The syllabi include compulsory specialised-theoretical subjects, different for every type of specialised *gimnazije*. On account of extra specialised subjects the choice is reduced, apropos adding optional contents and selection of subjects for the *matura*. The types of the specialised *gimnazije* are *Gimnazija* of

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<sup>101</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV11584>

<sup>102</sup> <http://portal.mss.edus.si/>

technics, *Gimnazija* of economics and *Gimnazija* of arts, which offers four tracks of education: music, dance, drama-theatre, and visual arts.

- 466 The **matura examination course programmes** include three compulsory *matura* examination subjects (Slovenian, mathematics and foreign language), two elective *matura* examination subjects from the range of general education subjects, as well as the optional 6th *matura* examination subject if selected by a student (Eurydice, 2016).
- 467 Each of the two Councils of experts adopts a **curriculum or a catalogue of knowledge** for each subject of the syllabus. They include objectives and teaching recommendations, as well as guidelines on inter-curricular teaching to support teachers in their endeavours to structure the teaching content. The didactical recommendations for an individual subject include instructions for teachers on how to use information-communication technology (ICT) in classes or for homework (acquiring information, learning, communication and presentations) and develop digital capacities. The forms of teaching vary: lectures, tutorials, seminars, workshops, field-work, research camps, seminar papers, and teaching methods are in most cases left to the discretion of teachers. In classes, students use textbooks and other learning material (geographical and historical atlases, collections of resources, collections of assignments and workbooks). As specified by law, public schools only use textbooks that have been approved by both Councils of Experts. There may be several approved textbooks by different authors for one subject, and the choice as to which one the students shall use lies with the individual school.
- 468 The development of **upper secondary technical education** programmes is the responsibility of the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training; and in part (general education subjects) of the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. The programmes have to comply with common reference levels specified by the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Technical and Vocational Education with consent of the Minister of Education. The Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Technical and Vocational Education considers the programme proposed, specifies their special part and recommends their general part. Upon the recommendation of the council of experts the Minister adopts the programmes by publishing an enactment act which the Ministry publishes in the Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia. The Ministry also uploads all programmes online on its webpage.
- 469 The two-year **vocational-technical education** programmes that provide upper secondary technical qualification are open to students who complete a three-year upper secondary vocational programme and wish to improve their knowledge. Admission is often subject to specific programmes in upper secondary vocational education of the same or similar domain. There are programmes of vocational-technical education open to students with any kind of education after three-year vocational education programmes; however, candidates have to have a national vocational qualification in a certain domain or at least three years of work experience within a certain industry. The one-year programmes of **vocational course** are designed for students who graduated from *gimnazija* and wish to attain a specific vocational qualification or students who finished the programme of upper secondary technical education and wish to attain additional vocational qualification. The development, adoption and publication of **vocational upper secondary education and short vocational upper secondary education programmes** is the same as for the upper secondary vocational education programmes (Eurydice, 2016).
- 470 General **rules that apply to the assessment of the students' knowledge** are specified by the Gimnazije Act and the Vocational and Technical Education Act, and detailed rules by the ministerial act Rules on the Assessment of Knowledge in Secondary Schools. **Schools prepare**

**their own assessment rules** on the basis of the above mentioned regulations that are then approved by the head master upon prior review by the assembly of teachers.

471 In **upper secondary** general education, teachers assess the knowledge of all subjects in the syllabi and compulsory optional content. In **short upper secondary vocational education, upper secondary vocational education** and upper secondary technical education, teachers assess the knowledge of all subjects and technical modules of the syllabi and extra-curricular activities. Knowledge in practical lessons is assessed by employers and the results are reported to the school.

472 Teachers assess the students' knowledge in order to achieve learning objectives. The assessment is carried out after discussing the subject matter and prior to the written examination. The knowledge assessment criteria are brought into line by the school's expert working groups on the basis of subject-curricula and catalogues of knowledge. The assessment grades are numerical and descriptive. The student's **overall educational attainment**: pass, good, very good, and outstanding. At the end of every assessment period – except in the final year – the students receive a transcription of grades, conclusions, and requirements fulfilled. At the end of each school year, students receive the end-of-year report. If they fail to fulfil all requirements, they receive a notification of their success.

473 Students of upper secondary schools may take different examinations of knowledge assessment: entrance examination, subject examination, remedial examination, and re-take examination. Students take **Entrance** examinations to show additional enrolment qualification (talent, skills or language proficiency). Students take the **Subject** examinations to advance more rapidly (extraordinarily), improve their final grade or to transfer to another education programme. Students who fail to obtain the final grade in a specific subject take **Remedial** examinations, and students **retake** examinations to improve the fail grade.

474 Students in upper secondary vocational and short upper secondary vocational education end their studies by taking a final examination. Successful students receive a school leaving certificate (*Spričevalo o zaključnem izpitu*). Ending the studies with a final examination is specified by the ministerial Regulations on the Final Examination<sup>103</sup> (in Slovenian); schools dispose of their own rules specified by their head masters upon obtaining the opinion of the school assembly of teachers.

475 Students who successfully complete **short upper secondary vocational education** may take the final examination before the examination committee that includes teachers and may also include professionals nominated by the relevant chamber of employers. The competent minister appoints a national committee to coordinate the elaboration and execution of the final examination at the national level. The final examination: **final assignment** in the form of a product with oral representation, or service with oral representation. Students who pass the final examination have the right to enrol in the initial year of any other upper secondary vocational or technical education programme.

476 Students who successfully complete **upper secondary vocational education** also take final examination before the school examination committee that may include external professionals nominated by the competent chamber of employers and representative unions along with teachers. The final examination consists of two parts: exam in mother tongue – written and oral – and final assignment in the form of a product with oral representation or service with oral

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<sup>103</sup> RULES <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV7722>

representation. Upper secondary vocational school students who pass the final examination have the right to enrol in vocational-technical education programmes and after a certain period of experience, the right to take the master craftsman exam.

477 Students finish their upper secondary general education with the general *matura* and receive the certificate of upper secondary education “*Spričevalo o splošni maturi*”). The end of upper secondary education and general *matura* are specified by the Matura Act and the ministerial act Rules on the General Matura<sup>104</sup>. The general *matura* is an external examination at the national level (spring and autumn term). Students take examination in five subjects. Three subjects (mother tongue, mathematics and foreign language) are compulsory, while students decide on the other two from the list of *matura* subjects. The list is approved by the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education upon the recommendation of the National Committee for General Matura and with the consent of university senates and independent higher educational institutions. Certificates give them access to university study programmes or all other tertiary education programmes.

478 In the **upper secondary technical education**, students take the vocational *matura* at the end of the programme. Students who pass the vocational *matura* receive a school leaving certificate (*Spričevalo o poklicni maturi*). The vocational *matura* and successful completion of the education programme are specified by the Matura Examination Act and the ministerial rule the Vocational Matura Rules<sup>105</sup>. Upon the completion of education at an upper secondary technical educational institution, the student takes vocational *matura* – a form of final exam – before the school examination committee of teachers and also (option) external professionals nominated by the competent chambers of employers and representative unions. The vocational *matura* is an examination of two parts, namely compulsory of written and oral exam in mother tongue and theoretical-technical subject and elective part of oral and written exam in foreign language or mathematics, and seminar thesis or product or service with oral presentation to demonstrate practical skills for a chosen occupation. The general part of the vocational *matura* consists of written and oral exam in mother tongue as well as oral and written exam in foreign language or mathematics. To pass the vocational *matura* renders students the right to enrol in professional higher education programmes or short cycle higher vocational education programmes. Students may pursue their studies in certain university programmes, but they have to take and pass additional exam in one of the general *matura* subjects.

479 The general *matura* at the national level is administered by the National Committee for General Matura which is appointed by the Minister. The vocational *matura* is administered by the National Vocational Matura Committee appointed by the Minister. At the level of individual school, the implementation of the *matura* is administered by the school *matura* committee or the school committee for vocational *matura*. School committees are presided by the head master. Technical, administrative and professional support to implement the assessment of all educational levels is the responsibility of the National Examination Centre (RIC). The issue of all certification is specified by two ministerial rules: the Rules on Upper Secondary Education School Documentation<sup>106</sup> and the Rules on Forms of Public Documents in Upper Secondary Education<sup>107</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> **RULES** <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=200829&stevilka=1051>

<sup>105</sup> **RULES** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV6710>

<sup>106</sup> **RULES** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV2182>

<sup>107</sup> **RULES** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV9039>

- 480 **The system to identify and ensure the quality** of education in the Republic of Slovenia is based on internal evaluation of quality or **self-evaluation**. Internal evaluation is one of the regular activities of schools. Since 2008, Articles 48 and 49 of the Organization and Financing of Education Act impose the obligation and responsibility to head masters of all schools and kindergartens to identify and ensure the quality of kindergartens or schools. The evaluation takes place on various levels and areas of work. Teachers and pre-school teachers evaluate their own work and the progress of the class, head masters of kindergartens/schools evaluate the work of pre-school teachers/teachers within the framework of the tasks as required by the law. The evaluation can take place at an individual level and/or small units within the educational organization and, at the same time, at the level of the whole educational institution.
- 481 When schools conduct self-evaluation and introduce improvements, they can rely on their own data (quantitative and qualitative) and on the data of national and international studies on attainment. Schools can also refer to the National Examination Center which offers the information and data processing tools to determine the performance of their pupils and students on the national assessment of knowledge, as well as general and vocational *matura*.
- 482 The aim of setting up a culture of quality and the introduction of self-evaluation was supported by results of some important projects of public institutions: the National School of Leadership in Education (ŠR), the National Education Institute (ZRSŠ), the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI), the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, (ACS) the National Examination Centre (RIC), and the Educational Research Institute (PI). A number of projects in the past provided a solid basis for its implementation: the Mirror Project (*Ogledalo*), *Offering quality education to adults* project (POKI), the Learning Schools Network (*Mreža učečih se šol*), the Blue Eye Project (*Modro Oko*), Determining and assuring quality of pre-school education in kindergartens (*Ugotavljanje in zagotavljanje kakovosti predšolske vzgoje v vrtcu*), and others.
- 483 After introducing a legal obligation of self-evaluation, the Ministry (MIZŠ) supported the schools with a project Designing and Introducing a Quality Assurance System for Educational Institutions (Pre-Schools and Schools) (*Zasnova in uvedba sistema ugotavljanja ter zagotavljanja kakovosti vzgojno-izobraževalnih organizacij (vrtcev in šol)*), also known as KVIZ, which took place from 2008 to 2014. The organisers of the project were the National School of Leadership in Education with partners. The project was aimed at the internal as well as external evaluation of the educational system.
- 484 In the programming period 2014–2020, the Ministry intends to establish, complete and test the presented model of identifying and ensuring the quality in education through a project focusing on quality (Ministry of Education, Quality in Education, 2016). The aim of the model is to determine a common concept of identifying and ensuring quality on the level of educational institutions (kindergartens, basic and upper secondary schools, and adult education organisations) and evaluation on the level of the educational system. The principal purpose of establishing, developing and testing the new model is to maintain quality in a dynamic way if the quality is attained, or to achieve and develop quality if it is too low. The added value of this project compared to former projects on quality will be, in addition to the introduction of the pre-established uniform system, the introduction of expert groups on quality. Educational institutions will be able to use knowledge of experts in expert groups established to provide expert support and training to conduct self-evaluation.
- 485 Other elements of internal evaluation can be used to assure the quality of work in schools. The head master supervises the work of teachers in classes, conducts annual interviews with the

employees and monitors their continuous professional development. The head master also makes proposals for their promotion to titles. Educational staff can be promoted in accordance with Article 105 of the Organization and Financing of Education Act and the Rules on the Title Promotion of the Employees in Education.

486 Educational staff can be promoted to lifelong titles: *mentor* (mentor), *svetovalec* (advisor) and *svetnik* (councillor). The head master or director of the institution where the professional worker is employed can propose a promotion at any time. Educational staff can also submit a proposal for their promotion themselves. The head master can propose the promotion of educational staff to higher salary grades in accordance with the Rules on the Title Promotion of the Employees in the Education<sup>108</sup>. School councils annually assess the work of head masters and also propose their promotion to titles.

487 Every year, kindergartens and schools have to prepare the annual work plan identifying the organisation and a detailed content of the work of the educational institution – depending on the specifics of the programme or target group. For example, the work plan in kindergartens determines: the organisation and the kindergarten's working hours, kindergarten programmes, cooperation with educational, healthcare and other organisations and material and other conditions necessary to implement the educational process. In basic and upper secondary schools, the work plan determines: the content, scope and organisation of the educational and other work in accordance with the syllabus and the curriculum, the scope, content and organisation of extra-curricular activities and compulsory elective contents. The annual work plan is approved by the council of the institution.

488 In addition to the annual work plan and self-evaluation, schools also draft the development programme of the school (Articles 48 and 49 of ZOFVI). Head master is responsible for drafting the development programme of the school. The development programme of the school is then approved by the school council. The law makes no provisions for the drafting of this document. In 2010, the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia drew up guidelines to prepare the development programme. The programme has to include a development vision, an analysis of the situation, development objectives and the activities to achieve these objectives as well as the expected results and indicators.

489 The well-being of all stakeholders and cooperation with the environment are the key to a successful education. ZOFVI (Article 2.a) stipulates that safe and supportive learning environment has to be ensured with no form of violence against children or among them and unequal treatment that would be based on gender, sexual orientation, social and cultural background, religion, racial, ethnic and national origin or on physical and mental disabilities.

490 As for safety and well-being, kindergartens have to present their organisation and the characteristics of their programmes in line with the Rules on publication<sup>109</sup>. The publication determines the rights of parents and children as well as the way of securing these rights. The principles of pre-school education covered as provided for by the Rules:

- Pre-school education should be regarded as important for a pre-school child (each developmental phase should be respected as it is) and not as a preparation for the next stage of education;
- The curriculum for pre-school children should consist of different areas and daily routine;

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<sup>108</sup> **RULES** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV2204>

<sup>109</sup> **RULES** <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV3470>

- Pre-school education in kindergartens should be built on children's capabilities and lead them towards gaining new experiences and knowledge, pose reasonable requirements or problems incorporating the children's active learning, allow them to express themselves, experience and engage emotionally and socially;
- Teaching of pre-school children is based on direct activities using objects and gaining experience with people and things, to create ideas and pre-notional structures on the basis of the first generalisations, internal motivation and resolving specific problems as well as gaining social experiences;
- Children's play is the most fundamental principle of pre-school education and, if it is sufficiently broadly defined outside the academic or development approach to pre-school education, are perceived as part of the child's development and learning in early years.

491 In addition to the laid down objectives and contents of the curriculum, day-to-day activities in kindergarten are equally important, such as the communication and interaction with and among children, praising or scolding, rules for time and space management. The hidden curriculum is the most effective in these activities. It includes many elements of the influence on children which is not defined anywhere, but is, in terms of direct upbringing, often more effective than indirect parenting activities laid down in the curriculum.

492 Pre-school teachers, pre-school teacher assistants or other adults who participate in the educational process spend all the time with children in small or big groups or individually. The adult organises the activities but does not direct them and is usually a role model for pleasant communication. Kindergartens should provide enough time for conversations, narration, explanation, description, dramatization, and role-play. In addition to the emotional, social and cognitive development, it is crucial that children develop linguistic ability, i.e. the ability to produce and understand texts in different communication circumstances and for different needs.

493 An important element of the curriculum, which emphasises the right to choose, is the organisation of time and space while following some important principles:

- Organising a healthy, safe and pleasant environment (indoor and outdoor areas);
- Guaranteeing privacy;
- Ensuring flexible and encouraging spaces (the furniture and activities in playrooms should be adapted to various age groups of children).

494 **Cooperation between the kindergarten and parents** is an important aspect of quality of pre-school education as it contributes to adequate upbringing in families and institutions. Safety and well-being are assured by respecting norms on the number of children and regulations on interior design which is essential for health and safety.

495 The **Basic School Act** provides the school's **education plan**. In this way, the means of achieving the objectives of the act are set out, taking into account the needs and interests of pupils and characteristics of the wider area. The education plan consists of educational activities and forms of cooperation between the school and the parents as well as their inclusion in the implementation of the education plan. Education activities consist of proactive and preventive activities, counselling, guidance and other activities (praise, certificates, prizes and different types of corrective measures) which allow the school to develop a safe and supportive environment.

- 496 Educational staff, pupils and parents participate in the development of the **education plan**. The head master proposes the education plan which is then adopted by the school council, the procedure being set out in the annual work plan. The head master annually provides the council of parents and the school council with an overview of the implementation of the education plan. The report is an integral part of the school's annual self-evaluation. On the basis of the education plan, the school rules define more precisely the duties and responsibilities of pupils, the ways to ensure security, the rules of behaviour and conduct, determine the educational measures for individual violation of rules, organisation of pupils, excuses for absence, and cooperation in providing healthcare of pupils.
- 497 Educational staff, pupils and parents participate in the development of **school rules**. School rules are adopted by the school council on the proposal of the head master who has to obtain an opinion of the school assembly and the council of parents beforehand. The Basic School Act also stipulates that the basic school has to publish the information about the school on its website, to provide the characteristics of the school's programme, school's work organisation in accordance with the annual work plan, pupils' rights and duties, contents of the education plan, house rules and other information. The presentation has to be available to the parents in writing in the school premises. Through house rules, the school determines the area of the school and the school surfaces, working hours, information on the use of space and organisation of supervision, measures for ensuring security, and maintaining housekeeping.
- 498 The Rules on the **school order in the upper secondary schools** stipulate that the school is responsible for the safety and healthcare of students in compliance with norms, standards and other regulations on safety and health at work, and the students are required to use appropriate equipment for practical subjects, sports education and other activities as specified by the education programme. The same rules stipulate the rights and duties of pupils, including the pupil's right to safety and protection against all forms of violence, equal treatment regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, social status of the family and other circumstances, and safe, healthy and encouraging working environment.
- 499 **Counselling services** in kindergartens and school provide the optimal development of children. Regardless of any differences between individuals or groups, all children have the right to equal opportunities for optimal development in education. The counselling service in kindergarten or school ensures, establishes and maintains the conditions for optimal development of every child in kindergarten or school (Ministry of Education, Counselling Service in Basic Schools, 1999).
- 500 To ensure the optimal development of children, basic and upper secondary schools organise school meals, which are an integral part of educational activities in schools. They are regulated by the School Meals Act. The act regulates the organisation of school meals for pupils and upper secondary school students and subsidised meals in relation to the Exercise of Rights from Public Funds Act. The act, which takes into account the Guidelines for Nutrition in Educational Institutions, applies to all educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, residence halls, institutions for SEN children and young persons). For more information on subsidies for school meals, see Section 4.8.
- 501 The Ministry of Health is responsible for activities related to **health education** and other preventive measures encouraging people to actively take care of their health. Other strategy papers are also important for the education development with regard to health, well-being and high quality learning environment in the Republic of Slovenia: Resolution on the National Programme of Sport of the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2023, and Resolution on the National Programme on Nutrition and Physical Activity for Health 2015–2025.

- 502 The Slovenian Network of Health-Promoting Schools responds to the problems regarding the health of children and adolescents and is oriented towards developmental programmes for health promotion, particularly in the field of healthy diet and exercise, mental health, evaluation of preventive activities in the school curriculum, active inclusion of pupils, local and regional cooperation, education of teachers, conceptual development of the network, and quality of standards (National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ), 2016).
- 503 Since 2008, a project entitled Healthy Lifestyle<sup>110</sup> organised by the National Institute of Public Health is taking place. The contents that have been identified as highly important and linked to healthy lifestyle are: mental health, alcohol and tobacco consumption, healthy diet, and exercise. The National Institute of Public Health established a pilot project in cooperation with four basic schools to systematically introduce these contents in the school curriculum.
- 504 Teachers also participate in the development of the structure, objectives, rules, but also atmosphere and culture in the class. They also plan the work in the department, implement it and respond to the current problems in the framework of the assembly of teachers of the class. The class teacher directs the work of the assembly of teachers of the class and is responsible for the department and its coordination with other departments in the school (managerial staff, counselling service, and other school staff) and outside the school (parents and external institutions). The departmental community is embedded in the social community of the school and the culture of the wider society as they are constantly in relation with each other.
- 505 The Basic School Act defines the **cooperation with the environment** in the annual work plan. The Organization and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI) determines the bodies of kindergartens and schools (Kindergarten/School Council), but also provides for the cooperation of schools with the surrounding communities and other stakeholders. The participants are mainly the Council of the institution, such as the Council of the public kindergarten or school composed of three representatives of the founding party, five employees' representatives and three parents' representatives; the Council of public vocational or technical schools, *gimnazije* and public student dormitories composed of three representatives of the founding party, five employees' representatives, three parents' representatives and two pupils' representatives. In case the state is the founder, one of the council members has to be the representative of the local government where the school is located or of several local governments if they all agree.
- 506 **Extra-curricular activities programme** is part of the annual work plan of individual schools. Each school plans its own programme depending on the school and other factors. Pupil's interests and the conditions to carry out the extra-curricular activities as well as the possibility to connect with the environment have a big influence on the organisation. The programme and contents of these activities are formed by both teachers and pupils and carried out through modern methods and forms of work (research work, project learning and learning in groups). The principal purpose of extra-curricular activities is the use of the acquired knowledge in leisure activities which can, in turn, serve as a starting point for further education. Interest-based networking and socialising within and outside school create favourable conditions for the development of their self-esteem. From a lifelong learning perspective, it is important to get used to self-organisation or "self-regulation", which allows a development of the individual in other areas and different periods of life.

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<sup>110</sup> **PROJECT** [http://www.zdravjevsoli.si/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=57&Itemid=34](http://www.zdravjevsoli.si/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=57&Itemid=34)

507 **Principles of pursuing extra-curricular activities** are based on the curricular reform. They emphasise the cooperation and co-decision of pupils in the context of the extended basic education and include relevant factors for lifelong learning from the inner and broader environment. A high-quality implementation of extra-curricular activity programmes allows the pupils to choose, volunteer, co-create, develop their own activities, change (pupils can leave an interest groups and choose another one), pursue lifelong learning, link (leading to new means of communication), cooperate (encouraging responsibility and courteous approach to work and people), and (self-) evaluate (Ministry of Education, Extra-Curricular Activities in Nine-Year Basic School, 2008).

508 **Cooperation and education of teachers** also contribute to well-being in the educational system. The right and duty of pre-school teachers and teachers to continuous professional development is stipulated by law and The Collective Agreement for the Education Sector in the Republic of Slovenia. It determines the right of pedagogical staff to 5 days of in-service training a year or 15 days over three years. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport organises and finances in-service training for pedagogical staff. The regulations regarding the professional development of teaching staff issued by the Minister of Education manage the organisation and financing of the programmes, the decision-making bodies and their authorities, as well as the awarding and the **recognition of points for advancement** of pre-school teachers and teachers.

509 In addition to supplementary and training programmes as well as update programmes, various public and private providers offer other forms of education for educational staff, such as topic conferences, study groups training, mentor networking and other networks of pre-school institutions or schools. Public institutions or research institutes offering such forms of continuing professional development in education are: The National Education Institute (ZRSŠ), the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training (CPI), the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (AGS), the Educational Research Institute (PI), the National School for Leadership in Education (ŠR), the National Examinations Centre (RIC) and the Centre for School and Outdoor Education (CŠOD). Among the providers are also pre-school institutions, organisations for adult education and private providers.

510 Teachers and other school educational staff cooperate in various ways. Teachers of the same subject or subject area form working groups where they network, consult, solve professional issues, and come up with suggestions to improve educational work and similar things. Education staff can collaborate outside school as well. They form study groups aiming at exchanging experiences and informing each other about new changes and professional developments relevant for the subject or the subject area.

511 Learning Schools Network (*Mreža učech se šol*)<sup>111</sup> is a programme implemented by the National School for Leadership in Education. This programme allows educational staff of schools and kindergartens to train in introducing continuous improvements, which is one of the approaches to determine and ensure quality. The objectives of the programme are to build connection between the professional and personal development of an individual and the development and performance of the school, to promote cooperation in learning – to exchange experiences and good practice systematically between schools or kindergartens or teachers and pre-school teachers as well as encourage and equip them with the skills to find solutions to their problems themselves, to introduce the improvement in a practical way and carry out an evaluation in the

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<sup>111</sup> **PROGRAMME** <http://solazaravnatelj.si/index.php/dejavnosti/mreze-ucecih-se-sol-in-vrtcev/mreze-ucecih-se-sol>

area chosen by education staff of the school or kindergarten, and encourage cooperation in leadership.

## 5.6. USE OF SCHOOL PREMISES AND MATERIALS

512 In addition to educational activities, schools can also **conduct activities that are not related to education**, but only with the head master's permission according to Article 72 of ZOFVI. Schools can therefore let their premises (for example, a gym) to various sports organisations, clubs and other groups for different purposes, but they have to obtain the head master's permission beforehand.

513 As specified by law (ZOFVI), kindergartens or schools are not allowed to host and entertain governing political parties or their youth wings. In addition, confessional activities are also not allowed in public kindergartens and schools. However, they are allowed in private kindergartens or schools and schools holding a concession, but only when concessional activities are carried out separately from the education programme which functions as a public service. Confessional activities need to be organised in such a way that those who do not wish to participate can come and leave.

514 Public institutions are managers of properties used for the implementation of education programmes and research departments. In accordance with the Physical Assets of the State and Local Government Act,<sup>112</sup> the unused areas or the whole immovable property can be let or used for a limited period of time. In principle, renting or leasing is lucrative. Gratuitous lease or use that involves covering material costs is available to certain eligible lessees/users performing public functions as public bodies (except public undertakings), NGOs operating in the public interest, social enterprises and non-profit legal persons in compliance with legislation on social entrepreneurship, and international organisations in which the Republic of Slovenia participates and which have a head office in Slovenia, an agency, a department, a representation, or office.

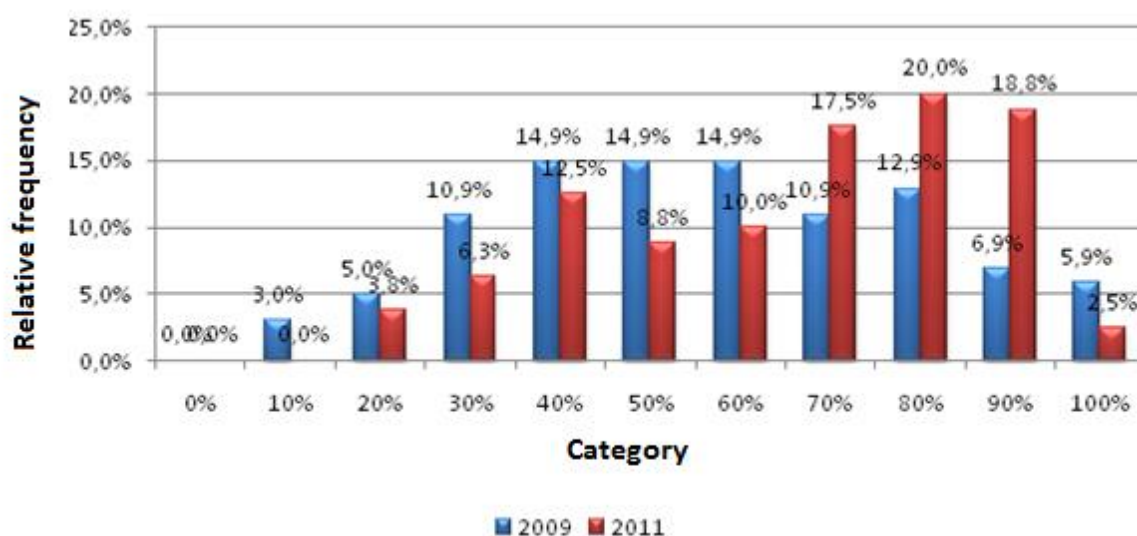
515 There are no specific limitations to let the premises of educational institutions, but it is expected that only complementary activities are carried out. In most cases, the tenants are economic operators providing meals for pupils and students.

516 As for the **use of ICT** in basic schools in 2011, 40% of teachers were using ICT over 25% of the time. In upper secondary schools, 51% of teachers were using ICT (EK ICT, 2012). Research by the University of Maribor has shown the following results:

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<sup>112</sup> **Physical Assets of the State and Local Government Act** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO5974>

GRAPH 5.8 NUMBER OF SCHOOLTEACHERS APPLYING ICT DURING LESSONS



Source: Status and trends in information and communication technology (ICT) in Slovenian secondary schools  
[http://raziskavacrp.uni-mb.si/rezultati-ss/uporaba\\_ikt-zastopnost.html](http://raziskavacrp.uni-mb.si/rezultati-ss/uporaba_ikt-zastopnost.html).

517 The results show that most schools (20%) say that 80% of their teachers use ICT in their classes. Unfortunately, there are no recent data available.

518 A meaningful and effective use of ICT offers competencies and skills young people need for a full development and a successful integration in the labour market. At the same time, technology is changing the role of pupils, particularly in a way which takes into consideration the pupils' characteristics and allows them to co-create their own learning pathway. This approach promotes self-regulation, autonomous learning, learning in groups, reflection, and communication with teachers and classmates. A frequent feedback between all participants is also important. ICT helps create ad hoc groups, cooperate with external experts, develop entrepreneurship, and can even pursue the objectives laid down by formative assessment in education from didactical point of view.<sup>113</sup>

## 5.7. ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

519 In Slovenia, the **education management** is a responsibility shared between councils of experts, various public institutions, Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport (IŠŠ), and other services within the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MIZŠ). As explained in Section 2.4, the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education makes the decisions on the development and assessment of curriculum in basic and upper secondary education. The Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Technical and Vocational Education is also responsible for upper secondary education.

<sup>113</sup> For more information about ICT in schools see Section 4.5.

- 520 The Inspectorate of the **Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport (IŠŠ)** is responsible for inspection, but does not provide a continuous professional supervision (except in an extraordinary inspection). The inspectorate has a staff of 16. Institutions implement professional supervision; they monitor the quality and conduct counselling through regular self-evaluation with support of various institutions, such as the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, and the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.
- 521 The **National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (ZRSŠ)** is the main national research, development and consultancy institution in pre-school, basic and general upper secondary education. ZRSŠ is responsible for preparing professional documents, establishing systemic conditions in Slovenian educational institutions, following and evaluating innovations and developing good practices. The branches of the institute are situated in eight locations throughout Slovenia and employ around 200 people.
- 522 The **Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI)** is the central Slovenian institution dealing with development, research and counselling in vocational and technical education. The Institute employs some 48 people from different professions, such as in physics, forestry, agriculture, graphic design, electrical engineering, or teachers, sociologists, economists, political scientists and psychologists.
- 523 The **Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (ACS)** is the main national institution for research and development of adult education and a partner in the lifelong learning strategy. Its main objective is to contribute to the accessibility and quality of education for all Slovenians in line with the principles of free choice and equal opportunities. ACS employs about 36 people.
- 524 The **National Examination Centre (RIC)** is responsible for *matura* examination, national examinations, advisory and organisational services as well as for the collection of data. The centre employs 57 people. The Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (**CMEPIUS**) was established to perform professional, technical and administrative tasks for implementing educational and training programmes of the European Union as well as student mobility. According to the 2015 annual work plan, the institution has the staff of 32, 18 of them work on projects (in particular, Erasmus+) (CMEPIUS, 2015).
- 525 The Ministry of Education and the **Educational Research Institute (PI)** work together in preparing statistics and analyses on education. PI also carries out regular international large scale surveys as well as various studies and has a staff of 38 people (35 of them on open-ended employment agreements) from different professions.
- 526 The Ministry of Education intends to establish an internal organisational unit that will monitor studies and analyses as well as take care of the development of documents based on their results or findings. The analyses in relation to finance are carried out by the **Financial Planning and Analysis Section** in the Finance Service of the Ministry (18 employees), while the analyses of the personnel are performed by the **Service for Development of Personnel in Education** (19 employees). In addition to the data collected by the Ministry, the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (UMAR), the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURS) and other institutions also gather data and carry out analyses.
- 527 The **National School of Leadership in Education (ŠR)** also **offers support to schools** as it was established with the purpose to train the managerial staff for the management of kindergartens and schools (basic and upper secondary). The **National School of Leadership in Education**

currently offers nine programmes focused on the networking of schools and kindergartens in order to transfer good practices, and on the development of various capabilities in school leadership, such as mentoring new head masters, training in relation to legal and financial acts and managing working groups of teachers.

528 As for **assessment procedures**, schools are usually not assessed or classified at the national level. The National Education Institute Slovenia (ZDSŠ), the National Examinations Centre (RIC) and other public institutions supporting the educational system perform systemic tasks in relation to monitoring and evaluating educational work as well as management and leadership of educational institutions.

529 On the proposal of the Council for Quality and Evaluation, the Minister adopts **criteria** and procedures for the **assessment and assurance of quality** at kindergartens and schools at the national level, as well as the proposals of national evaluation studies. The Council for Quality and Evaluation is appointed by the Minister. The Minister specifies in detail the powers of the Council for Quality and Evaluation. The school council adopts the annual report on the self-evaluation of school or kindergarten. The head master ensures and determines quality through self-evaluation and an annual report on the self-evaluation of school or kindergarten.

530 The **assessment of teachers** is carried out by the head master in accordance with the Public Sector Salary System Act and the Decree on the promotion of civil servants to salary grades and normally not on the basis of the pupils' achievements. The assessment has a direct influence on the possibility to be promoted into higher salary grades. Due to the economic depression and general government financial crisis, various restrictive measures and interventionist rules were introduced in 2010, which have limited or even prevented promotions into salary grades.

531 The **evaluation of head masters' performance** is determined by the Rules on Criteria for Establishing Work Performance of Directors in the Field of Education. In accordance with these rules, the director of a public institution can acquire no more than two additional wages from work performance (1. implementation of the scope of the programme – up to 25%; 2. quality programme implementation – up to 35%; 3. developmental orientation of the institution – up to 35%; and 4. ensuring material conditions – up to 5%). The interventionist rules, which prevent head masters from receiving a job performance benefit as long as the economic crisis continues, apply in this case as well.

532 To **monitor the pupils' achievement** on the national level, national examinations take place in Grades 6 and 9 in mother tongue, mathematics and foreign language or the third subject determined by the Minister. The achievements of the national examination present additional information about pupils' knowledge. Data and analyses of the achievements in the national examination shall not be used for the classification of schools.

## 5.8. MAIN CHALLENGES

533 The fundamental dilemma is how to ensure an **optimal method of financing** that would provide all of the participants with optimal and comparable educational conditions regardless of the school's size and status, whilst taking into account the limited budgetary resources. Due to reduced funding for education, some schools were more disadvantaged than the others and limited resources are especially felt in providing funds for infrastructure in schools. The challenge is to ensure an appropriate standard and quality of school infrastructure with limited financial resources.

534 Slovenia identified a further use of new technologies which require the establishment of the appropriate ICT infrastructure network in education (such as wi-fi networks and clients for pupils, students) as some of the key challenges for the future of education. To this end, the Operational programme for the programme period 2014–2020 (*Operativni program za programsko obdobje 2014–2020*) provides more than 20 measures and their use of ICT is crucial for an effective implementation, their total value exceeding €30 million. In addition to pupils and secondary students who struggle to progress, special attention will be given to talented pupils as well.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

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### 6.1. COMPETENCIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

535 There are no specific programmes or processes that would provide expertise and capacity for the **management of resources** in the entire education system. In addition, local communities have no specific policies to ensure efficient resource management. Schools ensure employment for accountants. They can also organise or ensure education in this field to their employees and outsource the management of public procurement to external contractors with the funds provided for carrying out of the activities.

536 There are also no **training conditions** as far as the selection of managerial staff is concerned. Candidates are familiarised with the basic legislative framework for financial management of schools during the programme to hold a headship licence which is the requirement for the post of head master (director). Topical subjects are addressed in advanced programmes of the National School of Leadership in Education, while the Ministry offers support on specific questions. The Ministry of Finance also provides further clarifications.

537 The managerial staff of the school undertakes training in order to grasp the competencies and responsibilities, the need to control the regularity of operations, and to raise awareness of all employees of efficient use of resources.

538 **Support to schools and their managerial staff in the management of resources** is implemented by the **Head masters' Association**. The Association allows head masters to join working groups and regional groups, to be focused on the networking of schools and organise a mentoring network of schools. Training seminars for accountants are also organised.

539 Budgetary planning and use of resources at the state level are underpinned by the information system. SAPPrA is a web-based application intended for direct users of the government budget. It is used for preparing and providing financial plans of the users along with explanations, preparation and provision of the explanations regarding annual accounts, different analyses in budgeting on the annual basis or during the year, and for data analyses for development plans in the process of budgeting on the annual basis or during the year. The application provides a framework for resource planning, setting of objectives, and reporting on their implementation. Government budget execution takes place through the MFERAC application which allows the monitoring of the use of funds. The Ministry provides the schools with tables for planning and reporting on the implementation along with instructions contributing to a unified and comparable method of planning and reporting on the implementation of the financial plan.

540 The services of the Ministry also offer support (Legal Service, Financial Service, Office for the Development of Education, Preschool and Basic Education Directorate, Upper Secondary, Higher Vocational and Adult Education Directorate, IT Service, Investments Directorate).

## 6.2. MONITORING THE USE OF RESOURCES

541 Supervision and control of the **use of resources** at different levels of educational system is carried out in the following way: the school council approves the financial plan and the annual accounts of the individual school. The IŠŠ inspects and monitors the implementation of education programmes in schools. The Court of Auditors conducts financial due diligence of educational system coordinators and individual schools. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport supervises the operations of schools in terms of finances and contents. The municipalities are tasked with financial control and control over the operation of schools funded by the municipalities. Individual schools can outsource some audit work (to private audit firms).

542 The Ministry of Finance also monitors the use of funds intended for **pre-school education** at the state level and collects the expenditure of all municipalities on the basis of their annual accounts for each calendar year. At the local level, every municipality prepares the annual accounts showing the amount of funds intended for the work of kindergartens. The Court of Auditors controls the regularity of spending of kindergartens and municipalities. The municipality which established the kindergarten, or its supervisory committee, controls the regularity of spending.

543 The use of public funding for **kindergarten subsidies** is monitored by the Ministry responsible for social transfers (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities - MDDSZ). In the Republic of Slovenia, all the rights in relation to social protection are recognised on the basis of the Exercise of Rights from Public Funds Act (ZUPJS), which falls under the responsibility of MDDSZ.

544 The founder, i.e. the municipality, as well as IŠŠ (within the framework of their competence), have the power to control the operation of **basic schools**. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport controls the information on the scope of activities which serve as a basis for job classification, financing of activities, and control on the eligibility for a regular job performance benefit of head masters or directors.

545 Basic schools are obliged to send the information on the scope of activities for the current school year to the Ministry at the start of the school year. The data is entered into the web application created by the Ministry. These data present the basis to finance the activities. The Ministry compares the entered data (number of classes, students, learning groups and cleaning areas) with the data for the previous school year and invites those schools that showed discrepancies in

the data with no justification to explain and justify them. If the justification of the school has no legal basis, the Ministry may request that the data be corrected.

546 The information on the scope of activities is the basis for job classification in schools that head masters propose to the Minister for consent. The Ministry reviews and adjusts the proposals which are approved by the Minister.

547 Schools can **employ** staff only for the posts listed in the table of staff. Before the publication of a vacancy, the school has to request the Ministry's consent. Schools determine the staff expenditure through the application designed by the Ministry. The Ministry supervises the number of employees through the human resources and payment information system (KPIS) in connection with the number of posts listed in the table of staff. A specific programme records the differences between the posts listed in the table of staff and the posts for which the schools determine their staff expenditure through the application designed by the Ministry, which controls any modifications entered in the application during the school year. In case of derogation, the surplus of paid sums shall be settled.

548 If the Ministry and the school are unable to reconcile the information, the Ministry submits a proposal to start a supervision of the school to the IŠŠ. The Ministry also supervises payments to the schools based upon the requests from schools, either in electronic or written form.

549 The information on wages, which is available to the Ministry in the application, is inspected on a monthly basis by the financial service of the Ministry. The total amount of gross wages of each school for the current month is compared with the previous month. If a substantial difference is found, the number of employees, promotions, relocations and sick leaves are reviewed to determine whether the derogation is justified. The control is also carried out through inspection of individual elements, such as derogations from the staffing table, correct calculation of different supplements, absences and sick leaves.

550 In this way, different types of irregularities can be detected. The Ministry informs the schools about irregularities and invites the schools to eliminate them. Wages are paid in advance and any changes are recouped with the final account of the wage the following month.

551 Specific claims of schools, which are not part of the application, such as the payment of performing extra-curricular activities, additional professional assistance for teaching assistance and foreign pupils, different benefits, solidarity assistance, severance pay or long-service bonus are verified by the Ministry with a view to determine if they are in accordance with the legislation in force, consents and data from the application, and the correctness of the calculation of each claim has to be verified as well. Any irregularities have to be harmonised with the school and taken into account when payment is due.

552 The transfers of those claims that are calculated by the application are verified occasionally. They are compared with the transfers from the previous month and if the discrepancies are notable, they are aligned with the school. The financing is then carried out correctly.

553 Schools record the consumption of annual income in their accounts in such a way that it is easily to determine the target use and the efficiency of funding.

554 Schools have to send the following information to the Ministry at least once a year:

- Information on the number of students enrolled in individual programmes by years or the education programme for pupils with emotional and behavioural disorders for the current school year;

- Information on the number of instruction periods per subject or technical module per year and on the organisation of the implementation of the upper secondary education programmes in a school year along with the number of teachers and other staff;
- Information on the organisation and implementation of the education programme for pupils with emotional and behavioural disorders;
- Information on the employees and their amount of work;
- Financial plan with justifications for the following financial year;
- Implementation of financial plan with justifications for the current or the previous financial year;
- Other information in accordance with the instructions and the deadlines of the Ministry.

555 The Court of Auditors carries out **financial audits** of schools, but individual schools are allowed to hire auditing firms. The Ministry also oversees the use of resources and the financial management.

556 The **school council assesses the performance of the head of school**. The assessment is carried out annually, one of the criteria being the evaluation of financial results of operations. The assessment affects career development and has a financial impact on wages; however, the latter is frozen at the moment due to the drafting of this document.

557 Different forms of **external evaluation** are organised in parallel with the existing and abovementioned self-evaluation, including national examinations, which take place at the end of grades 6 and 9 of basic education, the general *matura*, the vocational *matura*, the final examination, international comparisons of pupil attainment in individual areas of learning through international research, national evaluation studies, and strategies to modernize education. The members of the Council of Quality and Evaluation, which is also active in this field, are appointed by the Minister of Education.

558 External evaluation of the education system is conducted in the following ways:

- The evaluation is carried out by national evaluation studies which take from 12 to 24 months (in accordance with the Rules on updating the education process and the Protocol for the selection and conducting evaluation studies). They consist of basic evaluation studies and secondary analysis of data obtained with international evaluation studies addressing systemic issues. Both national evaluation studies have developmental and exploratory characteristics.
- International comparative studies among pupils or students and adults in individual areas (mathematics, science, reading, language, civil competence, information literacy and other types of literacy) are carried out as periodic large-scale surveys under the responsibility of OECD and IEA. These studies ensure the acquisition of comparable international data necessary for the analysis of the education system. They also constitute the basis for shaping educational policies at the EU level.
- Through strategies to modernize the educational work in line with the Rules on updating the education process, which define the strategies and institutions responsible for modernisation of the educational work in Slovenia. These are the introduction of new public programmes, new elements for the existing programmes and the introduction of mechanisms to update

the education process with an attempt to introduce it in the educational system in Slovenia. Three public institutions are responsible for introduction and monitoring of the update of the educational process: the National Education Institute (programmes of general education), the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (vocational education programmes), and the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (adult education programmes).

559 External evaluation of the education system is conducted in the following ways:

- The external evaluation of schools conducted by the Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport. The aim of the school inspection is to ensure the respect for the legality and the protection of the learners' rights.
- The assessment procedures of determining the basic conditions for the quality of the work in kindergartens and schools implemented by the Ministry responsible for education (space, staff, and programme requirements) are also part of external evaluation of educational institutions.

560 The Act Amending the Organization and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI-I, Official Gazette 20/2011) requested the Ministry of Education to create, manage, maintain and control a computerised database of learners, i.e. the Central Register (CEUVIZ). CEUVIZ covers personal data and data on education of pre-school children, pupils, upper secondary students, HCV students and participants in adult education. The data covered in the data base are determined in Article 135.a of ZOFVI. The Central Register was created for the purpose of performing the duties specified by ZOFVI and other regulations on education referred to in Article 1 of this Act, the purposes of decision-making on rights to public funds, and for scientific/research and statistical purposes. Educational institutions enter the data through a web-based application. The users of the application can authenticate using their own digital certificates. The Central Register is connected with the existing data bases of the local network at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (*Register zavodov in programov, evidenca udeležencev dijaških domov*, the register of educational institutions and participants in education) and with the existing databases outside the local network of the Ministry of Education, such as the Central Population Register (CRP) managed by the Ministry of the Interior, the Register of Spatial Units (RPE), managed by the Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia (GURS), and the Social Rights Register (*Register socialnih pravic*) managed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The web-based application is used by educational institutions and employees working at the Ministry of Education.

## 6.3. TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING

561 Schools have to submit the **reports on the use of financial resources** (balance sheets) to the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES). The financial information from the accounts of public institutions is **available and made known on the website of AJPES**.

562 Reports on the implementation of the annual work plan of individual schools, demonstrating the consumption of resources and the effectiveness of the planned operations are public information and, as such, frequently published on the school websites.

563 Upper secondary schools have to forward the reports **on the use of resources**, which are allocated to them on the basis of a financing decision on the implementation of education programmes and a report on the implementation of the financial plan of the institution.

564 All public institutions have to submit to the founder (the Ministry or the municipality) a semi-annual report. The report allows monitoring of the operations of individual budget users even during the implementation of financial plans of indirect users of state and municipal budgets through the financial year. If infra-annually a deficit in funds is shown, one has to take measures in due time to maintain funds within the scope as specified by the financial plan of the indirect user until the end of the year. However, schools report on other topics, specified in Section 6.2, to the Ministry as well.

## 6.4. INCENTIVES FOR RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

565 Education funding provides the funding for public service regardless of student performance in individual schools. There are no incentives that would be linked to the volume of funding – no bonuses or penalties. Schools may keep the surplus from previous years, but they must use it for the development of education in line with the Fiscal Rule Act.<sup>114</sup>

566 The founder of the kindergarten may decide on how to use the **surplus** according to the act (Article 28 of the Kindergarten Act) – the resources can be used to improve the infrastructure or to purchase certain related elements. However, they should not be used for employee salaries.

567 **Positive results** of the institution are one of the conditions for the payment of the **regular work performance** to head masters of schools, but these payments have been halted since the introduction of austerity measures. There are no rewards and incentives for good governance at the moment.

## 6.5. MAIN CHALLENGES

568 As far as upper secondary education is concerned, the **discussion about the methodology of financing, i.e. defining the price per student**, is necessary. Among the critical points is defining the cut-off date for the acquisition of data based on which one determines the annual amount of resources, and financing of schools with a lower number of upper secondary school students who attend several education programmes in the school. Currently, there are no particular challenges in terms of management of resources foreseeable in relation to participants in education. However, **further professionalization of managerial staff in schools** remains a fundamental challenge in view of the ever-growing complexity of educational systems and environments of their implementation.

569 It might be reasonable to reflect on a possible introduction of specific programmes or processes that would provide expertise and capacity for the **management of resources** in the entire education system in the future.

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<sup>114</sup> **Fiscal Rule Act** <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO7056>

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