
Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education

Educational System in Slovak Republic

Bratislava 2005



THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

I. Development after November 1989

Until 1990, the ideological foundation of the educational policy and the concept of education and training as well as of the entire system of education and training^{1/} was the project "The Further Development of the Czechoslovak System of Education and Training" approved under the conditions of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1976) and codified by the education acts passed in 1978 and 1984 (the Act on the System of Primary and Secondary Schools, the Act on School Facilities, the Act on State Administration and Self-Government in Education and the Higher Education Act of 1980). For the further education, only by-laws were adopted (on part-time study in secondary schools and higher education institutions, on educational establishments of the sectors and of the branch, regional, and corporate economic and social organisations).

The revolutionary political-societal and social-economic changes, which took place in this country after November 1989, have logically resulted in fundamental legal, educational-organisational and, particularly, ideological-pedagogical changes in the field of education and training, and in its management. This kind of transformation of the concept of content, organisation and management has also brought about changes in the respective education acts and the related binding regulations as well as the creation of new legal standards specially considering the current international documents and recommendations in the field of education and training (UNESCO, Copenhagen Document (KBSE No. 1203) on Human Dimension and Minority Rights (1990), OECD, Bologna Declaration, White Paper on Education and Training – Teaching and Learning (1995), EC Copenhagen Declaration on Vocational Education (2002), Convention on International Labour Organisation on the Right of Employees to Further Education, etc.) and new provisions of the Constitutional Act of the CSFR (1991) on implementation of universal rights and freedoms in agreement with the Declaration of Rights and Freedoms which were also included in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic in 1992.

Such a wide and complex political-societal and social-educational framework of transformation of the system of education and training (hereinafter SET) was implemented step by step: on the basis of amendments to the valid education (and related) acts or in the form of newly published legal educational-organisational and *educational rules of laws*, which secured the new ideological focus of the education and

^{1/} Slovak educational terminology (like German or Russian, e.g.) distinguishes the term of education and training. Education (*Erziehung, vospitanije*) stands for an intentional gradual process of man's formation, his personality, active relation to the surrounding world and adoption of rules of social life, interhuman relations, conduct (with predominant element of moral, social, aesthetic, physical and other kind of education). Training (*Bildung, obrazovanie*) stands first of all for a process of providing the knowledge on nature and society, ability to use them in practice. Similarly, the mission and function of schools (different levels and types) are distinguished from establishments which provide for various voluntary nonformal special-interest activities during extra-curricular teaching as characterized in Chapters 6.1 and 6.2.

training, democratisation and humanisation of the entire system of education and training, the system of its management, administration, financing and implementation of new objectives of educational policy.

In the concept of content and organisation of education and training the implemented changes focused in particular on:

- ▶ inclusion of the latest unbiased knowledge of science and technology in the curricula and educational process itself and elimination of one-sided ideological bias,
- ▶ creation of more proportional structure in content of study plans and study programmes, formative and informative educational aims in study plans; determination of acceptable and adequate degree of principal and extending educational requirements, application of interdisciplinary relations and sources of extracurricular information,
- ▶ underlining the development of skills, attitudes and promotion of motivation of pupils and students to educate themselves, instead of the routine presentation of knowledge in a ready-made form,
- ▶ restructuring the teaching organisation aimed at more remarkable implementation of differentiation of requirements according to skills and interests of students, realisation of alternative approaches and organisation of education, democratisation of administration and management of schools with more thorough implementation of the principle of self-administration and subsidiarity (decentralisation of administration, establishment of alternative, church and private schools and school facilities),
- ▶ transforming the concept and organisation of education and training in order to create better conditions for effective operation of the system of education and training, to provide for educational level comparable to those achieved in the developed countries and good employment opportunities for graduates, not only at home but also abroad.

Within the legislation and law there were principal amendments to the Education Law in force or preparation and publication of new acts dealing with the system of education and training and its management, in particular:

- ▶ the Act on the State Administration and Self-Government in Education (1990, as amended in 1996, 1999, 2001, 2003),
- ▶ the Higher Education Act (1990, amendment of 1996, and new act of 2002),
- ▶ the Act on School Facilities (1993, amendment of 2001),
- ▶ the Act on Further Education (1997, amendment of 2001),
- ▶ the Act on Funding the School System (2001, 2003), and

a whole series of the related binding executive regulations (government provisions, decrees and directives of the Ministry of Education), which were issued to purposefully secure new ideological focus of education and training, democratisation and humanisation of the entire system of education and training, its management and administration, implementation of objectives and aims of the educational policy, programme government declarations, modifications of curricula for primary and secondary schools and higher education institutions, decrees on organisation and objectives of individual types of schools and school facilities, on professional and educational competence and further education of educational personnel, on school inspection, employment rules for educational personnel, etc.).

Also, the drafts of the new concept on development of the system of education and training were developed (in 1991, 1994, 1996) which, however, were not agreed and implemented in nation-wide scope. In 2000, "The Concept of the Further Development of Higher Education in Slovakia for 21st Century" was approved which became a basis for elaboration of the new Higher Education Act (2002) and, in 2002, a new concept of education and training was adopted – "Millennium – the National Programme of Education and Training for the Next 15-20 Years" as an ideological and objective background for the draft of new education law on education and training in primary and secondary schools and school facilities. The draft of the Education Law is a subject of public discussion and it is expected to be adopted as a law by the end of 2004.

During the period of transformation of the whole society in 1990's, the educational policy has been implemented under rather unfavourable social economic conditions. These conditions have been influenced primarily by the decline of performance in economy and high unemployment rate among population, including the graduates, which led to decline of demand for skilled workforce and to lowering the social function of the education system (reduction of kindergartens, school clubs, extra-curricular educational establishments).

This situation resulted in undesirable changes within the hierarchy of values and in stronger social differentiation among population with all negative political and social consequences: instability of political structures, government and top administration of the Ministry of Education, which was unable under the above conditions to focus its attention on finding solutions to fundamental questions in the concept of education and training, on the forecasts of future development of the system of education and training and on preparation of high quality educational legislation as decisive instruments of successful management.

In spite of the above problems, it was possible to achieve on the whole positive results in the field of transformation of the school system and in development of the system of education and training, in particular:

- ▶ implementation of a new, modern concept of content and organisation of work in primary and secondary schools and higher education institutions corresponding to the European standards,
- ▶ elimination of one-sided ideological bias in education and training,
- ▶ diversification of the rigid system of uniform schools and creation of opportunities for establishment of alternative, church and private schools,
- ▶ more distinct differentiation of education in primary schools and gymnasia,
- ▶ elimination of narrow specialisations in technical secondary schools and vocational secondary schools and in higher education institutions,
- ▶ updating and issue of new curricula for primary and secondary schools and study programmes for higher education institutions; reduction in number of the fields of study taught in technical secondary and vocational secondary schools, implementation in higher education institutions of the rules and the system of education identical to those in the advanced democratic countries,
- ▶ democratisation and decentralisation of the system of school management and administration, application of the self-administration principle, subsidiarity, enabling the schools to achieve the status of legal entities, and modification of the system of management of vocational secondary schools,

- ▶ provision of expansion of compulsory schooling up to 10 years and expansion of the primary school attendance up to 9 years,
- ▶ distinctive quantitative development of gymnasia and higher education institutions and advancement of educational level of the population,
- ▶ introduction of new programmes of education and training for Roma children,
- ▶ modification and implementation of new qualification requirements for professional and educational competence of educational personnel, and facilitation of their further education,
- ▶ issue of new Employment Rules for educational staff developed in agreement with the new Labour Code,
- ▶ implementation of the new concept of education and training for disabled pupils,
- ▶ adoption of the draft law on Funding the School System (2001, 2003),
- ▶ establishment of the independent State School Inspection,
- ▶ strengthening the international relations and cooperation of schools and school facilities,
- ▶ partial application of inceptions from the proposals of new concepts of educational development (1991, 1994, 1996) and preparation for implementation of the new concept of education and training with the national programme of education and training and the concept of higher education for 21st century (2001),
- ▶ preparation for approval of draft laws on primary and secondary schools, school facilities, higher education institutions and the further education.

However, some long-term programme objectives have not been implemented successfully and on time, but only partially:

- ▶ the basic programme target to ensure that a priority status should be given to education and training within the practical State policy, as one of the most decisive sources and factors of the social and economic development, was not achieved,
- ▶ despite the fact that self-administration bodies have been created within the school system it was not possible to achieve more efficient support from social partners of the school and their active participation in education and training and in its management,
- ▶ the school system has not been allocated sufficient amount of funds to secure the required level of material and technical conditions for its development and operation; the percentage of GDP assigned to the school system has even declined, resulting in indebtedness of schools and their falling behind as far as the purchase of necessary equipment, in particular of the latest information technology, is concerned,
- ▶ the remuneration of teachers lags behind, is low and does not reach the average level achieved in other sectors, resulting in the outflow of skilled teachers to other sectors and in worsening qualification structure of teachers and professionalism in teaching,
- ▶ the proposals of new concepts on education and training (1991, 1994, 1996) and the draft laws on primary and secondary schools have not been adopted, the realisation of the Millennium concept lags behind,
- ▶ the development of individual types of schools and school facilities has not been balanced and has not corresponded to the strategic needs of development of

individual industrial and cultural sectors, while those school facilities, which also provide social services, have suffered most (kindergartens, extra-curricular educational establishments, school catering facilities and boarding schools), which meant weakening in the social function of the education system as well as in development of the above standard (optional or leisure-time) activities at schools; in the field of tertiary education, particularly the development of higher vocational schools lags behind,

- ▶ the network of schools is not economical, it is irrational, often unnecessarily disintegrated, the opportunities for integration of schools and school facilities in order to rationalise and economise the network of schools have been insufficiently utilised,
- ▶ the scientific and educational research and creative utilisation of foreign know-how and experience have not been sufficiently developed to find solutions for fundamental current and strategic objectives of the school system.

Besides the above new regulations for schools and educational concepts, the conditions for development of the system of education and training have also been significantly influenced by the new related regulations, which modify the power and organisation of the state administration and self-governance (in particular, the Act on Municipalities, the Act on Competencies of Higher Territorial Units, the Act on the State Administration and Self-Government in Education (1990, 2001, 2003) and, with regard to the legal and employment issues, newly-issued Labour Code and the acts on the State and Public Service).

II. Current Situation

Based on the above-mentioned legal and educational standards, the present system of education and training consists of:

a) Pursuant to the Education Law (1984, as amended):

1. primary schools;
2. secondary schools:
 - 2.1. gymnasia (four years at least and eight years at most),
 - 2.2. technical secondary schools and conservatories,
 - 2.3. vocational secondary schools and centres for practical training;
3. apprentice schools for pupils who failed to complete the primary school prior to the end of the period of duration of compulsory schooling;
4. special schools: primary, secondary, practical schools and special vocational schools;
5. schools for special-interest education: basic schools of art;

b) Pursuant to the Act on School Facilities (1993, as amended in 2001):

6. school facilities:
 - 6.1. educational facilities,
 - 6.2. special educational facilities:

- educational facilities for prevention,
 - facilities for substitute education,
- 6.3. counselling facilities,
- 6.4. special-interest educational facilities: language schools, stenographic institute,
- 6.5. special-purpose school facilities:
- school catering facilities,
 - facilities for practical training,
 - school service providers,
7. schools for national minorities, church and private schools;
- c) Pursuant to the Higher Education Act (2002, as amended by 2003):**
8. higher education institutions: public, state-owned, private with three levels of higher education;
- d) Pursuant to the Act on the Further Education (1997):**
9. institutions for the further education – types and forms of further education (vocational, complementary, extending, retraining, civil, social and cultural) provided by various educational facilities, secondary schools and higher education institutions);
- e) Organisation, management, administration and financing of the school system:**
- are also regulated by closely related regulations and concepts of development, mainly, by:
- ▶ the Act on State Administration and Self-Government in Education,
 - ▶ the Act on Financing Education,
 - ▶ the Act on State Administration and Act on Public Service,
 - ▶ the Act on Performing the Work of Public Interest,
 - ▶ the Competence Act (on organisation of activities by the central bodies of the State administration),
 - ▶ the Act on Municipal Establishment and the Act on Higher Territorial Units,
 - ▶ the Labour Code and the Employment Rules of Schools and School Facilities,
 - ▶ the Act on Employment and the Act on Labour Inspection,
 - ▶ the Act on Transfer of Some Competencies from the State Administration Bodies to Municipalities and Higher Territorial Units,
 - ▶ the Act on State Administration Bodies in the Field of Social Affairs, Family and Employment Services,
 - ▶ international documents of UNESCO - International Bureau for Education, OECD, Basic Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Holy See, European Charter of Local Self-Government, European Charter of Regional Self-Government, Charter School Teachers,
 - ▶ the concept of decentralisation and modernisation of public administration, Millennium – National Programme of Education and Training in the SR, Concept of the Further Development of Higher Education in Slovakia for 21st Century.

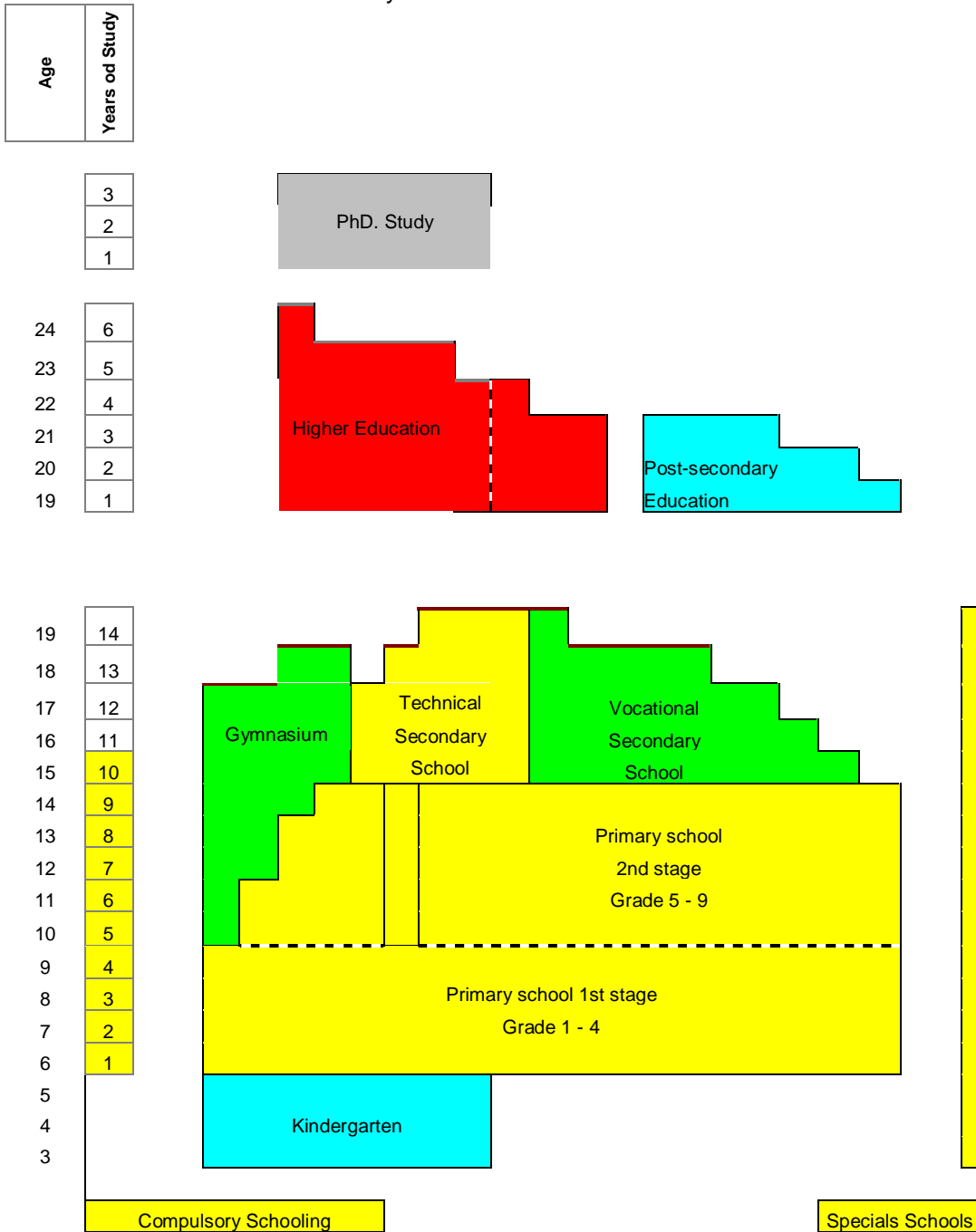
Table 1: System of Education and Training, school year 2003/2004

Schools and school facilities	Number					
	facilities	faculties/ classrooms, groups, units	students/ pupils	teachers	educators	other employees, instructors
Kindergartens - total	3 210	7 488	150 718	14 963	9	16
Primary schools	2 387	27 117	579 011	40 747	5 353	204
Secondary schools - total	858	11 972	326 516	x	x	x
<i>out of which: gymnasia</i>	223	3 308	100 057	8 230	x	25
technical secondary schools*	279	3 290	93 353	11 116	x	15
associated secondary schools	89	2 037	52 953	3 652	x	1590
vocational secondary schools	267	3 337	80 153	5 332	61	3 665
Special schools – total	442	3 677	32 039	4 857	1 695	742
Basic schools of art	205	x	98 395	4 452	x	x
Language schools	28	x	27 562	519	x	x
School clubs	2 285	5 798	128 549	x	x	x
Leisure and hobby centres	155	5 507	72 151	x	2 330	x
Special training facilities – total	29	127	1 123	x	418	513
Youth centres	239	x	28 489	x	1 274	x
School canteens	4 779	x	517 215	x	x	x
Higher education institutions – total	25	104	99 909	12 401	x	x
School counselling centres – total	6	578	58 824	x	x	x
<i>out of which: in secondary schools**/</i>	6	578	13 632	x	x	x
in HEIs	0	x	45 192	x	x	x

* Including secondary schools for nurses.

** Providing part-time study only.

Education System in Slovakia in 2003/2004



Note:

Giving access to higher level education

Table 2: Schools and School Facilities, school year 2003/2004

Type	Kindergartens		Primary schools		Special schools		Secondary schools		Other facilities ¹		Total	
	schools	pupils	schools	pupils	schools	pupils	schools	pupils	schools	pupils	schools	pupils
State	3 180	149 728	2 272	553 249	430	31 520	729	297 798	5 473	0	12 084	1 032 295
Church	19	672	104	25 259	9	467	62	17 183	95	0	289	43 581
Private	11	318	11	503	3	52	67	11 535	86	0	178	12 408
TOTAL	3 210	150 718	2 387	579 011	442	32 039	858	326 516	5 654	0	12 551	1 088 284

¹ The other facilities include: basic schools of art, centres of leisure activities, centres of practical training, language schools, youth homes, school canteens, educational facilities, counselling centres.

1. Primary Schools (ISCED 1, 2)

The primary school represents a special-purpose social-educational institution for provision of the compulsory general basic education, i.e., the fundamentals of intellectual, moral, esthetical, labour, health, physical and environmental education. The education is provided by teachers possessing required professional and educational competence based on unbiased scientific knowledge in accordance with principles of patriotism, scientific knowledge, humanity and democracy. Primary schools, as a part of the entire system of education and training, prepare pupils for their further studies in secondary schools and for their future practical life.

Since 1997, the primary school consists of 9 grades and two stages:

The first stage (Grades 1 - 4, ISCED 1) and the second stage (Grades 5 - 9, ISCED 2) which is usually differentiated according to pupils' interests and skills. The pupils are admitted to Grade 1 upon attaining the age of 6 years. The compulsory school attendance lasts 10 years. After completing the primary school, the pupils are required to apply for a secondary school.

According to the latest changes in the area of competence of the state administration and self-government bodies, public primary schools are established by municipalities (towns). Such schools may also be established by churches, natural persons, or legal entities, provided they comply with standard conditions. Their scope is defined in the special regulation of the Ministry of Education. The primary school may also include a school club, school library, boarding school, or other facility for education outside classes.

The content of education in primary schools is regulated by study plans and framework curricula, with schools being able to decide from one of three basic alternatives, after discussion with the educational board, parents and school board (with extended classes in Grades 7-9). Such curricula are designed for standard population. The additional ten alternatives to study plans enable schools to create differentiated classes for meeting

specific interests and skills of students (for example, foreign languages, mathematics and natural sciences, sports, art, music, or technical education).

Table 3: Curricula for Grades 1 - 4 of Primary School, school year 2003/2004 – basic alternative (ISCED 1)

Subject	Number of lessons per week			
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Alternative 1				
Slovak Language and Literature	9	9	9	9
Elementary Teaching	2	2	-	-
Slovak History, Geography and Literature	-	-	1	2
Mathematics	4	5	5	5
Natural Sciences	-	-	2	2
Crafts	-	-	1	1
Art	2	2	2	2
Music	1	1	1	1
Sports	3	3	3	3
Total	21	22	24	25
Optional subjects	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2

Table 4: Curricula for Grades 5 - 9 of Primary School, school year 2003/2004 – basic alternative (ISCED 2)

Subject	Number of lessons per week				
	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Alternative 1					
Slovak Language and Literature	5	5	4	4	5
Foreign Language	4	3	3	3	3
History	1	2	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2	2	1
Civics	-	1	1	1	1
Mathematics	5	5	5	4	4
Physics	-	2	2	2	1
Chemistry	-	-	-	2	3
Natural Sciences	2	2	2	2	1
Technical Education	1	1	1	1	1
Art	2	1	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1	1	1
Sports	2	2	2	2	2
Ethics/Religion	1	1	1	1	1
Additional courses	-	-	2	1	2
Total	26	28	29	29	29
Optional classes	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2

Table 5: Development of Indicators for Primary School, in 1989-2003

Year	Schools	Classrooms	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils per teacher	Pupils per class
1989	2 302	27 559	724 919	36 242	20,0	26,3
1993	2 483	28 518	690 189	38 874	17,8	24,2
2001	2 406	28 539	626 645	41 983	14,9	22,0
2003	2 387	27 117	579 011	40 747	14,2	21,4

2. Secondary Schools (ISCED 3, 4)

The secondary education is currently in three streams of education: in gymnasias, technical secondary schools and vocational secondary schools. These schools are established by self-governing regions after they are approved by the respective central body of the state administration and by social partners. Schools may be also established by churches, legal entities and private persons.

The secondary schools provide upon completing primary school the following kinds of education:

- ▶ general secondary education with school-leaving certificate (gymnasia),
- ▶ technical secondary education with school-leaving certificate,
- ▶ higher vocational education,
- ▶ vocational secondary education.

The courses are organised either on a full-time basis, or on a part-time basis, or on a combined basis. The admittance of students to full-time education is conditional on the successful completing of entrance examinations.

The education is provided free of charge, however, church and private schools may charge tuition fees.

The important measure in the field of management and administration of secondary schools is the approval of the legal status of schools, strengthening the authority of the principals and establishment of the school board and regional school board.

2.1. Gymnasia (ISCED 3A)

After 1989, the gymnasias were transformed into a modern type of secondary schools offering general education, which prepare students especially for studies in higher education institutions and for postsecondary education. Fundamental changes took place within the concept of education, mainly:

- ▶ compulsory vocational training has been cancelled;
- ▶ more emphasis has been placed on education in social sciences, foreign languages and physical education; curricula now include subjects of aesthetics and ethics alternated with religious education;

- significant change occurred in the structure of curricula and in internal and external differentiation of education by increasing the proportion of optional and elective subjects, and extended classes, by enabling *bilingual education*, by establishment of *five - and eight-year gymnasia*, and especially by strengthening the powers of schools in modifying their curricula according to skills and interests of students. For the school-leavers of gymnasia the postsecondary forms of vocational education have been introduced.

Table 6: Curricula of 4-year gymnasia - basic alternative

Subject	Number of lessons per week				
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Slovak Language and Literature	3	3	3	3	12
History	2	2	2	-	6
Society	-	-	1	2	3
Aesthetics	2	-	-	-	2
Ethics/Religion	1	1	-	-	2
Foreign Languages (total)	6	6	6	6	24
Mathematics	4	4	3	3	14
Information Technology	2	-	-	-	2
Physics	3	3	2	2	10
Chemistry	3	2	2	-	7
Biology	-	3	3	2	8
Geography	2	2	-	1	5
Sports	3	3	3	3	12
Extending classes (total)	-	2	6	8	16
Total	31	31	31	30	123
Optional subjects (total)	4/6	4/6	4/6	4/6	16/24

The updated curricula of gymnasia underline the development of cognitive abilities and activities of students, their preparation for independent creative work, higher level of communication, acquisition of functional literacy, ability to work with information and strengthening their focus on ecological, health and environmental education and humanities.

The plurality and differentiation of education required acceleration of preparation and issue of educational standards. After experimental verification of these standards, currently (also due to the extension of studies in primary schools up to 9 years), these standards have once again been modified, utilising the knowledge of the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievements (IEA). With regard to the new concept of gymnasia also the new concept of school-leaving examinations has been approved.

At the moment the gymnasia are faced with the fundamental problems such as the lack of alternative textbooks and equipment of schools with new teaching aids, modern educational technologies and, first of all, the lack of computers.

The number of gymnasias and the number of students attending these schools have substantially grown up since 1990.

Table 7: Development of Indicators for Gymnasias, 1989-2003

Year	Schools	Classrooms	Students	School leavers	Teachers	Students per teacher	Students per class
1989	128	1 638	51 531	10 463	4 228	12.2	31.5
1993	176	2 169	68 006	13 720	5 549	12.3	31.4
2001	217	2 916	86 239	13 995			
2003	223	3 308	100 057	9 331	8 230	12.2	30.2

2.2. Technical Secondary Schools (ISCED 3A)

The mission of technical secondary schools (TSS) in the light of the education law in force is to provide for pupils vocational secondary education with school-leaving certificate and higher vocational education, to prepare them for performance of occupations and professional activities in all spheres of economy, administration, culture, art and societal life, and, at the same time, to prepare them for the follow-up higher education and further education. Technical secondary schools provide preparation of specialists for individual industries, such as the construction, transportation, agriculture, food industry, services, economics, financial sector, culture, state administration and other areas of social life.

Table 8: Pupils, Classrooms and Schools according to Type of TSS, school year 2003/2004

Type of school	Students	% of students	Classrooms	Schools
technical college	36 105	38.7%	1 289	86
economic	32 554	34.9%	1 089	96
agricultural	6 205	6.6%	243	24
forestry	928	1.0%	31	3
librarian	422	0.5%	13	1
teacher training	3 478	3.7%	118	10
conservatories	1 728	1.9%	77	8
schools for girls	3 358	3.6%	119	20
health-service	8 575	9.2%	311	31
Total	93 353	100%	3 290	279

After 1989, individual schools have promptly updated the contents of education and training with orientation on free labour market, anticipated needs of open society and of corporate sector (private companies and small business), which expect from the graduates a broader profile and the ability to rapidly adapt to changing conditions and requirements of the economic and social life.

The curricula involves greater number classes of foreign languages, and the range of interdisciplinary subjects – informatics, computing, environmental protection; new subjects have been introduced, such as management, marketing, entrepreneurship,

gastronomy, banking, labour psychology, ethics, mechatronics, legal education, introduction to the world of work, and others.

After the above modifications of study plans, the share of general education reaches about 42-45 % of the total classes, professional education 55-58 %, out of which 25-30 % is assigned to practical training. Schools are empowered to modify their study plans up to 10% of classes and up to 30 % of the contents of curricula based on new scientific and technical knowledge and on actual requirements of the labour market.

The technical secondary schools provide education at the third level (ISCED 3A) completed by school-leaving examination, but also at the fourth level (ISCED 4A) in postsecondary qualification study, and higher vocational education in vocational postsecondary education leading to “graduate” diploma (ISCED 5B).

By introduction of integrated study fields with broad specializations, the number of narrowly specialised study courses has declined. However, new study courses have been gradually introduced, reflecting changes in the market and the transformation of the economy and society. Specialisation of training has been postponed to higher classes and to postsecondary higher vocational education. The system of technical secondary schools offers preparation in 482 study programmes and specialisations.

At present, the educational standards for technical secondary schools are being verified.

Despite positive results of transformation of technical secondary schools, several issues remain open in their activities, in particular:

- ▶ lack of information about actual labour market requirements and the future needs,
- ▶ low interest of the business and corporate sector in technical education and training due to the shortage of vacancies,
- ▶ as a result, insufficient interconnection between theoretical and practical training,
- ▶ brain drain (departure of experienced skills - teachers, technicians, economists),
- ▶ insufficiently coordinated and regulated development of technical secondary schools and their irrational distribution with insufficiently utilised scope for association and integration of secondary schools. In the school year 2003/2004, 89 associated schools were established.

Table 9: Development of Indicators for Technical Secondary Schools, 1989-2003

Year	Schools	Classrooms	Students	School leavers	Teachers	Students per teacher	Students per class
1989	181	2 677	80 545	18 747	7 941	10.1	30.1
1993	342	3 642	111 664	21 662	11 889	9.4	30.7
2001	373	3 770	101 690	26 375	13 133	7.7	27.0
2003	279	3 290	93 353	14 432	11 116	8.7	28.0

2.3. Vocational Secondary Schools (ISCED 3C, 3A)

The mission of the secondary vocational schools (SVS) is to prepare students for skilled performance in workers' trades and professional activities corresponding to the system of trades and for performance of some more demanding workers' trades and technical-

economic activities of operational nature in the study fields in production and services in all branches of national economy.

The content of education and training consists of general and vocational part. The vocational part with vocational (practical) training which make up the basis of graduates' profile, predominate.

The training is provided in more than 600 fields of study and their specialised concentrations which reflect the system of workers' trades and their specialisations.

The education and training is provided according to the demands of curricula as follows:

- ▶ in two- and three-year training courses, in which graduates, after final examination, receive certificates of apprenticeship as an evidence of their secondary vocational education (ISCED 3C),
- ▶ in follow-up two-year study courses for graduates from three-year training courses; the courses are finished by a school-leaving examination and the graduates receive secondary vocational education with a school-leaving certificate (ISCED 3A),
- ▶ in four-year study courses and their specialisations, in which training is completed by school-leaving examination and the graduates receive secondary vocational education (ISCED 3) and school-leaving certificate (ISCED 3A).

Depending on the level of achieved education (final examination) the school-leavers of secondary vocational schools receive a certificate on education with the level of qualification indicated as follows: 1. trained, 2.instructed, or 3. qualified (certificate on apprenticeship).

Table 10: Curricula in the field of Mechanical Engineering, Specialisation of Manual Metal Processing

Subject	Number of lessons per week		
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
a) general subjects			
Slovak Language and Literature	1	1	1
Mathematics	1	1	1
Civics	1	1	1
Physical Education	2	2	2
Ethics/Religion	1	1	1
b) subjects of vocational training			
Technology	2	2	2
Mechanical Technology	1	2	2
Machines and Equipment	-	-	1
Mechanical Engineering	1	1	-
Practical Training	18	21	21
Total	30	34	34
c) elective subjects:			
Sport Games	1-2	1-2	1-2
Constitutional Physical Education	1-2	1-2	1-2
Education for Parenthood	-	-	1-2
Basics of Family Education	1-2	1-2	-

Foreign Language (conversation)	1-2	1-2	1-2
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Based on the recommendation of the professional-methodical commission, the educational council and requirements of employers' organisations the secondary vocational schools may modify their study plans within the scope of up to 10 % of weekly classes and the curricula of individual subjects within the scope of up to 30 % (usually in the form of additional professional or technical knowledge of the respective study programmes and specialisations and requirements specified by companies).

In recent years the interest in studies in secondary vocational schools and the development of vocational secondary schools have substantially declined, as a result of:

- ▶ high unemployment rate of graduates from these schools as a result of decline and collapse of industries, ignorance of prospective requirements of the respective sectors and companies, increased costs for students' accommodation and transport
- ▶ internal problems of vocational schools, especially insufficient interconnection between the theoretical education and practical life, loss of experienced qualified professionals (teachers, on-the-job trainers, technicians), inadequately regulated development of other vocational schools with attractive study courses, slow modernisation of their technical equipment and decline of vocational education quality.

Table 11: Development of Indicators for Secondary Vocational Schools, 1989-2003

Year	Schools	Classrooms	Students	School leavers	Teachers	Students per teacher	Students per class
1989	311	5 953	155 240	42 898	7 426	17.7	26.1
1993	344	5 450	138 465	57 538	6 876	17.2	25.4
2001	374	4 475	106 775	35 733	6 745	15.8	23.9
2003	267	3 337	80 153	21 694	5 332	15.0	24.0

3. Apprentice Schools (ISCED 2C)

The apprentice school represents a special level and type of school which prepares the pupils for performing trades upon completing the compulsory schooling in a lower grade of primary school or who failed to successfully complete Grade 9 and therefore cannot advance to secondary school. The apprentice school is not an equal type of secondary vocational school even though it applies some provisions of the education law on the secondary vocational schools (establishment, organisation, management, vocational training, final examinations – ISCED 2C).

4. Special Schools

The objective of special schools is to provide education using special educational and training methods, tools and forms for students with mental, sensorial or physical

handicaps, students with dysphasia, students with multiple handicaps, maladjusted pupils, ill or weakened pupils placed in medical facilities and to prepare them for their integration into the working process and social life.

Special schools include special primary schools, special secondary schools, practical training schools and vocational schools. These schools are classified according to the type and the degree of the handicap of their students. Special education and training is also provided in the form of integration of handicapped students into the regular schools, or into special classes within regular schools with the assistance of professional teachers.

Education at special primary and secondary schools is provided according to study plans and curricula of regular schools, with only partial modifications. Therefore, education received at these schools is equivalent to the education received at regular primary or secondary schools. Training of mentally retarded pupils, however, their preparation for future career may only continue in some less demanding trades. The level of vocational training of the school-leavers is defined just as a skill-gaining or getting in the groove (ISCED 2C). For pupils with mental defects who completed a special primary school and were not admitted to a vocational school or special apprentice school there are practical schools provided. The function of these schools is to prepare students for independent living, family life, simple chores and auxiliary works under supervision.

Special schools usually accept pupils on the recommendation of educational, psychological, or special advisory centres. Teachers working at special schools are required to have a special teacher training of the respective specialisation.

Currently, the whole system of special education and training undergoes a major restructuring, which underlines the principle of humanisation of education and training, respect for individual qualities of each person and maximum possibilities for their integration into the normal population, instead of their segregation, with the aim to provide the pupils with the highest education corresponding to their abilities and professional qualification. The integration is carried out by involvement of individuals into regular schools or by establishment of special classes in schools for healthy population or by integration of special schools with special educational facilities (by establishing special schools of a boarding school type for providing all-day and longer care for pupils).

Table 12: Special Primary Schools

Year	Number of schools	Total number of classrooms	Total number of pupils	Total number of teachers
1989	299	2 073	24 388	2 860
1993	307	2 325	22 269	3 210
2001	293	2 739	24 377	3 782
2003	290	2 728	23 622	3 901

5. Basic Schools of Art

Basic schools of art (BSA) as special-interest educational institutions, offer young generation and adults opportunities to enhance their natural talents in music, dancing, fine art, or literary and dramatic art, and provide students the opportunity to continue their

further education in art at higher schools of art, or to qualify them gradually to become professionals in various arts.

The education at basic schools of art is organised as:

- ▶ preparatory – for junior pupils of primary schools,
- ▶ basic – for older pupils of primary schools and pupils of secondary schools,
- ▶ extended – for pupils with extraordinary talents,
- ▶ condensed – for pupils preparing for courses in secondary schools and higher education institutions of teacher training or artistic orientation, and as
- ▶ adult education.

This type of education is organised on individual or group basis and is completed with final examination. The pupils pay tuition fees for their study.

Training process at basic schools of art takes place according to the general educational and organisational standards. The evaluation and classification of performances of students takes place in the form of entrance, commission, annual and graduation examinations. At individual schools professional and methodical commissions, educational and artistic councils, associations of parents and school boards have been established.

Basic schools of art, as schools of multi-subject orientation represent significant cultural and educational factor within the society and have an important position in education outside the framework of regular schools (primary schools in particular). The basic schools of art are attended by 12-14 % of pupils of primary schools and secondary schools.

So far the training of skilled teachers for basic schools of art is mostly provided by conservatories.

Major problems of basic schools of art include: insufficient scientific and educational research of the issue of the artistic training, scientific preparation of study plans and curricula for basic schools of art, as far as the management of these schools is concerned, the problems include insufficient professional supervision, insufficient professional and methodical assistance provided to teachers at basic schools of art and, in villages, another problem encountered is that concerning the attendance of pupils to these schools.

Table 13: Basic Schools of Art (1) - Total

Year	Number of schools	Number of branches	Teachers	
			full-time	part-time
1989	144	38	2 705	430
1993	171	68	2 916	576
2001	197	140	3 561	806
2003	205	165		

Table 14: Basic Schools of Art (2)

Year	Number of pupils total	Distribution according to specialisation			
		Dance	Fine Art	Literature and drama	Music
1989	76 917	8 125	22 332	3 798	42 662
1993	78 463	9 562	21 151	3 086	44 664
2001	96 887	13 797	29 811	4 101	49 178
2003	98 395	14 583	30 413	4 374	49 025

6. School Facilities

School facilities constitute a part of the system of education and training. They have been established by the public administration bodies or by private persons to provide pre-school education, to take care of pupils after classes, to provide accommodation and meals to the pupils, protective and preventive educational care, educational counselling and professional services for schools.

6.1. School Educational Facilities

6.1.1. Pre-School Facilities (ISCED 0)

Pre-school facilities provide systematic education for 2- to 6-years-old children, complement family education with activities that support universal development of child personality, balance differences in the level of social-cultural environment and development of children, and prepare them for compulsory education. In addition, kindergarten teachers also provide counselling and educational services for parents.

The educational care for children is organised according to parents' requirements as the system of a half-day, full-day, weekly, or continuous care. Preparatory classes for children of 5 years of age are organised prior to their admission to primary schools. Special kindergartens have also been established.

Pre-school education is provided according to the Framework Programme of Education and Training in Kindergartens, which – besides traditional components of education – also includes separate subjects: pro-social education, integrated environmental education, education in healthy way of living, fundamentals of social education, education in creative drama, elements of musical therapy which are based on the principle of activating the children.

The desirable development of pre-school education is currently hindered in particular by the decline of birth rate, unemployment of young parents, increased fees for meals in school canteens, and payments for material equipment and operation of kindergartens. As a result, there is reduction in enrolment and of kindergarten network and debasement of their social and educational function.

Table 15: Development of Indicators for Kindergartens, 1989-2003

Year	Schools	Classrooms	Children in kindergartens	Gross attendance in %	Teachers	Children per group
1989	4 052	9 390	241 458	92.3	18 729	25.7
1993	3 482	7 962	183 972	78.2	15 834	23.1
2001	3 243	7 491	150 587	85.7*	15 100	20.1
2003	3 210	7 488	150 718	87.2*	14 963	20.1

Note:

Gross attendance is counted as a share of children enrolled in kindergartens related to number of children aged 3 to 5.

6.1.2. Extra-Curricular Facilities

The objective of these facilities is to develop interests and skills of students during their leisure time, to complement educational and training programmes of schools with follow-up educational and training activities, to secure creative and meaningful contents for their leisure time, to prepare students for classes and to organise relaxation, recreation and entertainment activities. From this point of view school facilities closely co-operate with schools, cultural and educational institutions and special-interest civil organisations. These facilities are also active during summer vacations thus fulfilling a significant socio-educational function.

School Clubs for Children currently fulfil primarily an educational-social function (daytime stay of pupils at schools) and enable students to prepare themselves for classes (in particular at the first stage primary schools. These clubs may also be a part of primary schools and partially perform special-interest activities. Many school clubs face the problem of insufficient staffing, insufficient participation of teachers in special-interest after-school educational activities and unsuitable special equipment of clubs set up for special-interest activities of students.

Table 16: School Clubs

Year	Number of clubs	Number of departments	Enrolled pupils
1989	2 088	8 210	205 870
1993	2 191	6 378	152 681
2001	2 276	6 180	135 389
2003	2 285	5 798	128 549

Centres of Leisure-Time and School Centres for Special-Interest Activities represent a higher level of care provided to children and juveniles during their leisure time. Through the organisation of spontaneous recreational and special-interest activities, these centres fulfil a major function as far as prevention against negative influences of the environment is concerned and through the development of more demanding special-interest activities contribute to greater differentiation of education and training of the talented pupils and to the search for talents.

Table 17: Centres for Leisure-Time Activities and Special-Interest Activities

Year	Number of facilities		Regular special-interest activities	
	Leisure centres	Hobby centres	Number of units	Total number of members
1989	130	80	5 598	89 575
1993	118	14	4 537	68 456
2001	128	18	5 225	69 711
2003	134	21	5 507	72 151

Youth Homes (Boarding Schools) account for accommodation and meals of secondary school pupils, and, within the framework for educational and training activities, these centres broaden education and training received by students at respective secondary schools. The organised daily regime in youth centres with schedules of activities has proven its value, because the students living in youth centres show better than average study results.

Table 18: Accommodation of Pupils and Students

Year	Youth homes		Special boarding schools		University student hostels	
	Number of facilities	Accommodated pupils	Number of facilities	Accommodated pupils	Number of facilities	Accommodated students
1989	115	25 366	92	6 497	40	36 246
1993	120	18 657	87	5 129	54	37 303
2001	222	22 873	116	4 555	66	44 529
2003	220	24 498	120	4 096	73	45 434

Open-Air-Schools enable children from kindergartens primary school pupils, coming especially from disadvantaged background, to stay in the nature without interrupting their systematic educational process. These schools have been established also outside of the regional competence of the respective territorial unit.

Table 19: Open-Air Schools

Year	Total	Children and pupils sent to open-air schools					
		Kindergartens	Primary schools	Special schools	Gymnasia	Technical secondary schools	Other facilities
1989	94 091	15 239	77 717	971	0	0	164
1993	59 396	7 139	49 961	850	1 396	0	50
2001	74 456	7 797	64 119	658	1 833	49	0
2003	66 697	8 042	56 180	798	1 677	0	0

6.2. Special Educational Facilities

Facilities of Educational Prevention (educational and psychological prevention centres, therapeutic and educational sanatoriums and diagnostic centres) and *Facilities for Substitute Education* (re-educational centres for children, re-educational youth centres) fulfil objectives in that they protect the children against harmful social phenomena, prevent problematic and delinquent development of children and implement the institutional and protective education.

Table 20: Other Educational Facilities

Year	Re-educational youth centres, diagnostic centres, therapeutic and educational sanatoriums for children		Re-educational youth centres, diagnostic centres for youth and for mothers with children	
	Number of facilities	Total number of pupils	Number of facilities	Total number of pupils
1989	12	610	12	829
1993	13	582	12	595
2001	17	592	12	561
2003	16	569	13	554

Diagnostic Centres are facilities of residential type, which secure complex psychological and special-pedagogical examination of maladjusted children and juveniles, who were placed in such facilities on the basis of decision of courts to give them institutional or protective education.

Therapeutic and Educational Sanatoriums offer special education for children with learning or behavioural disorders who were unsuccessfully treated by outpatient departments.

6.3. Facilities for Educational Counselling

The institution of educational counselling (educational and psychological advisory centres, facilities for special educational counselling, educational counsellor, school psychologist, and school special pedagogue) offer professional services to schools, educational personnel and parents of children with regard to education, training, personal and professional development of children. These facilities cooperate with secondary schools and higher education institutions, the respective health-service, social authorities, police and courts, and concerning career guidance, also with labour offices and employers' organisations. The advisory functions are also carried out by the regional methodical-educational centres.

6.4. Special-Interest Educational Facilities

6.4.1. Language Schools and State Language Schools

Provide the students with language education in foreign languages to be completed by the State language examination in a language school accredited for it. The State language schools also organise language courses of professional orientation and preparation for translating and interpreting.

Table 21: Language Schools I

Year	Total schools	Total students	Schools according to language of teaching				
			English	Arab	Chinese	French	German
1989	15	17 950	10 860			1 142	5 539
1993	24	17 972	9 880			1 092	6 496
2001	30	23 833	16 174	63	7	1 448	6 141
2003	28	26 041	18 076	59	18	1 708	6 180

Note:
The numbers show the independent and associated schools combined.

Table 22: Language schools II

Year	Students according to language of teaching					Teachers
	Slovak	Russian	Spanish	Italian	Japanese	
1989		50	270			186
1993		15	350			274
2001	29	44	742	392	10	518
2003	28	90	909	464	30	519

6.4.2 State Stenographic Institute

Prepares students in Slovak and foreign language shorthand, for performing business correspondence, secretary work and special professional teacher training in the respective subjects at schools.

6.5. Special-Interest School Facilities

These facilities provide services and professional assistance to schools and school facilities concerning school catering (school dining halls and canteens, centres for school catering), practical training (school farms, centres of practical training) and economic and technical services (services, provision of schools and school facilities with material and technical aids, school information services, including education of school employees in informatics and computers).

7. Specificities of Content, Organisation, Management and Administration of Schools for National Minorities, Church and Private Schools and School Facilities

The nationality, church and private schools and school facilities in the SR are an equivalent integrate part of the education system with equal social-educational status, and certificates they issue are of universal equal validity. According to the education act

and act on school facilities they are regulated by generally valid provisions on education system, but also by special provisions on content of education and training, organisation of teaching, management and administration of schools and school facilities.

The Constitution of the SR provides in compliance with international documents on the position of nationalities and on education and training, to all citizens of the SR fundamental human rights and freedoms, that means, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to education and the right to participate in administration of public affairs, irrespective of their nationality, language, religion, national and social background and social position.

As a follow-up to these constitutional rights of citizens, the laws and the binding regulations on education and training, on administration of schools and school facilities provide for the application of these rights in aims, content, organisation, management and administration of all levels and types of schools and school facilities.

7.1. Schools for National Minorities

The system and organisation of schools for national minorities do not represent a special element of the education system, as it is identical with the system and organisation of Slovak schools. The current Education Act (1984) guarantees to the members of the nationality different from Slovak one the right to education in their native language within the scope adequate to their national development, at all levels and types of schools and school facilities. The Act on School Administration and Self-Government enables school boards and regional school boards *to promote interests of local and regional self-administration, parents and teachers* in the field of education and training, i.e., also with regard to the teaching in native language.

The *same transformation changes* took place within the concept of education and training, however, *some specificities in instruction* in the native tongue of national minorities ensuing from their differences, have been applied, too.

Depending on the language difference, the following forms of school education are currently applied, in particular:

- ▶ schools or classes using the language of minorities being the *language of instruction*,
- ▶ schools with *combined education*, in which some subjects are taught in the native language, some subjects are taught both in native and Slovak languages and some in the Slovak language; they are in fact bilingual schools,
- ▶ *schools with compulsory education in minority language* as a language of instruction, with other subjects being taught in the Slovak language (these are mainly schools/classes which include Ukrainian, Ruthenian or German language).

In addition to the basic forms of teaching at nationality schools there are also various forms of alternative education (similarly as in schools with Slovak as a language of instruction), especially in the field of language and social-scientific teaching, music education, and according to local conditions.

The organisation of teaching in schools with Ukrainian (Ruthenian) language of instruction is made more difficult due to outflow of pupils and declining interest in teaching in Ukrainian (Ruthenian) language, due to, among other things, insufficient follow-up

network of schools of higher level. The development of schools with German as teaching language is made more difficult due to low number of pupils and diffused settlements of population of German nationality (Central Slovakia, Gemer, Spiš, Bratislava).

Table 23: Schools and Students of Full-Time Studies according to Language of Instruction

Year		Number of schools							Number of children, pupils, students				
		Total	with the language of instruction						Total	with the language of instruction			
			Slovak	Slovak-Hungarian	Slovak-Ukrainian	Hungarian	Ukrainian	Other		Slovak	Hungarian	Ukrainian	Other
1989	Kindergartens	4 052	3 642	0	0	344	66	0	241 458	224 737	15 103	1 618	0
	Primary	2 302	2 039	0	0	245	18	0	724 248	674 282	48 756	1 210	0
	Gymnasia	128	106	8	3	10	1	0	51 531	47 720	3 500	311	0
	Technical secondary	181	156	16	6	3	0	0	80 545	75 326	4 454	765	0
	Vocational secondary	311	286	19	0	6	0	0	155 240	150 050	5 190	0	0
	Special school	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	Total	6 974	6 229	43	9	608	85	0	1 253 022	1 172 115	77 003	3 904	0
1994	Kindergarten	3 343	2 892	106	1	297	46	1	174 436	160 855	12 350	1 161	70
	Primary	2 547	2 194	31	2	307	13	0	675 813	628 720	46 323	770	0
	Gymnasia	183	160	8	1	13	1	0	72 072	67 030	4 892	150	0
	Technical secondary school	361	332	22	2	5	0	0	117 145	111 914	5 110	121	0
	Vocational secondary school	359	323	30	0	6	0	0	138 173	132 440	5 733	0	0
	Special school	412	372	18	0	22	0	0	29,947	28 499	1 448	0	0
	Total	7 205	6 273	215	6	650	60	1	1 207 586	1 129 458	75 856	2 202	70
2001	Kindergarten	3 243	2 827	102	3	277	34	0	150 587	140 563	9 313	711	0
	Primary	2 406	2 099	35	1	262	7	2	626 645	585 155	40 892	459	139
	Gymnasia	217	190	8	0	17	1	1	86 239	81 053	5 027	117	42
	Technical secondary school	373	344	19	1	9	0	0	101 690	97 577	4 036	77	0
	Vocational secondary school	374	340	25	0	9	0	0	106 775	101 850	4 925	0	0
	Special school	437	401	21	0	15	0	0	32 244	30 673	1 571	0	0
	Total	7 050	6 201	210	5	589	42	3	1 104 180	1 036 871	65 764	1 364	181
2003	Kindergarten	3 210	2 806	96	3	278	27	0	150 718	140 602	9 566	546	4
	Primary	2 387	2 081	35	2	260	6	3	580 791	542 464	37 736	458	133
	Gymnasia	223	196	8	0	17	1	1	100 057	93 784	6 069	155	49
	Technical secondary school	281	255	17	1	8	0	0	94 064	89 872	4 121	71	0
	Associat. secondary school	89	81	7	0	1	0	0	52 953	50 624	2 329	0	0
	Vocational secondary school	267	242	18	0	7	0	0	80 153	76 577	3 576	0	0
	Special school	442	409	20	0	13	0	0	32 039	30 560	1 479	0	0
Total	6899	6070	201	6	584	34	4	1 090 775	1024483	64 876	1 230	186	

Note:

From the year 2000 the data include technical secondary schools falling under the Ministry of the Interior of the SR and the Ministry of Defence of the SR.

The teaching at nationality schools is carried out according to the updated study plans, curricula and textbooks. To secure the appropriate level of language preparation of students, mainly in schools with Hungarian language as a language of instruction, special methodical recommendations have been prepared, selection of concepts from natural sciences, which must be also mastered by students in Slovak language, with study plans now including also conversation in the Slovak language on scientific issues especially in the field of natural sciences. Also a scientific research of language learning issues has been carried out (such as the project of multi-cultural education and training, project of intra-cultural education, grant project on Psychological, Social-Linguistic and Methodical Aspects of Learning of the Slovak Language and Formation of Hungarian-Slovak Bilingualism, and others).

Qualitatively new approach has been applied to the education of Roma children. Study plans and curricula have been prepared for schools which teach the Roma language (although this language has not been codified yet), as well as the concept of learning the Roma language in primary and secondary schools, and several professional and methodical studies have been prepared together with recommendations concerning specific features of the Roma minority. A primary school and Secondary School of Art with Roma language as a teaching language have been established in Košice and in Nitra, at the Faculty of Education, the Department of the Roma Culture has been established.

7.2. Church Schools and School Facilities

Starting with 1990, the church schools have been founded and administered by churches and church communities registered by the State. The churches have the right to autonomously administer their affairs and institutions except for legal competence of the Ministry of Education at establishment and dissolution of schools, defining the concept and organisation of teaching, issue of study plans and framework curricula, provision of compulsory school attendance, setting up the conditions for provision of development of extra students' talents and gifts and in general educational affairs. The details on establishment and activity of church schools are defined by the Ministry of Education (and Ministry of Health) by a decree.

The specificities on organisation and management of Roman-Catholic schools and school facilities are defined by the Basic Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Holy See, the position, organisation and activity of other church schools is likewise defined by an agreement between the SR and registered churches.

According to the above agreements the proposal on establishment of the church school is submitted by the appropriate church body to the Ministry of Education (in case of health school to the Ministry of Health) showing the data on the type of school, its organisation, personnel and material-technical provision of the school, curricula for all subjects that are agreed by the school founder after a prior agreement by the Ministry of Education.

The agreements with the churches in the field of education and training acknowledged to the churches the right to freely perform their religious mission, to teach the profession, to

hold church holidays, the right and duty of parents to religious education of their children and to free choice of the school, the right to establish, administer and use for education and training the basic, secondary and higher education institutions. The Slovak Republic binds itself through the agreements to create inevitable conditions and to provide religious education to pupils at all schools and school facilities and to apply the principles of religious tolerance. The religion teachers have the same labour-legal position as the other teachers. For provision of financing the churches the SR has to conclude with them a special agreement and the right to apply in education its religious conviction in harmony with principles of Christian ethics and ecumenism.

7.3. Private Schools and School Facilities

Represent educational establishments the founders of which are legal entities or private persons, civic or special-interest associations and special-purpose educational organisations. After being accredited they are equal units of educational system providing education equivalent to that of public schools. The legal status of private schools and school facilities is defined by the founder, within the scope of generally binding provisions of the education law; in professional-educational questions they are managed and checked up by the Ministry of Education (or Ministry of Health). Under the conditions of market economy the founder is often represented by commercial educational agencies, especially in the field of further education, extra-curricular education and socio-economic provision of students. The details on activities and position of private schools are defined by the decree of the Ministry of Education (and Ministry of Health).

8. Higher Education Institutions

A historical milestone of development, democratisation and humanisation of the study objectives and organisation of higher education institutions became the Act adopted by the Federal Assembly of the CSFR in 1990. It newly specified the mission and position of higher education institutions, and unambiguously specified their self-governing status, fundamental academic rights and freedoms, the right to freely elect their self-governing bodies and the right to profess and spread diverse philosophical and religious beliefs.

In the field of administration and management the Act reduced the competence of the Ministry of Education for creation of conditions for development of higher education institutions, coordination of their activities and for provision of realisation of decisions of the Higher Education Council and Accreditation Commission of the SR Government.

The Amendment to the Act in 1996 specified the concept of education, the structure of schools, faculties and study fields were harmonised with development of occupations and new needs of socio-economic development of the society. The Act has gradually included the recommendations of UNESCO (1988) and OECD experts (1992) on situation and problems of higher education institutions in the CSFR, namely:

- ▶ diversification of higher education study,
- ▶ appropriate economic and material-technical provision of education,
- ▶ improvement of active participation of higher education institutions in societal and economic development,

- ▶ specification of the position of self-governing bodies of higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education,
- ▶ introduction of three-level system of higher education and adjustment of its relation to the system of the further education.

Table 24: Development of Indicators for Higher Education Institutions, 1989 – 2001

Year	HEIs	Faculties	Students	Graduates	Teachers	Students per teacher
1989	13	43	49 154	9 321	9 795	5.0
1993	14	62	58 843	8 824	8 392	7.0
2001	23	92	95 430	16 579	12 769	7.5
2003	25	104	99 909	18 205	12 401	8.1

An important impulse for problem-solution of the future growth of higher education has been brought about in particular by the World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century – Vision and Activities, approved by the UNESCO Conference (1998) and by the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education in Bologna (1999).

The results and recommendations of both declarations, together with the results emerging from the critical assessment of the development and status of the higher education in the Slovak Republic, became the basis for the new Concept of the Further Development of Higher Education in Slovakia for 21st Century.

Based on the critical assessment of the university status this concept classifies the basic issues of the higher education in twelve problem areas, which became the ideological and material basis for the preparation of the new higher education act.

This concept recommends in particular:

- ▶ preservation of the current objective and self-administration status of higher education institutions and the powers of the Ministry of Education,
- ▶ creation of conditions for the further development of higher education institutions, increase in numbers of admitted students, introduction of a transparent system of the admission procedure,
- ▶ with regard to scientific and research activities, enhancement of the potential of higher education institutions and intensification of their co-operation with other institutions and companies,
- ▶ diversification of the network of universities, differentiation between the academic universities and the vocational universities,
- ▶ implementation of recommendations of the Bologna Declaration within the educational system, reforms of the system of specialisation and assurance of further education of graduates,
- ▶ for assurance of high quality higher education the creation of the functional system of quality assessment,
- ▶ improvement of the social standing of university teachers, closer specification of the standing of associate professors and professors, appointments in the executive positions on the basis of tenders (for a 5-year period of office), creation of a compact system of further education of university teachers, transfer of the system of remuneration to universities,

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- ▶ strengthening the status of self-administration of students, introduction of a differentiated system of social benefits for students, preservation of the principle that the full-time study courses should be offered free-of-charge,
 - ▶ equipment of university facilities with modern information technologies, making them available to students, as well as improvement of conditions for utilisation of the information technologies within the teaching process,
 - ▶ implementation of the university funding reform, transformation of higher education institutions into public non-profit organisations, introduction of the system of funding from multiple sources and increased total amount of funds from the state budget (gradually, to the percentage level of GDP comparable to that of the developed countries),
 - ▶ strengthening the integrity of higher education institutions, termination of the legal status of their faculties, improvement of the management of higher education institutions and setting up administration boards at the higher education institutions,
 - ▶ development of co-operation of higher education institutions with employment organisations, adaptation of the study plans to the actual requirements, widening of the scope of offered follow-up programmes of further education for secondary school-leavers and university graduates as well as for experts from companies and various institutions,
 - ▶ expansion of international contacts of individual schools, participation of higher education institutions in the EU educational programmes, further development of higher education institutions while following the European trends, support of the mutual international mobility of university teachers and students, intensive language education of university employees as a precondition for development of international co-operation.

The new Higher Education Act approved in 2002, as amended in 2003, sets up in a comprehensive way the mission, status and activities of higher education institutions, their organisation and funding management, as well as the status of university students and university employees and self-administration university bodies in accordance with the conclusions of the Concept of the Further Development of Higher Education in Slovakia for 21st Century.

The Act characterises higher education institutions as top educational, scientific and artistic institutions the mission of which is to develop harmonious personality of students, their knowledge, creativity and to contribute to development of education, science and culture for benefit of the whole society.

This mission is to be fulfilled, especially, by:

- ▶ education and training of experts with the highest level of education, moral principles, civic and societal responsibility, respecting the values of democracy, humanism and culture,
- ▶ development of knowledge by scientific research,
- ▶ cooperation with public administration bodies, economic organisations, cultural institutions and foreign partners.

The Act stipulates that higher education institutions be established and dissolved by the Act of the National Council SR. According to the founder the higher education institutions are divided into **public, state** and **private**; higher education is conceived as a three-level education: **Bachelor, Magister** or **Engineer**, and **PhD study**. According to its character and scope of activities the higher education institutions are divided into university which provide all three levels of higher education and non-university (vocational) which provide only education of the first level. The universities with a considerable share and results of education of the third level and scientific research are research universities.

In the academic year 2004/2005 there are 27 higher education institutions in Slovakia, out of which 20 are public, 3 state-owned and 4 private. According to nature, scope and professional orientation there are eleven public universities, three technical universities, one agricultural university, one university of economics, one university of veterinary medicine, three institutions of artistic orientation; three state higher education institutions (academy of armed forces, police academy and medical university); and four private higher education institutions (of health and social work, management, economy and management of public administration, and law). The higher education is carried out in 194 study fields of Bachelor study programmes and in 645 study fields of Magister, Engineer, and PhD study programmes.

In the field of organisation and management the Act assigns to public higher education institutions a self-governing nature, and defines the area of competence of self-governing bodies, and cancels the status of legal entity for faculties. The basis of self-government of higher education institutions is the academic community, the highest self-governing body is the Higher Education Council, in higher education institutions the Academic Senate, Scientific Council, Disciplinary Commission; the higher education institutions have the right to issue their own binding internal regulations, the statute and the binding organisational, working, study and disciplinary order. The statute of the school is a subject of registration by appropriate ministry; the concept of content of study requires recommendation by the Accreditation Commission of the SR Government.

The source of higher education institutions' incomes are the state subsidies, tuition fees and charges linked with the studies (admission examinations, *examina rigorosa*, credentials on studies achieved), incomes from further education, scientific research, incomes from one's own property and intellectual property, enterprising activity and incomes from gifts.

The public higher education institutions are internally divided into faculties, educational, scientific, information, economic-administration and special-purpose establishments.

The faculties carry out educational and scientific research activities in the field of relative study fields and accredited study programmes. The faculty self-governing bodies have the right to decide on admission to study, to create accredited fields of study, to carry out enterprising activity and cooperate with other legal entities and private persons, to decide on internal organisation of the faculty, on organisation of the study and scientific research. The faculty self-governing bodies are represented by academic senate of the faculty, dean, scientific council and disciplinary commission. The appropriate teaching facilities, teaching hospitals, pharmacies, training schools, school property, enterprises and seminaries are constituent parts of the faculty. The faculties lack the status of legal entity.

The administration councils are established for enforcement and provision of public interests. A part of their members are proposed by the rector and a part by the ministry from among representatives of public life, enterprising organisations, territorial self-government and the central state administration bodies. The members of administration council cannot be elected from among employees of the respective higher education institution but the participation of rector, prorector, registrar and chair of academic senate in the sessions of the administration council is allowed. The area of competence of administration council is, particularly, to propose to rector a solution of economic-administration and property issues, to express comments on intentions of the perspective development of the higher education institution, on budget proposal and on annual report on activity of the higher education institution.

The content of study in higher education institution is specified by study programme of individual study fields, that are a part of the system of study fields (ISCED 5, 6). The study may be realised either in the form of full-time or part-time study in the present, distant or combined method. In the organisation of the study the accredited system is applied. The study is completed by the state examination before examination commission. The successful completing of examination is a subject of granting the academic degree of bachelor, magister or engineer, or doctor.

Higher education institutions may award to students the social support in the form of contributions for accommodation and meals in the hostel or in the form of scholarships.

In agreement with the concept of development of higher education for evaluation of quality of education, research, developmental or artistic activity the government establishes on the proposal of minister the **Accreditation Commission** which expresses its opinions on conditions of competence of higher education institution to realise the appropriate study programmes, on the proposal of establishment, dissolution or transit of the institution and on change of study fields. The complex accreditation of activity of higher education institution is carried out according to plan once in six years. The members of the Accreditation Commission are outstanding representatives of higher education institutions, professional and scientific institutions. A third of the members are representatives from non-higher education institutions.

The staff of higher education institutions are university teachers (professors, associate professors, assistant lecturers, instructors), research workers, artists, technical, economic-administrative and administrative workers. The Act and Employment Rules specify their tasks, rights and position.

The students of higher education institutions have the right to pursue the elected study field according to their own study plan, to choose the speed and succession of the part of study programme, the right to apply for study at another institution (also abroad), to participate in research, developmental or artistic activities, in activities of independent civic associations and to express their opinions on quality of teaching and teachers.

The student duties ensue from the study order and study programme, especially to protect and economically use the property, means and services of the school, to pay the tuition and contributions connected with the study, to convey to the institution attended, the required personal data and place of residence. For trespassing the duty the student may be reprimanded, or fired from the institution either conditionally or completely.

The successful **realisation of the Higher Education Act** is made difficult by insufficient provision of higher education institutions, insufficient estimation of the work of teachers and research workers, as a result of which the highly skilled specialists leave the schools.

The absence of real vision of social-economic development of society is made more difficult by realisation of perspective development of higher education institutions and the study fields corresponding to economic-social needs and real opportunities for graduates' employment. The increase of expenditures connected with the study (accommodation, meals, travelling, tuition) make the access of a great part of capable applicants from socially poor background to higher education and its successful completion more difficult. The solution of these problems is therefore a subject of public discussions, negotiations of the Higher Education Council and self-governing bodies, student self-government as a representative body of students and a subject of discussions of the public administration bodies of the state as one of priorities of its policy.

9. The Further Education

The system transformation of the society and economy after 1989 highlighted new requirements for the qualification of professional workers also in the field of lifelong education. The concept of further education as a follow-up system of school education up to a certain level and type has been confirmed and further education remains from now on an organic part of the educational and training system. However, as a result of the privatisation of the economy, the power of central bodies of the state administration over educational establishments has been reduced to central determination of the framework of study plans and partially to funding of further education from the state budget. Gradually – in addition to the postsecondary and postgraduate forms – new, mainly private or civil educational establishments came into being, which were able to promptly modify their educational programmes, update their contents, methods and educational forms.

Therefore the legislation from the period of centrally controlled economy has been replaced by the new Act on Further Education (1997, amended in 2001).

Pursuant to this Act, the further education takes place in institutions of further education in the form of various short-term and long-term educational activities: seminars, training programs, courses, part-time studies in secondary schools and universities, complementary, extension, special, or retraining studies. At present, besides secondary schools and higher education institutions nearly 300 various educational establishments provide the further education.

The further education is either accredited or non-accredited on the basis of the Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education for the Further Education.

The accreditation, as the state verification of the competence of an educational institution, is granted by the Ministry of Education on the basis of the approval by its Accreditation Commission. Members of the Accreditation Commission are appointed by the Minister of Education on the basis of proposal of the respective central bodies of the state administration, regional self-administration, Centre of Labour of Social Affairs and Family, professional organisations and experts in the field of further education. The accreditation is conditional on the relevant professional educational orientation of the institution, project submitted by this institution, which must meet all requirements, appropriate educational

documentation of the educational activity, qualified staffing and the appropriate material and technical facilities of this institution. The accreditation is granted for five years. Graduates from accredited further education courses are issued certificates by the respective educational institution, which are valid on the whole territory of Slovakia.

The expenditures for the further education are covered partially by participants themselves and partially from the funds of employers, from special-purpose subsidies, from the budget of the Centre of Labour (only for accredited retraining education), from budgets of local self-administration, from contributions by foundations and from other sources.

Table 25: The Further Education

Type of education	1997	2000	2003
Further specialised education (professional, complementary, extended)	50.20	59.21	67.88
Retraining	34.27	16.92	-
Civil education	4.87	6.17	-
Social, cultural and special-interest education	4.70	6.08	-
Continuous education to achieve educational level	-	-	6.35
Special-interest and civil education	-	-	11.00
Other	5.96	10.29	14.57
Data not available	0	1.33	0.22

10. Management, Administration and Funding of the System of Education and Training

Management and administration of the system of education and training are governed by the respective education acts (on primary and secondary schools, on school facilities, on higher education institutions, and on the further education) and the Act on State Administration and Self-Government in Education. The management and administration of the higher education institutions are regulated by the Act No. 131/2002 on Higher Education and on Change and Supplement to Some Acts. The authority of the Ministry of Education has been defined by the Act on Organisation of Ministries (1990) and, since 2001, by the Act on Organisation of the Government Operation and on Organisation of the Central State Administration, which also reflects the changes resulting from the reform of the public administration, and the Act on State Administration and Self-Government in Education (2003).

The Act stipulates that the Ministry of Education represents the central body of the state administration for all primary and secondary schools, universities, school facilities and life-long education. On the basis of its authorities the Ministry is obliged in particular:

- ▶ to participate in creation of a unified state educational policy, to meet the objectives resulting from international treaties and international co-operation in the field of education,

- ▶ to examine the issues of education and training and to prepare concepts for their further development,
- ▶ to prepare draft laws and general binding legal regulations in the field of education and training (such as study plans, curricula, standards and directives concerning the school equipment),
- ▶ to co-operate with other ministries and central bodies and to utilise the knowledge and know-how of scientific and research institutions, as well as of professional organisations, to discuss with trade unions and representative organisations of employers and social partners proposals for major measures, which would reflect their interests.

The rules of conduct and the features of major objectives of the ministry within its individual areas of competence, as well as its relations to other central bodies of the state administration, have been defined in the Statutes of the Ministry, which were approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic.

After the 1996 sectoral administration dissolution the regional state administration was done by 30 June 2002 by regional and district offices, which were under control of the government. The Ministry of Education managed the operation of the state administration of the school system only on the basis of general binding legal, educational and organisational regulations, by co-ordination and methodical directives provided to school departments, which were established by the regional and district offices to administer the schools. District offices have been given necessary authorities within the field of primary schools, as well as in pre-school and extra-curricular educational facilities, while regional offices managed secondary and special schools and school facilities. In 1999, the school inspection has, however, been dropped from the list of competencies of the regional and district offices and the independent State School Inspection has been created. After self-administration regions have been established and the competencies of municipalities extended, the state administration has been transferred (from 1 January 2002) to municipalities and self-administrative regions.

The execution of state administration in the field of primary schools, pre-school establishments and facilities for education outside classes has been transferred to municipalities, including establishment and dissolution of the schools and facilities, appointment of school principals and creation of economic, material, technical and personnel conditions for operation of schools and school facilities, as well as control over the rational spending of allocated funds. Self-administrative regions have been authorised to establish and dissolve secondary schools, special schools and school facilities and to be in charge of the state administration at the second level. With efficacy from 1 January 2004 the performance of state administration and self-government in the field of primary schools and secondary schools and school facilities was regulated by new Act on State Administration and Self-Government in Education (2003). According to this Act:

a) The state administration of the school system is performed by:

- ▶ principals of school and school facility,
- ▶ municipality within the scope of the authorities which have been transferred from the dissolved district offices,
- ▶ regional school offices,
- ▶ State School Inspection,

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- ▶ Ministry of Education,
 - ▶ and other central state administration bodies (Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Justice).

b) Regional self-administration of the school system is performed by:

- ▶ the school and school facility board and, in secondary schools, also by the pupils' school board,
- ▶ municipal school board, and
- ▶ regional school board.

Note:

The central self-government body for primary and secondary schools and school facilities is not completed yet. The function of the central self-governing body for higher education institutions is fulfilled by the Higher Education Council, Rectors' Conference, Student Council and representative bodies of higher education institutions.

The self-administrative educational authorities for regional education enjoy the status of initiative and counselling bodies, with the objective to express and enforce local public interests, to perform the function of public control, to evaluate activities of schools and school facilities, of local and regional state administration bodies, to present opinions about candidates for position of school principals or school facility heads, about concepts of development and professional focus of schools and school facilities, about budget and work conditions of school or school facility employees, about the administration and results of education and training. These bodies, however, do not have the decision-making power. (The system of management of higher education institutions has been described in details in Chapter 8.)

10.1. Funding of Schools and School Facilities

Since the reorganisation of the state administration in 1996 until 30 June 2002 the funds for secondary schools and school facilities were allocated through regional offices, as these schools and facilities were under direct control of regional offices, while the funds for primary schools and school facilities came from district offices as their control bodies. Secondary health-care schools, police and military schools were funded by their respective ministries, while vocational schools were funded by the respective economic bodies which founded the schools.

Since 1 July 2002, funding of schools and school facilities has been regulated by the Act on Funding of Primary and Secondary Schools and School Facilities, which differentiated the funding of the state, public, church and private schools and school facilities. From 1 January 2004 the funding is regulated by the **new Act No. 597/2003 on Funding Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities**.

The Act guarantees from the state budget free education in primary and secondary schools, financing of educational process, operation and solution of average situations and provision of fees for financing development, reconstruction, modernisation and material-technical equipment of schools. Likewise, the state provides for funding to the private and church schools.

The source of financing the schools and school facilities are the funds from state budget, subsidies for the performance of self-governing competences, funds from the budgets of municipalities and self-governing regions, from private persons and legal entities, from enterprising activities of the schools, from contributions of parents and guardians, from gifts and other resources (contributions for leisure education, for publishing textbooks, methodical aids, educational press, regular special-interest activities and competitions of pupils).

The Act changed the financing of the state and non-state schools. The financing of state schools from the state budget ensues from normatively designated contributions for calendar year according to number of pupils from the school. The norm includes *wage norm* (for wages and salaries, insurance and employer's contribution) and *operational norm* (funds annually prescribed for operation of the school and costs for teaching process falling per pupil).

At specifying the norms, the level, type and kind are distinguished, the personnel and economic demands of the study field and trade, the form of study, language of instruction, size of school and climatic conditions of the school premises.

For the solution of average situations the Ministry of Education may provide through the appropriate regional school office to the founders of the state school a special-purpose subsidy and the Ministry of Finance a subsidy for reconstruction and modernisation of the school equipment. The non-state schools are provided contributions according to directions similarly as to state schools, but the funds for reconstruction and modernisation of the school equipment are not provided to them from the state budget.

For financing regular non-compulsory special-interest education the pupils are granted **educational vouchers** as a contribution to the holder of the voucher for provision of selected special-interest activity at school or in school facility.

The school budget proposal is submitted by the principal to the school founder and he is responsible for its observance, and efficient and purposeful use of school or school facility. The check up of economic and effective use of the budget by the school and school facility and their property is carried out by the municipality or self-governing region and the subsequent control by the Ministry of Education through regional school office and the State School Inspection.

The state budget specifies annual limits for revenues and expenditures of the school system including those of the Ministry of Education, higher education institutions and directly managed organisations as well as of regional offices, which fund regional schools.

In kindergartens the parents contribute to education, meals and teaching aids for their children. In primary and secondary schools and school facilities parents contribute for meals of their children, in basic schools of art and language schools the parents also cover the tuition fees; they contribute for accommodation and meals of their children living in hostels and youth centres, for school educational facilities (school clubs, centres of leisure time and special-interest centres) as well as to personal teaching aids. Textbooks can be borrowed by pupils from school libraries.

In private schools, parents pay school fees on all levels and types of schools.

In accredited public higher education institutions the education is provided free of charge. The university students pay fees for special administration procedures only (admission

procedures, or for above-standard activities) and contribute to costs of their accommodation and meals. Higher education institutions and secondary schools have also opportunity to earn funds from extra revenues and business operations, provided that these business operations are in some way related to the professional orientation of the studies.

The further professional education of employees may be financed by their employers and partially also by individual participants. According to the newly passed Higher Education Act the part-time education is provided free of charge also at a university level.

Retraining courses for the unemployed are funded by the Labour Office and the respective regional school offices, and partially by participants in these courses.

Table 26: Total expenditures for education in the Slovak Republic

Type of education	1990	1993	1999	2001
Regional schools	11.07	15.37	26.57	29.63
Universities	2.71	3.05	5.92	8.22
Other organisations	0.37	0.75	1.7	2.39
Slovak Republic – total	14.15	19.17	34.19	40.24

Table 27: Comparison of expenditure share in total expenditures of the state budget and GDP

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Percentage of expenditures for education in the total expenditures of the SR	10.96	13.18	13.89	10.04	10.7	13.8	12.25	12.6	16.2	15.38	15.34	15.7
Percentage of the total expenditures for education in the GDP	5.1	5.51	5.9	5.2	4.38	5.05	4.55	4.71	4.46	4.57	4.17	3.9

III. Conclusions and Trends of the Further Development of the Education System

Based on the previous characteristics of the development and present state of the education system the following conclusions may be stated:

- ▶ after 1989 significant conceptual measures were taken to regulate, in agreement with the nation-wide social and economic changes, the mission and position of the education system as a subsystem of democratic political and societal establishment
- ▶ for its provision the new legal, educational organisational and pedagogical norms on organisation, content and forms of education and training and in the system of administration and management were issued
- ▶ thus the system of education and training in this country became compatible with the systems of education in the advanced democratic countries in EU, in harmony with the valid international documents on education and training
- ▶ the process of humanisation and modernisation of aims and content of education and democratisation of the system of administration and management, required personnel, economic and material-technical provision of the conditions of education and training cannot be considered is completed.

Particularly, the SR entry to EU presupposed realisation of the further continuous partial as well as principal modifications in the concept of education and training, its management and administration with the aim to achieve a higher level of compatibility of the system and standards of education with the advanced EU countries, mobility and employment of graduates in the Europe labour market, to more flexibly accommodate the education to the changing conditions and needs of the advanced society, market economy and more consistent application of the principles of humanisation, modernisation of the content and democratisation of the system of management.

They are manifested in the new **Concept of Lifelong Education in the SR** (hereinafter LLE) approved by the SR Government in February 2004.

The concept defines lifelong education as a decisive instrument of educational policy of the state and employment policy that includes educational and training activities in all stages of development of man, that means, in the stage of pre-productive, productive and post-productive age. The process is carried out in three subsystems of education and training:

- ▶ in the subsystem of formal institutional education in schools of vertically bound levels and horizontally divided types, subjects, fields of study
- ▶ in the subsystem of non-formal extracurricular education in various institutions of the sectors, economic organisations or in school educational institutions, and
- ▶ in the subsystem of informal, non-institutional educational activities (in family, in free time, in leisure civic associations and the surrounding environment).

The adopted Concept on Lifelong Education ensues from the conclusions of LLE evaluation in EU countries, from international documents on education and training (especially white Paper of EC on learning and Teaching – Towards Learning Society (1995), from Memorandum of EC on LLE (2000) as well as from intentions of our valid concepts of LLE development, National Programme of Education and Training in the SR (2002), the Concept of the Further Development of Higher Education in Slovakia for the 21st Century (2002) and the Concept of the Further development (2002).

On the basis of the above documents the Concept defines six principal intentions and presuppositions of LLE development:

1. to provide for new basic skills for all
2. to provide more investments in human sources
3. to carry out innovations in education
4. to recognise the educational results
5. to realise new approach to professional guidance and counselling, particularly career guidance
6. to make the education nearer to the learners.

Following the above intentions the LLE Concept sets up the strategic aims of LLE development, characterises the required activities for their achievement and the proposal of concrete measures, namely:

- ▶ establishment of the Council of the Minister of Education for LLE for provision of coordination of activities of interested sectors and social partners at fulfilling adopted measures,
- ▶ to work out the programme of LLE development
- ▶ to create regional councils for LLE, too
- ▶ to work out a proposal of new legislative norms on position and tasks of LLE
- ▶ to gradually increase budget means for LLE at the percentage level of GDP in EU countries
- ▶ to work out the proposal of strategy of multisource LLE funding
- ▶ to introduce the system of evaluation of individual units of LLE (Basic, secondary and higher education institutions), study fields
- ▶ to create legislative preconditions for recognition of results of nonformal education comparable to results of formal education

The Government resolution set up to the minister of education in cooperation with the other interested ministries to provide for realisation of measures and recommended to social partners (employer's organisations and associations, Confederation of Trade Unions and Association of towns and Communities) to support their realisation until the end of September 2004.