OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools

COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT FOR THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

This report was prepared by the Educational Policy Institute, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, as an input to the OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (School Resources Review). The participation of the Slovak Republic in the project was organised with the support of the European Commission (EC) in the context of the partnership established between the OECD and the EC. The partnership partly covered participation costs of countries which are part of the European Union’s Erasmus+ programme. The document was prepared in response to guidelines the OECD provided to all countries. The opinions expressed are not those of the OECD or its Member countries. Further information about the OECD Review is available at www.oecd.org/edu/school/schoolresourcesreview.htm.
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Country Background Report for the Slovak Republic

Matej Šiškovič, Ján Toman

January 2015

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Abstract

The Country Background Report (CBR) was prepared as an integral part of the international project OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (OECD Review). The CBR depicts key policies, processes and factors related to the management of resources and their use in the Slovak pre-primary, primary and secondary education system. The first chapter briefly outlines key economic, social, demographic, political and cultural characteristics that influence the school system in Slovakia. The next chapter describes some of the key characteristics of the school system, mainly in terms of its organization, management and outcomes. The third chapter takes a look at the total amount of financial resources in the school. The next chapter deals with distribution of financial, human, and physical resources from central and regional to local level. The fifth chapter deals with resource use related to students with special needs, organization of school management, career and professional development of teachers and school leaders, and school evaluation system. The concluding chapter focuses on resource management at all levels of the school system, monitoring the utilization of resources and transparency of managing financial funds.

Key words: Slovak education system, effectiveness and distribution of resources, management

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2 The OECD Review intends to provide recommendations to improve effectiveness and quality of the school system drawing on the comparative framework of the project and taking into account countries’ specificities.

3 The guidelines were prepared in line with the analytical framework and the key issues and questions for analysis proposed in the “Design and Implementation Plan for the Review”.
# Table of content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of content</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of tables</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of graphs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of boxes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of acronyms</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 The national context</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 The economic and social context</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Demographic developments</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Political context</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Public sector management</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.1 State administration</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.2 Self-government</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 The school system</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Major milestones in the development of the Slovak school system</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Description of the school system</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Education environment</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Objectives of the education system and student learning objectives</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Distribution of responsibilities within the school system</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Market mechanisms in the school system</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Performance of the school system</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.1 Access to education</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.2 Quality of education</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.3 Further study of secondary school graduates and their situation on the labor market</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Policy approaches to equity in education</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Governance of resource use in schools</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Level of resources and policy concerns</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Sources of revenue</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Planning of resource use</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Procedures, policies and budgeting</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Demography and school network</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Challenges in school capacities and policy solutions</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Implementation of policies to improve the effectiveness of resource use</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Resource distribution</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Distribution of financial resources across levels and sectors of the school system</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1 Structure of expenditures across individual levels and sectors of education</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2 Characteristics of public expenses</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Distribution of schools and materials</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Resource utilization ................................................................. 66

5.1 Reflecting students’ individual education needs ........................................ 66
5.2 Organization of student learning time ......................................................... 67
5.2.1 Organization of a school week ..................................................................... 69
5.3 Allocation of teacher resources ...................................................................... 70
5.3.1 Class size and student teacher-ratio .............................................................. 71
5.3.2 Organization of teacher’s work .................................................................... 72
5.3.3 Career structure, professional development and compensation .................. 73
5.3.4 Support staff ............................................................................................... 75
5.4 Organization of school leadership ................................................................. 76
5.4.1 School leadership arrangements ................................................................. 76
5.4.2 Organization of school leaders’ work ............................................................ 76
5.4.3 Compensation ............................................................................................. 77
5.5 Teaching and learning environment within school ......................................... 77
5.5.1 Curriculum development ............................................................................. 77
5.5.2 Student assessment, school evaluation and development .............................. 78
5.5.3 Well-being and outreach to the school community ....................................... 79
5.5.4 Teacher collaboration and professional learning .......................................... 80
5.6 Use of school facilities and materials ............................................................. 81
5.7 Organization of education governance ......................................................... 81
5.7.1 Organization levels and units of the school system ...................................... 81
5.7.2 Evaluation and assessment procedures ....................................................... 81
5.8 Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions ................................................. 82

6 Resource Management ........................................................................... 85

6.1 Capacity building for resource management ................................................. 85
6.2 Transparency, reporting and monitoring of resources use ............................. 85
6.3 Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions ................................................ 87

References ............................................................................................... 89

Annexes ....................................................................................................... 92

Annex No. 1 – Basic statistics ....................................................................... 92
Annex No. 2 – Statistics of schools, students and classes ................................. 93
Annex No. 3 – Education targets ................................................................... 95
List of tables

Table 1: Educational attainment of the Roma population (2009) ..................................................... 13
Table 2: Distribution of students (including special schools) ............................................................... 20
Table 3: Number of schools and students in general and vocational education .................................... 20
Table 4: School founders and types of schools ....................................................................................... 21
Table 5: Expenditure on educational institutions as % of GDP .......................................................... 39
Table 6: Annual expenditure per student by educational institutions (2011, USD PPP) ....................... 40
Table 7: Characteristics of school leaders and deputy leaders (as of 31.1. 2014) ............................ 60
Table 8: Numbers of school leaders and deputy leaders (as of 31.1. 2014) ........................................ 61
Table 9: Average instruction time per week by of school type and language of instruction ............. 68
Table 10: Kindergartens ....................................................................................................................... 93
Table 11: Basic Schools ....................................................................................................................... 93
Table 12: Gymnasiums ....................................................................................................................... 93
Table 13: Vocational schools ............................................................................................................. 94
Table 14: Conservatories .................................................................................................................... 94
Table 15: Employees in the school system based on the source of funding ....................................... 94
Table 16: Selected outcome indicators for education ............................................................................ 95
Table 17: PISA outcomes and early school leaving - international comparison (2005 - 2013) ........ 95
Table 18: Normative and non-normative budget 2014 (in KEUR) ..................................................... 107
Table 19: Integrated students by type of disability ............................................................................. 109
Table 20: Disadvantaged students in special kindergartens .............................................................. 109
Table 21: Disadvantaged pupils in special basic schools ................................................................. 110
Table 22: Disadvantaged students in special secondary schools ..................................................... 110
Table 23: Student population by language of instruction at basic schools .................................... 112
Table 24: Components of a teacher’s tariff salary in 2014 ............................................................... 115
Table 25: Assignment of teachers into salary tariffs .......................................................................... 115
List of graphs

Graph 1: Main economic indicators ................................................................. 12
Graph 2: Distribution of schools and students by founder (as of 15 September 2013) .......... 21
Graph 3: Preschool participation .................................................................. 31
Graph 4: Truancy and grade repetition at basic schools .................................. 32
Graph 5: Secondary school graduates (full-time study) ................................... 33
Graph 6: Performance of Slovak students and their OECD peers ......................... 35
Graph 7: Secondary school graduates on the labor market (full time study) .............. 36
Graph 8: Expenditure on (pre – tertiary) educational institutions by source of funds ...... 40
Graph 9: Population projection until 2038 ..................................................... 43
Graph 10: Population projection until 2025 by districts .................................... 44
Graph 11: Total current and capital expenditure on educational institutions (2011) .... 49
Graph 12: Expenditure on general and vocational education .................................. 50
Graph 13: EU resources invested in school infrastructure .................................... 55
Graph 14: Use of ICT at different school types .............................................. 56
Graph 15: Teachers’ age and qualification ....................................................... 58
Graph 16: Teacher qualification and distribution by social status of schools ............. 60
Graph 17: Instruction time per subject as a percentage of total compulsory instruction time (2011) .................................................................................. 69
Graph 18: Number of student per class .......................................................... 71
Graph 19: High and low achievers in PIRLS and TIMMS 2011 by regions .......... 97
Graph 20: Slovakia results in PISA 2012 ....................................................... 98
Graph 21: PISA – Distribution of students by proficiency – reading level ............. 98

List of boxes

Box 1: Selected budgetary and contributory organizations of the Ministry of Education .......... 26
Box 2: School Board ..................................................................................... 28
Box 3: Advisory bodies of the Minister of Education ........................................ 46
Box 4: Regulation of the maximum class size .................................................. 72
Box 5: Continual education ........................................................................... 74
List of acronyms

CPPPaP Centre of pedagogical and psychological consulting and prevention
CŠPP Centre of special pedagogical consulting
CVTI Centre of Scientific and Technical Information of the Slovak Republic
ERDF European Regional Development Fund
ESF European Social Fund
EU European Union
GDP Gross domestic product
ICT Information and communication technologies
INEKO Institute for Economic and Social Reforms
ISCED International Standard Classification of Education
IVP Educational Policy Institute
MPC Methodology and Pedagogy Centre
MRK Marginalized Roma communities
MSVVS SR Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic
MPSR Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
NEP National Education Program – State Curriculum
NUCEM National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements
OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP Operational Program
PIRLS Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA Program for International Student Assessment
SIOV National Institute for Vocational Education
SGI Slovak Governance Institute
SEP School Education Program – School Curriculum
SPU National Institute for Education
SSI State School Inspection
SR Slovak Republic
TALIS Teaching and Learning International Survey
TIMSS Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UIPS The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education
UNDP United Nations Organization Development Program
V3 V3 countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary)
VÚC Self-Governing Region
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Glossary</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gymnasium</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maturita</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maturita examination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modular school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normative budget</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non- normative budget</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional state authority</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Board</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School facilities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systematic preparation for education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher certification</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

The national context
In 2012, the Slovak GDP per capita reached 68% of the OECD average. Slovak economy faces high unemployment rates, whereby most of the unemployed stay outside the labor market longer than one year. Integration of the Roma minority and population ageing represent further pressing economic and social challenges for the Slovak society. Most of the Roma population live in segregated locations and in fact, have no chance to find a job. Low fertility and increasing life expectancy are expected to cause sharp decline in total population in the coming decades.

More than 5.4 million people live in Slovakia. 80% of the population declares Slovak nationality. The Hungarians (8.5%) and the Roma (2%) represent the largest national minorities. Approximately three fourths of the Slovak population belongs to the registered members of church. Most of the population is roman catholic (62%).

The School System
The school system is composed of kindergartens (pre-primary education), basic schools (primary and lower secondary education) and secondary schools (lower secondary, secondary, upper secondary, postsecondary and tertiary education). Secondary schools include: gymnasiums, vocational schools and conservatories (dance school, school of music). Children with special needs (i.e. with disabilities and gifted children) are also taught in special schools. Education and care is also provided also by school facilities, which provide extracurricular and leisure activities, consulting and prevention services, accommodation to students (dormitories) etc.

The school system has adopted several market principles to support competition. The per capita funding system ensures that money follows students. In general, students of private and church basic schools and secondary schools are financed similarly to students of state schools. Parents are free to choose any basic school for their children. Further disclosure of information by schools, mainly on the quality of education is necessary to support market competition.

The 10 – years compulsory school attendance ensures good access to primary and secondary education. Basically all children obliged to participate in education do so. However, there are persisting problems with socially disadvantaged students with respect to truancy, grade repetition and early school leaving. In 2012, more than 14% of socially disadvantaged students repeated a grade. From among other students, only slightly more than 1% did so. Compulsory school attendance was terminated earlier than in the ninth grade by more than 34% of socially disadvantaged students, which was ten times as much as by other students.

International assessments indicate a below-average or average quality of education. In 2011, Slovak students of the fourth grades at basic schools achieved similar results in reading literacy as average OECD students involved in PIRLS. In mathematics, Slovak students scored significantly worse than average OECD students involved in TIMMS. On the other side, Slovak students achieved significantly better results in natural science.

In PISA 2012, Slovak students achieved significantly worse results than the OECD average in all three fields of literacy (mathematics, reading and science). At the same time, Slovak low achievers have relatively worse results than OECD low achievers, while Slovak and OECD high achievers have very similar results. (Šiškovič, Toman, 2014) The poor social background in Slovakia has one of the most significant impacts on students’ performance across OECD countries. Relatively large is a vulnerable group of students, achieving lowest results on PISA scale. (NUCEM, 2013b)

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4 The Educational Policy Institute, with the aim of stimulating and improving public discussion on current topics in education, published a short paper on PISA 2012 results. The paper concisely presents the most important findings regarding Slovakia in terms of student performance, impact of socioeconomic background on students’ outcomes, students’ attitudes and motivation and impact of different school and system characteristics on students’ outcomes.
Graduates’ success on the labor market provides additional evidence on the quality and effectiveness of schooling. With this respect, unemployment affects mostly graduates of secondary vocational schools, which rose dramatically after the beginning of crisis. For example, in 2012/2013 about 24% of graduates of Maturita fields of study were unemployed. Moreover, long term unemployment in all vocational fields of study makes it difficult for graduates to find a job. Therefore, the Ministry of Education in cooperation with employers elaborated a new act on vocational education and training, which will introduce features of dual system of vocational education and training. Employers participating in the dual system will provide and finance practical part of education based on the contract with a given vocational school and a contract with a student. The state will give employers tax incentives to participate in the dual system.

**Governance of resource use in schools**

In 2011, educational institutions in Slovakia received total amount of 4.37 % GDP (including tertiary education), which is less than in any other OECD country. As much as 88% of the financial resources are obtained from public funds.

Student population, which is crucial for both financial and human resource management and planning, is decreasing. Between 2003 and 2013, the total number of students of basic schools and secondary schools decreased by 27%. The school network saw only partial adjustments, the number of schools dropped by 11% and the number of classrooms by 15%. Teachers’ population responded to the demographic trend somewhat more proportionally and it fell by 20%.

On the other hand, increasing number of births in recent years places pressure on kindergarten capacities. The number of births was increasing from 2002 to 2011. This trend has had an impact on the population of children aged 3-5, which rose from 154 thousand (in 2006) to 168 thousand (in 2012). As a result, unsatisfied demand for kindergarten has been growing. From 2007 to 2013 the number of rejected applications increased more than fivefold, from 1 760 to 9 600. The number of applications is expected to grow until 2017.

Problems with capacities in basic schools are of regional nature. By 2020, the number of children aged 6-9 should exceed the level from 2013 by 10%. The size of 10-14 age cohort shall reach its peak in 2025 and outgrow the numbers from 2013 by 13%. Although the overall increase is not dramatic, the situation is especially striking in the eastern parts of Slovakia with a high share of marginalized Roma communities. Also villages nearby Bratislava, where many people move from the capital, struggle with the same problem.

Beginning 2012, the Ministry of Education in cooperation with other government bodies started the construction of modular schools in regions with high proportion of marginalized Roma communities. So far, 6 modular schools were built in the east regions and construction of additional 15 modular schools is scheduled for 2014. Also, kindergartens in 82 municipalities have the chance to expand their capacities within the project Development of educational infrastructure for marginalized Roma communities. Only municipalities, which implement project of inclusive education of children from marginalized Roma communities, will receive financial support in the total amount of 47 million euro.

**Resource distribution**

In 2011, educational institutions (excluding tertiary education) managed funds in total amount of 3.27% GDP. Current expenses account for more than 94% of total expenditures across individual levels of education. More than 64% of current expenditures are spent on personnel compensation across individual levels of education.

Financing of basic schools and secondary schools from the state budget is based on a two-level model. At the central level the amount of the budget is calculated for every school. It is based on the weighted number of students in each school. At the second level, founders allocate the financial amount calculated on the central level to individual schools falling under their competence; founders are allowed to shift certain portion of the funds between schools.

The system also allocates funds to students with special needs. Funding system allocates additional financial resources by the means of modified normatives, contributions, subsidies and grants. Teacher assistants represent additional human resources. For example, more than 890 new teacher assistants
for children with disabilities and gifted children arrived to schools on 1 September 2014, which will satisfy the demand of founders for the first time. Also, national projects co-financed from OP Education (ESF) play an important role in integration of marginalized Roma communities into the society.

The size of classes is falling and student teacher ratio has experienced a mild decrease at all types of schools, except for kindergartens. Compared to 2003, the average class size at gymnasiums experienced the largest decrease (-5 students), followed by basic schools (-4 students), secondary vocational schools (-3 students) and conservatories (-2 students).

In 2014, the Ministry intended to prepare a new funding model for basic and secondary schools. One of the goals was to apply greater pressure on rationalization of the school network in which the costs of cost-inefficient schools would be partially borne by the school founder. The Ministry intended to make the funding more accurate with respect to the school needs by taking into account also the number of school classes. In the end, the work on the new law was postponed until the end of 2015.

**Resource utilization**

Each school is managed by a school leader. Also school’s self-governing bodies (School Board, student school board) and director’s advisory bodies (e.g. pedagogical board, methodology association, etc.) participate on school management. External assistance to school leaders is provided mainly by the school founders. Administrative staff is responsible for administrative arrangements.

Educational content is developed on the state and on the school level. National Education Program (NEP) is a binding document defining the content of education for all levels of education. School education programs (SEP) constitute a second stage in the whole system of education program development. SEP reflects specific school needs taking into account parents’ requirements, employers’ proposals and needs but also those of children and students.

State controls the quality of education and care by means of State School Inspectorate (SSI). School leaders are responsible for evaluation at the school level. Self-assessment at schools takes various forms. Generally, basic schools and secondary schools use the following forms of self-assessment: class inspections, polls and questionnaires, etc.

Quality is also evaluated by means of nationwide standardized assessments of students’ performance. Students take part in an assessment before applying to further studies at a secondary school (Testing 9 in the ninth grade of basic school) and at the end of upper secondary studies as part of Maturita examination. In 2015, also pupils before the first selection into different school tracks will join in (Testing 5 in the fifth grade of basic school).

According to certain stakeholders the Slovak Republic has not developed any integrated model of school self-assessment, which would consist of evaluation criteria and corresponding quality indicators. Generally, schools look up the necessary information to gain knowledge on their own by studying professional literature or by means of continual education.

**Resource management**

School leader is responsible for the efficient use of school’s funds. Functional courses of continual education partly reflect the necessity to develop capacities in resource management. The cooperation between school leaders, founders and the regional state authorities, or the Ministry of Education help school leaders to deal with various financial issues and resource management.

State controls the funding of basic and secondary schools and school facilities via the Ministry of Education and the regional state authorities. The Supreme Audit Office performs a function of an independent control body. The Office controls the efficient use of funds and state assets and EU funds.

Problems arise mainly with respect to efficient allocation of EU funds. In the programming period 2007-2013, Slovakia managed to allocate only 32 % of the total amount of EU funds allocated for OP Education. The critics see the problem in the state concentrating on complex national projects. The Ministry, on the other hand sees the problem in too many small public procurements, which are often of poor quality and contain mistakes.
1 The national context

1. The first chapter briefly outlines key economic, social, demographic, political and cultural characteristics that influence the educational system in Slovakia. Some of them may as well represent a challenge the country will have to face in the future. Information discussed in this chapter should serve as a basis for a more detailed debate in further chapters. A basic economic, social and labor market statistics is available in Annex 1.

1.1 The economic and social context

2. Slovakia is a very open and export-oriented economy, heavily relying on automotive industry. The country produces the largest number of passenger cars per capita globally. The second most important industry is the consumer electronics. These two sectors have brought most of the foreign direct investments to the country in the last 20 years. Slovak economy takes advantage of its well-educated, productive and relatively cheap labor force, high-quality connections to markets in Western Europe as well as its favorable geographical position for export to the markets in Eastern Europe.

3. Integration and globalization contributed to a relatively higher real GDP growth in Slovakia. As a result, the Slovak economy started to catch up with its neighboring countries as well as with the rest of OECD countries. In 2012, Slovakia’s real GDP per capita was 8 p. p. ahead of the average of the V3 countries. From 2005 to 2012 the real GDP per capita in Slovakia rose from 54 % to 68 % of the OECD average. Global conjuncture helped to accelerate the pace of economic convergence between the open and export-oriented Slovak economy and the economies of OECD countries. On the other hand, Slovakia was hit by the global economic crisis relatively harder because of its relatively higher sensitivity to foreign demand and small domestic market.

Graph 1: Main economic indicators

A. Real GDP annual growth rate (%)

B. Unemployment rate (% of labor force)

Source: OECD statistics

4. High employment is one of the most serious economic and social problems in Slovakia. It affects mainly young and low-educated people. The country also struggles with integration of Roma minority both to the labor market and the society as such. Slovakia has also low numbers of innovative products and Slovak high-tech products account for only a small part of the export. The innovation performance of the Slovak Republic falls considerably behind other EU countries.

- In 2012, the unemployment rate in Slovakia reached 14% and ranked fifth highest among OECD member countries. In addition, Slovakia reports high share of the long-term unemployed. These people, over the time spent outside the labor market, lose their working habits and skills. In 2012, 64 % of the unemployed had not worked longer than one year compared to the average of 34% in OECD countries and 40% in V3 countries. On top of that,
45% of all unemployed in Slovakia were unemployed for longer than two years.\(^5\) In Slovakia 5.3% of 15-19 year-olds were neither employed nor in education or training in 2011 (3.9% unemployed and 1.4% inactive). It is less than the OECD average, which made 8% (2.7% unemployed and 5.8% inactive). (OECD, 2013a)

- A large proportion of Roma population lives in segregated areas, without any opportunity to find a job. Providing Roma minority with adequate education is the key prerequisites to solve the problem of unemployment and segregation. As much as 68% of Roma men and 77% of Roma women have completed only primary education or a lower secondary education, i.e. an education without Maturita.

- From among 28 EU countries, Slovakia ranked 21st in the innovation performance in 2014. Low R&D expenditures of both, public and private sector are responsible for the situation. In 2011, countries in EU 27 spent on average 1.94% GDP for R&D, whereas Slovakia spent only 0.68% GDP. Public funds covered 55% of R&D expenses in Slovakia. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic estimates that expenses on R&D in 2012 will rise to 0.82% GDP.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Men Roma</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Women Roma</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Lower secondary</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher secondary</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 1.2 Demographic developments

5. In 2013, more than 5.4 million people lived in Slovakia. The largest population increase was recorded in the second half of the past century. Between 1950s and 1980s, the number of people increased by approximately half a million people every decade. Since 1990 this trend significantly weakened and the population rose only by around 60 thousand inhabitants in the last twenty years.

6. Slovakia applies strict immigration policy and serves mainly as a transition country for migrants. Thus, Slovakia shows negligible numbers of permanent immigration. Since 2005, the number of immigrants with permanent residence fluctuates between 5 and 8 thousand a year. Twice as many immigrants stay longer than 12 months.

7. Slovakia experiences a long-term trend of population ageing and catches up with EU27 countries. From 1992 to 2012, the median age of population in Slovakia rose by 6.1 years, compared to 5.8 years increase in EU27.\(^6\) This is caused by low total female fertility and increasing life expectancy at birth. In 1990s the fertility rate of Slovak females fell below EU27 average. In 2012 it reached only 1.34 children per woman compared to 1.58 in EU27. Life expectancy at birth is in Slovakia (72.5 years) also increasing and catching up with EU27 (77.5 years).

8. Slovak population is projected to decrease by 2060 by 0.3 million people as a result of the expected dynamics of fertility, life expectancy and migration rates. The age structure is expected

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\(^5\) From 2008 to 2013 the unemployment of the young aged 15-24 rose by 14 p. p. to more than 33 %. During the same period, the total unemployment rate increased by 4.6 p.p. In 2013, the unemployment rate of low educated people (pre-primary and lower secondary education) in Slovakia reached 42.6%, which is twice as much as the EU28 average and three times more than the total unemployment rate in Slovakia. People with tertiary education (ISCED 5–6) represent the least vulnerable group, with unemployment as high as 7.3% (in 2013). Graduate unemployment rate describes the situation on the labor market from another point of view. This issue is discussed in detail in the Chapter No. 2.5 Results of the Education System.

\(^6\) In 2012 the median age in Slovakia was 35.7 years, while in EU 37 it was 41.5 years.
become much older than it is now. The share of young people (aged 0-14) is projected to fall from 15% to 12% by 2060. The proportion of those considered economically active (aged 15-64) will sharply decline from 72% to 54%. On the other hand, the share of people aged 65+ will grow from 12% to 34% and those aged 80 and over from 3% to 12%. (EC, 2011) The implications may be considerable mainly for socioeconomic system, such as public pension’s programs and health care. Education system must be therefore able to attract and retain well trained educators to ensure quality education for future productivity and economic growth.\(^7\)

9. According to the last census in Slovakia (2011), more than 80% of total population declared Slovak nationality.\(^8\) Great but decreasing in number are also national minorities. In 2011, more than 670 thousand people (12.3% of the total population) declared other than Slovak nationality. Hungarian minority is the largest (8.5%), which at the same time reported the largest decrease. Roma minority, which follows (2.0%), experienced the largest increase.\(^9\)

10. Approximately three fourths of the Slovak population are registered members of church. In 2011, 62% of total population professed Roman Catholic religion, followed by the Evangelic Church (5.9%) and Greek Catholic Church (3.8%). About 13% of the population did not declare any religious affiliation.

1.3 Political context

11. Slovak Republic is a member country of the key European and international economic and political organizations. In 2014, the country celebrates its 14th anniversary of OECD membership, 10 years of EU membership and 5th anniversary since adopting the Euro currency.

12. Slovak Republic was established on 1 January 1993 as a parliament democracy. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic is the supreme law of the land. Slovak language is the official language.\(^10\) The constitutional system is comprised of the constitutional and the legislative power (National Council of the Slovak Republic), executive power (President of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Slovak Republic) and judicial power (Constitutional Court and other courts).

13. The President is the head of the Slovak Republic. The President represents Slovakia and ensures proper functioning of constitutional bodies. The President performs his duties to the best of his belief and is not bound by any orders. Citizens of the Slovak Republic elect their president in direct elections by secret ballot. His term lasts five years. The President signs acts and is authorised to return them to the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The President appoints and recalls the Prime Minister and other members of the Slovak Government.

14. The National Council of the Slovak Republic (Parliament) is the only constitutional and law-making body of the Slovak Republic. The National Council discusses and resolves upon the Constitution, constitutional laws, and acts and checks their compliance with laws. By the means of legal acts, the National Council implements relations arising in all aspects of social, political and economic life of the Slovak Republic. The National Council represents sovereignty of the state and the

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\(^7\) Past development and forecast of school population follows in Chapter No. 3.3 Planning and use of funds.\(^8\) However the data are probably distorted. Compared to the last two censuses the number of people who did not report their nationality increased significantly. Additionally, the number of people declaring their nationality as Slovak decreased significantly, while no significant changes were reported regarding other nationalities. Thus the actual proportion of people with Slovak nationality is probably higher.\(^9\) The number of Roma population seems to be underestimated. Large share of Roma is not recorded in any statistics. Atlas of Roma communities project provides the most accurate estimate derived from the survey directly in field. In 2013, according to Atlas, 7.5% of the population belonged to the Roma (403 thousand). Compared to the last survey from 2004 the number increased by almost 70 thousand.\(^10\) A citizen of the Slovak Republic who belongs to a national minority has the right to use (besides the official language) also the language of the national minority. Citizens belonging to a national minority, who make at least 15% of total number of citizens in a given municipality in two subsequent censuses, have the right to use the language of the minority in official dealings. Use of the languages of national minorities in official dealings and in other fields is regulated by relevant legislation.
people. Members of the parliament are elected in general, equal and direct elections by secret ballot. There are 150 members of the parliament and their term of office lasts four years.

15. The executive power of the Slovak Republic is represented by the Government. It is comprised of the Prime Minister, Vice-Prime Minister and ministers. The Government is appointed by the President of the Slovak Republic on proposal of the Prime Minister. The Government reports to the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The Government jointly decides on bills, government regulations, the Government Manifesto and on meeting the program, on principal measures regarding the business and social policy of the Slovak Republic, on state budget drafts, international treaties of the Slovak Republic, and principal questions of local and foreign policy.

16. The Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic is an independent judicial authority protecting the constitutionality. The Constitutional Court decides on compliance of acts with the Constitution, the constitutional laws and international treaties approved by the National Council of the Slovak Republic which were ratified and promulgated in a way provided by the law. The Constitutional Court provides the interpretation of the Constitution or a constitutional law in the case of disputable matters.

1.4 Public sector management

17. Public administration of the Slovak Republic consists of a system of state administration authorities (ministries and other central bodies of the state administration and decentralized state administration) operating in parallel to the system of local self-government authorities (municipalities and self-governing regions).

1.4.1 State administration

18. Central administration of the Slovak Republic consists of the central Government Office, thirteen ministries and additional central administration bodies. Each Ministry is headed by a minister who answers to both, the Government and Parliament for the activities of his ministry. There are also agencies of central management which have the same status as ministries. Again, heads of the agencies are appointed and recalled by the government. 11

19. Decentralized state administration consists of the general state administration and specialized state administration. The specialized state administration is decentralized from the central level to the regional level (regional offices) and to the district level (district offices). The general state administration is decentralized from the central level to the district level (district offices of the general administration). 12

20. In 2012, the Government of Slovak Republic started a public administration reform, so called ESO Program - efficient, reliable and open state administration. The public administration should be simple, well-arranged and accessible, sustainable, transparent and cost-effective. For example, more transparent structures of the decentralized central administration shall be established through single Citizen’s Contact Administrative Points. Further, a new quality management system will be developed to monitor and assess performance efficiency and quality of state administration. 13

11 The following offices belong to the central executive bodies: Slovak Statistical Office; Slovak Office of Geodesy and Land Registry; Cartography and Spatial Arrangement; Slovak Anti-Monopoly Office, Slovak Supervision Office for Nuclear Energy; Office of Industrial Property; Board of State Substantial Reserves

12 Specialized state administration includes school offices, environmental protection offices, fire departments, health care administration offices and many others. Decentralized general state administration includes entrepreneurship, general interior administration, civil security or citizenship.

13 National Reform Program of the Slovak Republic 2013
1.4.2 Self-government

21. Self-government is organized on two levels – the regional level represented by Self-Governing Regions (i.e. higher territorial units) and the local level represented by municipalities. There are 8 self-governing regions and 2890 municipalities (138 towns and 2752 villages). Both self-governing regions and municipalities have their original powers financed from own funds. Additionally, they perform some tasks delegated by the state as a part of the so-called transferred competences. To perform their tasks within the transferred competences, self-governing regions and municipalities have a legitimate claim to use funds from the state budget.

Self-governing regions

22. Self-governing region is a legal entity independently managing its own assets using its own income and protecting the rights and interests of its inhabitants. Each self-governing region is headed by a Chairman. A self-governing region also has a regional parliament comprised of elected members, an office and its own supervisor. Self-governing region operates mainly roads (administration of class II and III roads), social services (runs social service facilities), healthcare (establishes certain types of hospitals), EU funds (preparation of funds drawing plans) and education.

23. As a part of their original competences, self-governing regions establish and close primary schools of art, language schools (other than language schools associated with basic schools), school facilities (free time centres, school farms and apprenticeship training centres, school dormitories), school special-purpose facilities (school catering facilities, school service centres, schools in nature). As a part of their transferred competences in the school system, self-governing regions establish and close secondary schools and apprenticeship training centres.

Municipalities

24. Municipality is an independent territorial self-governing and administrative unit. It associates citizens having a permanent residence in the territory of the municipality. A municipality makes independent decisions and performs all activities related to administration of its own assets and to its own income. The municipal parliament and the mayor are local government’s bodies. The Municipal Office is the executive body of the municipal parliament and the mayor. The Municipal Office is in charge of organisational and administrative matters of the municipal parliament and the mayor, and the authorities established by the municipal parliament.

25. As a part of their original competences, municipalities establish and close primary schools of art, kindergartens, language schools associated with basic schools, school facilities (school clubs for children, free time centres, school dormitories) and school special-purpose facilities (school catering facilities students of basic schools and children in kindergartens, school service centres). Under the transferred competences in the school system, municipalities establish and close basic schools.

Figure 1: Self-governing regions in the Slovak Republic
2 The school system

26. The following chapter describes a development of the school system some of the key characteristics of the school system, mainly in terms of its organization, management and outcomes. Some of the issues mentioned in this chapter will be discussed in detail in the following parts of this report. Data in the whole document relate either to a calendar year or a school year. Calendar year refers to financial indicators while school year refers to other indicators.\(^\text{14}\)

2.1 Major milestones in the development of the Slovak school system

27. Since 1993, the school system in the Slovak Republic has gone through a number of reforms. Until 2001 the changes were mostly spontaneous, without a deeper impact analysis. In 2001, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the National Program of Upbringing and Education in the Slovak Republic for the next 15 – 20 years – Millennium. The document defined basic principles for future changes in upbringing and education. In 2003, in line with Millennium, decentralization in the school system was launched and funding of basic and secondary schools was fundamentally changed. A so-called normative system of funding was adopted, which covered most of the school’s expenses. The rest of the school’s budget is covered by non-normative funding.

28. Adoption of a number of Acts led to comprehensive changes in the school system. The Act on Upbringing and Education (so-called School Act) from 2008 defined minimum content, primary skills and quality which shall be provided to all students in National Education Programs (NEP) in the form of education standards. At the same time, schools were given the responsibility and autonomy to develop own School Education Programs based on NEP.

29. The Act also defined a 10-year compulsory school attendance. It also established a zero grade to prepare socially disadvantaged children, who have not reached school capability, prepare for a successful transition to basic school. The new act encourages learning of new languages and ICT. The act harmonized the classification of education at our schools with the international classification ISCED. The School Act adopted free pre-primary education for children in kindergartens one year before compulsory school attendance. For children, whose parents are in material need, pre-primary education is free of charge irrespective of their age.

30. The Act on Vocational Education and Training from 2009 contributed to improving the relevancy of VET for the labor market needs. The Act defined rights and obligations of all participants and set conditions for involvement of individual employers, their associations and private investment capital in the VET system. The Act encouraged coordination between the sectors of business and education by establishing VET councils at the governmental, regional and industrial level.

31. The Act on pedagogical employees and specialist employees from 2009 created a career system which defines rules for career growth and professional development. The Act classified teachers’ career into four career levels (beginning teacher, independent teacher, teacher with first certification and teacher with second certification). The same career levels apply for specialist employees. Teachers climb up the career levels by acquiring new professional competences and are rewarded accordingly. The career system also allows teachers to gain salary allowances for professional development via a credit system. Ultimately, the system motivates teachers to professional development and career growth.

2.2 Description of the school system

32. The essential goal of the school system is to give all its citizens the opportunity to achieve pre-primary, primary and several types of secondary levels of education (lower secondary,
secondary and upper secondary education) as well as higher vocational education (postsecondary or tertiary education).

33. Children are taught in different types of schools to achieve the corresponding levels of education:

- Pre-primary education (ISCED 0) is provided by kindergartens.
- Primary education (ISCED 1) is provided in the first stage of basic schools.
- Lower secondary education (ISCED 2) is provided in the second stage of basic schools or by 8-year gymnasiums.
- Children, who do not successfully accomplish basic school may then continue their studies in a secondary vocational school and receive lower secondary vocational education (ISCED 2C).
- Upper secondary general education (ISCED 3A) is received in 8-year gymnasiums, 4-year gymnasiums and bilingual gymnasiums.
- Secondary vocational education (ISCED 3C) and upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3A) is received in secondary vocational schools and in conservatories. Secondary vocational schools also provide postsecondary (non-tertiary) education (ISCED 4A) and tertiary education (ISCED 5B).

34. Children with special educational needs (SEN) can study in special schools. The network of special schools consists of special kindergartens, special basic schools and special secondary schools for children with disabilities and for gifted children. There are also other types of schools, namely primary art schools, which provide primary and secondary art education (ISCED 1B, ISCED 2B) and language schools.

35. Educational services and care are also provided by various types of school facilities. For example, extracurricular and spare time activities are organized in school clubs for children and in free time centres. It includes also school dormitories, school cafeteria and apprenticeship centres. The school system is also comprised by institutions, which offer variety of specialized support services and care.

**Numbers of schools and students by types of schools**

36. In 2013, around 153 thousand children attended 2,870 kindergartens, 427 thousand students attended 2,159 basic schools and 227 thousand students attended some 718 secondary schools. Around 30 thousand children and students with disabilities attended about 417 special schools. (For a more detailed statistics see Annex 2 and Annex 11)

37. Around 150 thousand students took courses in 317 primary art schools and 22.5 thousand students attended language courses in 41 language schools. About 181 thousand children spent their free time in 495 free time centers. More than 118 thousand children attended 1,942 school clubs for children at (special) basic schools. 21 thousand students were accommodated in 217 dormitories.

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15 Students accomplish ISCED 3A level by passing Maturita final examination, which is a prerequisite for further university study. Students accomplish ISCED 3C level with a different type of final examination other than Maturita and are not entitled to apply for university study.

16 Postsecondary education (ISCED 4A) is intended for students who successfully accomplished upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3A) and want to improve their knowledge and skills in the completed field of study or for those who wish to gain qualification in some second field of study. A post-secondary study at a conservatory is in a process of an experimental verification.

17 Children with disabilities and gifted children study either in special schools or in mainstream schools. In the latter case children with SEN are integrated in ordinary classes or pupils with SEN can also study in special classes in mainstream schools, which is not regarded as integration.

18 The number of students in secondary schools includes students attending the first four grades of 8-year gymnasiums.
Figure 2: School system in the Slovak Republic

Key:
- ○/△: Starting/ending age of compulsory education
- ▲: Recognized exit point of the education system
- Student flow
- Transfer from a programme to another
- Programme designed for part-time attendance
- Vocational programme
- Single structure education (Integrated ISCED levels)
- May be provided within one school structure

Source: OECD (2014e)
General and vocational education at secondary schools

In 2013, 227 thousand secondary-school students attended 246 gymnasiums, 457 secondary vocational schools and 15 conservatories. 76 thousand students were taught in gymnasiums, 149 thousand students in secondary vocational schools by almost and almost 3 thousand students in conservatories.

Compared to 2003, total number of secondary-school students decreased by 30%. Student population in secondary vocational school dropped by 33% and in gymnasiums by 23%. On the contrary, the numbers at conservatories rose by 72%. As a result, the proportion of students attending general educational programs at gymnasiums slightly increased and it now makes 33% of all secondary students.

The school network partially adjusted to the falling numbers of students. Between 2003-2013 the number of secondary vocational schools gradually decreased by 25% from 635 to 472 schools. On the other hand, the number of gymnasiums showed a mild increase of 9% from 223 to 246 schools during the same period.

### Table 2: Distribution of students (including special schools)

<table>
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<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<td>143 263</td>
<td>142 175</td>
<td>143 107</td>
<td>143 762</td>
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<td>224 769</td>
<td>217 805</td>
<td>212 421</td>
<td>209 213</td>
<td>209 325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 2</td>
<td>321 476</td>
<td>310 315</td>
<td>293 519</td>
<td>260 867</td>
<td>274 204</td>
<td>209 904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 3</td>
<td>299 662</td>
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<td>284 656</td>
<td>278 696</td>
<td>265 707</td>
<td>261 464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 4</td>
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<td>3 967</td>
<td>3 651</td>
<td>4 267</td>
<td>5 101</td>
<td>5 170</td>
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<th>Students in Maturita/Non-maturita fields of study</th>
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<tr>
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<td>242 467</td>
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<td>229 267</td>
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<td>218 383</td>
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<td>82.8%</td>
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<td>85.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>86.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>86.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>86.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISCED 3C</td>
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<tr>
<td>(with Maturita)</td>
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<tr>
<td>51 672</td>
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<td>46 452</td>
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<td>42 189</td>
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<td>39 022</td>
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<td>30 440</td>
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<td>13.7%</td>
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<td>13.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: UOE

### Table 3: Number of schools and students in general and vocational education

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<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>245</td>
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<tr>
<td>vocational &amp; conservatories</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>486</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>gymnasiums</td>
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<td>99 758</td>
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<td>80 346</td>
<td>75 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocational &amp; conservatories</td>
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<td>225 796</td>
<td>218 062</td>
<td>212 594</td>
<td>203 477</td>
<td>196 060</td>
<td>191 540</td>
<td>182 102</td>
<td>171 333</td>
<td>160 041</td>
<td>151 688</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UIPS (2013a)
State, private and church schools

41. Schools and school facilities can be categorized with respect to the founder as state (public), private and church schools. Founders of state schools and school facilities are municipalities, self-governing regions or the regional state authorities. Private schools and school facilities can be founded by legal entities or persons. State- approved churches or religious communities are founders of church schools and school facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is the founder?</th>
<th>State administration (8 regional state authorities)</th>
<th>Self-governing region</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Other natural persons or legal entities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevailing types of schools</td>
<td>Special kindergartens, special basic schools, special secondary schools</td>
<td>Secondary schools</td>
<td>Basic schools, kindergartens</td>
<td>Basic schools and secondary schools, special basic schools and special secondary schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: School founders and types of schools

Source: EPI

42. Municipalities are founders of more than 90% of kindergarten and basic schools. Self-governing regions run almost 70% of secondary schools. Private founders and churches are founders of the remaining less than 10% kindergartens and basic schools and 30% of secondary schools. Private founders run a significant share of conservatories, church founders run relatively highest proportion of gymnasiuems within their school portfolio. The relative share of students with respect to founders is comparable to their relative share of school numbers, except for conservatories. Although there are almost twice as many private conservatories as state conservatories, the student population of private conservatories is nearly two times lower.

43. Regarding school facilities, municipalities are founders of 65% spare time centres. The rest of them, approximately 35% are run by church and private founders. Self-governing regions run 60% of dormitories (mainly dormitories at gymnasiuems) and approximately 30% of dormitories are run by the regional state authorities (mainly dormitories at special schools).

44. The regional state authorities are founders of 80% of special kindergartens and 90% of special basic schools and special secondary schools. The remaining special schools are run mainly by private and church founders. The relative distribution of students with respect to founders is similar to the distribution of school numbers by founders.

Graph 2: Distribution of schools and students by founder (as of 15 September 2013)

Source: UIPS statistics

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19 Private founders run mainly primary schools of art and language schools.
Compulsory school attendance

45. Compulsory school attendance starts at the age of six and when the child becomes mature to attend school. The compulsory school attendance lasts ten years, maximally until the age of 16. Thus, students in Slovakia usually complete their compulsory school attendance during their upper secondary studies.

2.3 Education environment

46. Education is gradually increasing its important in the eyes of the general public, also thanks to the attention paid by the media. However, this attitude has not yet manifested itself in an adequate position of teachers in society. As other areas, also education has gone through a transformation process after the societal and economical changes in 1989 and it now incorporates many features of modern education systems.

Importance of education in society

47. Slovak society has been changing its perception of education as a means to achieve success in life in the course of the social and economic transformation after the fall of socialism. The results of a sociological survey conducted by the Slovak Academy of Science and Comenius University showed that in 1988 only 41% of participants regarded education as a key means to success in their life and in 1993 this figure even decreased to 34%. However, in 2009 already 69% of participants saw education as a key to success in life. In 2009 only two other factors were considered to be more important – hard work and ambitions. (Džambazovič, 2010)

48. In the socialist era, higher attainment was not sufficiently rewarded with in terms of higher income. Political connections and contacts were regarded equally important as education. High rates of unemployment and career prospects during the economic transformation in the early 1990’s decreased the economic value of education. Nowadays, people start to realize that education leads to better career opportunities, higher income and consequently higher living standards (Džambazovič, 2010). Many adults complete their education, high share of young people studies at universities and moves abroad for the sake of higher quality studies.

Teachers’ position in society

49. People’s attitudes towards education contrast with the position of teachers in society and so far remain in declaratory statements. Teachers themselves are aware of this situation. As much as 96% of interviewed teachers disagree with a statement that teaching profession is valued in society (OECD, 2014c). Poor status of teachers manifests itself also in low attractiveness of teacher profession among young people. In a survey conducted among people aged 15 – 25 (GFK, 2009), neither young males nor females mentioned teaching as one of the top five profession.

Key traditions, culture and values

50. According to some experts, today’s education in Slovakia balances between traditional and modern approach to organisation and provision of education. Today’s education system is a mixture of reform, decentralised and deregulating aspects and traditional, centralised and regulating aspects. (Bútora D, Kríž M., 2013).

51. The current state is influenced mainly by the sudden and rapid political and social developments after the Second World War. Until 1990, the educational policy in Slovakia was focused exclusively to preserve the system of comprehensive, non-differentiated school system. To ensure the quality of education in schools, the state relied on strict regulation of the curriculum, material, technical and personal provision of education and supervision of the adherence to laws and ordinances. The concept was implemented in 1948, together with the new content and ideological changes in line with then omnipresent ideology. All schools were assigned a common goal and each type of school specific educational tasks. In 1976, all segments of the school system underwent a reform with the objective to respond to then actual societal and economic needs as well as to
accelerate the psychological development of children. However, the reform resulted only in broadening and deepening the educational content. (Humajová, 2008)

52. After 1989, new measures have gradually been implemented to anchor democratic and pluralistic principles in the school system. Today, modern features of the Slovak education system include free school choice, school self-administration (school board, student school board), coexistence of private and church founders, democratic selection of the directors etc. Historical heritage manifests itself in detailed national education programs, fixed teachers’ salaries, central market of textbooks, central regulation of methodological help for schools and centrally issued instructions and rules for schools. (Bútora D, Kríž M., 2013)

**Private tutoring**

53. Students in Slovakia often attend private tutoring to prepare themselves for university admission examination. Roughly 56% of university freshmen in academic year 2004/2005 reported taking private tutoring at the end of their secondary studies.20 21% attended a preparatory course organized by institutions (mostly universities), 18% attended private tutoring lessons, and 16% attended both. Students from gymnasia tended to use private tutoring slightly more often than students from vocational schools.21 Yet in 2004, students spent on average EUR 170 on private tutoring. In comparison, this amount accounted for 20% of the sum a gymnasium received per-student from public funds (Kubánová, 2006).

54. According to a more recent study about 20% - 30% of primary and secondary students took some form of private tutoring (Kubánová et al., 2008). PISA 2012 shows, that Slovak 15 years old students work with a personal tutor 0.5 hours a week on average, regardless whether paid or not, compared to 0.7 hours in OECD. From neighboring countries Hungarian and Polish students spend significantly more time with private tutors after school (0.9 hours and 1.1 hour a week). (OECD, 2013b)

**Parents’ and students’ investment in education**

55. Education at state basic schools and secondary schools is free of charge. Kindergartens, except for those established in healthcare institutions, can charge tuition for providing pre-primary education when parents pay a so called contribution22 for partial reimbursement of costs for children in kindergartens. Pre-primary education is provided free of charge to children one year before the start of their compulsory school attendance, and for those whose legal guardian receive social assistance benefit and allowance to social assistance benefit.

56. Expenses incurred by households are spent on school bags, exercise books, writing material, catering and transportation. Additionally, there are also unofficial and/or indirect payments made by parents in order to support the school system, such as contributions paid to Parent Teacher Associations23, for various school events, after-school activities and certain textbooks. According to their own estimates from 2008, parents spent on average 6% of their family income (EUR 613) for all educational expenses of their children (Kubánová et al. 2008). These are unofficial payments, which are neither systematically monitored nor recorded. The fact that some state schools force parents to

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20 This figure is comparable across selected European countries. In Lithuania, 62% of university students surveyed had received private supplementary tutoring in their last year of secondary school. In Portugal, 55% of candidates for the national university entrance examinations had received tutoring in Grades 10 to 12. In Poland 49.8% of first-year university students reported having received private lessons. (Bray, 2011)

21 A majority of 62% students felt that the knowledge and skills acquired in secondary school did not suffice to pass the university entrance examination. Gymnasium students may go to most popular and competitive university faculties, their parents may be more educated and usually wealthier all of which influences the participation of students on private tutoring. The survey was conducted among 926 students from 7 faculties at Slovak universities in November 2004.

22 Contribution is set by the founder and there is no limit to it. Only in case of kindergartens run by a regional state authority the contribution can amount only up to 7.5% of the subsistence minimum per child.

23 Parent Teacher Association (Združenie rodičov a priateľov školy – ZRPŠ) is either a voluntary or a civic association. Such association should have its statute or Articles describing in detail its activity and management of entrusted assets.
pay for various kinds of expenses is mentioned also in the report of State School Inspectorate (SSI, 2011).  

**Media**

57. Interest of society in the course of events in education has been recently marked with a positive trend. Good news is that the debate about Slovak school system does not take place within groups of experts any more but spreads into general public. More regular and sound articles about education in newspapers, weekly magazines, reports and debates on TV indicate a rising interest of public in education matters. For example, two most widely read serious magazines .týždeň and Trend deliver articles on various topics in education on a regular basis, whereby .týždeň publishes a separate column in its printed version and has a separate section on education in its online version (Bútora D, Križ M., 2013).

### 2.4 Objectives of the education system and student learning objectives

58. Mid-term educational policy objectives of the Slovak Government are broadly defined in the Government’s Manifesto. Strategic objectives and priorities of the Slovak government for education are defined in the National Reform Program (NPR), which is the national strategic document for the country’s economic development and structural policies in the framework of EU 2020 Strategy. By 2020, the share of early school leavers aged 18 - 24 should be less than 6 %, 15 years old students should arrive at the average of 505 points in OECD-PISA assessment and at least 95 % of children aged 4 - 5 should participate on pre-primary education in kindergartens. National targets arise from European benchmarks defined in European strategy 2020 and Education and Training 2020 (See more in **Annex 3**).

59. Main objectives of the education system, as stated in the School Act, are to afford the children and students the opportunity to:

a) gain competence, mainly in communication skills, use of information and communication technologies, official language, native language and foreign languages, and competence in mathematical literacy, natural and technical science and technologies, social and civic competence, business skills, cultural competence and competence for lifelong learning,
b) gain English language proficiency and proficiency in at least one other foreign language
c) learn how to identify and analyse problems properly, propose solutions to the problems and resolve them,
d) get prepared to live responsible life in a free society in the spirit of mutual understanding and tolerance, learn how to develop and cultivate own personality and engage in lifelong learning, work in a team and take responsibility.

60. General objectives and key competences, which the education should lead to, are defined by the National Education Program (NEP). NEP is a binding document defining the content of education for all levels of education using education standards. It is issued by the Ministry of Education, and it is prepared by the National Institute for Education.

61. National Education Programs include mainly state curricula, education standards and general learning plan. It sets general objectives for schools in the form of key competences (skills)

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24 State School Inspectorate points out that parents are forced to pay for various expenses at state schools including fees, maintenance costs, textbooks, sponsorships etc.
25 The Manifesto of the Slovak Government for 2012 – 2016 was approved by the members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic at the session held on 15 May 2012.
26 General learning plans contain learning areas with defined list of mandatory and optional subjects. It also defines the minimum number of lessons students have to take during their studies in each subject. General learning plans also define the maximum weekly number of lessons for students in each grade as well as the number of lessons schools can use in school education program in order to specialize. General learning plans constitute a binding document for the development of school learning plans.
taking into account a well-balanced development of students’ personalities. It is a binding document for development of individual School Education Programs, reflecting specific local and regional conditions and needs.

62. Education standards form an important part of state education programs. The standards define output requirements for education system. The standards provide a structured description of skills students ought to gain in each subject after completion of each grade or the whole level of education. An education standard is comprised of two parts: a content standard and a performance standard. The content part defines the minimum amount of knowledge students should acquire. Its key objective is to unify the minimum content of education and ensure compatibility across all schools. The performance part defines the proficiency level for students in the prescribed minimum content. Each level of outputs is focused on competences – i.e., combination of knowledge, skills and abilities.

63. The Ministry of Education issues NEP for kindergartens, for the 1st stage of basic schools, for the 2nd stage of basic schools, for gymnasiums, for primary schools of art, for conservatories and for language schools. Further 83 NEPs are prepared for vocational education. The Ministry issues also NEPs for children and students with disabilities and for the gifted children. For re-education centres, free time centres, school clubs for children the Ministry issues upbringing programs.

64. School education programs (SEP) constitute a second stage in the whole system of education program development. SEP reflects specific needs taking into account parents’ requirements, employers’ proposals and needs but also those of children, students and other stakeholders. The number of lessons which schools may use to develop their own school education programs is defined by the corresponding state education program.

2.5 Distribution of responsibilities within the school system

65. The management of the school system can be divided into three levels: central, middle and school level. Rights, responsibilities and mutual relations of individual stakeholders are set by law and other regulations (e.g. the relations between founders and school leaders, or between founders and the Ministry of Education). On each occasion, individual stakeholders participate on process of the rules development.

Central level

66. The Government of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Education define the school policy from the central level. The Government is responsible for allocation of funds in the budget chapter of the Ministry of Education and in the budget chapter of the Ministry of Interior, taking into account the priorities of the state education policy.27 Furthermore, the Government sets principles, terms and organisation of education by the means of government bills. The bills are introduced at the Government sessions by the Minister of Education. The Government subsequently approves the bills and introduces them to the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of Education issues especially generally binding legal regulations and manages the funding process of secondary schools. Also, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior manage funding of basic schools and special schools.

67. Minister of Education is appointed by the president on the proposal of the Prime Minister. The Minister has two Assistant secretaries who are appointed by the Government on the Minister’s proposal. Assistant secretary acts on the behalf of Minister in his absence. Office of the Ministry is

27 In 2013, the management of departments of regional state authorities in education, which establish mainly special schools, shifted from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Interior. Since then, all schools except for schools established by self-governing regions are financed from the budget chapter of the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Education is in charge of budget negotiation and legislation regarding the funding issues. Also, the Ministry of Education centrally calculates budgets for individual schools. The Ministry of Interior acts as an intermediary regarding the cash flow from the state budget to schools and provides mainly back office services for the Ministry of Education.
responsible for the organizational, technical and professional running of the Ministry. The head of the Office is appointed and recalled by the Government on the advice of the Minister. The inner structure of the ministry is subdivided into divisions that are headed by the division directors. These again are appointed and recalled by the Minister. Each division is further subdivided into the departments and units. Organization chart is portrayed in Annex 4.

68. The Ministry of Education has also established organizations to carry out delegated specific tasks. A more detailed description of the most important ones follows in the box below.

Middle level

69. The middle management of the school system forms school founders, regional state authorities as well as municipalities and self-governing regions acting as school authority.

School founders

70. School founders cooperate mainly with school leaders and with the school self-governing bodies. On the proposal from School Board founders dismiss school leaders School Board (for more information Box 2: School Board). They issue organisational instructions for school leaders at the beginning of the school year, evaluate their performance and provide them with legal advisory services. The founders cooperate with school leaders in staffing. They provide schools with professional and consulting services and control compliance with generally binding legal regulations.

71. School founders negotiate with school self-governing authorities (School Board) and school leaders mainly about the school development plan, material and social conditions of the school employees as well as a Report on the education outcomes and conditions at school.

Box 1: Selected budgetary and contributory organizations of the Ministry of Education

National School Inspectorate (SSI) acts on behalf of state as a supervisory body over the quality of pedagogical management, education and material-technical conditions. In case of serious deficiencies, the Inspectorate submits an address to the founder for dismissal of the school leader. The Inspectorate also submits recommendations to the Ministry recommendations for closure of schools or school facilities.

National Institute of Education (SPU) is in charge of professional and methodological management of schools and school facilities, and education activities of teachers. SPU’s core activities include curricula development (SEP) their experimental testing and monitoring of their implementation. SPU further deals with educational reforms and changes, applied research in education; professional and methodology consulting, etc.

National Institute of Vocational Education (SIOV) prepares and implements concepts and strategies for the development of vocational education. The Institute develops state education programs for vocational education, provides professional and methodological management of secondary vocational schools and carries out R&D activities and surveys with respect to the existing trends and needs of the national economy and the labor market.

Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (MPC) organises and implements educational activities for pedagogical staff and non-teaching staff of schools and school facilities.

National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements (NUCEM) administers, develops and oversees the external part and written form of the internal part of Maturita ordered by the Ministry of Education. as well as the external testing of graders at basic schools – “Testing 9”. Furthermore, it manages international assessments in which the Slovak Republic takes part.

Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (CVTI) merged with the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (UIPS) and took over the scope of the UIPŠ’s activities in 2014. UIPŠ was the main information centre of the Ministry of Education and its main task was to provide the Ministry of Education with the necessary information to support the management of the school system. CVTI is the national information centre for science, technology, innovation and education and a specialised scientific library of the Slovak Republic.
In terms of funding, founders serve as interlink between the central level and schools. Founders distribute funds they receive from the Ministry to individual schools and are allowed to reallocate certain amount among schools. In addition, founders and school leaders discuss together the draft distribution of funds received from the Ministry, the economic school report, perform follow-up financial controls and check the effectiveness and efficiency of the resource use.

Collaboration between municipalities and between regions

Association of Municipalities in Slovakia (ZMOS) represents more than 90% of Slovak municipalities and creates a platform for its members to organize discussions, coordinate activities, support joint problem solving and defend common interests. ZMOS is active in various fields in respect to the autonomous status of municipalities and education belongs to one of its priorities.

On the regional level there is Association of self-governing regions (SK8), which amongst a variety of other issues organizes the activities of its members as founders of secondary schools. ZMOS and SK8 intensively cooperate and are important negotiation partners for the government of the Slovak Republic and National Council of the Slovak Republic during the legislative process.

School departments of regional state authorities

There are two main areas of tasks concerning school departments of regional state authorities. First, the state authorities must perform their duties of school founders especially in case of special education. Second, regional state authorities cooperate with other founders and school self-governing authorities, give them guidelines with respect to funding issues and organization of schooling. Regional state authorities also ensure professional advisory services to all founders and school leaders and school leaders of school facilities. They also approve the status of municipalities as school authorities and provide them with methodological guidance.

In terms of funding, regional state authorities gives methodological guidance to all types of founders regarding normative financing, budgeting and reporting. On their websites regional state authorities keep and update data about the allocation of funds to individual schools of each founder. Also, they calculate the limits of both normative and non-normative funds for founders and processes and control founders’ documents for bargaining procedures.

School authorities

School authority is a municipality, which is a founder of schools with the total number of at least thousand students. A municipality performs state administration activities of the first instance when the education and care of children is endangered and when students’ compulsory school attendance is neglected. Municipality as a school authority performs school administration of second instance in matters, which had been decided by school leaders on the first instance at basic schools.

Similarly, self-governing regions perform state administration of second instance in matters which are decided on the first instance by school leaders. This competence of the self-governing region is a transferred state administration competence and the Ministry covers expenses of self-governing regions related to the transferred state administration duties.

School level

Management at the school level is carried out by school leaders. School leaders can establish advisory bodies (e.g. pedagogical board, methodology association, subject committee, arts board) which assist them in their work.

School leaders are appointed and dismissed by the founder and serve a five year term in office. School leader is mainly in charge of compliance with state education programs, development and implementation of school education programs and curricula, compliance with generally binding

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28 This concerns organization of education and care, catering services, informatics, employment relationships, remuneration etc.
legal regulations, proper management of school assets. In terms of funding, the school leader is responsible for school budget and effective use of the financial resources.

81. School Board and Students’ School Board are school self-governing authorities that play an initiative and advisory role in school management. They promote public interests in education as well as those of students, parents and employees in. The school self-governance is a form of public control and gives opinions on activities carried out in schools and/or school facilities.

82. A recent study shows that students’ opportunities to participate in school life are increasing. From 2004 to 2011 the share of upper secondary schools with established Students’ School Board increased from 32% to 58%. Their tradition, activities and acceptance from the side of school management varies from school to school. Nevertheless, three quarters of interviewed school leaders perceive see a positive contribution of students’ self-governance in their schools. However, 17.4% of school leaders consider Students’ School Boards to be formal (Bieliková et al, 2012).

83. Parents at schools are also usually organized in so called Associations of parents and friends of school. It is an unofficial organization with an informal influence, which speaks for the interests of parents by organizing and coordinating elections of parents’ representatives to school board, intermediary between parents, class teachers, and school leaders etc. Teachers may establish an teacher unions in each school to defend their interests with respect to their employer.

Box 2: School Board

At kindergartens and basic schools, the Board is comprised of two elected representatives of teaching staff, staff, one elected representative of non-teaching staff, four elected representatives of parents and four representatives delegated by the founder

At secondary vocational schools one representative can be delegated by a professional organization of employers, then instead of four there are only three representatives of the founder. School Boards at upper secondary schools comprise one representative of students elected by the Student School Board and only three instead of four representatives of parents.

The School Board plays an important role in the hiring process of school leaders. The School Board is in charge of the selection procedure and, based on the elections, nominates the best candidate for the position. The founder has to appoint the nominated candidate, except for private founders and church founders. School leader’s term of office lasts five years and is dismissed by the founder. In certain cases defined by law, the School Board is obliged to provide an opinion on the dismissal. At the same time, it is also entitled to submit an address for removal. If the School Board does not submit an opinion to the founder in 15 days due time the founder can remove the school leader on his own.

School leaders submit the following documents to the School Board for comments: proposal on the number of number of students to be admitted, proposal on the establishment of new study programs draft school education program, draft budget, draft school business plan, report on the school’s educational activities, results and conditions, school economic report, schools development plan elaborated for at least two years and its annual evaluation, information about human resources and material-technical support of education process.

Differences in autonomy between state, private and church schools

84. Education in private schools, church schools and state is regulated by the same legislation. It means that all schools have to follow the same rules and comply with the same responsibilities. There are, however differences regarding school autonomy with respect to appointment of school leaders, admitting students to the first grade of basic schools and funding.

85. Neither private nor church founder has to appoint the school leader nominated by the School Board. If the founder does not accept the candidate, the School Board has to nominate a new one. Church founders may appoint school leaders on their own if the School Board two times nominates a

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29 Public, private and church schools have to have own school education program which complies with the state education program, follow the prescribed education standards, employ qualified teachers, provide material and technical conditions for teaching etc.
candidate who does not satisfy the founder’s requirements. School leaders of state schools have to accept the candidate, which was elected and afterwards nominated by the School Board.

86. Non-state schools are not obliged to admit every child to the first grade of a basic school. By contrast, a state basic school has to admit every child to the first grade, as long as the child’s permanent address falls within the school district of the given basic school. At the same time, for every basic school there is a school district defined as a part of municipality’s area.

87. School funding is more closely described in the chapter “2.5 Market mechanisms in the school system”. Differences between private schools, church schools and state schools occur with respect to raising resources (tuition fees) and the resource use.

2.6 Market mechanisms in the school system

88. Per student school funding system when money follows students, is the key market principle. Market environment is further supported by free school choice and presence of non-state schools. In addition, the state pursues a policy of gradual disclosure of information about schools for parents and students to make a more informed school choice and enhance thus competition among schools.

Per-student financing at state, church and private schools

89. Students of private and church schools are in principle financed in the same way as state-school students. Private schools heavily rely on the support from the state budget. There are, however, certain differences. Private schools and church schools are allowed to collect tuition fees. Also, municipalities and self-governing regions are obliged to provide, language schools, primary art schools, kindergartens and non-state school facilities and with at least 88% of per-student normative, which they receive from state budget to run their own institutions. More details on funding follow in Chapter 4, part Financing non-state schools and school facilities.

School choice in case of basic schools

90. Parents have the right to send their children to any to any basic school they prefer. If parents decide to choose a school outside their permanent address (i.e. outside the relevant school district) the child will be admitted only upon the agreement with the director of that school. However, school leaders of basic schools must prefer and first admit children from the school’s district. If a child cannot be enrolled in a basic school in their school district for capacity reasons, the school leader informs child’s parents and the relevant local state administration authority chooses a new school for the child or ensures other form of educational provision.

Market competition and information asymmetry

91. Available information about schools, mainly about quality of schools, is an important prerequisite for market competition. The Ministry of Education gradually enables parents and students to make a more informed school choice and thus encourage competition among schools. For instance, a portal named “education map” (http://mapaskol.iedu.sk) was established in order to reduce the information asymmetry among parents, students and schools. The portal provides students, their parents and general public with an easier access to information, which was until recently often unavailable.30 The third sector is also involved in systematic and transparent disclosure of data on basic schools and secondary schools.31

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30 Users will find the list of schools, contacts, web pages, number of students, number of student from social disadvantaged environment, number of employees, selected budget indicators, gifts, fields of study, results of Maturita testing and Testing 9, unemployment of the graduates. Users can compare individual schools with each other.

31 The portal of the Institute for Economic and Social Reforms (INEKO) provides data on basic schools and secondary schools, results of national Maturita, national testing of graders (testing 9), unemployment rates of graduates, teachers, and
In order to eliminate the information asymmetry, state also discloses results from national tests on the schools level. National external tests assess students’ results, however, cannot be considered to be good indicators for quality assessment of teachers and schools. Students’ results depend on a number of factors. Quality of education at schools, e.g. using added value, is presently not measured in Slovakia. Moreover, school results are not measured on all levels of education. More detailed information on national tests is described in part 2.6.2. Quality of education.

### 2.7 Performance of the school system

Slovak school system has its clear strengths but also weaknesses. About 82% of young people aged 25 or less complete upper secondary education, which is the fifth highest figure among OECD countries with available data. Due to a 10-year compulsory school attendance students usually follow and finish upper secondary studies, which results in one of the lowest percentage of early school leavers among OECD countries. On the other hand international comparisons show, that the Slovak students achieve average or below average results. Also, children from socially disadvantaged background are much more vulnerable to truancy, grade repetition and early school leaving than their peers.

#### 2.7.1 Access to education

**Kindergarten schools**

Total number children attending kindergartens primarily depends on the demographic development. In this regard, the number of children at kindergartens dropped from 2000 to 2008, and since 2009 the number of children at kindergartens has been rising. According to the available predictions, the phase of growth should last until 2017 (UIPS, 2013).[^2]

In 2013 the participation rate of children on pre-primary education in kindergartens was: 12.2% of children younger than 3; 63.8% at the age of three, 73.3% of children at the age of four; 80.4% at the age of five 34.5% of children at the age of six.[^3] The fact that children at the age of five, children with postponed compulsory school attendance and children with additionally postponed start of the compulsory school attendance are preferred by the enrolment has contributed to the drop in the participation rate of children under the age of three.

Slovakia lags behind the European benchmark set for participation in early childhood education and care. Only 77.4 % of Slovak children aged 4-5 participate in pre-primary education compared to the 95 % benchmark. Also EU28, with the average participation of 94 % is well ahead of Slovakia. At the same time, the average participation of children between the age of four and starting of compulsory education in EU28 has been rising while in Slovakia it stagnates.

[^2]: Numbers of children, aged from two years to the start of their compulsory education, at kindergartens dropped from 154 232 children in 2000 to 138 186 children in 2008. Since 2009 (138 496 children) the number of children enrolled to kindergartens has substantially been influenced by the increase in total children population. In 2011 there were 144 130 children enrolled at kindergartens and on 15 September 2012 the number of children rose to 149 511 children.

[^3]: The participation rate of children younger than three years is influenced by the length of maternity leave and the period when parents receive parental allowance. After adoption of Act No. 571/2009 Coll. on the Parental Allowance effective from 1 January 2011, kindergartens experienced a substantial increase in number of applications from parents of children below the age of three (The act enables parents to work and, at the same time, receive the parental allowance and have children at a kindergarten.)
The participation rate of Roma children on pre-school education keeps decreasing compared to non-Roma population in the same locality. That could cause reproduction of poverty and result in higher individual and social costs in the future. More than a half (59%) of children from the non-Roma population, aged 3 – 6 at the time of the survey, attended a kindergarten. At the same time, only about one third (28%) of their Roma peers did so. Moreover, compared to the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, relative percentage of Roma children attending kindergartens in Slovakia is rather low. In Hungary even Roma children reach a higher participation rate compared to non-Roma children in Slovak locations where Roma communities reside. (UNDP, 2012)

**Basic schools**

The basic school has usually nine grades with the possibility to establish a zero grade. It consists of the first and the second stage with two separate interlocked education programs. As a rule, the first stage of basic school is comprised of grades 1-4 and the second stage comprises grades 5-9.34

Numbers of basic-school students are due to compulsory school attendance primarily influenced by the demographic development. The number of first-grade students in state basic schools dropped from 68 122 students in 2000 to 48 449 students in 2012. At private basic schools the number of first-graders increased from 3 500 students to 6 800 in the same period. The number of first-graders at church basic schools does not vary and is equal to 2 600 students on average.

**Truancy**

Truancy and class absences (including excused absences) are one of the major factors causing students’ failure at school, whether in form of grade repetition or in the form of early school leaving. In recent years, truancy in the basic schools has been on the rise. The average number of unexcused absences per-student at basic-school rose from 2.1 hours in 1998 to 5.7 hours in 2013. The most common causes for truancy are: bullying, unfriendly school environment, disturbed relations within class, but also the family environment, milder forms of run-aways, extraordinary intellectual abilities and a poor parental control or parents’ attitude to school attendance.35 (MPC, 2013)

34 A basic school with all nine grades is called a “fully organized basic school”. A basic school which does not have all grades is called a “not fully organized basic school”.
35 All data come from a survey conducted by MPC, which does not cover all basic schools and total student population. The survey covers 35.7% of basic schools and 40.5 % of all students. Approximately 60 % of all students from socially disadvantaged environment participated in the survey.
The situation significantly differs between regions. The highest number of unexcused absences per-student occurs in the Košice region (21.7 hours), the lowest in Trenčín region (0.6 hours). Truancy is more often observed with students from socially disadvantaged environment. Average number of unexcused absences per socially disadvantaged student was 29 hours, while for other students it was 2 hours. (MPC, 2013) In other words, 74% of all unexcused hours could be assigned to socially disadvantaged students, who represented 17% of all students involved in the survey.

Graph 4: Truancy and grade repetition at basic schools

A. Average number of skipped classes
B. Grade repetition

Source: UIPS (2013a)

Grade repetition

According to the school act a student repeats grade during their compulsory school attendance if their overall performance at the end of the second half of the school year was assessed as “failed” or if the student failed more than two compulsory subjects. A grade is also repeated by a student, who could not be assessed on an alternative date for serious, mainly health reasons or a long-term stay abroad.

Grade repetition is more frequent for students at the first stage (2.8%) than the second stage of basic schools (1.7%). From 2003 the number of first-stage students repeating a grade increased by 0.5 p. p, in case of second-stage students by 0.2 p. p.

As well as with truancy grade repetition refers mainly to socially disadvantaged students. In 2012, more than 14% of such students repeated a grade. From among other students, only slightly more than 1% did so. The socially disadvantaged repeated mostly the first grade (26%). Other students repeat mostly the first grade too, however, the share is substantially lower (7%). (MPC, 2013)

Early school leaving

As there is a 10-year compulsory school attendance in Slovakia, it is natural that after graduation from the lower secondary education at basic school each student usually continues their upper secondary studies. It is one of the factors affecting the low percentage of early school leavers among students. In 2011 only 5.0% of Slovak population aged 18 -24, attained lower secondary education and at the same time did not continue further education or vocational preparation, while across EU 27 countries it was 13.5% on average.

Similarly to truancy and grade repetition, social background has an impact on early school leaving. Compulsory school attendance was terminated earlier than in the ninth grade by more than 34% of socially disadvantaged students. Only 3.5% of other students terminated compulsory school attendance and did not make it to the ninth grade. (MPC, 2013)
Secondary schools

Secondary schools are divided into three different types: gymnasium, secondary vocational schools and conservatories. Gymnasium is an academic secondary school which prepares students primarily for university studies. Students obtain general education at gymnasium in 4, 5 or 8-year programs. Secondary vocational school prepares students for occupation and vocational activities. Students receive both theoretical education and vocational training and can be prepared for further study at a university. Conservatories provide a comprehensive artistic and artistic-pedagogical education. Conservatories are divided into two types: Music and Dramatic Arts Conservatory and Dance Conservatory. Vocational education is provided to students at secondary vocational schools in 2 to 5-year programs and at conservatories in 6 and 8-year programs.

Graduates from Maturita and non-Maturita fields of study

The majority of secondary school graduates finish their studies by passing a nationwide Maturita examination. In the last ten years, their share increased from 63% in 2003 to 83% in 2013. On the other side, during the same period the percentage of non-Maturita graduates dropped from 34% to 16% Those graduates from conservatories who finish their studies with absolutorium degree (ISCED 5B) make 1% of secondary-school graduates.

In Slovakia, 82% of young people aged 25 or less completed upper secondary education, which is the fifth highest figure among OECD countries with available data. Young people aged 25 and more in OECD countries have the possibility to receive upper secondary education in so-called second-chance programs. In Slovakia, only 2.5% of adults older than 25 years complete upper education in such programs; while the average of OECD countries with available data exceeds 7.5%. In 2011, Slovak students graduated from general upper secondary education at the age of 18.5 on average and from vocational education at the age of 19.8 years on average.\(^{36}\)

Graph 5: Secondary-school graduates (full-time study)

A. Graduates by school type

B. Graduates by study programs

\(^{36}\) Here, the student’s age at the beginning of the calendar year is considered. At the moment of graduation the student can be, in fact, a year older. In comparison, an average OECD upper secondary graduate of a general education was 18.6 years old and an average vocational education graduate was 22.2 years old.
Grade repetition and transfer of students between schools

110. A student at the upper secondary level of education can repeat a grade only based on a decision issued by the school leader. Secondary school leaders decide with respect to students’ assessment and reasons stated by the adult student in their written appeal or in that of their parents. If the director refuses to allow the student who completed their compulsory school attendance to repeat the grade, the student ceases to be a secondary-school student.

111. Grade repetition is more frequent at basic schools than at secondary schools. At basic schools approximately to 2.5% of students do so. At secondary vocational schools and conservatories the share is a little lower (1.7%), however from 2003 it almost tripled. There are almost no students repeating a grade at gymnasia.

112. In Slovakia there are credible data neither on the transfer of students between schools nor on the reasons of transfer. OECD’s PISA 2012 studied the probability of students’ transfer as a result of various reasons such as poor students’ outcomes, behavioural problems, special learning needs of students and parents’ or guardians’ request. On the ISCED 3 level all of the mentioned reasons would more likely lead to a transfer of students to other school in Slovakia than in OECD, but also compared to the ISCED 2 level. For example, 25 % of all Slovak students visit schools where low academic achievement would lead to their transfer to another schools compared to OECD’s average of 9%.  

2.7.2 Quality of education

113. On the national level, Slovakia intends to test students at the end of individual level of education. Today, students at the end of lower secondary studies in the ninth grade of basic school take part in Testing 9 and at the end of upper secondary studies in external part of Maturita exam. In 2013 NUCEM conducted a pilot national testing of students after finishing primary education in the fifth grades of basic schools (Testing 5) which will continue in 2014 and implemented in 2015. Internationally, Slovakia regularly takes part in PISA assessments well as PIRLS and TIMMS studies.

National testing

114. National tests focus on the assessment of students’ knowledge in mathematics, Slovak language, languages of national minorities as well as in foreign languages in case of Maturita. In all national tests, boys and girls achieved similar results. Also, the results of students from schools in

37 In case of behavioral problems 20% of students and visit such schools in Slovakia, in case of parents’ or guardians’ request nearly 30% of students. On the ISCED 2 level, compared to the OECD average, a significant difference occurs only in in the case of parents’ or guardians’ request. In Slovakia, 23.5 % students visit schools where a 15 years’ old student would be transferred to another school because of this reason. In OECD only 11.8 % students visit such schools on average. Other reasons are not likely to lead to a transfer in Slovakia. For example, only some 1, 7 % of students at ISCED 2 level attend school in Slovakia where low academic achievement would lead to a student’s transfer. In OECD 2, 7 % of students are in such schools on average.

38 Only 5th girls in 5th grades at basic schools are slightly better in Slovak language than boys and in Maturita exam girls are slightly better in Hungarian language.
cities are on average similar to those achieved by students from schools in villages. Regional differences were observed only in case of fifth graders in mathematics and in Hungarian language. In both cases, students in Bratislava region achieved highest results while students in Banská Bystrica region the lowest.\textsuperscript{39} Testing 9 provides results from Slovak language and mathematics at district level, with some ending up with better results and some with worse (NUCEM, 2013c, 2013d, 2013e).\textsuperscript{40}

115. In Maturita testing performance differences are apparent across different types of schools. Secondary vocational schools fall behind gymnasiums. The largest differences were observed in mathematics, where gymnasiums scored 58\% on average while secondary vocational schools only 37\%.\textsuperscript{41} Public, private and church schools all achieved very similar results. Only church schools are a little better in mathematics and Hungarian language than private schools. (NUCEM, 2013c)

\textit{International assessments of students’ performance}

116. In 2012, for the fourth time, Slovak 15 years’ old students took part in OECD’s PISA assessment. Slovak students achieved significantly worse results than the OECD average in all three fields of literacy (mathematics, reading and science). Also, in Slovakia, poor social background has one of the most significant impacts on students’ performance across OECD countries. In 2012, the impact of students’ economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) was even stronger than in the prior PISA 2009 cycle.\textsuperscript{42} At the same time, Slovak low achievers have relatively worse results than OECD low achievers, while Slovak and OECD high achievers have very similar results. Relatively large is a vulnerable group of students, achieving lowest results on PISA scale. For more detailed results from international assessments (PISA, TIMMS, PIRLS) see Annex 5.

\textbf{Graph 6: Performance of Slovak students and their OECD peers}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics{graph6.png}
\caption{Performance of Slovak students and their OECD peers}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Source: OECD – PISA 2012, EPI}

\textbf{2.7.3 Further study of secondary school graduates and their situation on the labor market}

117. Graduates’ success on the labor market and transition to university studies provide additional evidence on the quality and effectiveness of schooling. The key indicators referring to students’ future career include graduate unemployment rate and the share of secondary-school graduates enrolled to universities in the relevant school year.

\textit{Transition of secondary school graduates to university studies}

118. In academic years 2011/12 and 2012/13, more than 75\% of gymnasium graduates enrolled to a university. From among secondary vocational school graduates passing Maturita exam only 35\%\textsuperscript{39} In mathematics, Bratislava students scored 72\% on average, while in Banská Bystrica only 39\%. In Hungarian language 74\% and respectively.

\textsuperscript{40} For example, in Slovak language, 6 out of 79 districts achieved slightly better or better results as the national average and 11 districts reported slightly worse of worse results. Of these 11 districts 7 were located in Banská Bystrica region and the in Eastern Slovakia (Košice and Prešov regions).

\textsuperscript{41} In Slovak language, gymnasiums scored 73\% while vocational schools only 56\% and in Hungarian language 70\% and 54\% respectively.

\textsuperscript{42} In 2009 the impact of ESCS on students’ results was similar as in an average OECD country.
continued their studies at a university. However, graduates of secondary schools with Maturita can continue their studies at universities also later on, not only right after graduation.

Graduates on the labor market

Unemployment affects mainly graduates of secondary vocational schools. Unemployed\(^{43}\) are mostly graduates of Maturita fields of study with extended practical training (25% in 2012/2013), followed by non-Maturita fields of study (24%) and Maturita fields of study (19%). Unemployment of secondary vocational school graduates increased sharply after the beginning of crisis. Between 2008 and 2010, the unemployment rate rose by 22 p.p. for all fields of study on average. Between 2012 and 2013 it decreased for the first time in five years by 3 p.p.. Substantially lower unemployment figures are reported in case of gymnasium graduates (6.6% in 2012/2013). The reason is that most of them continue their studies at universities.

Long term unemployment in all vocational fields of study makes it difficult for graduates to enter find a job. In 2012 as many as 34% graduates from Maturita fields of study with extended practical training were unemployed longer than one year; followed by non-Maturita fields of study (33%), Maturita fields of study (29%). The same problem persists also at gymnasiums (23%). From 2008 to 2012, long-term unemployment at secondary vocational schools increased by 25 p.p. on average for all fields of study, whereas at gymnasiums by 16 p.p..

Graph 7: Secondary school graduates on the labor market (full time study)

A. Graduate unemployment by study program (median value June - May)

B. Long-term unemployment of graduates by study program (as of 30 September)

Source: UIPS
Note: RPV - extended practical training

Therefore, the Ministry of Education in cooperation with employers elaborated a new act on vocational education and training, which will introduce features of dual system of vocational education and training. Employers participating in the dual system will provide and finance practical part of education based on the contract with a given vocational school and a contract with a student. The state will give employers tax incentives to participate in the dual system based on the number of students and extent of practical training.

\(^{43}\) Graduate unemployment rate is defined as the share of unemployed graduates on the total number of graduates of a given type of school and field of study in a two years’ period after graduation. An unemployed graduate is a citizen under the age of 26 who graduated from their full-time study at a secondary school or a university and since then has not got first regularly paid job.
2.8 Policy approaches to equity in education

122. One of the key objectives of the school system is to ensure that all children and students, irrespective of their social and economic status, gender, ethnicity, native language and other differences, have equal opportunities to make use of their potential and receive a high quality education.

123. The Slovak education system distinguishes students with special educational needs (SEN), whose effective education requires additional resources. The ultimate goal is to provide those students with equal access to education, support social inclusion and adequate development of their abilities and personalities so that they achieve an adequate level of education.

124. A student with special educational needs is typically a student with disabilities, gifted student or a student from socially disadvantaged environment. The Slovak school system works and educates these students systematically by providing tailored organisation and content of education and by provision of additional human resources. Also national projects co-financed from European funds play an important role in ensuring social inclusion of disadvantaged children and students, especially of marginalized Roma communities. Chapter 4.5 Education of students with special needs includes further details about education of students with special educational needs.

125. Objectives and actions in the area of education and care of children with special needs are elaborated in relevant concepts and strategies.

126. Concept of upbringing and education of children with disabilities approved in 2000 by the Ministry of Education defines new education and upbringing trends as well as key objectives and their draft implementation for the next 15-20 years. The general objective of the future school policy improvement is to offer children and youth that require special care a wide access to optimal education which takes into account their individual interests and abilities.

127. Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration by 2020 approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic in 2012 reflects the need to addresses challenges related to social integration of Roma communities. The strategy is the underlying document for policies aimed to address the adverse position of vulnerable Roma communities for the period until 2020 and for the use of financial resources from the European structural in the programming period 2014 – 2020. The strategy defines better access for Roma to all levels of education including pre-primary education and care as the global educational objective. Special accent is devoted to the elimination of segregation at schools, prevention of early school leaving which makes use of their potential and ensuring a successful transition to the labor market.

128. In the past, also other concepts had been developed. The Concept of Development of Gifted Children and Youth in the Slovak Republic defines primary terms, conditions of development of gifted students in the education process and defines the methods of their identification and forms of education. The concept emphasizes the need of university and other education for teachers of gifted students. The Concept of upbringing and education of national minorities develops a framework for equal education of all citizens of the Slovak Republic and for improving conditions of national school system. In the first place, this includes education of all national minorities in their native language according to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

2.9 Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions

Autonomy in the school system

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44 The concept is a framework document which needs to be systematically adjusted with respect to new needs of special educational theory and practice which stem from the developments and changes in society.

45 The Strategy is a result of cooperation between the Plenipotentiary office of the Slovak government, the World Bank and the UN Development Program (UNDP), Open Society Foundation (OSF), Association of municipalities in Slovakia and non-governmental organisations. Also the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic contributed substantially to this cooperation.
Degree of autonomy for school founders, schools and teachers is one of the most discussed topics in Slovakia. In the past 20 years school autonomy reforms become strongly linked to a dual movement towards political decentralisation and implementation of more efficient public administration. This dual theory drove the reforms during this period in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and in the Baltic states where the breakdown of highly-centralised earlier system also provided the opportunity to adopt new rules for public management. (Eurydice, 2007) In 2008, the new School Act introduced teaching autonomy reforms which required schools to develop their own curriculum.

Some stakeholders want to continue to increase the autonomy of schools and municipalities. Association of Private Schools advocates increasing the autonomy of schools in the field of education. For example, it proposes to maintain and possibly increase the share of the flexible curriculum. According to the Slovak Chamber of Teachers educational system does not provide room for self-realization of teachers and has a number of barriers that prevent teachers to set the pace and depth of curriculum teaching. (SKU, 2014a) According to New Education Initiative, new responsibilities are important because an entire generation of teachers, school leaders and municipalities is for the first time able to make real decisions and significantly influence different issues in education system. (Bútora, Kríž 2013). The Initiative argues that the process of increasing the school founders’ and teachers’ autonomy has not been completed yet. Centrally regulated textbook policy, rigid control procedures of the State School Inspectorate, poor quality of continual education programs for teachers, lack of methodological assistance and increased bureaucracy shall serve as examples. (Zimenová, Blaščák 2013a)

Also, the issue of school founders’ responsibilities within the funding system is belongs to the fields of disagreement between education stakeholders. In particular, there is a disagreement on the share of funds that could be re-allocated among the schools by their school founder. The Association of Self-Governing Schools advocates the direct flow of funds from the state level towards schools without municipalities’ interference. (Sita, 2013) Similarly, the Slovak Chamber of Teachers argues that a cost effective school is not able to use saved money, because the school founder transfer these funds to another school that is not efficient. (SKU, 2014a) On the other hand, the Association of municipalities argues that the responsibility must go hand in hand with the right to manage. According to its strategic document, municipalities should be empowered to appoint school leaders on their own for and also have the capacities and the appropriate tools to manage and regulate school operations and wages; and modernization of schools buildings. (ZMOS, 2013)

Funding of private schools

The funding of private schools is another topic that was discussed last year. It was linked to market mechanism and school choice. One of the main features of the Slovak education system is that funding follows students. If parents decide to withdraw their child from one school and enroll them in another school, the funding flows to the next school. This principle applies to all school founders - state, church and private. Last year, representatives of the Ministry of Education discussed the possibility to decrease public support for private schools because they are able to raise additional resources through fees. (Sita, 2014a) Consequently, strong opposition arouse from the Association of private Schools, which started the Initiative for Equal Education. At present, there is not specific proposal by the Ministry of Education to decrease per-student funding for private schools.

46 Conclusions from conference of Association of Private Schools and School Facilities in Slovakia
3 Governance of resource use in schools

The following chapter takes a look at the total amount of financial resources in the school system. The chapter further deals with resource planning with respect to demographic development in the Slovak Republic. The chapter concludes with the description of educational policy development.

Total amount of financial resources in the school system can be presented in the structure of two methodologies. The international UOE methodology presents total resources as expenditures on educational institutions which are classified as public, foreign and private. This is the amount of resources managed by educational institutions. The second approach provides a closer look at the resources from the state budget perspective.

3.1 Level of resources and policy concerns

In 2011, educational institutions in Slovakia received total amount of 4.37 % GDP (including tertiary education), which is less than in any other OECD country. V3 countries spent 4.37 % GDP and OECD countries 6.07 % GDP on average. Compared to 2009 and 2010 the share of national wealth spent on education in Slovakia as well as in V3 countries and across OECD countries decreased.

The global financial crisis forced governments in Slovakia to consolidate public finances, namely to decrease the government deficit below 3% of GDP and withdraw the country from the excessive deficit procedure. Adopted measures affected also the wages of public administration employees, which stayed at the same level from 2011 to 2013. In fact, wages of certain groups of public employees were decreased. On contrary, teachers’ wages were increased twice - in 2013 and 2014 both times by 5 %. From this point of view, the amount of resources spent on the most important type of expenditure in the school system has been spared from the negative impacts of crisis.

Table 5: Expenditure on educational institutions as % of GDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 0</th>
<th>ISCED 1 - ISCED 3</th>
<th>ISCED 5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EAG 2014, OECD (2014b)
Note: Total expenditure includes resources, which are not allocated by ISCED level.

Cumulative amount of resources invested to educate a child from the age of 6 to 15 is one of the lowest among OECD countries. Slovakia ranks 29th with 52 000 USD (PPP) from 33 OECD countries, which spend 86 000 USD (PPP) on average. On each level of education, except for primary education, there is less money allocated per-student than in both V3 and OECD countries on average. The greatest difference occurs on the secondary level, where Slovakia spends 83 % of the V3 average and only 53 % of the OECD average. For spending in general vs. vocational programs see chapter 4.1.1 Structure of expenditures across individual levels and sectors of education.

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47 I.e. schools and school facilities. Expenses for educational institutions include expenses for the administrative and state institutions involved in regional education (e.g. the Ministry and its organisations).

48 There is no data available for Greece.
Table 6: Annual expenditure per-student by educational institutions (2011, USD PPP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-primary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Lower secondary</th>
<th>Upper secondary</th>
<th>All secondary</th>
<th>Post-secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>4,053</td>
<td>5,617</td>
<td>5,109</td>
<td>4,783</td>
<td>4,938</td>
<td>8,177</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>5,082</td>
<td>5,128</td>
<td>6,115</td>
<td>5,702</td>
<td>5,005</td>
<td>5,330</td>
<td>9,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>7,428</td>
<td>8,296</td>
<td>9,577</td>
<td>9,506</td>
<td>9,280</td>
<td>4,811</td>
<td>13,958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Expenditure at upper secondary education contains expenditure at post-secondary non-tertiary education. OECD (2013a)

3.2 Sources of revenue

Schools are financed from three main sources of revenue - public, foreign and private. Private resources have only marginal share on the total money spent on educational institutions. In basic schools and secondary schools, expenditures are covered from state budget. Church and private schools can be an exception, while they are allowed to collect tuition fees. Additionally, private funds are typically spent to cover certain special expenses, such as catering.

Sources of revenue according to UOE methodology

On average, total amount of financial resources in the school system fluctuates slightly above 3% of GDP (EUR 2.25 billion). Only in 2009 and 2010, the amount exceeded 3.5% of GDP. In 2011 public money covered 88% of expenditures on educational institutions (EUR 1.97 billion), private funds covered the remaining 12% (EUR 273 million). Foreign resources made only round EUR 340 000. The amount not allocated by ISCED level is not included.

At the same time, in 2011 state educational institutions spent 92 % of total resources; the rest was used by private institutions.

Graphic 8: Expenditure on (pre – tertiary) educational institutions by source of funds

A. Public, private, foreign funds as % HDP

B. Public funds by initial source

Source: UIPS, UOE

Note 1: In 2009, structural EU funds were incorrectly allocated as foreign funds. Structural EU funds are a part of public administration budget.

Note 2: The amount not allocated by ISCED level is not included.

49 According to the UOE methodology foreign funds consist of funds from public multilateral organisations for development aid to education such as the World Bank, regional development banks, the United Nations agencies, other intergovernmental organisations, bilateral development co-operation government agencies, international NGO agencies established in the receiving country. Private sources come from households and other private entities. In general, the living expenses of students (costs of housing, meals, clothing, recreation, etc.) are excluded. Included are transfers to households and students (tuition and other fees, public and private scholarships, grants, or loans), fees on ancillary services furnished by educational institutions and costs borne by private households for the purchase of educational goods and services.
140. From the perspective of public administration, part of the expenditures is covered from the state budget and part from the budgets of self-governing regions and municipalities.

- The state budget primarily finances all schools and school facilities run by regional state authorities. Additionally, the state budget resources are primarily transferred to finance the schools run by municipalities and self-governing regions; schools run by church and private founders, in which education is considered to be a systematic preparation for occupation (i.e. in basic schools and secondary schools). Altogether, approximately 70% of public resources for education before transfers come primarily from the state budget. Transfers to municipalities and self-governing regions make approximately 50% of total public expenses for education.

- Budgets of municipalities and self-governing regions primarily finance other schools (i.e., those where education is not regarded to be a systematic preparation for occupation – primary schools of art, language schools and kindergartens) and school facilities. The activities under the second group, i.e. activities performed as a part of the original competences, are financed from municipalities and self-governing regions own funds (see Annex 6). Approximately 30% of public expenses for education at regional education come primarily from municipalities’ budgets and self-governing regions’ budgets.

Sources of revenue according to state budget

141. Available is also more detailed information on sources of revenue of all basic schools and secondary schools (i.e. state, private and church), as well as special schools and school facilities. In 2012 founders of basic schools, secondary schools and schools facilities received EUR 1.38 billion (1.9% of GDP). Financial resources from the state budget made EUR 1.31 billion, which accounted for 95% of total funds. Other sources made EUR 70.1 mil.

- Founders of basic schools and secondary schools can spend additional funds, even above the sum received through transfers from the state budget. Municipalities reported that in 2012 they provided schools with EUR 5.2 mil. from their own resources and self-governing regions with EUR 7.2 mil., which was only 1.1% of total financial resources they spent. In 2012, church and private founders provided their schools with EUR 2.9 mil. from their own resources, which was approximately 2% of total funds they spent.

- In case of basic schools and secondary schools, tuition fees can be collected only by church and private schools. In 2012, parents’ contributions made 27.2% of private schools’ total resources (EUR 14.2 mil.) and 1.4% of church schools’ total resources (EUR 0.9 mil.).

- Schools also receive money from voluntary contributions and gifts. In 2012 schools and school facilities received contributions and gifts in the amount of EUR 4.4 mil. Employers and employers’ associations provide schools with contributions to cover material, technical and spatial costs of practical training. In 2012 schools received contributions in the amount to EUR 400 thousand.

3.3 Planning of resource use

142. Planning of resource use in Slovakia is challenged by rapid demographic changes. Whereas until 2002 the population of new-borns has seen a steady decline, since then it has been on the rise. This trend generates a pressure on pre-school and school capacities in a number of regions. Yet, the peak of pre-school and school population is expected to come in the following years. New capacities are built with the financial support from the European structural funds and from the state budget. European funds are used to support the access of education to the marginalized Roma communities.
3.3.1 Procedures, policies and budgeting

Planning of resource use in the budgeting process

143. Budget preparation for each fiscal year, which corresponds to the calendar year, is based on the top-down budgeting. At the beginning of the calendar year, Ministry of Finance starts with the preparation of the Government Budget Assumptions. Budget Assumptions match the estimates of macroeconomic and fiscal indicators with desirable general government balance and sets the expenditure limits for particular chapters of the public finance (ministries and other public agencies). During the next stage the ministries prepare their budgets where they allocate resources to the programs and categories according to the budgetary classification. The Ministry of Finance in cooperation with other government agencies prepares a budget proposal and submits it to the government by 15th August. The proposal includes additional expenditure requests which are subject to subsequent political negotiations. Also update of the macroeconomic and tax revenue forecast is prepared for the purpose of the budget proposal. After the proposal’s submission to the government, the political negotiations take place. Final decisions on resource distribution to individual budget chapters (government agencies) are made and the budget is approved by the government by 15th October and sent to the parliament. The parliament negotiates the budget and approves the final version in form of Budget law, typically by the end of the calendar year. (Kišš, Šiškovič, 2011)

144. Budget Assumptions and maximum limits set by the Ministry of Finance play a key role for resource allocation in the budget chapter of the Ministry of Education. The budget for the next fiscal year is based on the current budget, which is primarily adjusted of the changes in students’ population. The number of students namely defines the quantity of pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff which is necessary to ensure educational process at schools. Further budget adjustments depend on the enacted legislative measures if their implementation imposes requires additional spending or savings. Teachers’ wages, being the major part of the budget, is traditionally negotiated between the government and the teachers’ unions.

Assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of resource use

145. Resource planning and resource use do not fully utilize the results of research. However, experts participate in discussions on different topics related to the effectiveness of resource use in the school system. In the past, the issue of quality of teaching and learning with respect to class size was debated. The underlying question is whether larger classes with less but better paid teachers contribute to the quality of education more than smaller classes with more teachers on lower salaries but with the possibility of more individual approach to students. These discussions are usually reflected by decision makers, as it was in the case of maximum limits of class size.50

146. Today, there are a number of outcome indicators available, such as students’ performance in national and international assessments, access to education, data on early school leaving, grade repetition, education attainment etc. In order to assess quality, effectivity and efficiency of the school system, it is necessary to develop a more complex and sophisticated model, which would asses system’s performance. Up to this time, initial steps to develop value added indicators have been undertaken.

3.3.2 Demography and school network

Decline in student population and rationalization of the school network

147. Student population is crucial for both financial and human resource mid-term and long-term management and planning. Hence, forecasts of school and pre-school population need to be taken into account. Like other European countries, Slovakia was also hit by a negative demographic development

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50 Ministry of Education increased maximum limits for class size to increase the efficiency of resource use. However, the Ministry gave up on increasing the maximum limit from 22 to 25 students in the first grades of basic schools. The maximum limit was increased only in the second stage of basic school and in secondary schools.
in the last decades. The number of births dropped from 80 thousand in 1990 to 55 thousand in 2012, which resulted in a gradual decline of school population. Between 2005 and 2012, total number of students decreased by 21%. The largest decrease was observed in secondary vocational schools (by 27%) followed by basic schools and gymnasiums (by 19.5%).

148. The school network saw only minor adjustments when the number of schools dropped by 7% and the number of classrooms by 8%. Teachers’ population shrank by almost 14% which is still less than the decrease of student numbers. Largest consolidation occurred in secondary vocational schools. Between 2005 and 2012, the number of secondary vocational schools and conservatories as well as teachers dropped by 17%. On the other hand, the number of gymnasiums increased a little by 2.5%, while the number of teachers dropped by more than 16%.

149. Between 2005 and 2012, the number of basic schools dropped by 5% and the number of teachers dropped by more than 11%. It is interesting, that as the number of students in the first stage dropped by almost 11 %, the number of classrooms increased a little. At the same time, the number of students in the second degree fell by almost 26% and the number of classrooms fell by more than 13%. This could indicate that the decrease in the total number of teachers in basis schools was caused only by the consolidation in the second stage of basic schools.

### Graph 9: Population projection until 2038
(MŠ, ZŠ a SŠ; 2013=100%)

Note: Upper secondary schools refer to gymnasiums, vocational schools and conservatories
Source: Slovak statistical office – Database of Demographic Research Centre (VDC)

Forecast of the school and pre-school population until 2025

150. In the coming years, population of all age cohorts (except for the 15-18 years old) is expected to be rising. Pre-school population will peak in 2016 and outnumber the level from 2013 by 3.5 %. By 2020, the number of children aged 6 -9 is assumed to exceed the level from 2013 by 10%. The size of 10-14 age cohort shall reach its peak in 2025 and outgrow the numbers from 2013 by 13 %. Population of the 15-18 years old is expected to be below the level from 2013 until 2026.
Population projection at the district level shows considerable variations across individual districts. The majority of districts can expect a change in population across most of the age cohorts of up to 20%. At the same time, this change is usually negative (i.e. a decrease). However, the standard deviation of districts from the average change takes double digit values across all age cohorts except for the 0-4 years old.

A considerable increase of children population is expected mainly in Bratislava and the neighboring district of Senec. For example, a 144% increase of the 10-14 years old and a 108% increase of the 5-9 years old are expected in Bratislava V. Such a development could have a significant impact on the demand for school capacities. On contrary, districts in eastern Slovakia and southern districts of central Slovakia area assumed to experience a decrease across all age cohorts by 2025. For example, a 39% decrease of the 5-14 years old as well as of 15-19 years old is expected in the district of Veľký Krtíš.

Graph 10: Population projection until 2025 by districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Districts with the largest increase</th>
<th>B. Districts with the sharpest decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava V</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava I</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava III</td>
<td>-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava II</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senec</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Slovak statistical office – Database of Demographic Research Centre (VDC)

3.3.3 Challenges in school capacities and policy solutions

Participation in pre-school education is not compulsory and it is financed from municipalities’ own budgets. Consequently, municipalities do not invest in new capacities because they do not dispose of sufficient resources and they follow other priorities. As a result, new capacities heavily rely on the support from European funds and resources from the state budget.

Current and future insufficient capacities at kindergartens

Unsatisfied demand for kindergarten has been growing recently. From 2007 to 2013 the number of rejected applications increased more than fivefold, from 1 760 to 9 600. To satisfy the existing demand, the capacity of kindergartens would have to be extended by approximately 6%. On the district level, the lack of capacities is obvious mostly in the vicinity of Bratislava as well as in the capital itself, followed by Bytča, Ružomberok, Trnava and Prievidza regions. Founders of kindergarten try to address the problem mainly by extending the existing capacities. Since 2007 the number of births reached its minimum in 2002. Since then it kept increasing until 2011 when the number of newborns exceeded the 2002 number by 10 thousand babies. This trend has had an impact on the population of children aged 3-5, which grew from 154 thousand (in 2006) to 168 thousand (in 2012). Hence, the number of applications for a kindergarten is expected to grow until 2017, when the number of children aged 3 – 5 should exceed the level of 2013 by 3%.

This is an approximate number which could be distorted. If a parent sends an application to two kindergartens and none of them enrols the child, it is probably recorded twice.
number of classrooms increased by 11.5%. And, at the same time, the average size of kindergartens increased from 48 children (in 2007) to 53 children (in 2013).

New capacities

155. New kindergartens and expansion of the old ones shall cope with the problem of the insufficient pre-school capacities. New capacities in regions with high share of Roma communities will be financed from European funds while the state budget will cover the costs in other regions.

156. Today, kindergartens in 82 municipalities have the chance to expand their capacities within the project Development of educational infrastructure for marginalized Roma communities. The project falls under the Regional Operational Program. Only projects, which implement inclusive education of children from marginalized Roma communities will receive financial support in the total amount of EUR 47 million.

157. The draft budget for 2015 allocates additional 4.8 million euro for capital expenditure in the budget chapter of the Ministry of Education. These resources are intended for the extension of kindergarten capacities and reconstructions. Money will be allocated to individual municipalities based on a subsidy mechanism, which is currently being discussed. Capacities in basic schools and modular kindergartens are being considered as an alternative for capacity building.

Insufficient capacities in basic schools

158. Problems with capacities in basic schools are of regional nature. The situation is especially striking in the eastern parts of Slovakia with a high share of marginalized Roma communities. Also villages nearby Bratislava, where many people move from the capital, struggle with the same problem.

159. Some schools introduced double-shift schooling to address the capacity problems. Therefore, beginning 2012, the Ministry of Education in cooperation with other government bodies started the construction of modular schools in regions with high proportion of marginalized Roma communities. So far, 6 modular schools were built in Spiš and Šariš regions. Construction of additional 15 modular schools is scheduled for 2014.

3.4 Implementation of policies to improve the effectiveness of resource use

160. Cooperation plays a key role in implementing policies targeted to effective resource use. At the highest level the policies are created by the Ministry of Education, approved by the Government and the National Council. Advisory bodies of the Minister, school founders and professional organizations are involved. At the school level, experiments and pilot projects are tools used to bring innovation to everyday school life.

Key players in the process of policy development

161. The Government of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Education and the National Council of the Slovak Republic are formally responsible for the development of the school policy. The official process begins with bills being reviewed both within the ministry’s relevant departments and consequently by all ministries. Minister of Education presents then reviewed bills at Government session. Bills which are passed by the Government are introduced to the National Council of the Slovak Republic where several rounds of debates takes place before the bill it is enacted and becomes a law.

Advisory bodies of the Minister of Education

162. Advisory bodies, which are headed by the Minister of Education, work together with the Ministry on the assessment and development of policy proposals. Minister’s advisory bodies, namely Board for Systemic Changes in Education, School Quadripartite, Curriculum Board and the

56 From 2007-2012 the number of kindergartens dropped by 49, while in 2013 9 new kindergartens were opened. The number of classrooms between 2007 and 2013 increased by 786.
Minister’s Board for Education of National Minorities put together important stakeholders and experts in education.

163. The Ministry cooperates also with the representatives of school founders and several professional organisations and associations. In addition, ad-hoc working groups and advisory groups involving relevant stakeholders are typically established in case of specific legislative arrangements.

Advisory bodies of the Slovak Government

164. The Slovak Government, with the purpose of creating a properly working system of VET, established National Council for Vocational Education and Training together with regional and sectoral VET councils. The council consists of 15 working groups which focus on individual VET fields of study to support adjusting the network of VET fields of study to labor market needs.

165. The Council is government’s advisory and coordinating body for VET. It reviews strategic and conceptual documents (e.g. regional, sectorial strategies) and assesses plan of labor market needs. The Council discusses state education programs for vocational education and recommends introduction of new vocational fields of study or exclusion of the old ones to the Ministry of Education. Members of the Council are representatives of self-government regions, ministries, and employers.

Box 3: Advisory bodies of the Minister of Education

Board for Systemic Changes in Education

The Board for Systemic Changes in Education is a standing advisory body of the Minister of Education. Its members, who are experts in education and in other education-related fields, are appointed and removed by the Minister of Education. The Board’s mission is to present new policy proposals and give opinions on measures suggested by the Ministry of Education regarding systemic changes, optimization and efficiency issues in the school system and education.

School Quadripartite

The School Quadripartite discusses the present state of education in the Slovak Republic, and holds open negotiations on principal objectives and changes in the school system. The School Quadripartite is comprised of representatives of employers’ associations, self-government regions and municipalities, school trade unions and experts from the Ministry of Education.

Curriculum Board

The Curriculum Board gives advice on curriculum innovation, new fields of study, education reforms and new evaluation models. The Board, gives opinions on state curricula and their innovation, submits own proposals, and prepares background papers and evaluation report on the state of curriculum policy in the Slovak Republic. Members of the Board are mainly university experts from pedagogical faculties and representatives of basic schools and secondary schools.

Minister’s Board for Education of National Minorities

The Board was established to hold debates on the present state of education of children belonging to national minorities as well as objectives and changes in this area. The Board mainly prepares proposals to ensure that the right to be educated in native language is exercised and that high quality teaching of Slovak language is provided in schools visited by national minorities. Members of the Board are representatives of national-minority schools in Slovakia.

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57 Society for Pre-School Education; Slovak Committee of the World Organisation for Pre-School Education, Association of Self-Governing Schools of Slovakia; Association of State Gymnasium School Leaders of the Slovak Republic; Slovak Chamber of Teachers; Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia; Association of Special Teachers of schools and advisory centres; Association of Private Schools and School Facilities of Slovakia; Association of Free Time Centres; Association of Secondary Vocational Schools; Association for Development of Secondary Vocational Education and Training; Association of Primary Schools of Art, Alliance of Teachers of Primary Schools of Art; Association of Christian Teachers of Slovakia; Association of Catholic Schools of Slovakia

58 The plan of labor market needs refers to the current number of vacant positions of graduates of different vocational fields of study with a five year forecast.
Use of Experiments and Pilot Projects

166. Experimental verification is a process by which innovations become everyday school life. It is used to verify mainly pedagogical innovations of teaching strategies and new organizational forms of providing education. Other subjects of verification include forms and means of students’ assessment, treatment of gifted students or students with poor results, treatment of students with special educational needs, management of schools and school facilities as well as preventive and development programs.

167. Experimental verification represents a multistage process regulated by the Ministry of Education. Experimental verification must be submitted by school founder or founder of a school facility to the Ministry, which approves it based on an expert’s opinion. The Ministry rests the final decision about implementation of the results of experimental verification in schools upon the evaluation report elaborated by the head of the verification who is appointed by the founder. Personal, material and technical support for experimental verification shall be provided by the founders. Founders together with school leaders are responsible for organizational issues of experimental verification.

168. On contrary, pilot projects which are often part of projects co-financed by the EU structural funds, are not centrally regulated. Usually only a limited number of candidates can make use of pilot projects, which are meant to test whether the system works the way it was designed and whether it is feasible for final implementation. For example, in 2013, as a part of the national project of the State Institute for Vocational Education, 49 selected pilot schools received new equipment for polytechnic subject. Other projects which are regarded as pilot projects include, for example, construction of the first two modular schools in 2013, or the national project focused on the cooperation improvement between universities and businesses. Pilot testing is also used by NUCEM for development of new national students’ assessments.

3.5 Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions

Share of national wealth spent on education

169. Most professionals as well as the general public believe that adequate level of the total amount of financial resources in the school system is crucial for its development and quality improvement. Teacher Unions enforce increasing the share of GDP spent on education to a level comparable with the developed EU countries, i.e. to about 6 % of GDP, by 2020. For this purpose, governments shall spend additional EUR 140 million on basic and secondary schools and EUR 60 million on tertiary education per year. (OZPSAV, 2011)

Rationalization of the school network

170. Stakeholders slightly differ in their views on the consolidation of the school network. In particular, the Association of Self-Governing Schools (ZSSSK) agrees with rationalization, but only with a smart one. Consolidation shall take into account situation of the individual schools in regions. General limits on the number of students are not desirable. (ZSSSK, 2013) The Chamber of Teachers warns that more students are expected to enroll in schools, which may cause may cause lack of capacities in case of unsystematic rationalization. (SKU, 2014a) For the Trade Unions it will be important to introduce social programs for redundant teachers and employees who lost their job due to school network rationalization.

Education policy

171. Some stakeholders are not satisfied with the process of educational policy development. The Slovak Chamber of Teachers thinks that fundamental changes in education are made too often, without the necessary preparation. The Chamber would appreciate, if teachers were given the opportunity to get prepared for the changes, for example by the means of practical trainings, database of demonstration lessons etc. In addition, the Chamber representatives argue that a general strategy of education is missing. (SKU, 2014a) Furthermore, school policy makers do not create platforms to hear
out the voice of relevant stakeholders, what hinders continual debate, search for solutions and problem solving (SKU, 2014b).

172. The Ministry of Education is aware of the deficiencies in the policy making process and that Slovakia needs to draw from the best practices and lessons learned of successful countries. Therefore, the Ministry established Educational Policy Institute, which prepares analyses, forecasts and gives expert advice on strategic policy decisions. As the Ministry’s main analytical unit, EPI provides sound analytical expertise and searches for best practices from abroad to promote effective educational policies and greater efficiency in schooling.
4 Resource distribution

173. The following chapter deals with distribution of financial, human, and physical resources from central and regional to local level. It shows the structure of expenditures, describes the structure of the teacher’s body, teachers’ preparation and selection process. The chapter also pays attention to education of children with special needs and related personal and financial support.

4.1 Distribution of financial resources across levels and sectors of the school system

174. The structure of expenditures across individual levels of the school system is basically the same. Current expenditures account for about 95% of resources across ISCED levels, of which about two thirds account for personnel. Also sector wise, the ration of resources allocated between vocational and general education is stable and due to larger VET student population equal to about 3:1. Compared internationally, per student expenditures are about two times lower than in OECD.

4.1.1 Structure of expenditures across individual levels and sectors of education

175. In 2011, educational institutions (excluding tertiary education) managed funds in total amount of 3.27% GDP. Most of the resources are spent on current expenditures, again most of which is spent to cover personnel costs. Current expenses account for 94% – 96% of total expenditures across individual levels of education. From 2006 to 2011, the relative share of current and capital expenditures at individual levels of education experienced a mild year-to-year fluctuation but no special trend was identified.

Graph 11: Total current and capital expenditure on educational institutions (2011)

A. Total current and capital expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 0</th>
<th>ISCED 1</th>
<th>ISCED 2</th>
<th>ISCED 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
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B. Current expenditure – personnel, other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 0</th>
<th>ISCED 1</th>
<th>ISCED 2</th>
<th>ISCED 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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Source: UOE

176. 64% - 68% of current expenditures are spent on personnel compensation across individual levels of education. From 2006 to 2011, the relative share of personnel and other current expenditures did not show any special trend, but only mild fluctuations.

59 Personnel expenditures include expenses for all school employees (pedagogical and specialist employees, non-pedagogical staff, administrative staff, etc.), and school administration staff at local, regional and national level. Other current expenditures include expenses for services, purchase of teaching materials, overheads (e.g. water, gas, electricity) and other (e.g. internet).
Due to larger student population, three times more resources are allocated to vocational education than on general education. In 2011, the total amount spent on vocational education made 0.72% GDP, on general education about 0.25% HDP. Per student expenditures in vocational education reached EUR 2631 and in general education EUR 2287. In international comparison, Slovakia allocates 44% of the OECD average per-student of general education and 56% per-student of vocational education at the upper secondary level (expressed in USD PPP).

4.1.2 Characteristics of public expenses

Public resources are used to finance two groups of activities in the school system.

- The first group comprises activities of basic schools and secondary schools. Funding is based on a two-level model. First, money is distributed from the central level to founders of schools. Next, founders distribute money to individual schools.
- The second group is comprised of activities of primary schools of art, language schools and kindergartens, and school facilities. Activities under the second group are also referred to as activities performed under original competences. They are financed from municipalities’ and self-governing regions’ own funds.

Funding of basic schools and secondary schools

Funding of current expenditures in the basic schools and secondary schools\(^\text{60}\) is based on a two-level model. First, money is distributed from the central level to founders of schools. Next, founders distribute money to individual schools. For a more detailed flow of funds from the central level to school level and their use see Annex 7.

Each school has a normative budget first calculated centrally, separately for personnel (i.e. salary normative) and operating expenditures (i.e. operating normative). Additionally, there are some non-normative items as well. The funds are sent to individual founders who distribute them to schools. If a founder runs just one school, all the money must be send to the school. If a founder runs more schools, the founder must send each school at least 95% of the school’s salary normative and at least 80% of the school’s operating normative calculated at the central level. The founder can redistribute the remaining portions among schools according to their actual needs.

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\(^{60}\) Those schools and school facilities run by regional state authorities, municipalities, self-governing regions, church and private entities, in which education is regarded as a systematic preparation for occupation.
The total school’s normative budget can be regarded as a mixture of an earmarked grant and a block grant. Schools may spend saved money from operation normative for personal expenditures (e.g. teacher salaries). On the other hand, the founders are obliged to ensure, that their schools use the salary normative for personnel expenditures, i.e. on salaries and corresponding health, social and pension contributions. In special cases schools are allowed to use the salary normative on operational costs, modernization of education materials, special education materials and emergency situations. In order to do so, the school leader must submit a request to the school founder who must approve it.

The normative budget is centrally calculated for each school based on the number of students, and by school types, which may be subdivided into more categories. The normative, i.e. the sum of money per-student per year, reflects different economic costs (personnel, operations-energy intensity etc.) of running individual school types and to certain extent the size of small basic schools. For more detailed information on a school’s budget creation and calculation of normatives see Annex 8.

There are also non-normative items, which are not reflected in the per-student normative. They include students’ travel costs, teacher assistants, extraordinary student performance, development projects, contribution for education of socially disadvantaged students, emergency situations and educational vouchers. For more information on non-normative funding see Annex 9.

Both church and private schools are entitled to the full financing. In order to receive public funds, both church and private schools have to be registered in the school network and prepare School economic report for the prior year. Founders of church and private schools must use public funds for personnel costs and operating costs. For private schools it is possible to receive public funds only for capital expenditures, which are incurred for acquisition of movable assets as a part of development project. Moreover, the Ministry can cut the budget of a private founder for the relevant financial year, if the National School Inspectorate detects the following:

- incompliance of the school’s education program with the state education program,
- higher number of students in school classes than allowed,
- expertise of education of study subjects at schools as a part of school education programs lower than 70%.

In 2012, schools and school facilities used funds (both normative and non-normative) in total amount of EUR 1.35 billion (1.91% of GDP). State budget provided EUR 1.29 billion and other sources made almost EUR 60 million. Other sources come from founders, parents, tuition fees and other. More than three fourths (79%) of public funds were spent on personnel costs (salaries and social insurance), almost 20% accounted for operating costs and the remaining 1% was spent on current transfers to individuals and capital expenditures. (MSVVS, 2013a)

**Funding of other schools and school facilities**

Primary schools of art, language schools, kindergartens and all types of school facilities are financed from municipalities’ and self-governing regions’ own funds. Although the overall amount of funding concerning state intuitions is not centrally regulated, there is a central rule for funding non-state other schools and school facilities. The rule requires municipalities and the self-governing regions to provide non-state founders with at least 88% per-student funds which they spend on salaries and operations in their own institutions. Salaries are determined by a central compensation scheme. In return, non-state founders must be able to pay the rest of employees’ salaries and provide services in line with law.

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61 Public funds cannot be used to cover advertising costs and rentals. In addition, private schools cannot use public funds to cover capital expenditures.

62 Operating costs include travel allowances, energy, materials, transportation costs, maintenance, rent and services.

63 Capital expenditures include schools renovation costs, modernization and recovery of emergency situations.
187. Municipalities and self-governing regions manage funds earned from own sources within their self-governing competences and decide on the purpose of their use. Most of own funds are received as a share of personal income tax, which is collected at the central level. The revenue from the personal income tax is then distributed into three administration levels – state, self-governing regions and municipalities. In particular, 67% of total amount earned from personal income tax is redistributed to municipalities and 21.9% to self-governing regions. Each municipality and self-governing region receives a particular sum of money based on a number of indicators. In case of municipalities, 40% of the total amount to be redistributed is allocated based on their activities in education. Municipalities receive funds derived from the weighted number of children and students in schools and school facilities, and/or at the territory of municipalities. In case of self-governing regions 15% of the total amount to be redistributed is allocated based on the number of citizens aged 15 to 18 years who live in the self-governing regions.

4.2 Distribution of schools and materials

188. Demographic changes generate pressure on a more efficient distribution of schools. Also, in order to manage the network of vocational schools more effectively, relevant data about the graduates on the labor market is needed. In recent years progress has been made in reconstruction of the school premises, which is supported mainly from European structural funds. Also schools were equipped with delivering ICT (both hardware and software) and the share of students using computers during lessons is approaching 100%. Also the state managed to provide the first stage of basic schools with almost all required textbooks.

4.2.1 The school network

189. School network is composed of schools, which are accredited to provide education and care in the territory of the Slovak Republic. These schools are entitled to receive public funding. In order for a school to become a part of the school network, founder has to submit an application to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry must issue a positive decision. Formally, founder establishes school only after it was enlisted in the school network.

190. The founder delivers the application for enlistment to the Ministry of Education by 31 March of the year which precedes the year in which the school is established. The Ministry issues a decision on enlistment in the school network within 60 days from the application delivery. If positive, the founder may establish the school and start its operation on the 1 September of the following year.

191. The application must include a number of essentials, without which it is incomplete. Besides others, the request must contain the expected number of students and classes. The founder can establish a basic school with the first-stage (grades 1-4), if the expected number of enrolled students is at least 30 and in case of basic school with both stages (grades 1-9) at least 150. In special cases, mainly if the closest basic school is hardly accessible, the founder can establish a basic school with a lower number of children.

192. Private and church founders must also enclose an approval either of the municipality (in case of basic schools) or self-governing region (in case of secondary schools) where the school shall operate. Without their approval the Ministry will not enlist the school in the school network.

193. By the evaluation of applications, the Ministry takes into account local and regional requirements, namely:

- the efficient and complex distribution of schools,
- organization of education and upbringing in schools,
- language of instruction,

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64 Other essential include language of instruction, school education program, assumed budget etc. In case of vocational schools also a standpoint of corresponding employer organization.
The Ministry is the decision making body also in case of school closures. The process starts with a request submitted to the Ministry either by the founder, regional state authority or State School Inspectorate. Request includes a reason for school closure. Among others, deficiencies in personal, material and technical provision of education entitles to submit a request.

Changes in school network result also from school mergers. Mergers are recommended only for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of resource use or improving the conditions of education process and care. In this case, founders or founder of schools must agree on the merger.

**Reduction of 8 year gymnasiums**

In the future, changes in the school network will probably take place with respect to the reduction of eight year gymnasiums. Already in 2008, the Ministry of Education defined a limit on the number of students who are allowed to enrol in eight year gymnasium. This number shall not exceed 5% of students who finish primary education in basic school. The implementation has been postponed several times, most recently until 2016/2017 school year. In the Ministry’s opinion, early selection and transfer of the best students to eight year gymnasiums leaves students with poorer results in the second stage of basic schools which can decrease the overall quality of education.

**Regulation of the number of classes in first grades of upper secondary study programs**

From 2013/2014 school year, self-government regions determine the number of classes in first grades of upper secondary study programs in schools within their territory irrespective of the founder. In their decision, regions shall take into account labor market forecasts and analyses as well as the assessment of schools’ performance. This should help to adjust the network of vocational schools to the labor market needs and more generally the oversupply of places resulting in adverse behavior of schools to attract new students.

Today, the absence of relevant data about graduates on the labor market represents one of the main problems of managing the vocational education. Statistical data that would enable individual tracking would provide useful data on labor market relevance of study programs offered at vocational schools. Especially data on the graduates’ field of work of would make it possible to analyze their links to the graduates’ field of study.

**School size**

In 2013, the average size of school population was 53 children in kindergartens, 198 students in basic schools, 311 students in gymnasiums and 321 students in secondary vocational schools (including conservatories). Compared to 2003, the number of children per school increased only in kindergartens. The average size of basic schools dropped by 25 %, gymnasiums by 30 % and secondary vocational schools by 10 %.

In international comparison, the distribution of schools with respect to their size is similar to Czech Republic and Slovenia. Slovakia has relatively fewer schools with less than 50 students and with less than 100 students. On the other side, there are relatively more schools with the number of students between 100 and 250.

65 For example, in Bratislava region, half of the present 32 gymnasiums would be sufficient to educate the necessary number of students if the quota was applied.
66 This does not refer to eight year gymnasiums and upper secondary schools established by the regional state authority.
67 CVTI publishes twice a year unemployment rate by individual schools and study programs. The Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family is developing a methodology to analyze the position of employees on the labor market based on their educational attainment by school and study programs.
Costs of financing small schools and potential savings from the network rationalization

201. Small basic schools are protected mainly by the so-called compensatory mechanism and bargaining procedure (see Annex 8). In 2013 small basic schools received EUR 58 million in form of compensatory allowance, i.e., 8.8% of normative expenses for basic schools (i.e. 4.5% of total financial resources in the school system). Additionally, schools were paid EUR 28.5 million under bargaining procedures in 2012, i.e. 2.1% of the normative expenses.

202. Since January 2013, the Ministry can oblige a founder who previously applied for additional funds within bargaining procedure to implement specific efficiency measures in the given school or school facility. Such measures include e.g. reduction of the number of classes, layoffs or school closure due a fixed date. Individual measures are first discussed with the founder, who can come up with own proposal.

Use of savings from rationalization

203. Every year, the allocation of funds from the state budget for education is subject to political discussions between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance. In case of cost savings (e.g. due to school closures) there are no formal rules defining whether the budget chapter of the Ministry will be adjusted. In practice, the Ministry intends to use saved resources to increase teachers’ salaries. Additionally, at the same time, the Ministry of Finance presents efficiency measures as a prerequisite for allocation of additional funds to education.

204. Per student funding system encourages founders to find and apply the most efficient way to organize education under the given budget constraint. For example, falling numbers of enrolled students decrease the school budget, which motivates founders to close or merge small and expensive schools. At the same time, founders are encouraged to save costs (e.g. operating costs), because savings can reallocated for other purposes (e.g. higher teacher salaries, new teaching materials).

Potential costs of rationalization

205. School closures and mergers can make students travel to schools. Students, who visit a state school in the school district defined by their permanent address, are then entitled for compensation of travel expenses from the state budget. This does not apply if students have to travel within one municipality (i.e. village, town or city).

206. Theoretically, potential risks of closing schools might in the long term arise for students from poorer families, who might quit their upper-secondary studies after finishing compulsory school attendance due to lower accessibility of schools. However, already today students travel to schools, which especially in case of vocational schools also provide accommodation to their students at the dormitories. At the same time, the rate of early school leavers is one of the lowest across EU 28 countries (see Annex 3). However, it is still important to consider what social impacts rationalization could potentially bring.

4.2.2 School facilities and materials

207. The founder is responsible for infrastructure investments, maintenance and management. In order to provide educational services, founders receive funds from the state budget, EU structural funds or use own resources.

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68 Excluding costs of bargaining procedure (see Annex 8).
69 The founder must provide the Ministry with the data which are necessary to define the individual efficiency measures. Implementation of the prescribed measures constitutes a prerequisite for allocation of additional funds within bargaining procedure.
70 In 2013 three basic schools were cancelled as a result of efficiency measures. As of 1 September 2014 or 2015, 78 basic schools have to reduce the number of classes or number of employees.
71 Similarly this does not apply to students of private basic schools, students of secondary schools under compulsory school attendance or to students visiting school outside their school district defined by their permanent address as a result of the free school choice.
Funds from the state budget

208. Each year, the Ministry of Education allocates resources from its budget chapter to address emergency situations, reconstructions and modernization of school buildings. In 2012, the Ministry provided founders with EUR 21 million and satisfied 31.2% of total number of applications, which covered 27% of the total amount required. Founders spent EUR 4.9 million from their own resources, 70% of which was provided by municipalities and self-governing regions. The money was used to restore boiler rooms, roofs, replace windows, doors, floors and repair sanitary premises.

Funds from the European Union

209. Key resources for reconstruction and modernization of schools come from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Slovakia allocates European funds via Regional Operational Program (ROP) within the convergence framework of the European cohesion policy. ROP is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic.72

210. Until the end of 2012, Slovakia managed to contract 92 % of the total EUR 650 million grant approved by the EU.73 Most of the public projects were submitted by municipalities. Projects submitted by churches and religious communities prevailed in the non-public sector. Not-for-profit organizations and associations were involved only to a small extent.

211. By the end of 2012, Slovakia finished 610 projects and managed to spend 76 % of contracted resources. Most of the reconstruction were implemented in basic schools (506), followed by secondary schools (56) and kindergartens (48).

Graph 13: EU resources invested in school infrastructure

A. Completed projects by school type
   (as of 31.12 2012)

B. Invested resources
   (year by year)

Source: MPSR (2013)

Standards for materials, technical and spatial support for secondary vocational schools

212. Standards of material, technical and spatial support of education are developed by Institute for Vocational Education to ensure high-quality training for graduates of secondary vocational schools. The standards are derived from state education programs and they specify an interactive set of

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72 Under the “Convergence” objective, financial can be provided to regions with GDP per capita below 75% of EU25 average. Regions in the Slovak Republic, except for Bratislava region, significantly fall behind the EU average. Bratislava region is not included in the “Convergence” objective and, therefore, is not entitled to receive funds for development of school infrastructure. Bratislava region receives funds from ERDF and ESF structural funds for activities under the objective “Regional Competitiveness and Employment”.

73 Including co-financing from the state budget.
requirements, which characterize an optimal environment for education and training. The standards become binding after the approval given by the Ministry of Education.

213. Standard defines basic and recommended teaching premises for theoretical and practical training and their basic material and technical equipment. Recommended standards go beyond the basic ones and aim to ensure a higher quality of education process reflecting the labor market needs in the relevant branch.

**ICT in education**

214. All basic schools and secondary schools in Slovakia have access to internet. Schools are also equipped with information technologies, whereby hardware and software varies across different school types. In 2012, there were 3.78 students per one computer in schools on average. Number of students per computer experienced the sharpest decline in basic schools from 50 students per PC in 2003 to 4.25 students per PC in 2012. Special schools recorded a similar development, as the number dropped from 50 students to 4.25 students per computer.

215. Almost all teachers use computers. However, in 2012 only 43% of them used computers in the teaching process regularly. It is only a mild increase compared to 38% from 2009. Despite that more than 90% of teachers attended ICT trainings, only a little more than one fifth of them obtained advanced competences (MSVVS, 2013c). More information on use of ICT in schools is available in Annex 10.

**Textbooks**

216. Teachers are allowed to use textbooks approved and/or recommended by the Ministry of Education. Schools may also use other textbooks, but they have to be in line with the principles of education and upbringing defined in the School Act (i.e. in line with the National Education Program). Approved textbooks, study texts and workbooks, including their transcript in Braille writing or other

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74 4.25 students per computer in basic schools, 3.12 students per computer in secondary schools and 4.25 students per computer in special schools.

75 Religion as a subject can be taught using textbooks, education texts and exercise books approved by a church or religious community recognised by the state.
proper forms of transcription are provided to schools by the Ministry of Education free of charge. Recommended textbooks and other textbook do not have to be covered from the state budget.

217. In Slovakia, the process of approving textbooks is administratively burdensome and demand for new textbooks also generates pressure on financial resources. The demand increased significantly after the education reform from 2008, which redefined the educational content taught at schools.

218. The Ministry, being aware of the importance of textbook for quality education delivery takes gradually measures to supply reform textbooks to schools. From 2010, schools place orders for textbooks electronically via www.edicnyportal.sk web portal, which makes the management of orders and textbook store more efficient. On the portal, schools find a list of all approved and recommended textbooks. Also, despite the complex acquisition process the Ministry succeeded in making progress in textbook delivery at the majority of schools. For school year 2014/2015, the Ministry managed to provide the first stage of basic schools with 95 % of all required textbooks. Special schools will receive 93 % of required textbooks. Altogether, schools have 75 % of ordered textbooks.

219. The Ministry is also beginning to test a system, in which schools receive money and choose textbooks on their own. In reality, the offer is limited today, since only the approved textbooks are provided free of charge. Therefore, for the beginning, schools will receive a certain amount of money to choose from the recommended textbooks for foreign languages, which are usually bought by the parents. If the system works well, the Ministry intends to give schools a larger freedom of choice in the future.

220. Textbooks and other education content are also gradually made available on the internet via the eAktovka portal at www.eaktovka.sk. In May 2014, the portal provided free access to 83 textbooks (including their translations). The Ministry launches another major project to access digital education content. It includes a system of digital teaching documents called Planet of Knowledge. Since September 2013 basic schools and secondary schools can use more than 30 thousand teaching documents in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and natural science.

4.3 Distribution of teacher resources

221. It is positive, that Slovak school leaders do not report any teacher shortages. However, the teaching body is getting older. The teacher profession does not seem to be appealing enough for young people and the whole age distribution moves to the right. On the other hand, vast majority of teachers are qualified, which is the basic prerequisite for a quality education delivery. In addition, socially disadvantaged schools do not have bigger classes or less qualified teachers.

4.3.1 Structure of employees in the school system

222. Employees in education can be divided into three groups: teaching staff, non-teaching staff and specialist employees. Employees are financed either from the state budget or from own municipalities’ and self-government regions’ funds (for detailed numbers see Annex 2). In 2012, basic schools and secondary schools, which are financed from the state budget, employed approximately 62 000 teaching staff, 19 700 non-teaching staff and 1 300 specialist employees. Other schools such as kindergartens and school facilities, which are financed from municipalities’ and self-government

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76 Ministry of Education first announces a public procurement for a given textbook based on the publishing plan. The tender is attended by publishing houses. The winner submits an application to SPU or SIOV (depending on the content of the textbook), which give recommendation to the Ministry to approve the textbook. The application must include appraisals from registered reviewers from the register of reviewers who are appointed by the Minister. After the textbook is approved, it is put into the national register of textbooks. The Ministry distributes financial resources to publish textbooks based on the publishing plan. The publishing plan is a list of textbooks to be distributed to schools based on the budget of the Ministry allocated for purchase and distribution of textbooks. The plan contains primarily textbooks for compulsory subjects defined by the National Education Program (NEP).
regions’ own funds, employed approximately 24,600 teaching staff, 19,270 non-teaching staff and 120 specialist employees.

*Characteristics of the teachers’ body in kindergartens, basic schools and secondary schools*

223. In 2013, 60.5 thousand full-time teachers worked in kindergartens, basic schools and secondary schools.

224. Teaching is the domain of women. In 2013, 80% of the 46 thousand full-time basic school and secondary school teachers were women.\(^{37}\) In kindergartens, only 6 out of 14.5 thousand teachers were men. The proportion of men increases with the age of students. The difference is most remarkable in basic schools. The share of women-teachers decreases from 94% at the first stage of basic schools to 80% at the second stage. At secondary schools approximately 74% of teachers are women.

225. The teaching body is getting older. In 2014, the average teacher was 45.4 years old, i.e. 4 years older than in 2009. Secondary vocational school teachers were oldest on average (47.6 years) and the basic school teachers were youngest (44.6 years). The average age of teachers rose almost evenly across the different school types. The greatest change between 2009 and 2014 occurred in the size of the youngest cohort and the oldest cohort of teachers. Within each school type, the share of teachers aged 60+ rose by 4.5 p.p. on average, whereas the share of teachers younger than 30 years decreased by 6 p.p. on average except for kindergartens which experienced a slight increase.

226. In 2014, about 6.7% of teachers in service already crossed the age of retirement, which is in Slovakia typically 62 years. It is a slight decrease compared to 2009. On the other hand, 8.51% of teachers were younger than 30 years, which is as mentioned a considerable decrease. In 2014 as well as in 2009, about 30% of teachers were aged 50-59 and represented thus the largest age cohort.

227. Vast majority of teachers meet the required qualification requirements across all school types. Between 2001 and 2014, basic schools and vocational secondary schools reported the sharpest increase in the number of qualified teachers, which reached 96% resp. 95% level. At kindergartens and gymnasiums more than 95% of teachers met qualification requirements. However, during the last five years the share of qualified teachers slightly decreased at all school types except for basic schools.

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**Graph 15: Teachers’ age and qualification**

A. Change in size of the youngest and the oldest by school types (2009-2014)  
B. Share of qualified teachers by school types (2001-2014)

Source: UIPŠ (2013b), calculations EPI

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\(^{37}\) For part-time teachers, the proportion of men and women is more even. In 2013, 60% of the total 10 100 part-time teachers at basic schools and secondary schools were women.
4.3.2 Initial teacher education and recruitment

228. Qualified teacher must hold a corresponding degree in the relevant field of study. Qualified basic school teachers and secondary-school teachers must hold a university master degree. Kindergarten teachers must hold a bachelor university degree. Further requirements include integrity, medical fitness and command of the official language.

229. In addition, qualified teachers of basic schools, secondary schools, language schools and primary schools of art must spend at least one half of their teaching workload to teaching their approbation subjects or subjects of their fields of study.

230. Education of future teachers is provided by nine pedagogical faculties as well as at faculties with pedagogical departments. In 2013, 9.3 % of bachelor and master graduates at state universities graduated from pedagogical field of study. At private universities the share was 0.4 %. Students prepare themselves in the following fields of study: pedagogy, pedagogy of subjects in combinations, pedagogy sciences, physical education science. Students choose which subjects they want to teach from a broad range of study programs.

Teacher recruitment and teacher shortages

231. Generally, school leaders are in charge of the teachers’ selection process. In recent years both state and private sector adopted measures to make the teacher recruitment process more open and transparent. From 2012, the law obliges school founders as well as individual schools to publish information about vacancies on their web sites. On the regional level, aggregate information must be published online by regional state authorities.

232. In 2013, the biggest online recruitment provider profesia.sk launched a new internet portal - edujobs.sk, which makes information about demand and supply on the teachers’ job market available and easily accessible. School leaders can search for suitable candidates and applicants receive a complex and clear overview of the vacant positions. The portal automatically sends job offers directly to individual applicants per email.

233. According to Slovak school leaders there are no teacher shortages. The proportion of children attending schools with lack of teachers decreased from 20.4 % in 2003 to 12.6 % in 2012. However, particularly wide gaps are observed between advantaged and disadvantaged schools, though the situation has improved since 2003. Further, principals of schools located in towns and cities reported similar levels of teacher shortage, while principals of schools located in rural areas reported more teacher shortage than principals of schools in towns. (OECD, 2013b)

234. Uneven distribution of resources between schools with high share of economically disadvantaged student population and schools with lower shares can potentially lead to unequal access to education. In reality, socially disadvantaged schools – with more than 25% share of the socially disadvantaged – do not have bigger classes nor less qualified teachers compared to schools with virtually no economically disadvantaged students (0 %).

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78 Teacher in a primary school of art and accompanist must hold bachelor degree or complete higher vocational education; a kindergarten teacher can also accomplish upper secondary vocational education.

79 Religious studies can be taught by a person authorized by a registered church or religious community.

80 Employer can decrease the qualification requirement down to one third of direct educational activities in case when it is not possible to hire qualified teacher who meets the requirements to teach approbation subjects.

81 It was a reaction on the 2011 online survey, conducted by members of parliament, in which 40 % of teachers stated that school leaders relied by selection process mostly on their contacts and peer recommendations. 80 % of surveyed teachers think, that a vacant place has never been put up form a competition and if yes, then only formally. (Beblavý, 2011)

82 Out of 2 159 basic schools there are 468 schools with no socially disadvantaged students. Socially disadvantaged student population makes less than 5 % of total student population in 511 basic schools, 5 %-25% in 680 basic schools and more than 25 % in 500 basic schools.

83 Qualification structure of teachers is defined by the qualification coefficient.
4.4 Distribution of school leaders

235. Gender structure of school leaders as well as deputy leaders differs with school type. There is only one male director and two deputy leaders in kindergartens. In basic schools, 70% of school leaders and 88% of deputy leaders are women. Similarly, director and deputy leader positions in special basic schools and special kindergartens are dominated by females. Approximately fifty-fifty male/female ratio occurs only at gymnasiums and secondary vocational schools. Men dominate only as school leaders of secondary vocational schools with a 57% share.

236. Both school leaders and deputy leaders at all types of mainstream schools are on average more experienced than their counterparts at special schools, except for basic schools. Compared to school leaders, deputy leaders are younger and have less work experience. An average director is 50 years old and has approximately 27 years of work experience. Deputy leaders are on average one year younger and are three years less experienced.

Table 7: Characteristics of school leaders and deputy leaders (as of 31.1. 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Deputy Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>females</td>
<td>age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kindergarten</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic school</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gymnasium</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary vocational school</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UIPS database

237. Across all school types, schools employ mostly from 1 to 2 deputy leaders. Only approximately 69% of mainstream kindergartens, 82% of special basic schools and all special gymnasiums operate without deputy leaders. The number of deputy leaders in basic schools and in kindergartens depends on the size of school. That is why there are also relatively more basic schools without a deputy leader (37%).
Table 8: Numbers of school leaders and deputy leaders (as of 31.1. 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type of school</th>
<th>mainstream school</th>
<th>special school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 deputies 1 deputy 2 deputies 3 and more</td>
<td>0 deputies 1 deputy 2 deputies 3 and more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kindergarten</td>
<td>69% 30% 1% 1%</td>
<td>82% 18% 0% 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic school</td>
<td>37% 39% 21% 3%</td>
<td>34% 51% 14% 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gymnasium</td>
<td>19% 42% 29% 10%</td>
<td>100% 0% 0% 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conservatory</td>
<td>19% 31% 38% 13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sec. vocational school</td>
<td>13% 34% 30% 23%</td>
<td>27% 60% 0% 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49% 34% 13% 4%</td>
<td>43% 45% 11% 2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UIPS database

4.4.1 Selection of school leaders and their preparation

238. School leaders are appointed and dismissed by the school founder on the School Board proposal. School Board nominates a candidate for the position of school leader based on selection procedure. Founders of a state basic school and state secondary schools are obliged to appoint the director as proposed by the School Board. Founders of private schools and church schools can veto the nomination. Founder must announce the selection procedure in press or in other generally accessible mass media, such as TV, radio and internet. Director’s term of office lasts five years.

239. School leaders must meet the following criteria:
   - comply with qualification requirements to conduct pedagogical activities,
   - complete the first certification,84
   - teach for five years,
   - complete functional training not later than three years from the beginning of the term of service.

240. School leaders obtain management competences by means of functional training. Functional training is provided either by an organization of continual education established by the Ministry of Education, other central regulatory authority or by a university. Appointed director must defend a written final thesis and pass a final examination before a three-member examination committee. Functional training is valid for seven years after its completion. Before that, school leaders must complete functional innovative training. Again, functional innovative training is valid for seven years after completion.

4.5 Distribution across specific student groups

241. Schools also provide education and care to students with special educational needs (SEN). The group of students with special needs includes students with disabilities,85 gifted students86 and socially disadvantaged students.87 Their education and care requires modified organization of

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84 Certification verifies employee’s competences and serves as a prerequisite for promotion to a higher carrier level. Certifications are performed before certification committees at universities, organisations for continual education established by the Ministry of Education or before a certification committee of other ministries. Employees are issued a certificate after passing the examination. An employee with master’s degree can apply for the first and the second certification. An employee with a lower degree can apply only for the first certification.

85 Students with disabilities are students with mental disabilities, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disabilities, communication disorder, autism, multiple disabilities, ADHD and behaviour disorder.

86 Gifted students have above average skills in intellectual aptitude, in art, or sports and achieve extraordinary performance compared to their peers.

87 Socially disadvantaged student comes from a family which receives aid in material need, and the family income is below the subsistence minimum, in which at least one parent belongs to the group of disadvantaged job applicant, in which parents finished only primary education, or one of the parents did not finish primary education, which has substandard housing and sanitary conditions (e.g. student does not have a place for learning, own bed, no electricity connection etc.).
teaching, modified educational content and approach to students as well as additional financial, human and material resources.

242. Students with special needs are educated in special schools, in special or specialized classes in mainstream schools or they are integrated with other students in mainstream classes. Funding system allocates additional financial resources by the means of modified normatives, contributions, subsidies and grants. Teacher assistants represent additional human resources. National projects co-financed from structural funds play an important role in integration of marginalized Roma communities into the society.

4.5.1 Students with disabilities and gifted students

243. Children and students with disabilities are taught in schools for children and students with disabilities (special schools) or in mainstream schools. Children and students in mainstream schools are educated in special classes or in individual integration under individual learning plan together with other students in a mainstream class.

244. Gifted students are taught in schools for gifted children, in classes for gifted students, in groups of individually integrated students in a mainstream class, or as individually integrated students together with other students in a mainstream class. An integrated gifted student follows an individual learning plan or group learning plan. (For a more detailed statistics on disadvantaged students see Annex 11).

245. Education of students with disabilities requires additional staff to support the teacher. Teacher assistants help create equal chances in education and they help students overcome architectonic, information, language, medical, social or cultural barriers. Teacher assistants work in basic school, in some cases also in secondary schools.

246. The funding system in Slovakia provides financial resources for students with various needs. It reflects the needs of both children with disabilities and intellectually gifted children. The labor intensity coefficient in special basic schools, special classes in mainstream basic schools and in case of individually integrated students classifies students into 6 different groups according to the type of their disability or talent. In mainstream secondary schools the funding system recognizes 3 groups of students with disabilities and talent. (For more information see Annex 8)

4.5.2 Socially disadvantaged students

247. Schools create individual conditions to provide education and care for socially disadvantaged students. Children receive special attention and care in zero grades, in specialized classes and by means of individual learning plan.

Zero grades

248. Zero grades represent a transition between kindergarten and the first grade of basic school. The zero grade in basic schools shall accelerate, the child’s development so that the child can be integrated into the education process in the first grade of basic school. Education and care of socially disadvantaged students seeks to achieve adequate development of their abilities by eliminating various types of deficiencies (e.g. poor communication skills, cultural and social exclusion, bad hygienic habits etc.).

249. The zero grade of basic school is intended for children aged 6, who have not reached school capability and come from socially disadvantaged environment. At the same time the child starts mandatory school attendance. A child can be placed in the zero grade only with the informed consent of their legal representative. Request must contain a recommendation from the consulting and prevention center (CPPPaP) which evaluates child’s school capability. While from 2002 to 2012 the total number of students decreased by 30%, the number of socially disadvantaged students rose more

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88 Education of a group of intellectually gifted students is regarded as a form of individual integration.
than threefold from 1 100 to 3 500. Vast majority of socially disadvantaged students (more than 3 300) attend state basic schools.

**Specialized classes and education in mainstream classes**

250. A specialized class is intended for socially disadvantaged students, who completed zero grade and are not expected (e.g. after psychological screening) to successfully continue their education in the first grade of basic school. Also disadvantaged students who after completion of the zero grade enrol in the first grade of basic school and are not able to follow the content and keep up with peers are placed in a specialized class. Students are placed in specialized classes temporarily.

251. Specialized classes are not commonly used as a remedy for socially disadvantaged students who need it. In 2013, there were only 7 specialized classes with 57 students. Moreover, this number includes also students who had previously attended special basic school and need to receive a compensation and development program to be integrated to mainstream class.

252. Education of socially disadvantaged students then continues in mainstream classes together with other students. Subjects which appear to be too hard can be taken by the student under individual learning plan. The plan is prepared by the class teacher in cooperation with a special teacher, teacher assistant, and other specialist employees when necessary. All adjustments are made on an individual basis to match the student’s special educational needs.89

**Teacher assistants for socially disadvantaged students**

253. Teacher assistant teachers for socially disadvantaged students work at basic schools and special basic schools. They are responsible for eliminating barriers, which hinder equal opportunities in education.

**Funding system**

254. Founders of basic schools and special basic schools can receive a contribution for improving conditions of education and care of socially disadvantaged students.90 Total contribution per school is calculated as a product of the contribution and the number of socially disadvantaged students attending the school. The per-student contribution was increase in 2012 from EUR 90 to EUR 100. In 2012 the share of the contribution represented 0.5% of total current expenditures.91

255. The contribution can be used to cover the wages of teacher assistant and for class equipment, didactic technology and teaching materials. Founder of a basic school with more than 100 socially disadvantaged students must use at least 50% of the total contribution to pay teacher assistants.

**Grants and scholarship**

256. Founders receive grants from state to support upbringing of children, who are subjected to a threat of social exclusion. Grants are provided to cover the costs of learning materials (exercise books, writing utensils, textbooks etc.) which children use in kindergartens and basic schools and to cover the costs of school meals.92

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89 An individual learning plan provides mainly basic information about the student and the impact of his/her socially disadvantaged environment on the education process, modification of the learning plan and curricula and application of special educational practices.

90 For the purpose of providing the contribution, a socially disadvantaged student is defined as a student, who receives a contribution for food and teaching materials and, at the same time, the student comes from a family receiving benefit in material need or it is a student from a family with the average monthly income for the last six consecutive lower than the amount of the subsistence minimum.

91 Since 2006 financing of socially disadvantaged students has been changed several times. From 2006 to 2008, there was no separate contribution for socially disadvantaged students. The funds were allocated as a part of non-normative expenses for teacher assistants for students facing language and social barrier at school. In 2009 and 2010 the funds for socially disadvantaged students were separated from contributions for teacher assistant and included in the normative expenses. Since 2011 the contribution has been provided as a non-normative expense.

92 Grants are allocated per every child in a basic school or in a kindergarten, if more than 50 % of children come from families which receive benefit in material need. Grants are allocated per individual child, if the child comes from a family
4.5.3 Further specific programs

257. Some contributions go directly to students, although via schools or other institutions. Students who visit basic school outside the school district defined by their permanent address are paid the travel expenses. Also students of basic schools and secondary schools receive educational vouchers, which can be spent on leisure and extracurricular activities.

258. Secondary school students from socially weaker environment can receive state scholarships. The amount of scholarship increases the better student’s results are. Also, employers can give students of secondary vocational schools motivational scholarship, bonus for productive work and contribution to cover travel expenses and living costs in dormitories.

4.6 Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions

New funding

259. In 2014, the Ministry intended to prepare a new funding model for basic and secondary schools. One of the goals was to apply greater pressure on rationalization of the school network in which the costs of cost-inefficient schools would be partially borne by the school founder. The new law assumed efficiency broadly in terms of meeting the minimum class size, total number of students in schools, labor market needs etc. Also, the Ministry intended to make the funding more accurate with respect to the school needs by taking into account not only the number of its students but also the number of its classes. In the end, the work on the new law was postponed until the end of 2015.

260. The draft principles of the new law defined an efficient basic school as one that has an average class size equal or greater than the minimal class size defined by law. The same criterion would be apply on those types of secondary schools, where feasible (e.g. at gymnasiums). In addition, an effective secondary school would have to meet a certain threshold of students. An inefficient school would receive funds only for partial reimbursement of costs. Technically such school would receive a contribution calculated only according to the number of its students, but not classes. In the end, the work on the new law was postponed to the end of 2015.

261. There are different opinions among individual stakeholders on the funding system. New Education Initiative prefers to preserve the per-student funding, which now makes investments of public funds transparent, which is fair and supports individual students. However it is true, that some parameters need to be adjusted to make the funding work better. (Zimenová, Blaščák 2013b) The Initiative would accept number of classes as an additional parameter, in case it more accurately reflects the costs of educational provision and does not motivate schools to inflate the number of classes. (Križ, 2013)

262. Association of Municipalities in Slovakia (ZMOS) respects the Manifesto of the Slovak Government for the 2012-2016 period which articulates the intention to introduce funding per class. However, ZMOS finds it necessary to conduct a number of analyses before implementing new funding model. Namely, ZMOS suggests conducting an analysis of the school network, which would define optimal distribution of basic schools and secondary schools with respect to possible rationalization and regional needs. (ZMOS, 2013) On contrary, Evangelical Church considers today’s per-student funding system to be transparent and proved itself very well. (ECAV, 2013)

Funding of free time centers

263. Municipalities finance free time centers from their own funds, most of which come into their budgets as a share of taxes collected centrally at the national level. Municipalities now receive money based on the number of all children aged 5-15 with permanent address in their territory, not based on the number of children in their free time centers. At the same time, the contribution per child was which receives benefit in material need or if the average family’s income for the last six months is less than the subsistence minimum.
decreased. According to the Ministry of Education, the old system led to misuse of public finance, when municipalities reported higher than actual number of children in their free time centers. (MSVVS, 2013b)

264. The result is that those municipalities without free time centers now receive money for free time and leisure activities. On the other hand, those municipalities running free time centers often accommodate children from the former ones, now may receive less, because of lower contribution per child. However, municipalities manage their funds independently and do not have to transfer them to support other municipalities.

265. The Association of private schools and school facilities claim, that many municipalities (40% - 60%), which do not run free time centers do not support free time centers which are attended by their children. If they do, they decrease the support substantially (by 30% - 50%). (ASŠSZS, 2013)

On contrary, ZMOS supports the changes to funding of free time centers. It appreciates that the new system prevents the misuse of public finance and it considers the new system to be a good tool of financing free time activities.

*Initial teacher education*

266. The Slovak Chamber of Teachers considers lack of practical training during studies to be the weak spot of initial teacher education. They claim that universities teach the pedagogical science mostly at a theoretical level. Teachers therefore suggest significant changes to future practical training of future teachers. Students of pedagogical fields of study shall engage in two-semester practical training as teacher assistants. Today, two – week practical training is not sufficient, does not motivate the student and fails to give students enough time to develop the necessary competences for their future job etc. (SKU, 2014a).

*Provision of minimal qualification for teaching*

267. According to new legislation, students studying other than pedagogical fields of study have the opportunity to receive minimal teacher qualification also at their faculty. Until 2013, this was possible only at pedagogical faculties and at faculties with pedagogical departments. Experts from non-pedagogical faculties thus have the opportunity to educate future teachers. This change has been welcome mainly among secondary vocational schools. On contrary, representatives of pedagogical faculties claim that they can prepare future teachers with respect to pedagogical and psychological aspects of the teaching profession better than other faculties. Quality of teaching at schools can be thus reduced. (Balážová, 2013)
5 Resource utilization

The following chapter deals with resource use related to students with special needs, organization of school management, time spent by students and teachers at school. Description of the career and professional development of teachers and school leaders follows. The chapter concludes with the description of the school evaluation system.

5.1 Reflecting students’ individual education needs

Formation of classes and groups within schools

As a rule, classes are composed of students from the same grade, i.e. students of similar age. If necessary, in the first stage of basic school students from two grades can be taught in one class. Age structure of a class may be more heterogeneous because of students who repeat grade, students with postponed compulsory school attendance and gifted students who can skip grades or were enrolled to basic school before the age of six.

Classes can be split into groups. Groups are usually composed of students from one class. For the subjects of religion and ethical education it is possible to form one group from students of different grades. In the second stage, boys and girls form separate groups for physical education. In case of low numbers of students, boys or girls from different grades may be taught in one group. At secondary schools, students from different grades may attend the same group in non-compulsory subjects.

Generally, students are not assigned to classes based on their abilities. However, mainstream schools can create classes or groups within classes for students with special educational needs.

Institutions focused on assistance to students

Individual strategies and specific tools, which focus on students with special education needs are described in chapters 2.6 Policy approaches to equity in education and 4.7 Distribution across specific student groups. Institutional care for specific groups of children is also provided by a range of facilities. They concentrate mainly on students with special educational and upbringing needs.

Educational consulting and prevention centers

Centers provide children with professional care to optimize their personal, educational and professional development develop their talents, eliminate deficiencies in mental development and behavioral disorders. Experts employed in centers assist children by their social integration. Centers concentrate mainly on socially disadvantaged students and disabled students. The consulting system includes also specialist employees, who work directly at schools such as school psychologist, special educator, social educator and prevention coordinator.

Special educational facilities

In some cases, children have to be placed in special educational facilities. This happens, when deficiencies in their personal characteristics, social inadaptability, disorders, learning problems or addictions make it impossible to educate them in schools and the diagnostic, consulting as well as remedy measures must take place in special environment. Children are placed in special educational facilities based on the request filled by their legal representatives or a court ruling. (see Annex 12)

Students at basic schools and secondary school are obliged to select one of the following two subjects: religion or ethical education. One group can be composed of maximum 20 children. If the number of students in a group falls below 12, groups from different grades can be merged.
Differentiation of the learning path

275. As a rule, children at the age of six start their compulsory school attendance at a basic school. Basic school has nine grades and it is split into first and second stage. The first stage is comprised first to fourth grade and the second stage is comprised of the fifth to ninth grade. Students finish primary education (ISCED 1) by successful completion of the first stage of basic school and continue their studies at the second stage. After the fifth grade, students may also decide to continue their studies at an 8-year gymnasium or at an 8-year conservatory.

276. After the basic school, students can continue their studies at a 5-year bilingual gymnasium, a 4-year gymnasium, a 6-year conservatory or a secondary vocational school. Students can start to study at a 5-year bilingual gymnasium also after the eighth grade of basic school or after the fourth grade of an 8-year gymnasium. Students who fail to finish basic school can continue their studies in a 2-year program at a secondary vocational school.

277. Students achieve lower secondary education (ISCED 2) by graduating from a basic school, in the fourth grade of an 8-year gymnasium, in the fourth grade of an 8-year conservatory or in the first grade of a bilingual gymnasium. Students receive lower secondary vocational education (ISCED 2C) in two-year study programs at a vocational secondary school.

278. Students achieve upper secondary general education (ISCED 3A) by graduating from one of the 15 study programs at gymnasiums. The study programs include general studies, mathematics, mathematics and physics, informatics, biology and chemistry, ecology and foreign languages, programming, social science, culture, culture and foreign languages, bilingual studies, physical education, sports, Slovak language and literature, arts.

279. Students achieve secondary vocational education (ISCED 3C) by graduating from one of the 676 study programs or upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3A) by graduating from one of the 341 study programs at a secondary vocational school. Graduates find employment in different industries, health care, public administration, culture, art or continue in further studies.

280. Students achieve upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3A) also by graduation from an 8-year conservatory or from the fourth grade of a 6-year conservatory. Students may choose to study music, singing, music and drama or one of the 9 musical study programs.94

281. The school system enables students to switch to another study program within school or to switch schools and continue their studies in the same or in a different study program. Students may switch their study program within one school at the beginning of a school year based on the school leader’s consent. Students may switch schools if the school leader of the new school gives consent. Students also have to pass an examination, if it is required by the director of the new school.

5.2 Organization of student learning time

282. School year starts on 1 September and ends on 31 August of the following calendar year. The schooling takes 40 weeks and end on 30 June. Then, a 2-month period of summer holidays follows. In the 2013/2014 school year, students had 25 days of vacation during the period of schooling. On top of that, school leaders can give 5 more days of vacation for serious reasons, such as organizational and operational issues. This applies to all level of education. In case of kindergartens, director in cooperation with founder decide on the provision of education and care during the summer holidays.

94 By passing a maturita examination the eighth grade of a conservatory, the student achieves an upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3A) and by passing the vocational examination in the same grade, the student achieves a higher vocational education (ISCED 5B). By passing a maturita examination in the fourth grade of the 6-year conservatory, the student achieves an upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3A). By passing a vocational exam in the sixth grade, the student achieves higher vocational education (ISCED 5B).
Organization of curriculum

283. Curriculum is comprised of compulsory and compulsory flexible curriculum. Students visiting schools with a national minority language of instruction have to attend, on average more lessons per week than students in schools with Slovak language of instruction. The number of lessons includes the language of the national minority. At the primary level, students with Slovak language of instruction spend in school 24 lessons per week on average. Students with a national minority language of instruction spend in school 25.5 lessons per week on average. (For a more detailed statistics on minority students see Annex 13)

Table 9: Average instruction time per week by of school type and language of instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Language of instruction</th>
<th>Compulsory curriculum</th>
<th>Compulsory flexible curriculum</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. stage of basic school (ISCED 1)</td>
<td>SK</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. stage of basic school (ISCED 2)</td>
<td>SK</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 year gymnasi (ISCED 2) 1.-4. grade</td>
<td>SK</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>29.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual 8 year gymn. (ISCED 2) 1.-4. grade</td>
<td>SK</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>29.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 year sport gymn. (ISCED 2) 1.-4. grade</td>
<td>SK</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>29.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National institute for Education (SPU), calculations EPI

284. In 2011 a Slovak students received fewer hours of instruction than an average OECD student. At the primary level, students in Slovakia received 691 hours of instruction per year and at the lower secondary level 821 hours per year. In OECD countries it was 791 hours per year and 907 hours per year respectively.

Structure of the curriculum by subjects

285. At the primary level, Slovakia pays relatively more attention to mother tongue and to flexible curriculum than OECD countries. Mother tongue in Slovakia accounts for 30 % of total instruction time (26 % OECD) and flexible curriculum accounts for 15 % of the total instruction time (OECD 6 %). On contrary, students receive relatively less instruction time in other subjects.

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95 Note: The compulsory instruction time and compulsory flexible instruction time is defined for the whole stage of education, not for each grade separately. Instruction time is thus expressed as an average as a decimal.
Extracurricular activities and homework

286. Basic schools offer extracurricular activities and informal education in school clubs and in free time centers. Students are welcome during the whole school year (also during holidays if necessary) in the early morning hours as well as in the late afternoon. School clubs and free time centers provide a wide range of educational and spare time activities, teach children how to spend free time and monitor their interests.

287. Results from PISA 2012 show that schools in Slovakia provide a wide range of extracurricular activities related to mathematics but on the other hand lack creative activities. Especially mathematics clubs and clubs with focus on computers and communication technology are very common. As much as 93% of students visit schools, which offer computer clubs, which is the third highest share across OECD countries. On contrary, students do not have that many opportunities to engage in a band, orchestra, art club etc. (OECD, 2013b)

288. Slovak students spend much less time doing homework than their peers did ten years ago. According to students’ opinion, the average number of hours they spend on homework decreased from 8.4 hours per week in 2003 to 3.2 hours per week in 2012. On the OECD average, the time devoted to homework activities decreased from 5.9 hours per week to 4.9 hours per week in the same period. (OECD, 2013b)

5.2.1 Organization of a school week

Basic schools

289. As a rule, education is provided on a full-time (daily) basis during five working days a week. Instruction at basic schools begins between 7.00 a.m., and 9.00 a.m. If lessons cannot be attended by

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96 In PISA 2012, Slovakia scored fifth place across 34 OECD countries in the index of extracurricular mathematics activities. On contrary, Slovakia scored 28th place in the index of creative extracurricular activities. In most OECD countries schools with greater offer of creative extracurricular activities score better in mathematics. In Slovakia the results in mathematics do not correlate with the range of creative extracurricular activities.

97 Full-time daily form as a half-day, all-day, weekly or permanent. Half-day lessons are organised either in morning hours or in afternoon hours only; all-day lessons are organized in both morning and afternoon hours.
all students in the morning due to spatial constraints, schooling can be organized in two shifts, excluding the first grade. Teaching activities in the afternoon end on 5 p.m. at latest. 98

290. A lesson takes 45 minutes and cannot be extended or reduced for no reason. School leader defines sequence and duration of breaks between lessons after the discussion in the Pedagogical Board and the School Board. The “big break” usually follows after the second lesson and takes 15 – 30 minutes. During the big break students usually stay outside the classroom. The lunch break takes 30 minutes and starts after the fifth lesson at latest in case of first and second grade students and after the sixth lesson at latest in case of third and fourth grade students. The lesson during the afternoon shift can be reduced to 40 minutes. In special cases, the lesson during the morning shift may be reduced too.

291. Lessons of direct teaching activities take place during the school day. Extra-curricular activities usually take place either before or after the regular school day in school clubs and free time centers. 99

Secondary schools

292. Instruction usually starts at 8:00 a.m. It can start earlier, but not before 7:00 a.m. Students younger than 18 usually end before 18:00 p.m. Instruction can end also later, but before 20:00 p.m.

293. School day cannot take more than eight lessons (including non-compulsory subjects), except for sport trainings and art preparation. As a rule, a 20-minute break follows after the third lesson. Breaks between other lessons take 10 minutes. If lessons continue in the afternoon, the break between the morning and the afternoon lessons lasts at least 30 minutes. Lunch must take place after the seventh lesson at latest. Besides full-time daily form of study, students can visit secondary schools externally. Students may take evening classes or by means of distance learning.

294. Vocational training of the first and second grade students takes six lessons per day at most. In case of third, fourth and fifth grade students the training takes seven lessons a day at most.

295. School leader defines sequence and duration of breaks between lessons after the discussion in the Pedagogical Board and the School Board. As a rule the break after the third lesson takes more than 20 minutes. If students continue learning in the afternoon, the break between the morning and the afternoon lessons lasts at least 30 minutes. Students who are trained at workplaces of other legal entities or natural persons have breaks like the employees.

5.3 Allocation to of teacher resources

296. The size of teacher population adjusts to the decline of the student population, though not proportionally. As a result the student teacher ratio experienced a mild decrease. Teacher dealing with socially disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and gifted students are supported by teacher assistants and specialist employees. For 2014, the schools’ demand for teacher assistants for the disabled is satisfied for the first time. All employees advance their career by acquiring new professional competences mostly by means of completing programs of continual education, which promote them to the next career level.

98 In the first grade, five lessons at most can be taught in one series not more than three times a week, in the second grade five lesson in one series every day a week, in the third and in the fourth grade six lessons in one series at most not more than twice a week, in the fifth to ninth grade six lessons at most in one series every day per week. Additionally, students of the fifth and sixth grade can attend maximum seven lessons a day; students of the seventh to ninth grade can attend maximum eight lessons a day.

99 Additionally, schools organize ski or snowboarding courses, swimming sources, school trips, excursions and schools in nature. Ski courses usually take from five to seven days. Swimming courses take five working days or 20 lessons. School trips can take one or two days and can be extended by another two days of state holidays.
5.3.1 Class size and student teacher-ratio

In 2013, conservatories had the smallest classes with 18 students on average, followed by basic schools with 18.5 students per class, secondary vocational schools with 22.1 students per class and gymnasiums with 24.0 students per class on average. Compared to 2003, the average class size at mainstream basic schools and mainstream secondary schools decreased. Classes at gymnasiums experienced the largest decrease (-5.8 students), followed by conservatories (-4.4 students), secondary vocational schools (-4 students), and basic schools (-2.8 students).

Classes at kindergartens are becoming larger. From 2010 to 2013 the average class size increased from 19.5 children to 20.3 children. Considering the demographic development, the growing trend is expected to continue in the next few years.

Average class size at special schools has not changed in the last ten years, except for special gymnasiums. Special secondary vocational schools have the smallest classes, with 6.8 students on average, followed by special kindergartens follow with 7.5 children per class and special basic schools with 8.2 students per class on average. From 2006 to 2008 the size of classes at special gymnasiums rose sharply from 8.3 to 18.8 students per class. The reason is that gifted children became included in the group of children with special needs. In 2013, an average class at special gymnasiums had 17.5 students.

Graph 18: Number of student per class

A. Mainstream schools

B. Special schools and special classes in mainstream schools

Source: UIPŠ (2013b)

Source: UIPŠ (2013b)

A sharp increase was experienced only in special gymnasiums but not in special basic schools. This can be partly explained by the limits defining maximum number of students in a class. In basic schools the upper limits for gifted students are only slightly higher than the upper limits for children with other special educational needs. The upper limit in the first stage of a basic school for gifted children is 12 students per class, in the second stage the upper limit is 16 students per class. In a gymnasium for gifted children, the upper limit is 22 students per class.
Box 4: Regulation of the maximum class size

Besides other factors, number of students in a class depends on the regulations defining maximum class size. The regulations apply to all founders.

Kindergartens

A class for the 3-4 year olds can be attended by 20 children at most, a class for the 4-5 year olds by 21 children, a class for the 5-6 year olds by 22 children and a mixed class for the 3-6 year olds by 21 children. Maximum class size in special kindergartens varies from 4-8 children per class depending on the type of disability. The maximum class size can be increased by 3 children due to change of child’s permanent address, increased demand from the side of parents, postponement of compulsory school attendance or in case of adaptation or diagnostic placement of a child in a kindergarten. In special kindergartens the director can enroll two students above the maximum class size.

Basic schools

Average class size at basic schools decreased also because of the regulation of maximum class size in 2008. Maximum class size in the zero grade of a mainstream basic school is 16 students/class in the first grade it is 22 students/class, in grades 2-4 it is 25 students/class and in grades 5-9 it is 29 students/class. A class combining two grades from the first stage of a mainstream basic school can have maximally 24 students. A specialized class can be established for maximally 8 students.

Maximum class size for each grade in mainstream basic schools decreases by two students for each student with disabilities who is individually integrated in the class. A special class for students with disabilities in mainstream basic schools can be attended by maximally 4-10 students, depending on the type of disability. The same limits apply to maximum class size in special basic schools. Maximum class size for intellectually gifted students in grades 1-4 is 12 students/class, for grades 5-9 it is 16 students/class.

Secondary schools

Maximum class size in secondary schools is 31 students/class for all grades. Maximum class size for intellectually gifted students is 22 students/class for all grades. The same limit applies to a class of intellectually gifted students in a mainstream secondary school.

The maximum class size in mainstream basic schools and mainstream secondary schools can be increased by 3 students, due to change of student’s permanent address, grade repetition, transfer of student between schools, change of student’s study program, transfer of a student to higher grade without finishing previous grade, enrolment of a student to higher grade, student returning after interrupting his/her study. In special schools the director can enroll two students above the maximum class size.

300. From 2003 to 2013, secondary vocational schools experienced the sharpest decrease in student population (-33%), followed by basic schools (-26%), and gymnasiums (-23%). Only kindergartens reported a slight increase (1.5%). The number of internal teachers decreased as well, but to a relatively smaller extent – by 27% in secondary vocational schools, by 20.8% in basic schools and in gymnasiums and by 3% in kindergartens.101

301. As a result, student teacher ratio experienced a mild decrease at all types of schools, except for kindergartens. Slovakia has higher teacher student ratio than the average of V3 countries for both primary and secondary education. Compared to the OECD average, teacher student ratio in Slovakia is lower only at the lower secondary level.

5.3.2 Organization of teacher’s work

302. Weekly teacher’s workload is comprised of teaching hours (i.e. teacher’s basic workload) and number of hours spent on other activities (such as preparation for lessons, evaluation of students, etc.). Teachers’ basic workloads are specified in the table below.

303. School leader can permit that teaching staff performs other activities related to direct teaching activities (such as preparation for lessons, evaluation of students, etc.) as well as continual

101 The number of teachers necessary to provide education is influenced also by other factors, such as upper limits of class size (i.e. number of classes), splitting classes into groups, teacher workload (teaching hours) and instruction time.
education outside the workplace. Generally, school leaders do not constrain teachers who can go home after they finish teaching (basic workload) and do not have other responsibilities. Sometimes, teachers have defined fixed working hours (e.g. from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.), when they have to be in school.

Table 1: Basic workload of teaching staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic workload (teaching hours)</th>
<th>Teaching staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>teacher at basic school combined with kindergarten, basic school for students with disabilities and intellectually gifted students including special class in basic school, trainer at sports school, or in a sports class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>teacher of zero grade of basic school, first stage of basic school, preparatory grade and first grade at basic school for students with disabilities and intellectually gifted students including special class in basic school, teacher at secondary school, special secondary schools, apprenticeship training centers, preparatory grade at secondary vocational school, teacher at practical school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>teacher at special basic schools in a class for heavily mentally affected students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 24</td>
<td>master of vocational education at apprentice training centre, at special secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 – 35</td>
<td>master of vocational education at secondary vocational school, apprenticeship training center, vocational training center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>teacher at kindergarten, teacher at special kindergarten, teacher at kindergarten in healthcare facility, teacher of special class at kindergarten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.3 Career structure, professional development and compensation

304. Teachers are divided into the following subcategories: teacher at kindergarten, teacher at the first stage of basic school, teacher at the second stage of basic school, teacher at special basic school, teacher at primary school of art, teacher at language school, teacher for continual education.

Professional development and career of teachers

305. Teachers advance in their professional career by climbing through the following career levels:

- beginning teacher,
- independent teacher,
- teacher with first certification,
- teacher with second certification (Annex 14 describes career levels in a more detail).

306. Promotion to the next career level is tied to acquiring credits for learning new professional competences. Teachers can do so in different ways, most commonly by completing programs of continual education.

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102 The same rules for professional development apply for all pedagogical employees and specialist employees.
103 Other option include: passing a doctoral examination, passing state language examination, completing studies broadening their teaching scope (i.e. adding new subject or qualify for another teacher subcategory), completing education abroad which is associated with performing pedagogical activities, performing creative pedagogical activities (informal learning and teaching), authoring or coauthoring textbooks and by publishing articles in relevant literature.
Box 5: Continual education

Programs of continual education are accredited by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry also publishes the list of providers of continual education at its website. The Methodology and Pedagogy Centre is the largest provider, which offers all its courses free of charge. Among other providers are National Institute for Education, universities etc.

Teachers typically apply for professional development they would like to undertake through the school leader. They may choose from the following types of education programs of continual education: adaptation programs, updating programs, innovation programs, specialization programs, functional programs. The school leader is then in charge of prioritizing teachers’ training requests in line with the pedagogical needs and conditions of the school. Based on this judgment, the school leader submits requests for teachers’ admission into professional development programs. (Shewbridge, C., et al. 2014) Teachers then attend programs of continual education based on a yearly plan issued by the school leader.

However, teachers do not have to engage in continual education. They do so voluntarily or from the will of school leaders, who are responsible for continual education of teachers. Teachers receive compensation for taking courses of continual education as well as to prepare themselves to complete first or second certification, in both cases up to five working days.

By successful completion of continual education teachers promote their careers and receive extra financial benefits. Teachers may receive two times a 6% salary rise, each time for acquiring 30 credits. The salary rise does not follow automatically. School leaders, based conditions defined in an internal school regulation decide upon rewarding teachers with a credit salary rise.

The beginning teacher must complete adaptation program of continual education under the supervision of a mentor teacher in the first two years of employment. After that, the beginning teacher becomes an independent teacher. To make the next step, teachers must accumulate 30 credits and complete preparatory education program for certification or accumulate 60 credits. Teachers acquire certification after successful defense of a thesis and by passing a certification examination in front of a certification committee.

Based on their professional competences, all teachers are assigned to a career level. In addition, teachers may specialize in various career positions. The structure of career positions is determined by the school leader who decides whether the teacher is assigned to a career position. Teachers may specialize as class teachers, educational advisors, career advisors, mentor teachers etc. (For more information see Annex 15). Teachers may also specialize as chief pedagogical employees as and become school leaders, deputy leaders etc. Teachers, who specialize, must meet qualification requirements to perform pedagogical activities, must have completed adaptation education or may qualify by completing other types of continual programs.

Teachers, who perform specialized activities, are rewarded by corresponding salary allowances. This is the case of class teachers, mentor teachers, school leaders etc.

Teachers’ career may develop in three directions. First, teachers may seek lifelong retaining of standard pedagogical competences in line with the school requirements. Second, teachers may strive to acquire expert professional competences by the means of first and second certification. In the end, teachers may take the path of specialization. To this end, programs of continual education serve as a means of achieving individual career goals.

Adaptation programs help beginning teachers to acquire professional competences necessary for perform the tasks of an independent teacher. Specialization programs equip teachers with competences necessary to perform specialized activities. Functional programs equip teachers with managerial competences of school leaders. By means of updating program teachers maintain professional competences necessary for a standard delivery of teaching activities. It also serves as a preparatory education program for certification. The purpose of innovation program for teachers is to improve their professional competences necessary for a standard delivery of teaching activities.
Professional standards

312. New professional standards shall guide the professional development of teachers and specialist employees from pre-gradual preparation through the whole career development. Professional standards define set of professional competences for teachers and specialist employees at each career level. Individual programs of continual education will be adjusted according to the requirements defined in professional standards. Also, the standards shall help teachers to project their career paths (certification, specialization, school management). The standards were developed within the national project *Professional and career growth of pedagogical employees* by experts from Methodology and Pedagogy Center, Universities and praxis.

313. During 2014, the standards were discussed by founders, teachers’ unions, churches, Association of Municipalities in Slovakia (ZMOS) and State School Inspectorate (SSI). In November, school directors participated in meetings discussing the impact on continual education, certification of teachers and professional development.

Teachers’ compensation

314. Since 2009, teachers at schools and school facilities are classified into seven wage tariffs depending of their educational attainment and career level. Teacher belonging to the particular wage tariff is further classified into work class one or work class two. Teachers of special classes and special schools belong to work class 2. Other teachers belong to work class 1.

315. Compensation of teachers consists mainly of:

- Tariff salary,
- Personal allowance,
- Extra pay for specialized activities of a class teacher and mentor teacher,
- Salary bonus for credits,
- Allowance for managerial activities,
- Allowance for beginning teacher
- Allowance for working with students with disabilities and students from socially disadvantaged environment. (For more details see Annex 17).

5.3.4 Support staff

316. Support activities are necessary mainly in case of providing education to students with special educational needs. Support activities are delivered by teacher assistants and specialist employees (see Annex 18).

317. In 2011 – 2013, the number of assistants for socially disadvantaged students fluctuated from 278 to 335 assistants. Numbers of teacher assistants for students with disabilities and gifted students required by school founders keeps growing year by year. While in 2009 school founders asked for 785.6 teacher assistants, in 2012 it was already 1 338. From 1 September 2014, more than 890 new teacher assistants for children with disabilities and gifted children will arrive to schools. In total, 1 640 teacher assistants will help in schools, which will satisfy the demand of founders for the first time.

318. School can directly employ a school psychologist and/or a special educator.

319. In 2012 mainstream schools employed 204 school psychologists. 112 psychologists worked at basic schools, 49 psychologists worked at secondary vocational schools, 35 were at gymnasiums, 6 at kindergartens and 2 at conservatories. Compared to 2000, the number of school psychologist increased significantly, mostly in basic schools (2.5 times), secondary vocational schools (2 times) and gymnasiums (1.5 times). The number of school psychologist in special schools is stable. Special kindergartens and special basic schools employed 36 school psychologists and special secondary schools employed 7 school psychologists in 2012.

320. In 2012, mainstream schools employed 496 special educators; 456 at basic schools, 33 at secondary schools and 7 at kindergartens. Compared to 2000, the number of special educators at basic
grew 6-fold; at secondary schools more than a 3-fold growth but in kindergartens decreased 3-fold. There is only one special educator teacher at special secondary schools.

5.4 Organization of school leadership

321. School leaders together with school’s self-governing bodies and advisory bodies manage the school. However, the main deal of responsibility rests upon the school leader. In their absence, the school is run by the deputy leader. The school leaders receive professional managerial competences by completing functional programs of continual education.

5.4.1 School leadership arrangements

322. Each kindergarten, basic school and secondary school is managed by a school leader. The school management is the lowest, so-called micro level of school system management in the Slovak Republic. Besides school leaders, also school’s self-governing bodies (School Board, student school board) and director’s advisory bodies (e.g. pedagogical board, methodology association, study subjects committee, Art Board, etc.) participate on school management. External assistance to school leaders is provided mainly by the school founders. Administrative staff (controller, accountant, secretary etc.) is responsible for administrative arrangements.

323. Deputy leader substitutes school leader during his absence. School leader can also put deputy leaders in charge of different activities. Deputy leaders typically manage school’s economic activities and monitor implementing school’s objectives in education and care. Deputy leader also participates in evaluation of teachers’ and other employees’ work, prepares supporting documents for school budget, cares about efficiency of resource use, prepares timetable for the relevant school year and fills in statistical summaries.

5.4.2 Organization of school leaders’ work

Responsibility of the school management

324. School leader performs managerial activities together with teaching activities. School leader’s basic workload decreases with an increasing number of classes at school. The highest basic workload – 18 teaching hours per week are taught by a director at a basic school with only one class. On the other hand, director teaches 5 lessons a week at a basic school with 19 and more classes. Similar rules apply to school leaders at secondary schools and deputy leader. The rest of the director’s and his deputy leader’s weekly working time is spent on managerial activities.104

325. School leaders are responsible for:

- compliance with corresponding state education program,
- development and implementation of the school education program,
- development and implementation of the yearly plan of continual education,
- compliance with generally binding legal regulations related to the school’s or scope of activities,
- annual evaluation of the teaching staff and specialist employees,
- upbringing and education work of the school,
- budget, funding and efficient use of school’s financial resources,
- proper management of assets held or owned by school.

326. Founders provide school leaders with external assistance including expert and consulting activities, legal advisory services and cooperate with school leaders during the recruitment process.

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104 Director at a secondary school teaches from 3 to 8 lessons per week. The basic workload of a deputy at a basic school ranges between 8-12 lessons per week depending on number of classes. At a secondary school it ranges from 5-11 lessons per week. In certain cases defined by law, the basic director’s workload at secondary school and special secondary school can be reduced by 2–3 lessons per week.
Regional state authority provides consulting to founders and school leaders on organization of upbringing and education, catering services, activities with children and young people, free time education, health and safety regulations, etc.

**Training and education of school leaders**

The teaching staff and specialist employees must complete functional education to become school leaders. Candidates gain professional competences, which are necessary to perform managerial activities. Participants learn basic and expert managerial competences. Basic competences cover team leadership, stress management and strategic HR management. Expert competences cover individual management tools, such as audit (i.e. personal audit, organizational audit, process audit etc.) and project management. After seven years at latest, school leaders must have completed functional innovative education, which improve and update their managerial competences.

New professional standards were prepared also for future development and standardization of school leaders’ competences, and cover also efficient resource management. Professional standards represent a competence portfolio, and refer to various management areas including business and strategic school management. Thus, professional standards are expected to improve systematic preparation of managerial capacities for resource management.

**Compensation**

Compensation of school leaders reflects specific features of their managerial responsibilities. Like other teaching staff, school leader’s basic pay is derived from the corresponding wage tariff and work tariff. After meeting the qualification criteria, school leaders are assigned to the corresponding wage tariff based on their educational attainment and workload.

On top of the basic pay, school leaders are entitled to receive allowance for performing managerial activities. The allowance is calculated as a percentage from the corresponding wage tariff increased by 24%. For schools acting as legal entities, the allowance ranges from 12% to 50% depending on the founder’s territorial competence (nationwide, regional, district, local). For schools not acting as legal entities, the allowance ranges from 3% to 20% irrespective of the founder’s territorial competence. The amount of allowance for performing managerial activities as well as the amount of other allowances is decided by the employer.

**Teaching and learning environment within school**

Curriculum is developed both at the state and at the school level. The state controls the quality of education by means of the State School Inspectorate. At the school level, the school leader is responsible for teacher evaluation and quality of teaching. However there is no specification of the areas which should be subjected to internal control. Some traditional evaluation methods include class inspection, which gives teachers a feedback. It is noteworthy that contrary to other OECD average, Slovak schools are not under pressure from the parents’ side to increase academic standards.

**Curriculum development**

Educational content is developed on the state and on the school level. National Education Program (NEP) is a binding document defining the content of education for all levels of education. School Education Programs (SEP) constitute a second stage in the whole system of education program development.

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105 In case of schools not acting as legal entities, it is the founder who takes the role of employer (e.g. the municipal authority). If case of schools acting as legal entities it is the by the one who appointed the school director to the office.
School curriculum

334. Each school develops its own SEP, i.e. content, learning plan etc. which must comply with the corresponding NEP. School education program reflects specific needs taking into account parents’ requirements, employers’ proposals and needs but also those of children, students and other stakeholders. The number of instruction hours a week which schools may use to develop their own school education programs is defined by the corresponding state education program as a flexible compulsory curriculum.

335. Teachers can use their own initiative and allow schools to develop own profile on the competitive education market by adjusting national education standards (on top of the defined national minimum), organization of teaching (traditional subjects, project education, block teaching, etc.).

336. Development and implementation of a SEP requires teamwork of all pedagogical employees. It is recommended that SEP put more emphasis on variable organization of teaching – block teaching, individual forms of teaching, variable student assessment, opportunity to choose from a range of subjects.

337. Schools did not fully take advantage of the autonomy introduced by the school reform in 2008. Mainly absence of adequate training, which would provide teachers with necessary professional skills contributed to problems regarding the development of SEP. Lack of material and technical equipment, scarce didactic materials and limited financial resources caused problems too. In general, teachers did not have enough time and support to understand and adopt the goals of the reform. As a result, the division of curricula development between state and school was not consistent.

338. Schools find support in the Methodology for Development of SEP, which was elaborated by the National Institute for Education (SPU) and National Institute of Vocational Education (SIOV), Methodology for Development of SEP at kindergartens and Manual for Development of SEP at kindergartens.

5.5.2 Student assessment, school evaluation and development

Student assessment

339. Schools evaluate students on a regular basis. Students receive overall assessment of their results in individual subject in the middle and at the end of a school year. In general, results achieved by students are graded by means of a five-degree scale – from 1 (best results) to 5 (the worst results). Students’ behavior is classified using a four-degree scale (1 – very good, 4 – dissatisfactory).

340. Teachers of individual subjects are responsible for regular evaluation of students. Overall assessment of the student is discussed and approved by school Pedagogical Board. School education programs define subjects in which the students’ results are graded, and what methods and criteria shall be used. School may follow a manual issued by the Ministry of Education. The manual provides recommendations for evaluation and student assessment at basic schools and secondary schools

School evaluation

341. State controls the quality of education and care by means of State School Inspectorate (SSI). The senior chief state inspector, who is the main authority of SSI, submits to the Minister of Education an Annual Inspection Report. The Report presents information on the state of education, conditions and quality of education and care in Slovak schools, The Report is based on the results of inspections and quality assessment of schools, which reflects requirements of the Ministry, NUCEM and founders.

106 Schools can use the flexible school curriculum for subjects extending and improving the content of subjects included in the National Education Program, subjects chosen from a list of recommended subjects, own subjects prepared by school, subjects for students with special education needs who are not able to keep pace with their peers in standard lessons and are taught according to individual learning plan; special subjects for students with special education needs, experimentally verified innovative programs implemented in the teaching practice.

107 Report on the status and level of upbringing and education in schools and educational facilities
**Self-assessment of schools**

342. School leaders are responsible for evaluation at the school level. They prepare an *Annual Report on the School’s Educational Activities, Results and Conditions* and submit it to the school founder for approval and to the School Board for comments. The structure and content of the report is defined by relevant legislation and the methodological guidelines, which are binding. However, the report is mostly of a statistical nature and any evaluation statements are used rarely. Thus, the systematic self-assessment has not served its purpose so far.

343. Every school leader is responsible for the quality of upbringing and education process at their school. Only school leaders with insufficient professional and managerial competences neglect continual internal evaluation at least in some areas. There is no specification of the areas which should be subject to internal control. One way or another, the experience from implementation of internal control at schools proves that setting proper quality indicators constitute a much bigger problem.\(^{108}\)

344. Self-assessment at schools takes various forms. Generally, basic schools and secondary schools use the following forms of self-assessment: class inspections, polls and questionnaires, tests, analyses mainly based on the conclusions of SSI, based on evaluations performed by founder, etc.

345. Especially school education program is a tool, which plays an important role in internal quality assurance at schools. Before a SEP is approved, the school assesses the current quality of education, analyses conditions in which education is provided and conducts a SWOT analyses. However, schools were not given any tools and support to handle these activities.

**Evaluation of teachers**

346. Every school leader is also responsible for teacher evaluation and quality of teaching activities. However there is no regulation defining the form and methods, which can be applied. Traditional evaluation methods include class inspections which are used to monitor the teaching process and provide the inspected teachers with a feedback. Schools prepare internal assessments on their own using their own criteria.

347. Today, MPC provides more programs of continual education which cover the topics of self-assessment and human resource management. External evaluation of teachers can use only a limited number of tools. Carrier system based on continual education and promotion to higher qualification levels is one of them.

**School Development Plan**

348. The school leader elaborates and submits a two years *School Development Plan* to the founder for approval and to the School Board for comments. Evaluation and progress in implementation of the development plan is included in the *Annual School Report*, which is also prepared by the school leader. In praxis, school leaders typically prepare the development plan for the next five years, which is corresponds to the director’s tenure. As a part of the hiring process, the founder and the School Board may ask the candidate to present own concept of a school development plan.

349. According to the opinion of the school leaders, Slovak parents stand relatively well compared to the OECD average concerning voluntary activities for school and fund raising activities. On the other hand, parents and teachers are more interested in students’ behavior than students’\(^{108}\)

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\(^{108}\) School leaders evaluate mainly the school education program, results achieved by students, the school climate, cooperation with parents, teachers’ qualification, extracurricular activities of students, students’ participation at competitions etc.
performance. 26% of Slovak parents come to school to talk about the behavior from their own initiative, 19% about the performance. As much as 32% of parents come to school to discuss their children’s behavior from the teacher’s initiative, only 23% come to discuss the learning progress. (OECD, 2013b)\(^{109}\)

350. Slovak parents do not demand schools to increase academic standards. Only 10% of students visit schools, in which school leaders feel pressure from the majority of parents to hold high academic standards. On contrary, as much as 59% of students attend schools, which face pressure from minority of parents, and 31% visit schools from which parents do not demand high academic standards. (OECD, 2013b)\(^{110}\)

**Bullying**

351. According to school leaders, 98% of students attend schools, in which bullying does not disturb the school climate, which is 10 p.p. more than the OECD average. (OECD, 2013b) The issue of bullying was explored in several surveys.

352. Survey conducted by SSI examines the view of students on the problem of bullying in their schools. 19% of surveyed students in 80 basic schools experienced bullying on their own skin, 35% witnessed bullying and 9% behaved violently against their peers. (SSI, 2010) Similar situation was detected in earlier surveys. From 2007 to 2009 the number of students in basic schools and secondary schools witnessed or were victims of bullying slightly increased. (Bieliková a kol., 2009)

353. Schools may find basic information on bullying, prevention and problem solving in a “Methodological guidelines for prevention and problems solving concerning bullying”, which was issued by the Ministry of Education in 2009. SSI found out, that schools incorporated the issue of bullying into school documentation and materials on qualitatively different levels, often only in a general way. At the same time SSI states, that the cooperation between schools and professionals such as the police, diagnostic centers, Office of labor, social affairs and family is very good. (SSI, 2010)

**5.5.4 Teacher collaboration and professional learning**

354. The cooperation among teachers, as well as between teachers and school leaders, teachers and deputy leaders is organized and supported in the school leader’s advisory bodies. The advisory bodies are: the Pedagogical Board and the methodology bodies – the Methodology Associations and Subject Commissions.

**Pedagogical Board**

355. The Board consists of the school leader, deputy leaders, and pedagogical staff. The Board recommends the school leader on class teacher approval, allocation of teaching workload (number of instruction hours for individual teachers), school timetable, assessment of students’ behavior, teacher compensation etc. The Board submits proposals for changes in teaching process, comes up with suggestions for improving efficiency of school management, supports teachers’ self-reflection, actively participates in development of school education program, upbringing program, work plans, organization manual, evaluation of the pedagogical employees etc.)

**Methodology bodies**

356. Methodology Association consists of all pedagogical employees of the zero grade and grades 1-4 at basic school. Subject Committees consist of all pedagogical employees in charge of the particular subject or related subject at the second stage (grades 5-9) at basic school. The head of methodology body can be appointed to coordinate and plan teachers’ work, control teachers’ activities

\(^{109}\) 23 % of parents come to school to talk about the behaviour from their own initiative, 27% about the performance. 38% of parents come to school to discuss their children’s behaviour from the teacher’s initiative, and as much as 47% come to discuss the learning progress.

\(^{110}\) On OECD average, 21% of students attend schools which face pressure form the majority of parents, 46% of students are in schools under the pressure from minority of parents and 33% of students visit schools which do not face any pressure.
and discipline in the workplace, take responsibility for quality of teaching particular subjects, perform class inspections and analyze lessons in cooperation with teachers and school leaders.

5.6 Use of school facilities and materials

357. School buildings, classrooms and other premises can be leased out to legal entities or natural persons after founder’s approval. The teaching process or after-school activities of the students must not be disturbed and safety regulations as well as school leader’s instructions must be obeyed.

358. School buildings are usually occupied by children’s school clubs, which provide upbringing and education activities in the morning and afternoon hours during workdays. School clubs operate during the whole school year, during workdays usually from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. If so requested by legal representatives, School clubs may operate also during school holidays, if this is requested by parents. In 2013, 127 thousand children visited around 2100 school clubs. School buildings are also used to provide for evening education and external education.

5.7 Organization of education governance

359. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the governance of the school system at the central level. It does so with the help of a number of organizations established to perform particular tasks. Also, an important input and source of information is received form the results of the national standardized student assessment in the last year of basic school and at the end of upper secondary education.

5.7.1 Organization levels and units of the school system

360. Ministry of Education is the central managing authority in the school system. The Ministry established budgetary and contributory organizations, which assist the Ministry to perform its tasks. The organizations report directly to the Minister, who appoints and dismisses their statutory representatives (see the Box in Chapter 2.6.)

361. In 2012, the Ministry employed 456 employees and the budgetary and contributory organizations further 660 employees. Their compensation made EUR 14.5 million, which represents 1% of the total budget of the school system and 48% of the total administrative expenses in the school system. EUR 7.9 million was spent on compensation of the Ministry’s employees and EUR 6.6 million was spent on the compensation of employees of the budgetary and contributory organizations.

5.7.2 Evaluation and assessment procedures

Evaluation of schools, school leaders and teachers

362. The state controls and evaluates the level of the pedagogical management, upbringing and education at schools by means of the State School Inspectorate (SSI). The Inspectorate is in charge of external school evaluation, deals with complaints and petitions. SSI is managed by the Chief School Inspector, who is appointed and dismissed by the Minister of Education. The Inspectorate employs school inspectors to perform its activities.

363. The Chief School Inspector can submit a proposal to dismiss a school leader. The founder is obliged to dismiss the school leader, if the proposal is based on the detection of serious deficiencies. However, this occurs only in exceptional cases.

364. On regional and municipal level, school founders are regularly informed of the content of school evaluation reports. In case of serious deficiencies, founders are entitled to close the school. However, there were only few such cases, more frequent are school closures for financial reasons.

365. The school leader is in charge of teacher evaluation. Under the existing legislative, the school leader may apply various criteria teacher for evaluation. Despite that, most school leaders have
only limited possibilities to reward the best teachers as their salaries do not depend on any performance parameters.

**National testing of students**

366. Standardized quality evaluation of education falls under the competence of the National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements (NUCEM). The Institute performs nationwide standardized student assessment and conducts research and development in this area. It monitors results, the current state of education and development of education at all types of basic schools and secondary schools on the national level and analyses international assessments.

**Testing 9 and Testing 5**

367. NUCEM assesses students’ performance in the ninth grade of basic school, before applying to further studies at gymnasiums or secondary vocational schools (Testing 9). Students take tests in mathematics, Slovak, Hungarian and Ukrainian language. Results of Testing 9 are reflected by the student’s admission to secondary school. The Testing 9 shows students’ results on national, regional as well as school level. In 2015, a nationwide standardized testing will be implemented in fifth grades of basic schools (Testing 5), when the first selection of students into different school tracks takes place.

**External part of the Maturita examination**

368. After passing Maturita examination students of secondary schools receive a school leaving certificate (ISCED 3A), which is a prerequisite for admission to university studies. External (national) part of Maturita examination provides objective, standardized evaluation of students’ results. External Maturita assesses knowledge and skills which cannot be examined in the oral part of Maturita. It also enables to compare students’ results internationally. External Maturita also provides comparison of results on the regional and school level.

5.8 **Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions**

**Position of teachers in society - salaries**

369. Most professionals as well as the general public believe that today, teachers’ pay together with the opportunities for career growth, working environment and social status are crucial to the attractiveness of teachers’ occupation in Slovakia.

370. Slovak Chamber of Teachers suggests that country should concentrate on increasing teacher salaries, and bringing more specialist employees and teacher assistants into the school system. (SKU, 2014b) It is necessary to raise teacher tariff salaries by 10% every year, until they reach the level of the average pay of employees with the same educational attainment. (SKU, 2014a) The Teacher Unions express similar claims also for non-pedagogical employees. (OZPSAV, 2011) The Association of Municipalities suggests increasing the amount of financial resources for school leaders to decide on flexible raise of teacher compensation on top of their tariff salary (ZMOS, 2013)

371. The Slovak Chamber of Teachers sees paying teachers from different budgets (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, municipalities, self-governing regions) as a problem with respect to year-end bonuses. (Sita, 2014b) Some teachers may be rewarded at the end of the year and others not. Problems arise at schools and school facilities which are funded within original competences by municipalities that claim having insufficient funds to reward teachers at the end of the year. Teachers view this to be unfair and teachers’ unions as well as Slovak Chamber of Teachers therefore suggest that all employees working in the school system should be paid from the state budget. (Sita, 2014b)

372. The government sees teacher salaries as one of its priorities. Therefore, in 2013, 2014 and also 2015 teachers’ salaries grow by 5% every time The Ministry of Education will also prepare

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111 This concerns teachers of kindergartens, primary schools of art, language schools, free time centers, school clubs for children and other school facilities.
conditions for gradual increase of initial teachers’ salaries irrespective of their educational attainment. For the future increase of quality of education it will be necessary to adjust the compensation scheme of teachers to their teaching performance. Higher teacher compensation will also depend on more efficient teacher distribution in schools, reflecting the demographic development (decreasing number of students).

Career growth

373. According to the Slovak Chamber of Teachers, programs of continual education are not developed in cooperation with teachers. At the same time, accumulation of credits is today often the only way for teachers to get extra pay on top the tariff salary. (SKU, 2014b) The Association of Municipalities thinks that today’s system forces teachers to chase credits and does not motivate them to look up programs according to their content, quality and relevance in the teaching practice. Furthermore, there is lack of high quality programs about new trends in education, teaching and pedagogical methods. (ZMOS, 2013) Association of self-governing schools states that the credit allowance shall be abolished and the financial resources allocated to tariff salaries. (ZSSS, 2013) Also school leaders decide should not decide whether the teacher will get salary allowance for credits or not and the validity time should be unlimited. (SKU, 2014a)

374. Generally, teachers themselves confirm the reality described by various stakeholders. According to survey conducted by SKU in 2014,112 more than half of the teachers are not attracted by the offer of programs of continual education. On contrary, one third is satisfied. Relatively most of the teachers say that credit accumulation is the main motivation to engage in continual education, not education itself. 21% of surveyed teachers reported problems to be released from work to participate in continuing education (SKU, 2014c)

Evaluation of the school system

375. According to certain stakeholders the Slovak Republic has not developed any integrated model of school self-assessment, which would consist of evaluation criteria and corresponding quality indicators. Generally, schools look up the necessary information to gain knowledge on their own by studying professional literature or by means of continual education (mainly as a part of functional and functional innovative education). (NUCEM, 2012)

376. In the future, mutual compliance of standardized assessments (Testing 5, Testing 9, External Maturita) shall enable capture quality of education by added value indicators between individual levels of education at the school level. New quality indicators shall improve autonomy of school management.

377. Slovak Chamber of Teachers would welcome, if the national external assessments covered more subjects. Especially at secondary schools, all subjects of Maturita examination should be included. Today, national assessments provide biased and narrow picture about the quality of schools, which is then presented to general public, professionals and pedagogical institutions that take it for real. (SKU, 2014a)

378. According to the Institute for Economic and Social Reforms, more transparent disclosure of information on results of education would contribute to make better decisions. Accurate indicators of value added and effectiveness would help to decrease the uncertainty concerning the decision making about the amount and structure of investments in education. It would also make it possible to identify the best and the worst schools and on that basis support dissemination of best practice. (INEKO, 2014)

Class size and splitting classes into groups

379. Defining upper limits of class size is usually accompanied by a heated debate. In 2008, upper limits on class size were decreased to enable more individualized approach to students. From 2014, upper limits for second stage of basic schools as well as for all secondary schools may be increased by

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112 About 1 300 teachers mostly from kindergartens and basic schools (72 %) participated on the survey.
one student to arrive at higher efficiency in the school system.\textsuperscript{113} The Ministry originally planned to introduce sharper increase of upper limits, but after the comments from various stakeholders gave up on its intention.

380. For example, the Slovak Chamber of Teachers also denies increasing number of students in classes due to lack of capacities. Also, SKU enforces strict rules for splitting classes into groups by individual subjects. It should not depend on the director’s decision and school budget. (SKU, 2014a)

\textsuperscript{113} Also lower limits on class size for all types of schools were introduced.
6 Resource Management

381. The following chapter focuses on resource management at all levels of the school system. It explores the development of human resources for resource management and monitoring of utilization of available resources. The chapter further deals with transparency of financial funds management and incentives ensuring efficient use of funds.

6.1 Capacity building for resource management

382. At the school level, the efficient use of financial resources allocated to run the school falls under the responsibility of the school leader. Today, criteria for selection of school leaders do not include competences and skills reflecting the ability to manage these resources. Formal requirements comprise qualification criteria for execution of teaching activities, five years of work experience, first certification and completion of functional education within 3 years of service.

383. The development of necessary capacities in resource management is partly reflected by the functional education of school leaders. Functional education is a type of continual education provided by universities, Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (an organization directly reporting to the Ministry of Education) and educational organizations established by any other central government agency.

384. School leaders cooperate in terms of resources management with founders, the regional state authorities, or the Ministry of Education. School leaders discuss with founders the draft allocation of funds provided by the Ministry and the school economic report. Additionally, the founder provides schools and school facilities with professional and advisory services. Funds are allocated to schools based on precisely defined criteria, based on the data submitted via official forms and reports. In this respect, the regional authority is in charge of methodological guideline for all types of founders in normative financing, budgeting, reporting, etc.

6.2 Transparency, reporting and monitoring of resources use

385. The funding system is designed to generate incentives for efficient resource use. Per student financing encourages self-governments to use the funds allocated by the central government in the most efficient way. For example, a falling number of enrolled students leads to less funds for schools, which is a motivation to close or merge small and expensive schools. An important feature of the funding system is, that it partly provides money to schools in form of a block grant – the school can use the saved financial resources intended to cover operational expenditures (e.g. through energy savings), to increase teachers’ salaries, to purchase equipment, etc. (see section Funding of basic schools and secondary schools in section 4.1.2 Characteristics of public expenses.)

386. The general public is entitled to get information about the use of funds at schools based on the right to free access to information. Additionally, the law requires school leaders to disclose the Report on school upbringing and education activities at a usual place or on the school website, provided that such website exists. An integral part of the Report is data on financial and material support of educational activities. The financial statement of the school is attached to the Report too.

387. The law requires schools, which act as legal entities, to prepare a School economic report for the prior calendar year. The Report is submitted to the school founder. Founders are then obliged to submit a Summary Economic Report covering all schools falling under their competence to the regional state authority.

388. The Summary Economic Report is prepared by all founders of basic and secondary schools. Regional state authorities prepare also The Summary Economic Report of special kindergartens and school facilities falling under their founder’s competence. Other founders of kindergartens, primary schools of art and school facilities (municipalities, self-governing regions, private and church founders) prepare the Summary Economic Report only if in 2013 their special kindergartens, primary
schools of art and school facilities received funds via educational vouchers or received a contribution to cover upbringing and education of children one year before compulsory school attendance.

389. Regional state authorities submit the **Summary Economic Report** to the Ministry of Education for all founders falling under their territorial competence. The content and the format of the Summary Economic Report for the prior calendar year are published by the Ministry of Education at its website.

390. Economic reports provide a comprehensive overview of sources and use of funds not only at a national level, but also at the level of individual founders, and even on the level of individual schools and school facilities. However, not all schools are captured individually. This is the case of joint schools, basic schools with kindergartens, eight and four year gymnasiums etc. Data obtained from economic reports generally serve for detailed analysis, which is used for decisions of financial nature.

**Financial control**

391. Financial control is the basic tool enforcing efficient performance of the public administration at all levels of the school system. Preliminary financial control verifies every financial operation that is being prepared. Current financial control verifies only selected financial operations. Follow-up financial control verifies, *inter alia*, compliance of preliminary and current financial control with regulations. It controls if the measures adopted for the correction of the detected defects were applied and reasons for their occurrence eliminated. Mentioned types of financial control are performed by the Ministry of Education, the regional state authority and founders, school leaders and entitled school employees.

**Central level**

392. State controls the financing of basic schools and secondary schools and school facilities via the Ministry of Education and the regional state authorities. They focus mainly on the fulfillment of given laws with primary emphasis on:

- monitoring the transparency of financing, checking correctness of methods and procedures applied in financing of state schools, church schools, private schools and state school facilities,
- checking the correctness of methods and procedures applied in financing of kindergartens,
- checking the correctness of data provided to the Ministry on numbers of children at state kindergartens and schools provided to the Ministry,
- checking the correctness of methods and procedures applied in financing of free time education and care,
- checking the correctness of data provided to the Ministry on numbers of students of primary schools of art, language schools and children of kindergartens and school facilities a compliance with the filing deadlines,
- meeting the purpose of use of the granted financial funds in accordance with the law.

393. The Department of Control of the Ministry of Education is responsible for the control and financial audit. The Department controls primarily the funds provided by the state budget and funds from the European Union. The Ministry coordinates its audits with the Ministry of Finance and the Supreme Audit Office. The Department presents the yearly plan of its activities to the Minister of education, the **Summary Financial Management Report** and individual auditing reports to the Ministry of Finance.

394. Governmental audit is another tool of control, which is performed by the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education or the Financial Control Office with the permission of the Ministry of Finance. The main purpose and goals of the governmental audit are defined in the yearly plan of governmental audits. This audit can be done at the Ministry of Education, in the organizations controlled by the Ministry, at the regional level or at the municipality level. The objective of this audit is the setup and efficiency of the management and control systems, the fulfilment of the requirements
for receiving government funds and the control of other aspects of correct, effective and appropriate use of public funds.

395. The Supreme Audit Office acts as an independent state control body. The Office controls the efficient use of funds and of state and regions’ assets and funds from European Union. The Office is responsible for the control of the Slovak Government, ministries and other legal units established by municipalities, regions etc. The Supreme Audit Office performs its controls based on the yearly plan of controls, which is based on the strategic goals defined for the three-year period.

396. Controls and audits are focused on the fulfillment of law related to the use of public funds. However, there is little tradition of policy and program evaluation. Effective monitoring and evaluation of policies is a serious issue across the sectors of public administration in Slovakia. As OECD (2014d) concludes, particular attention should be paid to the development of indicators which appears to be fragmented and ad hoc.\(^{114}\) While responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of progress rests with the individual ministries, some central steering would be preferred to ensure coherence and consistency across the system. In particular, indicators need to be linked to a clear strategic policy objective, target and activity to achieve them. These indicators should be able to track at least results and outputs and possibly some impact.

**School level and school founders**

397. Founders of schools (regional authorities, municipalities and self-government regions) perform follow-up financial controls at their schools of funds from the state budget, general budget of the European Union. They also check efficiency and expediency of the use of assets.

398. At the school level, budget and efficient use of funds falls under the responsibility of the school leader. The school leader submits a draft budget to the founder for approval and to the School Board for comments. The system of financial management includes mainly preliminary financial control. The preliminary financial control follows procedures governed by internal school regulations prepared by the school leader. However, the obligation to issue an internal regulation is not clearly implied by the law.

399. Founders of schools as well as school leaders issue guidelines on the financial management of schools and school facilities. These guidelines define steps for planning, budgeting, accounting and reporting and financial control of public funds. They also define one comprehensive approach, basic rules, goals and process of the financial management. They also define basic terms and responsibilities of school management and other school employees.

**6.3 Main challenges and stakeholders’ opinions**

400. Effectiveness of the use of European funds in education is low. In the programming period 2007-2013, Slovakia managed to allocate only 32% of the total amount of available European funds for Operation program Education. Operational program Education supports implementation of reforms in education and vocational preparation and training, education of children with special needs including children form marginalized Roma communities, lifelong-learning and continual education of teachers etc.

401. Slovakia shall be able to increase the allocation from European funds for education thanks to the extension of the programming period 2007-2013 until 2015. According to some members of parliament committee for education, the ability to use the rest of the available resources is questionable. They point to high amount of unused resources, which are still available as well as slow progress in their allocation.

\(^{114}\) Some ministries have well-developed performance measurement systems in place, while others have not developed systematic processes to measure performance. Indicators developed by individual ministries mostly focus on inputs and tasks rather than outputs and outcomes. (OECD, 2014)
The critics see the problem in the state concentrating on complex national projects. Particularly, problems arise due to small number of public procurements. Their potential failure leads to the loss of great amount of financial resources. The Ministry, on the other hand sees the problem in too many small public procurements, which are often of poor quality and contain mistakes.

Management and control of European resource use is highly centralized, what may be a source of problems too. Financial support from structural funds is managed by the Ministry of Education through individual operation programs. The Ministry is responsible for implementation, correct and efficient of resource use of European resources and ensures compliance with rules set by the European and Slovak legislation. According to their own experience, various ministries claim, that local and regional authorities do not have the capacity to manage European funds.

The Slovak Chamber of Teachers claim, that only small share of European funds end up directly in schools. Too much is spent on project management, coordination etc. According to SKU, financial resources should be provided directly to schools, which would decide on their use. (SKU, 2014b)
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Act no. 317/2009 Coll. on pedagogical and specialist employees

Act no. 596/2003 Coll. on state administration in school system and school self-government

Act no. 597/2003 Coll. on funding of basic schools, secondary schools and school facilities

Ordinance no. 282/2009 Coll. of Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic on secondary schools

Ordinance no. 320/2008 Coll. of Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic on basic schools
Annexes

Annex No. 1 – Basic statistics

### BASIC STATISTICS OF SLOVAK REPUBLIC, 2013
(Numbers in parentheses refer to the OECD average)*

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<th>LAND, PEOPLE AND ELECTORAL CYCLE</th>
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<td>Population (million)</td>
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<td>Under 15 (%)</td>
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<td>Over 65 (%)</td>
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<td>Foreign-born (% 2011)</td>
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<td>Latest 5-year average growth (%)</td>
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<th>Life expectancy (years, 2012)</th>
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<td>Men</td>
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<tr>
<th>POPULATION DENSITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>per km²</td>
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<th>UNDER 15 (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life expectancy (years, 2012)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVER 65 (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATEST GENERAL ELECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECONOMY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross domestic product (GDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In current prices (billion USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In current prices (billion EUR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latest 5-year average growth (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita (1000 USD PPP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUE ADDED SHARES (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry including construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of GDP, 2012*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOREIGN-BORN (%, 2011)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP (Value added shares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In current prices (billion USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In current prices (billion EUR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latest 5-year average growth (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita (1000 USD PPP)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>EXTERNAL ACCOUNTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange rate (EUR per USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP exchange rate (USA = 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports of goods and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports of goods and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current account balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net international investment position</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROSS FINANCIAL DEBT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATEST GENERAL ELECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LABOUR MARKET, SKILLS AND INNOVATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate for 15-64 year-olds (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate for 15-64 year-olds (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hours worked per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CO2 EMISSIONS FROM FUEL COMBUSTION PER CAPITA (TONNES, 2011)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WATER ABSTRACTIONS PER CAPITA (1000 M3, 2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIVE POVERTY RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIETY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income inequality (Gini coefficient, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative poverty rate (%, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median equivalised household income (100 USD PPP, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and private spending (% of GDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (primary, secondary, post sec. non tertiary, 2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total primary energy supply per capita (toe, 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewables (%), 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine particulate matter concentration (urban, PM10, μg/m3, 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Better life index: <a href="http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org">www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Where the OECD aggregate is not provided in the source database, a simple OECD average of latest available data is calculated where data exist for at least 29 member countries. 1. 2013 for expenditure and revenue in Slovakia.

Source: Calculations based on data extracted from the databases of the following organisations: OECD, International Energy Agency, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Inter-Parliamentary Union.
Annex No. 2 – Statistics of schools, students and classes

Table 10: Kindergartens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td>3,180</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,887</td>
<td>2,849</td>
<td>2,618</td>
<td>2,773</td>
<td>2,765</td>
<td>2,704</td>
<td>2,743</td>
<td>2,724</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>church</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,210</td>
<td>3,046</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>2,928</td>
<td>2,910</td>
<td>2,871</td>
<td>2,873</td>
<td>2,859</td>
<td>2,865</td>
<td>2,861</td>
<td>2,870</td>
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</table>

Table 11: Basic Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
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<td>2,217</td>
<td>2,173</td>
<td>2,146</td>
<td>2,112</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>2,063</td>
<td>2,046</td>
<td>2,023</td>
<td>2,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>church</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2,387</td>
<td>2,342</td>
<td>2,304</td>
<td>2,283</td>
<td>2,254</td>
<td>2,227</td>
<td>2,218</td>
<td>2,202</td>
<td>2,177</td>
<td>2,159</td>
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Table 12: Gymnasiums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>161</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>156</td>
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<td>151</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>church</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>246</td>
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</table>

Source: UIPS
### Table 13: Vocational schools

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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>628</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>469</td>
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</table>

### Table 14: Conservatories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>church</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 15: Employees in the school system based on the source of funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of funding</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>76278</td>
<td>68779</td>
<td>65247</td>
<td>64603</td>
<td>63570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>76278</td>
<td>68779</td>
<td>65247</td>
<td>64603</td>
<td>63570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of funding</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-teaching staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>23769</td>
<td>22268</td>
<td>21546</td>
<td>21103</td>
<td>21189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23769</td>
<td>22268</td>
<td>21546</td>
<td>21103</td>
<td>21189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of funding</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employees</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>43746</td>
<td>38565</td>
<td>37095</td>
<td>36959</td>
<td>36405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>38526</td>
<td>33880</td>
<td>32656</td>
<td>32028</td>
<td>31606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>27420</td>
<td>24810</td>
<td>23630</td>
<td>23024</td>
<td>22600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>109718</td>
<td>96255</td>
<td>88480</td>
<td>82501</td>
<td>78305</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UIPS

Note: The category specialist employee has been recorded from 2009. It was defined by then new Act on pedagogical employees and specialist employees.
Annex No. 3 – Education targets

Under ET 2020, a number of benchmarks have been set concerning pre-primary and secondary education. Benchmark concerning early school leaving has been taken up as one of Europe 2020 strategy headline targets, which Slovakia committed to achieve.

Table 16: Selected outcome indicators for education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NPR</th>
<th>ET 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td></td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(arithmetic average of the scores)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early school leaving</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(%, population age 18 - 24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECEC</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(%, children aged 4 - 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low achievement</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(%, population aged 15 below Level 2 on PISA scale)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate of recent graduates</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(%, upper secondary graduates aged 20-34)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National reform program 2014, Education and Training Monitor 2012

Table 17: PISA outcomes and early school leaving - international comparison (2005 - 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>SK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(arithmetic average of the scores)</td>
<td>OECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early school leaving</td>
<td>SK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(%, population age 18 - 24)</td>
<td>EU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National reform program 2014
Annex No. 4 – Internal organization of the Ministry of Education

Source: MSVV SR (2014)
Annex No. 5 – External assessments of students’ performance

TIMMS 2011 and PIRLS 2011 (ISCED 1)

405. In 2011, students of the fourth grades at basic schools participated for the third time in the PIRLS international testing of reading literacy. Slovak students achieved similar results as an average student of involved EU and OECD countries. The average performance of Slovak students is improving, from 2001 by 17 points on PIRLS scale.\(^\text{115}\) (NUCEM, 2013a)

406. In 2011, students of the fourth grades at basic schools engaged for the second time (first in 2007) in the TIMMS international testing of key mathematical and natural science competences. In mathematics, Slovak students scored significantly worse than average students of involved EU and OECD countries. On the other side, Slovak students achieved significantly better results in natural science.\(^\text{116}\) In both cases Slovak students improved only a little from 2007 to 2011. (NUCEM, 2013)

407. In 2011, students from Bratislava region achieved best results both in TIMMS and PIRLS, followed by students from Trenčín and Prešov regions. As many as 60% of Bratislava students scored high or the highest level in reading and 47% in mathematics. On the other hand, 8% of Bratislava students achieved the lowest level in reading literacy and 17% of Bratislava students achieved the lowest level in mathematic literacy. Students from other regions achieved statistically worse results. (NUCEM, 2013a)

Graph 19: High and low achievers in PIRLS and TIMMS 2011 by regions

A. Reading

B. Mathematics

Source: NUCEM

PISA 2012 (ISCED 2)

Mathematical literacy

In 2012, Slovakia achieved 482 points in mathematics. It is significantly less than in any previous PISA cycle.\(^\text{117}\) For the first time since 2003 Slovakia experienced a significant drop below the OECD average and now lags behind by 12 points. Slovak students achieved similar results as countries

\(^\text{115}\) 22 EU countries and 24 OECD countries participated in PIRLS 2011. Between 2001 – 2006 Slovak students significantly improved their performance by 13 points In 2011 Slovak students improved by 4 however the result was not statistically significant.

\(^\text{116}\) 21 EU countries and 25 OECD countries participated in TIMMS 2011. In mathematics, Slovak students earned 507 points, EU 21 students 519 points, and OECD students 521 points. In science, Slovak students earned 532 points, EU 21 students 521 points and OECD students 523 points.

\(^\text{117}\) Compared to 2009, the results show a drop by 15 points on average.
ranking 23th – 29th from among 34 OECD countries. Only students in Israel, Greece, Turkey, Chile and Mexico achieved a significantly lower performance than Slovak students.³¹⁸ (OECD, 2014)

Slovak students with the lowest ESCS fall behind similar students in OECD. Furthermore, the negative effect of parents’ unemployment on students’ results in Slovakia is one of the largest across OECD countries.

Graph 20: Slovakia results in PISA 2012

A. Score point difference between Slovak and OECD students by performance category

B. Relationship between score and ESCS

Source: OECD PISA 2012, EPI (2014)

Distribution of results by school types

As well as in 2009, also in 2012 students from secondary vocational schools without Maturita achieved most problematic results. Both in mathematics and reading proficiency as many as 71% of these students are classified as a vulnerable group which is 9 p.p. more than in 2009. Similar situation occurs at basic schools, where 38% of students scored lower than level 2 on PISA scale, which is 6 p.p. more than in 2009. (NUCEM, 2013b)

Graph 21: PISA – Distribution of students by proficiency – reading level

Source: NUCEM (2013b)

³¹⁸ Countries like Norway, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Russian Federation, USA, Lithuania, Sweden and Hungary achieved similar results to Slovakia.
Slovak non-state schools achieved by 42 points better results in mathematics than state schools, compared to a 28 score point difference in OECD countries. After the adjustment of both students' and school's ESCS the difference decreased to seven score points in favour of non-state schools. (NUCEM, 2013b)

**Reading literacy**

Slovakia earned 463 points in reading literacy and ranked 32nd among 34 OECD countries, which is the worst standing PISA 2003 testing. Only Chile and Mexico achieved significantly lower results. Overall results got worse in almost all types of school (except for 4 year gymnasiums). Slovakia is losing 34 points on OECD average, which is the largest difference since 2003. Compared to 2009, Slovak students earned 15 points less, while OECD countries improved their performance by 3 points on average. (OECD, 2014a)

As much as 28.2% of Slovak students achieve results below level 2 and belong to the vulnerable group. Compared to 2009, it is an increase by 6 p. p., fastest among OECD countries. The vulnerable group has increased in basic schools, secondary vocational schools without Maturita, and secondary vocational schools with Maturita. (OECD, 2014a)

**Scientific literacy**

In scientific literacy, Slovak students earned 471 points and ranked 28th–31th among 34 OECD countries, 30 points below average. Only Turkey, Chile and Mexico achieved significantly worse results. Compared to 2009, Slovak students lost 19 points while the OECD average remained unchanged. (OECD, 2014a)

As much as 27% of Slovak students scored under level 2 on PISA scale, which is the fourth largest proportion in OECD countries. Moreover, compared to 2009, the vulnerable group increased by 7.6 p.p., fastest among all OECD countries. Here again, the decrease in the proficiency level refers to almost all types of schools. (OECD, 2014a)
Annex No. 6 – Activities financed within original competences

Within their original competences in education, municipalities finance:

- expenses for education and upbringing: (i) students of primary schools of art, students of language schools, children at kindergartens and school facilities run by municipalities, (ii) students of schools of art, students of language schools, children at kindergartens schools and school facilities run by non-state founders aged below 15;
- expenses for catering: (i) students of schools run by municipalities, (ii) students of schools run by non-state founders under the age of 15, (iii) students of basic schools and special basic schools for students with special educational needs run by regional state authority, provided that students use the services of the school catering facilities run by municipality or a non-state founder. Expenses related to acquisition and maintenance of school buildings and school facility buildings run by municipalities.

Within their original competences in education, self-governing regions finance:

- expenses of education and upbringing: (i) students of primary schools of art, students of language schools and children’s school facilities run by self-governing regions, (ii) students of primary schools of art, students of language schools a children’s school facilities run by non-state founders above 15 years of age, expenses for catering: (i) students of schools falling run by self-governing regions, (ii) students of schools run by non-state founders aged above 15 years, (iii) students of secondary schools, secondary schools for students with special educational needs, apprentice training centres and practical schools run by regional state authorities, provided that students use the services of the school catering facilities run by self-governing region, a church or private founder.
- expenses related to acquisition and maintenance of school buildings and school facility buildings run by self-governing region.
Annex No. 7 – Flow of funds from central level to school level

Primary and lower secondary schools

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport

Ministry of Interior

Municipality

School head

Teacher assistants’ salaries for SEN and gifted pupils

Teaching and non-teaching staff

Administration, cleaning products, heating

Textbooks

New technologies, specialized teaching materials, computers, maintenance, renovation, buildings

Catering, meals, transport

Extra-curricular activities

Local taxes and other form of municipal income

Specific resources: STAFF

Operational goods and services

Capital

Other

The diagram shows the situation of the 74% of primary and lower secondary schools that have the status of a ‘legal body’. For primary and lower secondary schools without this status, funding goes directly to schools from the municipality and not to the school head as shown in the diagram.

Alternatively to what is shown in the diagram, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport can distribute funding for specific resources directly to schools instead of allocating it through the municipality.

Gymnázia (general upper secondary schools)

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport

Region

School head

Teacher assistants’ salaries for SEN and gifted pupils

Teaching and non-teaching staff

Administration, cleaning products, heating

Textbooks

New technologies, specialized teaching materials, computers, maintenance, renovation, buildings

Catering, meals, transport

Extra-curricular activities

Regional taxes and other form of income

Specific resources: STAFF

Operational goods and services

Capital

Other

All upper secondary schools have the status of a ‘legal body’.

Alternatively to what is shown in the diagram, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport can distribute funding for specific resources directly to schools instead of allocating it through the region.
Annex No. 8 – Normative funding - budget creation and calculation of normatives

Most of the total budget allocated to basic schools and secondary schools is based on a so-called “normative principle.” It means that the budget allocated for a school is based on the number of its students and the sum of money earmarked per-student per year – i.e. the normative.

Process of resource allocation and calculation of normatives

1) The total normative budget (in the Ministries’ budget chapters) which covers total current expenditures is split between personnel expenditures and other current expenditures. The corresponding shares of allocation are defined by the Ministry of Education.

2) The budget which covers other current expenditures is further allocated for:
   a. heating – it reflects average expenditures on heating from the last three calendar years
   b. educational and upbringing process – at least 15% of the budget which is allocated to cover other current expenditures
   c. further education of pedagogical employees – 1.5% of the budget which is allocated to cover personnel expenditures
   d. other current expenditures other than heating – it is the balance after subtracting a, b and c from the budget allocated for other current expenditures.

The student normative is the sum of the wage normative and operating normative for a given school category.

The salary normative

The salary normative represents weighted personnel costs of employees per-student. It is calculated for different school categories. The wage normative is calculated by multiplying:

- basic salary normative, which is calculated as the budget allocated for personnel expenditures divided by the weighted number of students,\(^{119}\)
- coefficient of personnel intensity corresponding to the school category a given school belongs to. It reflects the number of students per pedagogical employee and number of non-pedagogical employees per one pedagogical employee for given school category.
- coefficient of qualification structure of the pedagogical employees of a given school (as of 15 September of previous calendar year). It is calculated according to the employees’ wage tariff, working class and credit allowance.

The wage normative is calculated for 24 different school categories: basic schools, gymnasiums, sport gymnasiums, conservatories, 15 different categories of vocational secondary schools, apprenticeship centers, special basic schools, special secondary schools, special secondary vocational schools, apprenticeship schools and practical schools

Operating normative

The operating normative represents weighted current costs other than personnel costs per-student. The operating normative is calculated by summing four different normatives:

a) heating normative, which is calculated by multiplying the basic heating normative and coefficient of heating intensity for a given school category, whereby the coefficient reflects 8 different temperature zones.

b) normative of educational and upbringing process, which is calculated by multiplying the basic normative of educational and upbringing process and coefficient of the economic

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\(^{119}\) I.e. employees who deliver education and upbringing process and employees who are in charge of operations.

\(^{120}\) The weighted number of students is derived from the actual (real) number of students and reflects the coefficient of personnel intensity and the coefficient of qualification structure of pedagogical employees at schools. In other words, the weighted number of students is a sum of a weighted number of students reflecting the coefficient of personnel intensity and weighted number of students reflecting the coefficient of qualification structure at schools for different school categories.
intensity of the process for a given school category. The coefficient reflects the values of the coefficient of personal intensity of a given school category.

c) **normative of further education of pedagogical employees**, which is calculated by multiplying of the corresponding salary normative and the number 0.015.

d) **normative of operation other than heating**, which is calculated by multiplying the basic normative of operation other than heating and coefficient of operating intensity (6 categories). The coefficients reflect the average costs of operations other than heating for corresponding school category.

All basic normatives are calculated by dividing financial resources allocated for a given purpose (section 1.1.1., point 2 - a, b, c, d) by the weighted number of students. The weighted number of students reflects the actual (real) number of students and corresponding coefficients.

**Adjustment of normatives**

Normatives can be further increased or decreased according to various criteria.

- Salary normative and normative of educational and upbringing process for at schools with **other than Slovak language of instruction** is 8% higher.
- Salary normative and normative of educational and upbringing process in bilingual study programs is 25% higher.
- Salary normative in **zero grade** at basic school is 100% higher.
- The student normative for **evening classes** is 40% of the student normative for daily form of study. The student normative for **other forms other than daily form** of study is 10% of the student normative.
- The student normative for students **in prison** (daily form) is 300% of the student normative. The student normative for students **attending individual form of study** in prison is 30% of the student normative.
- The student normative for **integrated students** with disabilities and integrated gifted students in mainstream basic schools and mainstream secondary schools is defined according to the corresponding category of disability and talent.
- The student normative for students of basic schools, who attend **sport training classes**, is 8% higher.
- The student normative for **students attending vocational training in apprenticeship training centre** is 60% of the student normative for students of corresponding vocational school category.
- The student normative for **students attending vocational training in vocational training centre or in school farm** is 6% resp. 80% of the student normative for students of corresponding vocational school category.

**School budget**

The **school budget** (of a particular school belonging to a given school category) is calculated as follows:

\[
\text{School budget} = \text{Weighted number of students}_{\text{salary}} \cdot \text{Salary normative} + \text{Weighted number of students}_{\text{heating}} \cdot \text{Heating normative} + \text{Weighted number of students}_{\text{edu. and upbring. process}} \cdot \text{Normative of educational and upbringing process} + \text{Weighted number of students}_{\text{salary}} \cdot \text{Normative of further education of pedagogical employees} + \text{Weighted number of students}_{\text{operations other than heating}} \cdot \text{Normative of operation other than heating}
\]

In other words, the school budget is the sum of the products of corresponding weighted number of pupils and corresponding normatives.
Further particularities of normative funding

Additionally, the system includes two special measures which were originally defined only for the transitional period during the implementation of per-student funding in 2004. However, the measures are used until today: compensatory allowance and bargaining procedure.

- **Compensatory allowance** - Basic schools with lower number of students receive a higher per-student normative by means of a so-called compensatory mechanism. Higher per-student normative is applied on the territory of a municipality, where a founder runs school with less than 250 students of the same language of instruction. A basic school with number of students between 1 – 150 gets 1.495 fold of the normative, which then decreases with increasing number of students of the school down to 1.0 (for 250 students). The compensation does not apply for secondary schools and special schools.

- **Bargaining procedure** results in additional normative contribution due to lack of funds for personnel costs and other operating costs. The founder requests for additional resources in the course of a calendar year. Founders also receive funds to cover the costs related to Maturita examination. In 2012, EUR 28.5 million were paid within bargaining procedure which accounted for approximately 2.1% of the total normative budget for schools. Approximately 98% of this amount was used to cover personnel costs and the rest to cover operating costs.

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121 The mechanism counts students of a founder in the territory of each municipality. If there are two different founders in the territory of a municipality and both have schools with less than 250 children, then both are entitled to a compensatory allowance. Similarly, one founder with two small schools in two municipalities is entitled to receive the compensatory allowance.
Annex No. 9 – Non-normative funding

According to the act 597/2003 on funding of basic schools, secondary schools and school facilities

There are also non-normative items, which are not reflected in the per-student normative. They include students’ travel costs, teacher assistants, extraordinary student performance, development projects, contribution for education of socially disadvantaged students, emergency situations and educational vouchers.

- **Pre-primary education.** From 2008 Pre-primary education is provided free of charge to children one year before the start of their compulsory school attendance.

- **Retirement benefits** can be provided to an employee up to the amount of his/her two average monthly salaries.

- **Teacher assistants for the disabled.** Numbers of teacher assistants for students with disabilities and gifted students required by school founders keeps growing year by year. While in 2009 school founders required 785.6 jobs of assistant teachers, in 2012 it was 1 338 jobs. From 1 September 2014, more than 890 new teacher assistants for children with disabilities and gifted children will arrive to schools. In total, 1 640 teacher assistants will help in schools, which will satisfy the demand of founders for the first time. In the last years the Ministry was not able to keep pace with the rapid increase of founders’ needs. In 2013, only half of the required positions were filled. After the negotiations between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance additional 2.3 million euro were allocated to cover the compensation of new teacher assistants in 2014.

- **Students’ travel costs.** A support provided by the state includes payment of transportation costs for students of basic schools and special basic schools completing their compulsory school attendance outside the place of their permanent residence within a defined school district. In 2014 the funds granted for transportation made almost EUR 8 million. In 2012, the funds for transportation were granted to more than 61 thousand students, which made an average amount of EUR 130 per-student.

- **Contribution for education of socially disadvantaged students.** Founders of basic schools and special basic schools can receive a contribution for improving conditions of education and care of socially disadvantaged students.\(^{122}\) Total contribution per school is calculated as a product of the per-student amount of contribution and the number of socially disadvantaged students attending the school. The contribution per-student was increase in 2012 from EUR 90 to EUR 100. From 2009 to 2012 the share of the contribution increased from 0.42% to 0.5% of total current expenditures.\(^ {123}\) The contribution can is mainly used to cover the salarys of teacher assistant and for class equipment, didactic technology and teaching materials. Founder of a basic school with more than 100 socially disadvantaged students must use at least 50% of the total contribution to pay teacher assistants. In 2011–2013, the number of assistants for socially disadvantaged students fluctuated from 278 to 335 and finally 328 assistants.

- **From 2004, educational vouchers** serve for financing of hobby and leisure activities for students of elementary schools and secondary schools. Students give the educational vouchers

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122 For the purpose of providing the contribution, a socially disadvantaged student is defined as a student, who receives a contribution for food and teaching materials and, at the same time, the student comes from a family receiving benefit in material need and contributions to the benefit in material need or it is a student from a family with the average monthly income for the last six consecutive lower than the amount of the subsistence minimum.

123 Since 2006 financing of socially disadvantaged students has been changed several times. From 2006 to 2008, there was no separate contribution for socially disadvantaged students. The funds were allocated as a part of non-normative expenses for teacher assistants for students facing language and social barrier at school. In 2009 and 2010 the funds for socially disadvantaged students were separated from contributions for teacher assistant and included in the normative expenses. Since 2011 the contribution has been provided as a non-normative expense.
to providers of hobby and leisure education activities, such as schools and school clubs for children (approximately 89% of used educational vouchers). In September 2012 only 11% of educational vouchers were used in other primary schools of art, language schools, kindergarten schools and school facilities. In 2012, 82% of students joined this scheme. In 2012 the financial funds spent for educational vouchers amounted to EUR 17.6 million, which is approximately 1.5% of total current expenses intended for financing of regional education. In 2012–2014, the value of one educational voucher is EUR 29.3.

- **Emergency situations – current expenditures.** Each year, the Ministry of Education allocates resources from its budget chapter to address emergency situations, reconstructions and modernization of school buildings. The money is used to restore boiler rooms, roofs, and replacement of windows, doors, floors and repairs of sanitary premise.

**Other (not included in the act 597/2003)**

- **Textbooks.** Teachers use textbooks approved and/or recommended by the Ministry of Education. Approved textbooks, study texts and workbooks, including their transcript in Braille writing or other proper forms of transcription are provided to schools by the Ministry of Education free of charge.

- **Infovek** was the key project of the Ministry of Education in informatization of basic schools and secondary schools in 1999 – 2010. Schools were gradually equipped with computers, all schools were connected to internet, teachers were provided extensive trainings to work with ICT, IS and computer classroom administration. Since 2010, the project continues under the name Infovek 2 with a perspective to 2015. One of the benefits of the project is an across-the-board expansion of WiFi technology in all basic schools and secondary schools.

- **Students’ competitions.** Students participate in competitions at the school level, regional level, national and international level. These are financially supported by the Ministry of Education.

- **Emergency situations – capital expenditures** (the same as previous)

- **Development projects.** Financial resources have been used to support various projects such as Environmental Project, Digitalisation of school libraries, Health and security in schools, Psychological and special pedagogical consultancy, Development of positive school climate and motivation in multicultural classes, Projects for Roma communities etc.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
<th>Budget Chapter of the Ministry of Education</th>
<th>Budget Chapter of the Ministry of Interior</th>
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<td>3 973</td>
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<td>Non - normative expenditures (not included in act n. 597/2003)</td>
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Annex No. 10 – Strategies of the ICT Use in Schools

In 1999 – 2010, Infovek was the key project of the Ministry of Education in informatization of basic schools and secondary schools. Under this project, schools were gradually equipped with computers, all schools were connected to internet, teachers were trained to work with ICT, IS and computer classroom administration. Since 2010, the project continues under the name Infovek 2 with a perspective to 2015. One of the benefits of the project is an across-the-board expansion of WiFi technology in all basic schools and secodanry schools (as at 31.12. 2013 it was available at 2,364 from total number 2,901 schools).

There have not been any experiences with the transfer of knowledge from large schools to small schools regarding the use of ICT. However, the idea of present and future use of ICT in Slovak schools is well conceptualized and already under implementation. The approach to further development of education in terms of global trends in digitalization and development needs of Slovakia are presented in the Concept of informatization of the education sector with forecast to 2020 (DIGIPEDIA 2020). The key objective of the concept of implementation of ICT to schools is to ensure by 2020 the following:

- digital educational and teaching aids (such as interactive boards or overhead projectors) in each class of kindergarten, basic schools and secondary schools and universities,
- broadband safe internet for every kindergarten, Basic school and secondary school and university,
- adequate terminal allowing digital education for every student,
- fully digitalized learning materials and tools available at all schools in Slovakia,
- adequate terminal allowing digital education for every teacher.

The Planet of Knowledge (Planéta vedomostí) is the first large project of digitalisation of the education content in line with the Concept of informatization of the education sector with forecast to 2020 (DIGIPEDIA 2020). The education portal Planet of Knowledge is a comprehensive tool for schools and their teachers that serves for preparation of teaching materials for working with students during lessons and subsequent control of homework prepared by students. Teachers can register themselves to the portal, free of charge, and thus have the possibility to develop presentations and preparations for lessons and assign homework to students. Every teacher can attend free methodological trainings in 24 training centres, to familiarize with the digital education content. Since the beginning of the school year 2013/2014 the Planet of Knowledge has been launched with an interactive access of all basic schools and secondary schools. In May 2014, more than 14 thousand of teachers of basic schools and secondary schools were registered at the portal.

Content redesign of education at basic schools and secodanry schools using innovative forms and methods of teaching is governed by the Modern Education NP – digital education for general-education subject. The National Project was launched at the end of 2012 under the sponsorship of the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education. Since the beginning of 2014 implementation of the NP is in the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information of the Slovak Republic and it is financed from funds of the Education OP. Under the national project, interactive classrooms will be purchased and delivered to involved schools; the classrooms will be equipped with an interactive board, notebook and sound distribution. Digital objects will be developed in cooperation with active teachers, in accordance with the State education program (by ISCED scale) for 11 general education subject.

124 The Planet of Knowledge portal presents tens of thousands of multimedia and interactive educational materials for the needs of modern education and a tool for preparation and development of own presentations for lessons. It offers a set of digital and interactive materials for mathematics, physics, chemistry, natural science and biology in form of videos, animations, simulations, presentations and illustrations. The portal also provides 3D models, pictures, photos and other multimedia components. The access Planet of Knowledge portal is free of charge and it is permanent for all basic schools and secondary schools in Slovakia.

125 Teachers can win attractive prizes at the Planet of Knowledge – Press Release of the Ministry of Education (6.11. 2013)
Annex No. 11 – Statistics of students with disabilities

Table 19: Integrated students by type of disability

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Disabilities total | 796 | 868 | 892 | 642 | 592 | 496 | 502 | 491 | 519 | 481 | 568 |

Socially disadvantaged | 2145 | 3779 | 4585 |

Source: UIPS

Table 20: Disadvantaged students in special kindergartens

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TOTAL | 66 | 67 | 38 | 41 | 40 | 43 | 45 | 40 | 56 | 51 | 51 |

Source: UIPS
### Table 21: Disadvantaged pupils in special basic schools

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Source: UIPS

### Table 22: Disadvantaged students in special secondary schools

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<td>123</td>
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</table>

Source: UIPS
Annex No. 12 – Educational consulting and prevention system

The Pedagogical and Psychological Consulting and Prevention Centres (CPPPaP) and Special Pedagogical Consulting Centres (ČSPP) are the key components of the educational consulting and prevention system. Professional care is provided to children from birth until completion of their preparation for their future jobs, the child’s legal representatives and to teaching staff.

The centres provide professional care to children to optimize their personal, educational and professional development, develop their gifts, eliminate the defects in mental development and behavioral disorders. Experts employed by the consulting centres assist children in their social integration, mainly through psychological, pedagogical and special pedagogical activities including speech therapy, curative pedagogy and social care. Unlike Pedagogical and Psychological Consulting and Prevention Centres, the key target group for Special Pedagogical Consulting Centres are children with disabilities.

The consulting system includes also further components, such as educational consultant, school psychologist, school special educator, therapy teacher, social educator and prevention coordinator. They operate at schools and school facilities. A substantial part of their activities is focused on children and students with special education needs.

Special educational facilities

Special educational facilities include: diagnostic centre, re-education centre and therapeutic and educational sanatories. Special educational facilities focus on diagnostic, psychological and mental therapy and re-education care. They educate children at the relevant education level. Children are placed in special educational facilities upon a request filed by their legal representative or based on a court ruling.

- Diagnostic centres provide mainly diagnostics of children and consulting services and define further proper care. They assist children and their parents in identification of likely reasons and symptoms of behavioral disorders and verify proper treatment procedures considering the specific situation in the family and at school.\(^\text{126}\)
- Re-education centres are in charge of re-education and education of children and young people, in cases when upbringing and education in other facilities or in the family environment would not result in correction.
- Therapeutic and educational sanatories focus on diagnostics and correction of learning disabilities, activity and attention disorders, development of abilities and re-education of any form of addiction including prevention. The mission of a therapeutic and educational sanatory is to provide children with therapy and education focused on treatment of their emotional conditions and relations in their family and at schools, which could not be eliminated by an outpatient treatment. A sanatory can organize e.g. ski courses, swimming lessons, camps, trips and common stays of children with their legal representatives.

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\(^{126}\) A child can be placed in a diagnostic centre for a time necessary to define the relevant diagnosis or re-education. During the stay at the centre, the child is subject to a comprehensive pedagogical and mental diagnostics, education and correction of improper behaviour, individual and group therapy. An integral part of the activities performed by the professional staff are consulting services provided to persons directly participating in the upbringing and education of children with special education needs.
Annex No. 13 – Statistics of student population by language of instruction at basic schools

Table 23: Student population by language of instruction at basic schools

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<td>378 385</td>
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<td>326 260</td>
<td>326 260</td>
<td>326 260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
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<td>490 283</td>
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<td>240 223</td>
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</table>
Annex No. 14– Career levels

Career levels of pedagogical employees - teachers (applies also to specialist employees)

a) **Beginning teachers** perform their teaching activities under supervision of a mentor teacher. The beginning teacher must attend adaptation course and to complete it in first two years of service. Beginning teacher can perform specialised activities of a class teacher in one class. A teacher is classified as a beginning teacher when he/she joins his/her first employment contract, which involves teaching activities.

b) **Independent teachers** perform teaching activities independently. An independent teacher is allowed to perform specialised activities other than activities of the mentor teacher. A teacher is classified as an independent teacher after successful completion of the adaptation course.

c) **Teacher with first certification** is competent to perform activities of the independent teacher plus activities of:
   - mentor teacher,
   - teacher at training schools or training school facility,
   - teacher - leader,
   - teacher of continual education, provided that he/she performed teaching activities or specialised activities for at least seven years,
   - member of the examination committee for completion of the adaptation course,
   - member of the examination committee for the first certification.

A teacher is classified as a “teacher with the first certification”, after passing first certification and also a teacher with at least three years of teaching experience who received a doctorate in a field of study related to performance of his/her pedagogical activities.

d) **Teacher with second certification** is competent to perform activities of the teacher with the first certification plus activities:
   - sponsor of a continual education program,
   - member of the examination committee for the second certification,
   - delegated member of international expert committees and national expert committees,
   - research and analytical activities improving the conditions of upbringing and education.

Only teachers with the first certification may become teachers with second certification. They must further have at least a master degree and pass second certification or have at least six years of teaching experience and receive a doctorate in a field of study related to performance of his/her pedagogical activities.
Annex No. 15 – Career positions (applies also to specialist employees)

- **Class teacher** is responsible for maintenance of the student’s pedagogical documentation, encourages positive social relations among students and between students and school employees; cooperates with legal representative and other teachers and specialist employees of school and provides students and their legal representatives pedagogical with consulting services. Class teachers are usually in charge of one class, in special cases in two or more classes if this responsibility cannot be passed on other teacher.

- **Educational advisor** provides consulting services in terms of upbringing and education by means of informing, coordinating, consulting, providing methodological assistance and performing other related activities. Educational advisor facilitates therapeutic and upbringing activities according to student’s needs.

- **Career advisor** helps students to prepare for the labor market entry.

- **Mentor teacher** is in charge of the adaptation education of a beginning teacher. Mentor teacher assesses beginning teacher’s adoption of an independent teacher’s professional competences for the purpose of completing the adaptation education.

- **Head of the study subject committee or a study area, head of a methodology association or a study program** evaluates, coordinates and is responsible for preparation of pedagogical documentation in the delegated area of the school education program. He/she participates in the development of professional competences of teachers and performs project, advisory and evaluation activities focused on quality of upbringing and education.

- **Informatization coordinator** provides informatization consulting services and coordinates the use of ICT in the upbringing and education process. Informatization coordinator can be in charge of the information system maintenance.

- **Other employees** performing specialized activities are defined by the school leader, e.g. education advisor using information and communication technologies, specialist employee in upbringing and education of children from socially disadvantaged environment, training pedagogical employee, prevention coordinator.
Annex No. 16 – Compensation scheme

**Tariff salary** is a sum of two components:

- **tariff pay** which is derived from the **salary tariff** and the **work class**. Teacher’s salary tariff depends on the acquired degree of education and a career level. Effective from 1 January 2015, tariff pays of teachers are increased by 5%.
- **tariff pay increase** for every whole year of the recognized teaching experience.

### Table 24: Components of a teacher’s tariff salary in 2014

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<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Work class one</th>
<th>Work class two</th>
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<td>6.5 8.5 10.5 11.5 13.5 14.5 16.5 17.5 18.5 21 22 23 24 25</td>
<td>2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.5 10.5 11.5 13.5 14.5 17 18.5 21 23 25</td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 25: Assignment of teachers into salary tariffs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher in basic school and secondary school</th>
<th>Teacher in kindergarten</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>not qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary vocational education</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: MŠVVS SR

Note: Not qualified teacher would be for example a teacher with first attestation (or in other career level) not spending half of their basic workload teaching their approbation subjects.

On top of their tariff salary, teachers may receive an extra pay in the form of:

- **Personal allowance**, which is paid out to award extraordinary personal abilities, work results or for work delivered above the scope of job responsibilities. Personal allowance can be provided maximally in the amount equal to 24% of the corresponding tariff pay.
- **Allowance for class teachers and mentor teachers**. Class teachers who are in charge of one class receive a 5% allowance calculated from their tariff pay increased by 24%, class teachers in charge of two and more classes receive a 10% allowance. Mentor teachers supervising one beginning teachers receive a 4% allowance calculated from their tariff pay increased by 24%. Mentor teachers supervising two or more beginning teachers receive an 8% allowance.
- **Salary bonus for credits**, Teachers receive a 6% bonus calculated from their tariff pay for each 30 credits but maximally a 12% bonus for 60 credits. The bonus is valid for 7 years.
- **Allowance for managerial activities**, which is defined as a percentage share of the teacher’s tariff pay increased by 24%. The share ranges is an interval defined by legislation based on the founder’s competence (i.e. local, district, regional, nation-wide)
- **Allowance for beginning teacher.** During the time of adaptation education, beginning teachers receive a 6% allowance calculated from their tariff pay.

- **Allowance for working with students with disabilities and students from socially disadvantaged environment** is paid out to a teacher at basic school working in a class, in which at least 30% the maximum class size are individually integrated students with disabilities or socially disadvantaged students. The allowance is at most 2.5% of the 12th salary tariff of work class one. The allowance is defined internally by a school’s regulation. Teacher is entitled to the allowance when he/she teaches at least four lessons a week in the class without the help of a teacher assistant.

- **Further allowances**: allowance for practical preparation for teachers of a training school, compensation, personal salary, allowance for deputizing, salary compensation for constrained working environment, allowance for shift working, extra pay for work at night, allowance for working on Saturdays or Sundays, allowance for working on holidays, allowance for working overtime, salary for inactive part of working standby at the workplace.
Psychologist performs expert activities in psychological diagnostics, psychological consulting, psychotherapy, prevention and intervention with special focus on upbringing and education at schools and school facilities. In addition, the psychologist performs expert activities such as psychological consulting with the focus on relations in a family, partnership or other. The psychologist provides psychological advisory services and consulting to legal representatives of children and students as well as to pedagogical staff of schools and school facilities.

School psychologist is active directly at school and performs same activities as a psychologist. In addition, school psychologist prepares documentation for expert employees employed at consulting and prevention facilities.

School speech therapist performs expert activities in speech therapy diagnostics, consulting and intervention with focus on children and students with communication disorder. The speech therapist provides a speech therapy advisory services and consulting to legal representatives of children and students as well as pedagogical staff of schools and school facilities.

Special educator performs expert activities in special diagnostics, consulting and intervention with focus on children with are students with mental disabilities, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disabilities, communication disorder, autism, multiple disabilities, ADHD and behavior disorder. Special educator provides special consulting to legal representatives of children and students as well as pedagogical staff of schools and school facilities.

School special educator is active directly at school and performs same activities as a special educator. In addition, school special educator prepares documentation for expert employees employed at consulting and prevention facilities.

Special educator in field performs special education, diagnostic, advisory, preventive, education and methodological activities for children and students with disabilities. Special educator in field performs methodological activities and provides advisory services to pedagogical staff and to children’s legal representatives.

Therapy teacher performs expert activities in therapeutic education to assist children and students with development disorders or behavioral disorders who are unable to live their lives in a way adequate to their age. Therapy teacher also helps children and students whose mental, emotional and social development is at risk. The therapy teacher provides assistance in therapeutic education and consulting to children’s and students’ legal representatives, pedagogical staff of schools and school facilities, including expert activities related to re-education of behavioral disturbance.

Social educator performs expert activities in prevention, intervention and provision of advisory services mainly with the focus on children and students subjected to socio-pathological phenomena, from socially disadvantaged environment, drug addicts or otherwise disadvantaged children and students, their legal representatives and pedagogical staff of schools and school facilities. Social educator delivers the tasks of social education and upbringing, supports pro-social and ethical behavior, conducts socio-pedagogical diagnostics of the environment and relations, provides socio-pedagogical consulting and prevention of socio-pathological phenomena and re-education of behaviour. The educator performs expert activities and edifying activities.