Slovak National Observatory of Vocational Education and Training

Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training in Slovakia

National Report
2000

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with support of

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1. Socio-economic background

The period immediately following the fall of Communism in 1989, accompanied by the transformation of a controlled economy into a market economy, is characterised by (so-called) shock therapy. The year 1991 saw increases in prices and, simultaneously, extensive growth in unemployment as a consequence of the collapse of Eastern markets. Differential impact of the economic transformation policy on the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic contributed to the separation of Czechoslovakia. The inception of an independent Slovak Republic, which took place on 1 January 1993, was accompanied by a continuing economic depression. But by the year 1994 the downward trend saw a reversal and the years between 1994 and 1998 were characterised by substantial growth in the GDP, a stable rate of inflation, and a relatively stable rate of unemployment, as can be seen from Table 1.

Table 1
1990-1999 basic macroeconomic indicators

Indicator	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
GDP	-2.5	-14.6	-6.5	-3.7	4.9	6.7	6.2	6.2	4.1	1.9
Unemployment rate	1.5	11.8	10.4	14.4	14.6	13.1	12.8	12.5	15.6	19.2
Inflation Rate	-	61.2	10.1	23.2	13.5	9.9	5.8	6.1	6.7	10.6

Source: Statistical Office of SR, tabled by author
Note: GDP, constant prices 1995, annual change (%) ESA methodology since 1995
Registered unemployment rate as of 31 December (%)
Annual average inflation rate – consumer prices (% change)

Despite these facts, Slovakia has fallen behind in process of integration into European structures. Non-fulfilment of political criteria rather than economic reasons were the grounds for not inviting Slovakia to the Luxembourg group of candidates for integration into the EU.

1.1 Economic developments

Very good macroeconomic indicators from 1994-1998 went hand in hand with a huge increase in encumbrance. The GDP growth reflected strategic manoeuvres of the government, which took responsibility even for extensive commitments in loans provided to private enterprises, rather than spontaneous dynamics of the enterprise sector. There has not been a fundamental sanitation of enterprises. Privatisation by means of politics, for the benefit of selected Slovak owners, did not lead to establishment of stable owners who would be willing and able to proceed to restructuring of the newly-gained companies. In fact, a dead investment market and an ineffective banking sector failed to create conditions for the healthy, competitive growth of companies. High interest rates and low accessibility to credit in general held back the development of small and medium-size businesses. Potential investors were also discouraged by the highest tax and levy charges of all the countries in Central Europe.

Although independent analysts pointed out the fact that Slovakia lives beyond its conditions - that the increase in real wages and the final consumption of inhabitants are not sustainable - an optimistic evaluation of the economic situation prevailed among politicians on both sides, on the governmental side and, partly, also among politicians in opposition as well.

Before the election in 1998, the opposition politicians assumed that as a consequence of new politics in strong favour of integration into the EU and NATO and a more transparent privatisation process, foreign investments would strengthen considerably and economic growth would allow an even more intensive rise in real wages than was the case in the past. One of the effective election slogans was one promising "double wages." After the election, the instability in the macroeconomic success of Slovakia became obvious almost immediately.

Inauguration of new government had to call for changes in the behaviour of a politicised group of new owners. It was impossible to expect further carefree granting of credit, not even covering credits by the government. On the contrary, the new government announced the revision of disputed decisions regarding privatisation realised by the previous government. Owners, who were politically the most vulnerable ones, tried to be very prompt in capitalising their property by exporting it abroad and by selling it to new owners. Dismissing redundant employees and liquidating unattractive and unsuccessful companies led to a severe growth in unemployment, leaving Slovakia with the highest rate of unemployment in Europe by the end of 1999 (Table 2).

Table 2
1990-1999 labour market indicators - unemployment

Indicator	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Average annual number of registered unemployed	14296	169059	285511	323216	366168	349821	324278	336661	379466	485202
Average annual registered unemployment rate (%)	0.6	6.6	11.4	12.7	14.4	13.8	12.6	12.9	13.7	17.3
LFS unemployment rate (%)	-	-	-	-	13.7	13.1	11.3	11.8	12.5	16.2
Average annual number of benefited unemployed	7996	124624	119205	112409	91143	76590	85241	83939	102491	130343

Source: National Labour Office of SR and Statistical Office of SR (LFS)

The approximate number of those living on unemployment benefits (on average SKK 3 413 per month – about EUR 80), was over 130 000 people.

In autumn 1998 the National Bank ceased fixing the national currency and established a floating rate of exchange for the Slovak crown. This, naturally, started the decline of the crown in relation to key world currencies. A severe slump in the value of the currency in spring 1999 led to the introduction of a surcharge on imports and to the increase in the VAT tariff. Measures taken by the government in July 1999 stabilised the situation. In 1999, the public sector incurred a consolidated deficit of SKK 29.2 billion (EUR 0.68 billion), representing 3.7 % of the GDP. In 1998, the deficit was 5 % of the GDP. The current account deficit dropped to 5.4 % which, compared to the deficit of the previous year amounting to 10 %, is considered a most important positive development.

The price which had to be paid for the soft landing of economy was a reduction in growth of the GDP and a decline in consumption.

Table 3
Cooling phase of the economy: 1997-1999 selected macroeconomic indicators

Indicator	1997	1998	1999
GDP	6.2	4.1	1.9
Domestic demand	4.3	9.5	-4.8
Final consumption of households	5.6	5.3	0.1
Final consumption of government	4.0	4.0	-6.9
Gross fixed capital formation	12.0	11.1	-18.8
Imports of goods and services	17.6	12.2	3.6

Source: Statistical Office of SR, ESA 95 methodology

Especially sensitive for the government was a real wage decrease to 97.1, at index 99/98 in 1999. Real wages in 1999 amounted to just 88.2 % of wages in 1989, decreasing after five years of growth.

Table 4
1989-1999 real wage development (1989 basis)

Indicator	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**
Real Wage Index	100	94.4	69.6	75.7	72.8	75	78.2	83.8	89.2	91.8	88.2

Source: Statistical Office of SR

When looking at the trend in wages as broken down by NACE sections (Table 5), a decline in the education sector is easy seen. When comparing the situation at the start of the transition process in 1991 to 1999 wage averages, winners are workers with direct access to power (i.e., the administration) and direct access to financial sources due to obligatory/necessary payments of inhabitants (electricity, gas and water, and financing).

Table 5
Average gross wage per sections (average wage=100)

NACE Sectors	**1991**	**1994**	**1998**	**1999**
Total	100	100	100	100
Agriculture, hunting and forestry 1/	100	82	78	78
Industry	102	103	103	104
Mining and quarrying	118	117	110	112
Manufacturing	100	98	100	100
Electricity, gas and water supply	119	139	133	134
Construction	102	103	100	92
Trade and repair	90	91	107	107
Hotels and restaurants	84	82	75	76
Transport, storage and communication	102	105	106	108
Financial intermediation	140	187	193	186
Real estate and business activities	99	106	121	122
Public administration and defence	111	117	124	122
Education	94	82	82	78
Health care and welfare	105	86	91	85
Other services	98	89	85	88

Source: Statistical Office of SR, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
1/ including fishing

Although interest rates had dropped considerably as a consequence of the reduction in the state investment claims credit policy did not revive. However sufficient the liquidity position

is, banks express their distrust in the company sector, preferring investments to treasury notes of state and/or National Bank sterilisation operations which do not involve any kind of risk. In 1999, the volume of credits reached 53 % of the GDP but estimations of analysts who take into consideration only living, real credit reimbursements report volumes below 30 % of the GDP.
The Slovak investment market is the only one in Central Europe to show declines (in the year 1988 a decline of 49 %, in 1999 a decline of 18 %). Its share in the common investment market together with the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia covers less than 1 %. There are three obligations, which the government has to face and realise, otherwise commitment of banks in the business sector and, as a matter of fact, revival of the economy in Slovakia cannot be expected. They are:

- improvement of legislative procedures, mainly reaffirmation of creditor positions in relation to debtor positions,
- successful privatisation of banks,
- improvement of functioning of courts of justice.

It is expected that the amendment to the Act of Bankruptcy and Settlement which was adopted in 2000 will provide the banks with wider manoeuvering space when restructuring a jeopardised company instead of a speedy liquidation of the company. The Government has removed SKK100 billion from the pockets of tax-payers to settle wrong bank credits (which is equal to the resources of the educational sector for about three-years time). This created positive preconditions for a quick privatisation of banks. While the government is taking action on the first two issues, there has been only a slight progress in the reform in the judiciary system. It is even worse news as improvement of functioning of the courts is a time-consuming and demanding procedure, because it lessens hope for the prompt establishment of a stable environment for serious entrepreneurial business and, consequently, for the faster economic revival of Slovakia.
Despite controversial political actions suspicious of elitism, the privatisation process is progressing quickly (see Table 6). The industrial sector is almost completely privatised, with some exceptions - predominantly within the late army-industry linked machinery plants. The years 2000 and 2001 provide signs of privatisation of the banking sector and of very lucrative state monopolies. Replacement of bad loans from the most important banks to the specialised agency has contributed to the attractiveness of the banking sector and by the end of 2001, all important banks are expected to be privatised and backed by important foreign investors. Due to massive interventions from the state budget at the cost of taxpayers the final income from the privatisation process of banks is marginal in comparison with the already started privatisation process of Slovak Telecom, the state gas utility Slovenský plynárenský priemysel (SPP) and Transpetrol. Privatisation in the public service sector will affect the monopoly of the Slovak Insurance Company, energy producer Slovenské elektrárne (SE), regional public bus companies Slovenská automobilová doprava, and the water supplier Vodárne a kanalizácie.

Table 6
Private sector share in the economy – selected indices

Indicator	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Private Sector Share in % of GDP	39.0	58.2	65.6	76.8	82.6	82.4	84.3
Private Sector Share in Industrial Production (%)	30.1	57.5	64.6	68.2	73.2	78.1	79.3
Private Sector Share in Construction Production (%)	53.2	74.2	81.8	83.2	82.2	83.7	91.5
Private Sector Share in Total Retail Sales (%)	80.9	88.5	91.7	94.6	95.9	96.8	99.5

Source: Statistical Office of SR

With the launching of the law on industrial parks and the intention to motivate municipalities for co-operation on creation of industrial parks by financial incentives, at least 5 industrial parks are going to be established soon: Malacky, Vráble, Lučenec, Námestovo and Košice, two of them with extraordinary importance - Malacky for the automotive industry and Lučenec for chemistry. Part of the earnings from privatisation of SPP are planned to go to the further support of industrial park establishment. Slovakia is still relatively unsuccessful in attracting foreign investors. Lagging behind with the establishment of industrial parks in comparison to neighbouring candidate countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland), and not offering ten years of tax vacancies as these countries do, the government is just trying to catch up in this area. Establishment of industrial parks could be of benefit for the improvement of regions, as the current situation shows extreme disparity in distribution of foreign direct investment by region. Two thirds of investments were allocated to Bratislava and its vicinity (Bratislava and Trnava regions). The Bratislava region has a special position not only in comparison with other Slovak regions but also in comparison with the EU average. With a level of 105 % of EU average and 265 % over the average of Central European countries, this region could rank among the most developed regions within these countries. The other regions in Slovakia feature 29 – 44 % of the EU average.

Table 7
Foreign investment by regions (without bank sector) as of 31.12.1999

Territory	Million of USD	%
Bratislava region	957.9	55.2
Trnava region	193.8	11.2
Trenčín region	134.9	7.8
Nitra region	73.5	4.2
Žilina region	58.1	3.3
Banská Bystrica region	96.3	5.5
Prešov region	64.0	3.7
Košice region	158.2	9.1
Slovakia	1 736.8	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education of SR

The Government is determined to attract foreign investors by taking the following measures: Taxpayers of corporate income tax with corporate domicile established in the Slovak Republic by 31 December 2002 shall be granted reduction of the tax declared in the tax return in the amount of 100 % of the respective tax for five consecutive taxation periods. Moreover, the taxpayers may for five consecutive taxation periods draw an additional tax credit in the amount of 50 % of the tax declared in the tax return. Additionally, customs relief - exemption of duty on the import of fixed capital equipment and machinery, and an employment support scheme - returnable contribution - negotiated with Regional Labour Office, and non-returnable contributions - negotiated with District Labour Office, are offered under special conditions.
Nevertheless, Slovakia is still significantly lagging behind other neighbouring candidate countries in both the total amount of investment and the structure of investment. There is no significant inflow of investment into the sectors, except three sectors clearly visible in Table 8.

Table 8
Structure of foreign direct investment by NACE sectors as of 31 December 1999

Sector	Mill. USD	%
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	3.5	0.2
Mining and quarrying	24.7	1.2
Manufacturing	1 002.8	49.1
Electricity, gas and water supply	10.1	0.5
Construction	39.9	2.0
Wholesale and retail trade, repairs of motor vehicles	381.7	18.7
Hotels and restaurants	25.1	1.2
Transport, storage and communication	63.7	3.1
Financial intermediation	413.9	20.3
Real estate, renting and business activities	71.4	3.5
Health and social work	0.4	0.0
Other community, social and personal service activities	6.8	0.3
Total	2 043.8	100

Source: Ministry of Education of SR

The SME sector still suffers from a lack of flexibility in administration and a comparatively high tax and levies (46.2 %), which prevents many entrepreneurs from employing staff, and creates good conditions for development of a shadow economy. But, there are two good messages with regard to SMEs. In accordance with a new law, a very simple system of taxing without accountancy procedure for small traders has been introduced. This could encourage small craftsmen and traders to run businesses without time consuming paperwork. A PHARE 2000 project on establishment of incubators for SMEs is going to be supported by the EU with EUR 1million in regions with high unemployment; that is, in Prešov, Košice, Rožňava, Spišská Nová Ves.

The Ministry of Economy developed a document, "A Complex Set of Legal, Regulating and Tax Framework for Support of Investment and Entepreneurship". Measures proposed in this document could significantly improve conditions for entrepreneurship. However, proposals for reduction of corporate taxing are not supported by the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance is preparing its own proposals of changes in the tax policy for the period 2001-2003. The main objective, however, is seen in harmonising of Slovak tax laws with EU legislation. It will result in transfer of the tax burden to property and consumption taxes. There is a threat that a decrease in direct taxes will not be so significant as an increase in indirect taxes. Since the Ministry of Finance did not approved a decrease of the legal entity income tax rate from 40 % to 29 %, which has come to force by the decision and initiative of the Parliament since 1 January 2000, it will depend on the activity of the Parliament whether the proposed decrease to 15-20 % will be enforced in future.

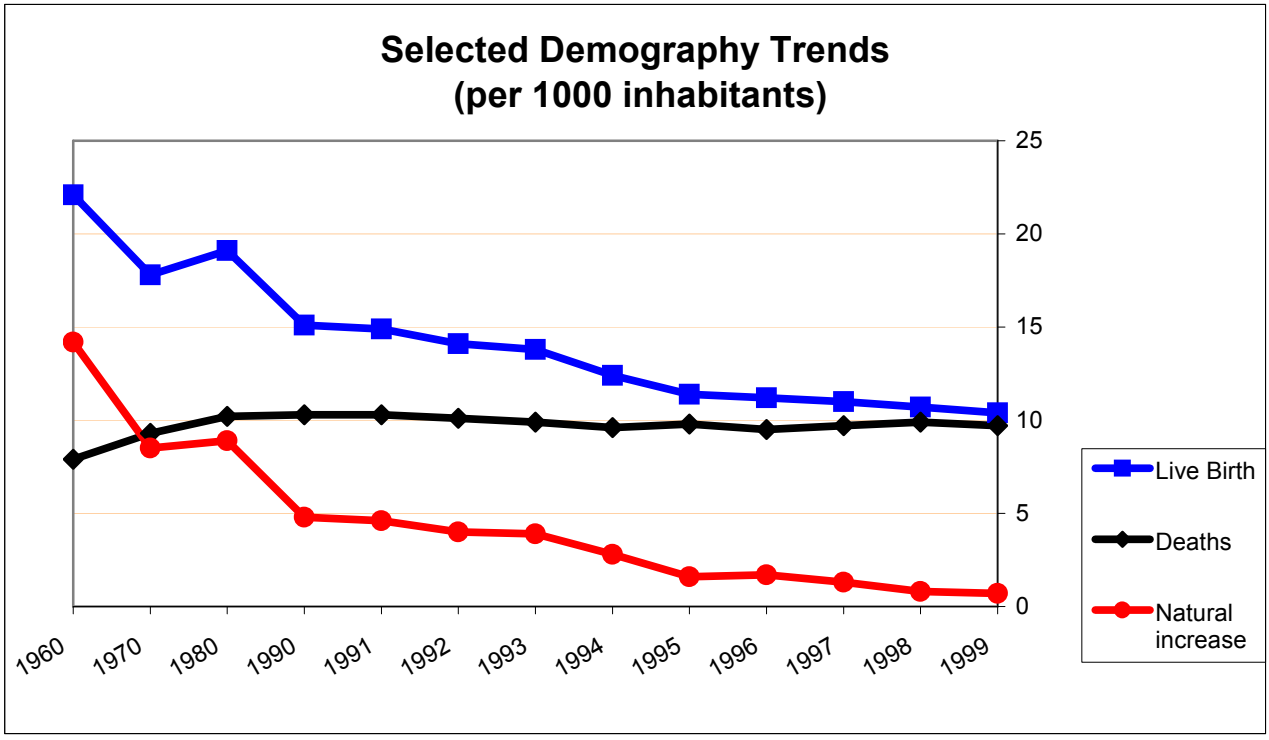
It would be an extraordinary success for the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family if the part of tax relief was fixed to investments in human resources development, e.g. to the establishment of vocational education and training funds as recommended in the conclusions of the working seminar of ETF and tripartite representatives in Senec, 11-12 May 2000.

1.2 Demography

On 31 December 1999 the population of Slovakia was 5.399 million, of which 2.774 million (51.37 % of total population) were female and 3.346 million (61.97 % of total population) were persons in the productive age range. Population density per square km is 109.9. For more details see Tables II, III, IV in Annex.

The overall situation in Slovakia is developing similarly to other Central European candidate countries. With some time shift we are experiencing a huge decrease in birth rates and ageing of the population. Basic indicators of demographic development in Slovakia are getting worse since the beginning of the second half of 20th century, except for the time-period of the early 1970s. Since 1989 the demographic situation in Slovakia has got even worse to such extent that some analysts started to report about a demographic catastrophe. The share of live-born children dropped from 19.1 per mille in year 1980 (see Graph 1) and 15.2 per mille in 1989 to 10.4 per mile in 1999 while the death rate remained stable. Thus, the natural increase of 8.9 per mille in 1980 decreased to 5.0 per mille in 1989 and 0.7 per mille in 1999.

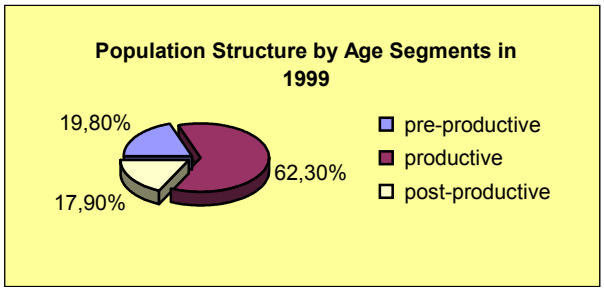
Graph 1



Source: Statistical Office of SR

Despite the severe decrease in birth rates in the 1990s, Slovakia has still the highest birth rate of all Central European countries. Nevertheless, a significant ageing of the population is visible in changes over time in age segments of the population. The current shares of age segments are depicted in Graph 2.

Graph 2



Source: Statistical Office of SR
Note: Pre-productive age (pre-working age): from 0 to 14 year, productive age (working age): from 15 to 59 years old men, from 15 to 54 years old female, post-productive age (post- working age): 60 and more years old men, 55 and more old female

Since 1960, the pre-productive segment of the population has decreased. From a 31.6:54.7:13.7 share among pre-productive, productive and post-productive segments of the population, Slovakia gradually tends toward a regressive 20:50:30 share as indicated by the demographic prognoses in Table 9. For a more detailed trend of the 1990s in absolute numbers see Table V in Annex. It is worthwhile to stress that the working age population is still increasing.

Table 9
Prognosis of demographic development (1996)

Age groups	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Pre-working age (0-14)	1043030	941560	886468	880215	855858
Working age (M:15-59; F:15-54)	3387362	3451725	3395754	3261056	3152072
Post-working age (M:60+; F:55+)	978278	1044345	1158466	1273931	1354336

Source: Statistical Office of SR

All this is reflected in the worsening of indicators characterising the ageing process (see Tables 10 and 11).

Table 10
Population of non-working age per 100 persons of working age

Year	1990	1994	1998	1999	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Index	74	69	62	61	60	58	60	66	70

Source: Statistical Office of SR, Statistical Yearbooks of SR (1950-1999 data); 2000+ data from prognosis of development (1996)
* Females 55+ and males 60+ divided by age group of 0-14.

Table 11
Ageing index*

Year	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	1999	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Index	0.42	0.43	0.60	0.62	0.69	0.72	0.76	0.81	0.87	0.91	0.94	1.11	1.31	1.45	1.58

Source: Statistical Office of SR, Statistical Yearbooks of SR (1950-1999 data); 2000+ data from prognosis of development (1996)
* Females 55+ and males 60+ divided by age group of 0-14.

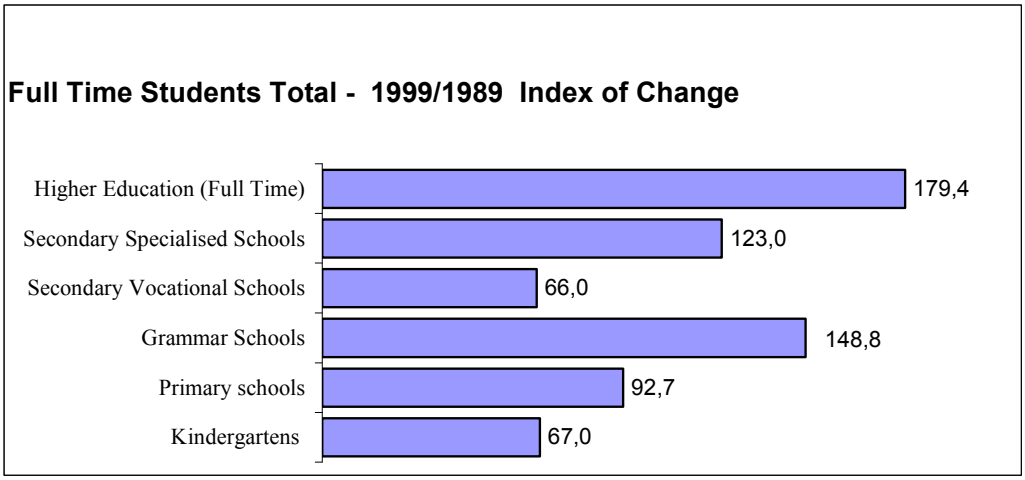
Demographic developments in Slovakia suggest two important features:

- An unstable PAYG-based pension scheme will have to be reformed and the retirement age will have to be increased. This will affect especially women and, in particular pedagogical staff who are mostly women
- Optimisation of school networks and study and training branches has to reflect both labour market changes and demographic changes.

The last baby-boom population is already completing university studies (see Table VI in Annex), and a wave of free places at schools is moving through primary and secondary schools. A tremendous population decrease makes a deep reconstruction of primary and secondary networks urgent. In 1989 there were still 80 116 children born alive in Slovakia, in 1999 only 56 223 children.

It is very easy readable from the figures of Graph 3 that school networks must be subjected to significant changes. An increase in the numbers of students indicated in primary schools is due to an expansion of Basic School from 8-years to 9-years. Optimisation of the network of secondary schools could be significantly supported by the decision (already agreed) that sectoral ministries competencies on establishment of SVS goes to regional offices. Thus, all secondary schools will be maintained by regional offices and later by regional self-governing authorities.

Graph 3



Source: Statistical Office of SR

So far, the optimisation process of secondary schools has been hampered by a very complex system of governing of VET and a necessity to harmonise the points of view of many key players. It can be expected that after the fulfilment of the reform of the administration, where primary schools become maintained by municipalities and secondary schools by regional self-governing authorities, this reconstruction will be fulfilled.

2. Labour market background

The situation in the labour market is still heavily affected by the slow restructuring process of enterprises. The unemployment increase in 1999 has affected the whole country. Nevertheless, traditional segmentation has remained and is visible in Table 12 as "a Bratislava - Žilina Highway Effect". Regions along the border with the Czech Republic (Bratislava, Trnava, Trenčin, Žilina) linked by this highway feature the lowest unemployment. Last three columns clarify why the NUTS II region Slovakia East containing Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice regions has been selected as a priority region for preparatory measures aimed at future structural funds related activities.

Table 12
Registered unemployment rate in regions in 1998 and 1999 (in %)

Year	SR Total	Bratislava region	Trnava region	Trenčín region	Nitra region	Žilina region	B. Bystrica region	Prešov region	Košice region
1998	13.67	4.44	11.37	9.02	15.69	11.91	16.72	19.26	18.88
1999	17.31	6.08	14.34	11.92	19.19	16.12	21.13	23.63	23.91

Source: National Labour Office of SR

Despite the huge increase in unemployment, a modest increase in GDP indicates an increase in productivity.

2.1 Economic activity of population

The activity rate in Slovakia is stabile, oscillating around 60 %.

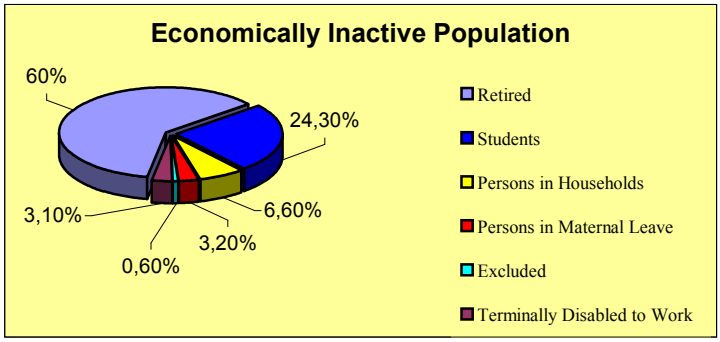
Table 13
Activity rate development

Indicator/Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Economic activity rate	59.8	60.1	59.9	59.9	60.0

Source: Statistical Office of SR

The current structure of the economically inactive population is shown in Graph 4:

Graph 4



Source Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family of SR

For a more detailed activity rate breakdown by age and education and by age and gender see Tables VIII and IX in the Annex.

The productive age population has been increasing during the whole period of the 1990s, as discussed in the previous chapter (see Table V in Annex). In parallel, the active population has been increasing too. From 1994 to 1999 the increase exceeded 5 %, with a significant decrease in both poles of educational attainment (see Table VII in Annex). A positive trend is the decrease in the number of low-educated persons by over 20 %, indicating that the population may perceive education as an opportunity for both increased chances for employment and prevention of unemployment. There is a negative message for the Slovak society in that over 30 thousand of those with a higher education disappeared from the labour market, which represents 1.2 % of 1999 active population. When comparing the total active population in respective age groups with ISCED 5+ active population within the same age groups, the highest losses can be seen in the group of 35-44, followed by the group of 25-34, i.e. in the population which naturally features the highest mobility. Losses in new professionals in the age category of 25-34 compared with losses in the age category of 45-54 (which persons are not as easily employable abroad), indicates a 4 times higher brain-drain likelihood of younger professionals than of older professionals.

2.2 Employment

The increase in the active population, however, has not contributed to adequate growth in employment (see Table 14).

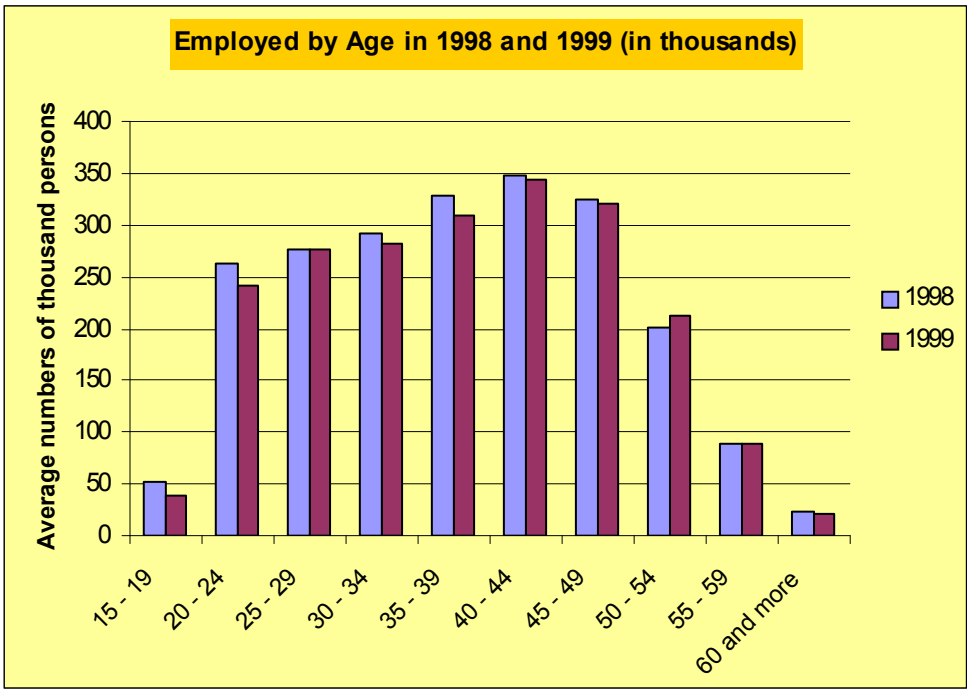
Table 14
Active population and employed in comparison of 1994 and 1999

Specifications	1994	1999	1999/1994 (%)
Working age (in thousands)	3194	3361	5.23
Active population (in thousands)	2430	2556	5.19
Employed (in thousands)	2104	2128	1.14

Source: Statistical Office of SR (LFS 2Q)

As could be observed from more detailed data provided in the Annex, employment rose and unemployment decreased just in 1994-1996. Since 1997 the number of unemployed persons has been increasing and the number of employed has been decreasing. The decrease in employment in 1998 and 1999 is depicted in more detail in Graph 5.

Graph 5



Source: Statistical Office of SR, Statistical Yearbook of SR 2000

The most significant decrease in employment has affected the age group of 15-24. This was caused by an increase in the proportion of the population within this age group remaining in education.

Development of labour market demands, as presented in Table XIII in the Annex shows analogous trends observed with respect to data on economic activity of the population. It indicates a tendency to lower absorption of the less educated labour force.

A severe brain drain seems to be a plausible explanation of the decrease in employment of males with university education. An increase in university graduates of 70 % compared to 1989 seems not to contribute to an increased quality of the labour force in Slovakia, but rather to the export of the labour force with higher education.

The education level ISCED 3, however, needs to be decomposed for more precise analysis. It is worthwhile to notice that a huge decrease in employment affected the population with only a SECONDARY education without maturita and with just a final exam, but not in possession of a certificate of apprenticeship (by approximately 30 %). A small decrease in employment affected the trained population with maturita. However, employment of the TRAINED population with the same level of ISCED 3, but possessing a certificate of apprenticeship, featured a remarkable increase in employment, as shown in Table 15.

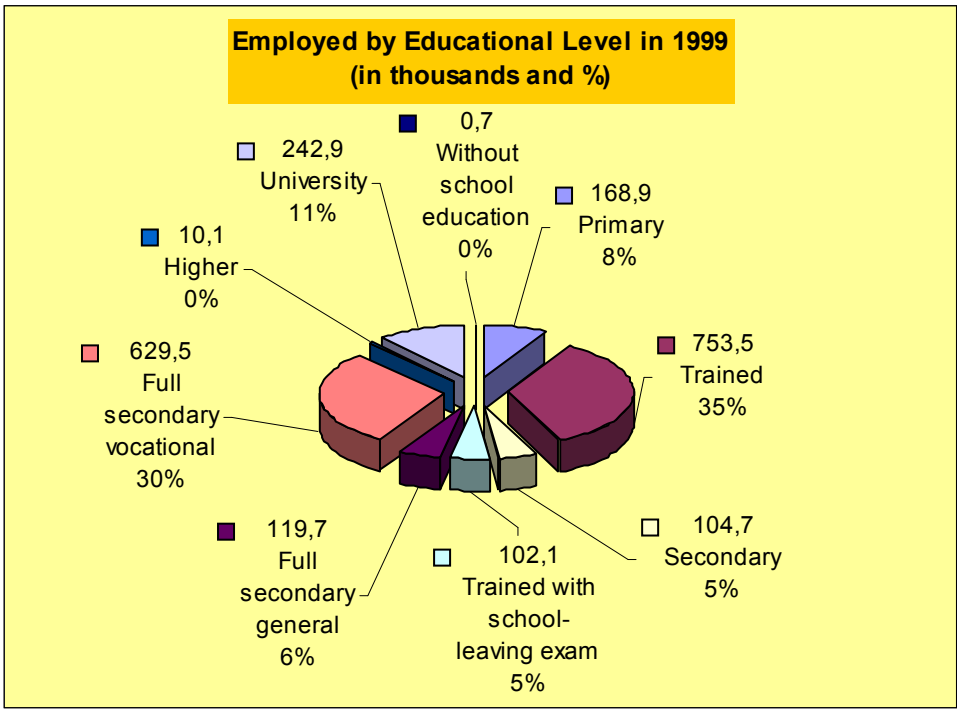
Table 15
Employed by detailed educational attainment (in thousands)

Level of Education	1998	1999
Primary	211.9	168.9
Trained (with certificate of apprenticeship)	729.1	753.5
Secondary with final exam	153.1	104.7
Trained with school leaving exam (maturita)	106.5	102.1
Full secondary general	127.3	119.7
Full secondary vocational	610.3	629.5
Higher	13.1	10.1
University	247.1	242.9
Without school education	0.2	0.7

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS

The less educated segment of population includes two significant polarities: An old/young population, and Roma/non Roma population, where the old and Roma groups are highly at risk. We will address this issue within the discussion about strategies of employment policy in the Slovak Republic. The educational structure of the working force in 1999 is depicted in Graph 6.

Graph 6



Source: Statistical Office of SR, Statistical Yearbook of SR 2000

Nevertheless, according to experts' estimates the number of persons employed in a shadow economy is approximately 80 000. According to estimates of the National Labour Office of SR (NLO), approximately 70 000 newly created jobs yearly would be needed as a precondition for gradual improvement of the situation.

2.2.1 Structural changes in employment

Employment broken down by NACE branches confirms expected global trends. The decrease in employment in agriculture is inevitable. A gradual decrease in employment in industry is expected with an increase in productivity estimated at up to 30 % in 2000 followed by similar trends until at least 2004.

Table 16
1995 –1999 average employment (NACE branches) in % of total

Specifications	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Agriculture and forestry	9.2	8.9	9.2	8.2	7.4
Industry(excl. construction)	30.3	31	30.2	30.2	29.5
Construction	8.6	8.5	9.1	9.3	8.9
Services	51.9	51.6	51.5	52.3	54.2

Source: Statistical Office of SR

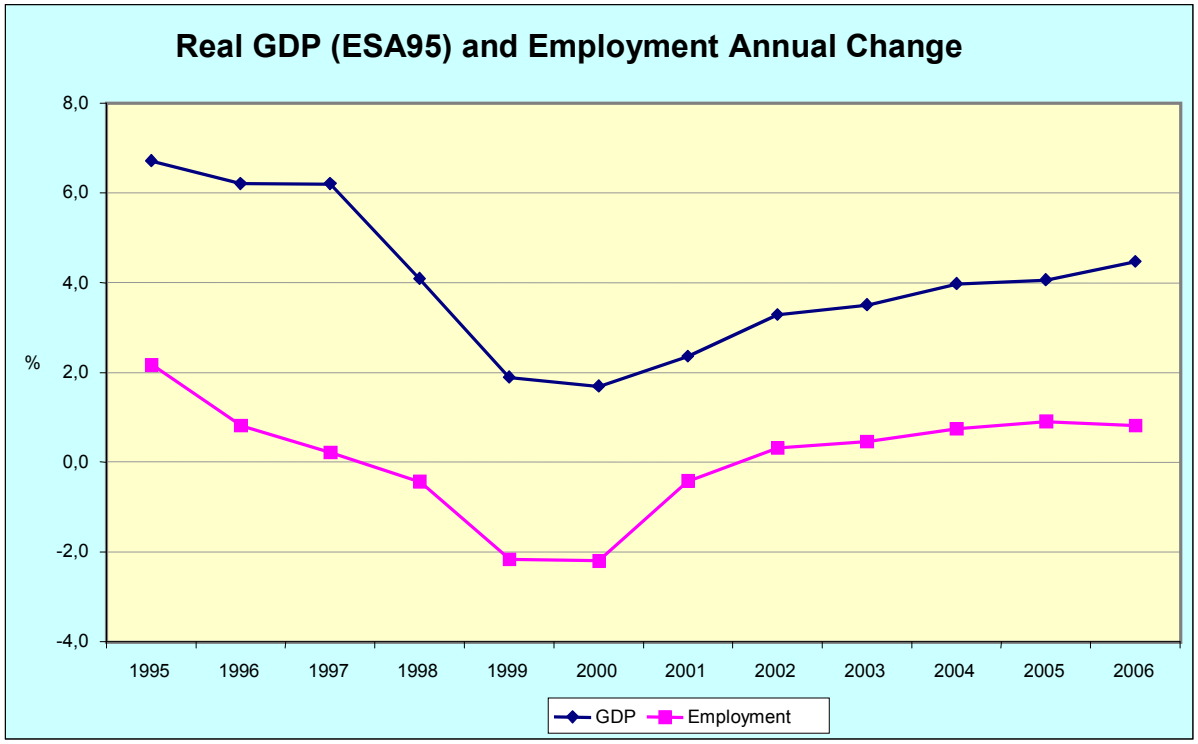
Trends visible in Table 16 are expected to continue with one exception. By the decision of the government to invest over EUR 1 billion on highway construction within next 5 years, the construction sector could be revived. A preliminary boom in the construction sector fed by governmental plans for speedy construction of highways in 1997 and 1998 has been temporarily stopped by the new government due to high debts and high interest loans within this branch. A more detailed depiction of information about the employment structure in the Slovak Republic can be found in Tables XI, XII in the Annex.

It is very important to stress that the banking sector is in the process of reconstruction. The biggest Slovak bank has been already privatised (Slovak Savings Bank) and all other important banks are expected to be privatised by the end of 2001. In this preliminary period banks behaved very passively. Despite the high liquidity and dramatically decreased interest rates (from 19.4 % of average annual credit interest rate in 1998 to below 10 % in 2000) they prefer investment in government bonds and operations with the National Bank rather than provision of credit to entrepreneurs. In order to complete this picture it is worthwhile to stress that interest rates offered for savings are under the officially expected 2001 inflation rate. Unfortunately, Slovak inhabitants are used to doing a lot of shopping abroad at very popular markets in Poland and hypermarkets in the Czech Republic and Hungary. The consequence is as follows: banks do not pump funds into businesses and household consumption is not able to revive local production. This might be slowly changed by the start of hypermarket chains in Slovakia in 2000, provided these chains will accept local products.

Summarised, a massive widespread creation of new jobs is not to be expected before
- completion of the banking sector reconstruction,
- justice reform and elimination of administrative barriers,
- flowing out of the already lifting wave of bankruptcies and settlements,
- tax reform that is positive towards entrepreneurship with a significant decrease in the tax load,
- political stability with all important political parties actively sticking to EU and NATO compatible policies.

Prognoses of gradual slow improvement in the GDP and employment are clearly visible from Graph 7 taken from the National Development Plan.

Graph 7



Source: National Development Plan

Despite a currently very painful period of transformation, examples of positive developments can be reported:
The car producer Volkswagen Slovakia contributing 50.2 % to the Slovak automotive industry output (which represents 21.25 % of industrial production in 2000) is planning a huge investment in enlargement of its facilities with over 1 500 new jobs in 2001, and 15 000 new jobs in total till 2010. Having just 26 % of its workers from Bratislava, where the facilities are located, and competing with the attractive shadow economy offers partly from neighbouring Austria, Volkswagen might experience increasing troubles in recruitment of working staff in the vicinity.
The consequence could be an increase in bussing of working staff or support of mobility, inclusive provision of housing incentives, and, which is still hampered by legislation, a massive engagement in VET tailored to its requirement. Secondary vocational school affiliated to Volkswagen might be more effective in both providing quality training and facilitating the transition from school to work. It is worthwhile to stress that due to the gap between VET schools and enterprises, VET is funded by the state and by the productive activities of schools. This gap, inevitable in the early 1990s where enterprises faced the process of restructuring and privatisation, must be bridged by new legislation, a new model of financing VET, and tax reform. It is necessary to allow establishment of VET schools affiliated to strong enterprises and to allow schools currently responsible for initial VET to enter the labour market of CVE services. Nevertheless, this is not doable under the current terms of an obsolete financial regime valid for state operated institutions. VET schools need to be recognised as free to compete for active employment policy funds maintained by labour offices.

Despite the generally weak demand on the labour market, the situation varies regionally as shown by the Volkswagen case above. Thus, in western Slovakia it happens quite often that skilled workers are lacking and must be bussed from other regions. In less attractive regions three important features are worthwhile stressing.
A workforce not able to find jobs in the region must commute to work, while young workers tend to leave the region and move to cities and more developed regions. They are hampered just by a lack of housing opportunities and an almost dead market with regard to housing. In contrast to the previous economic depression periods where the male work force was traditionally looking for work abroad or in (nowadays) the Czech Republic, a tremendous share of women looking for positions as baby sitters, governesses, nurses, housekeepers etc. abroad is notable.
A part of the workforce, predominantly those who are kept in the area by their households, tends to accept jobs in looser connection with their previous jobs or qualifications. In line with the government and local administrations, which are desperately trying to decrease unemployment by attracting any investor/employer (regardless the level of skills demanded), this segment of the workforce could contribute to the mismatch between the level of education and qualification on one side and the level of skills required from labour force for new job positions on the other side. This could be interpreted as a temporary overqualification but, at the same time, it could contribute to regression in the quality of the regional labour force indicating a future profile of labour market and future profile of required graduates of schools. Within this segment of workforce mothers, older men and people often strongly believing in family values are to be expected.

2.2.2 Employment in the private sector

The share of employment in the private sector has increased tremendously along with the gradual privatisation process. As indicated in Table 6 above, the private sector share in the economy amounted to 84.3 % in 1999. Nevertheless, in 1999, the number of persons employed in the private sector was for the first time higher than number of persons in the public sector. It should be noted that the share of employed in private sector is just 50.4 %.

Table 17
Employed persons by ownership sector (in thousands)

Sector	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	2104	2138	2217	2207	2201	2128
Public sector	1405	1308	1279	1193	1106	1055
Private sector	700	830	939	1014	1095	1073

Source: Statistical Office of SR, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

There is a lack of information about the private sector's demand on the structure of labour force skills. This is due to the fact that currently it is almost impossible to conduct surveys conducted with high methodological standards. Questionnaire techniques and self-report suffer from biases caused by a low proportion of respondents. Moreover, quite typically, just successful entrepreneurs show a positive attitude to responding. A qualitative survey initiated by the SNO and conducted by the Research Institute of National Economy of the University of Economics in Bratislava (Matulčíková M., Srna O., Brendzová D., 2000) has suggested the following general results:
Personal qualities, predominantly reliability and flexibility and other social skills dominate over specific vocational skills. Learnability is valued as the most important educational

output. This is due to high numbers of unemployed already possessing specific vocational skills and by a high pace of innovation in technology making retraining inevitable.

We will address this issue in chapter 3.5.2.

2.2.3 Employment opportunities for graduates (school-leavers) from educational institutions

Pursuant to Article 29 of Act No. 387/1996 of the Law Code on Employment, in latter wording, a school graduate is considered "a citizen during a year after completion of his systemic vocational preparation". In accordance with this definition, the population without any employment experience, i.e. persons who fail to find a job after leaving school, represents a wider group than a group of graduates. Due to the absence of practical experience and professional practise, which leads to decreased competitiveness compared to a professionally-qualified workforce, this group is highly at risk. Statistical data are available just for a subgroup of graduates of schools.

At the end of 1999 unemployed graduates represented 6.1 % of the total number of the unemployed.
The influx of graduates to the labour market has two peaks: in June and after the holidays, in September.
The lower the educational level of graduates, the higher the probability of unemployment, in particular, of long-term unemployment. The situation within ISCED 3 level is worth deeper analysis. Table 18 shows the estimates of the probability of initial unemployment calculated as share of unemployed graduates (as of 30 September 1999) to graduates within selected types of secondary schools.

Table 18
Unemployment of ISCED 3 level graduates (as of 30 September 1999)

Level of Education	Graduates	Unemployed	%
ISCED 3A – Grammar School	15 495	3 927	25.34
ISCED 3A – SSS	26 908	14 962	55.6
ISCED 3C – SSS	414	148	35.75
ISCED 3A– SVS	17 260	8 134	47.13
ISCED 3C – SVS	27 783	11 168	40.2

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education and National Labour Office of SR

May 2000 data will provide information about the real employability of graduates. As of 30 September 1998, the National Labour Office registered 35 808 unemployed graduates. As of 31 May 1999, the number of unemployed graduates was only 25 154. Despite the fact that 1999 data are significantly higher (43 388 as of 30 September 1999), a similar decrease is observed (see further analysis of the share of unemployed graduates of SVS and SSS by regions within Chapter 2.3).
The situation of graduates is markedly affected by low absorption into the labour market, which is suffering from the current slowdown in the economy.

New job creation is a fatal weakness of the Slovak economy. With a vacancy/unemployed ratio over 1:50 it is hardly possible just to blame schools for a qualification mismatch.

Table 19
1990–1999 Average monthly number of vacancies (as registered by District Labour Offices)

Year	1990[1]	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Vacancies	16802	7767	13304	10917	10851	15461	17331	24132	17109	9263

Source: National Labour Office of SR
[1] calculated from the 4Q of 1999

A part of the work force, inhibited by the low absorption of the work force by traditional industrial branches, is looking for an easy going lifestyle, often waiting for a better bid in the future or pretending entrepreneurship in a service sector. Despite the reliable forecast of a future increase in employment in service sector, all such forecasts play a currently rather negative role of funnelling youngsters to "soft" study branches. Moreover, currently still unstable enterprises are not able to contribute to the alternative positive vision. Even those who would be interested in blue-collar professions are afraid of unpredictability within the blue-collar professions.
Consequently, youngsters are supported in their visions of an easy career in business, e.g. in the hotel and tourism industry, often in middle management positions or other white collar positions, leaving without notice training branches leading to manual work.

Let us try to illustrate this with an example from a region in Central Slovakia:

Table 20
Case study of placement 1999

Specifications	Grammar	SSS	SVS	Total
Applications	2000	3300	4100	9400
Places	1700	4100	4800	10500

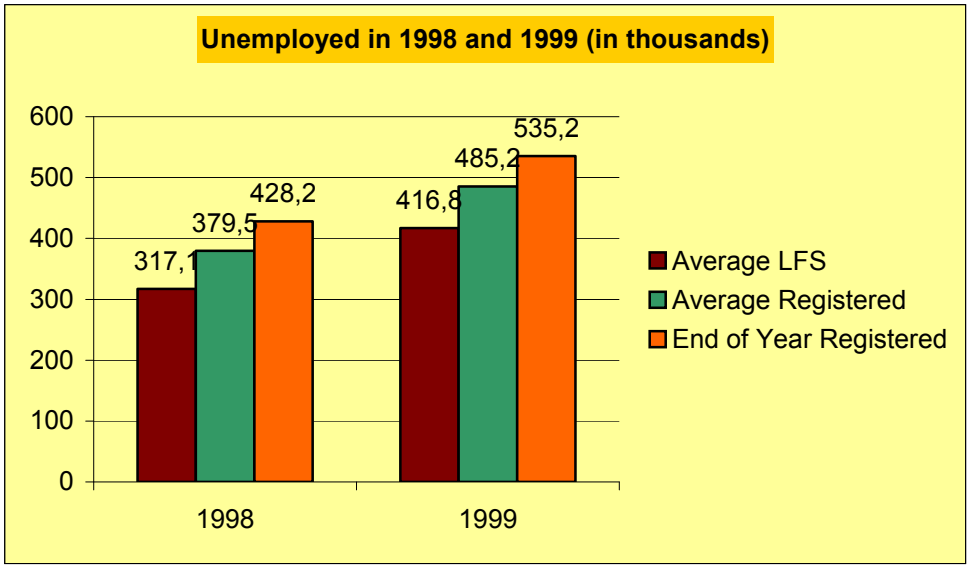
Source: Ministry of Education of SR

9 400 graduates of basic schools, applying for grammar school, for SSS and for SVS have (due to the population decrease) 10 500 places at secondary schools available. With the exception of small towns, it is a problem to get to the grammar school. Within SSS the most attractive are highly specialised and profiled technical schools providing both specialised quality education and access to higher education. Less attractive are less specific study branches, e.g. commercial academies which after years of increase in enrolment now experience a decrease. In comparison with SSS, there is a trend toward decreases in enrolment in industry-related branches, e.g. machinery and electrotechnics, and in agriculture where in contrast to electrotechnics and predominantly machinery, no vacancies could be expected. It is worthwhile noting that trainees who would be served best at SVS machinery and electrotechnic branches are often absorbed by the higher status possessing SSS and subjected to a less practical and more theoretical education. A lack of employability and inadequate aspirations might result in some cases. Lots of students who do not prefer an academic education select among SVS studies preferably those branches that are related to the service sector. Unfortunately, positions within these sectors are very sensitive to consumer purchasing power, which is still very low in Slovakia. Moreover, this sector needs more time for its development and more investment in order to attract rich, predominantly foreign clients.

2.3 Unemployment

Comprehensive data on unemployment are presented in Tables XIV-XVIII in Annex. A severe increase in unemployment in late 1990s is depicted in the following graph providing LFS and NLO data.

Graph 8



Source: Statistical Office of SR (LFS data), National Labour Office of SR (registered unemployed data)

The consequence of this development is the increase in the number of unemployed persons depending on social assistance and an increase in passive employment policy costs.

Table 21
1993-1999 unemployed social beneficiaries

Average monthly number	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Unemployed social assistance beneficiaries	121 835	158 329	157 570	141 762	143 386	169 039	236 811
Changes over the preceding year in %	.	30.0	-1.5	-10.0	1.1	17.9	40.1

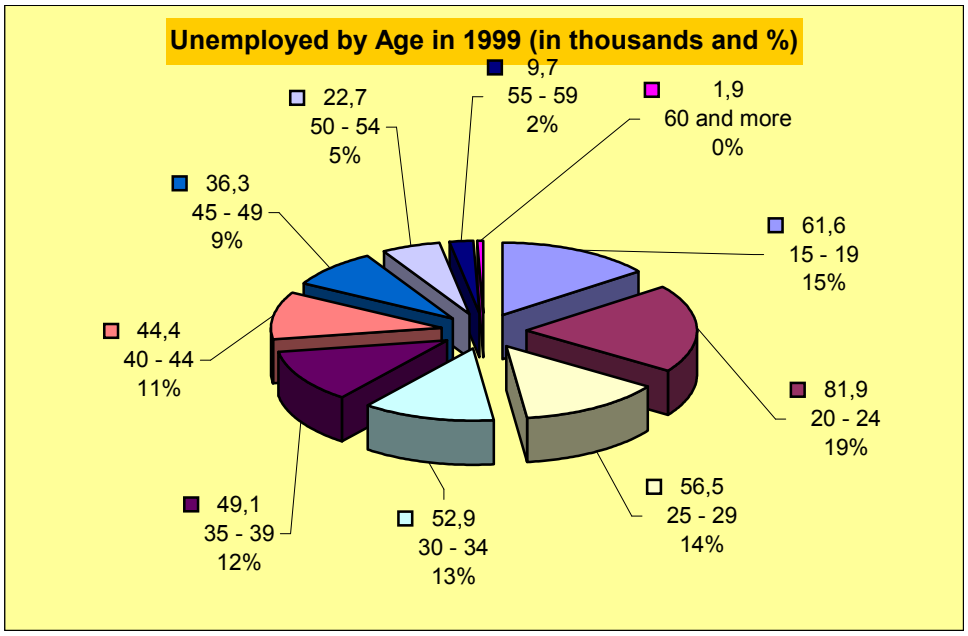
Source: National Development Plan

In 1999, the registered unemployed represented 91 % of the number of social assistance beneficiaries, and received SKK 8 790.2 million paid from the state budget funds. This sum represents 92 % of the total amount of funds paid to recipients of material need benefits. An additional SKK 5 338.5 million was paid to the unemployed through the National Labour Office within unemployment benefits. This means the unemployed were paid in total SKK 14 128.7 million. The state contribution to this sum represents 62.2 %. Compared to the preceding year funds directly paid to the unemployed increased by 45 %.

Table XV in Annex indicates that young women under 24 and old men close to retirement age were the most affected by the increase in unemployment.

Note from the following graph the high share of young people in the unemployed population.

Graph 9



Source: Statistical Office of SR (LFS)

A low rate of creation of new jobs and low wages offered to persons in jobs requiring low education lead to a dangerous trend resulting in a high share of the long-term unemployment (see Table 22).

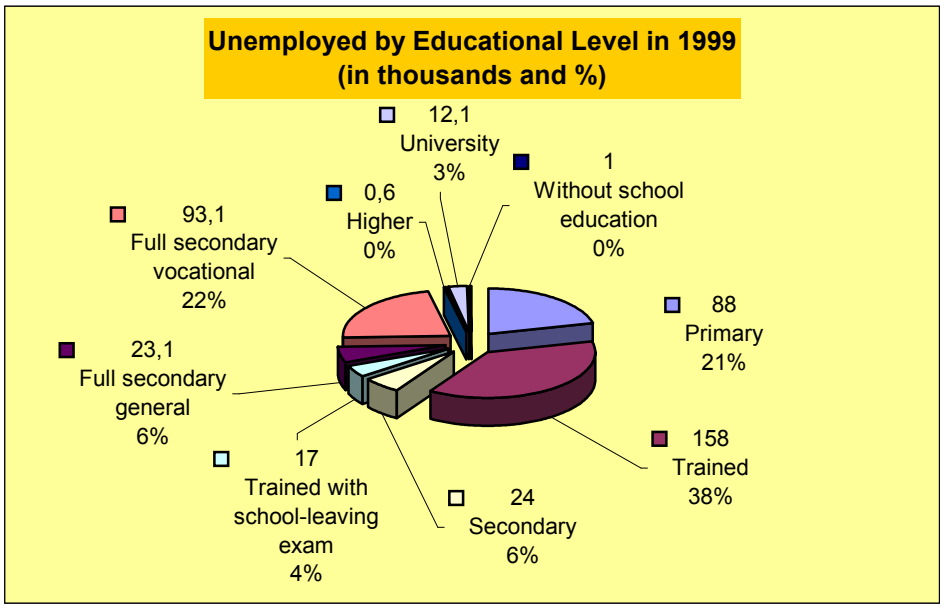
Table 22
Unemployed by duration of unemployment (in thousands) in 1999

Age group	Duration of unemployment in months					
	Total	3 and less	4-6	7-12	13-24	25 +
15-60+	404	51	64	91	75	112
15-19	52	5	8	24	9	4
20-24	81	12	15	18	19	16
25-29	54	6	11	10	9	18
30-34	54	6	8	9	11	18
35-44	91	11	11	17	17	32
45-54	59	8	9	12	9	19
55-59	11	1	2	2	1	4
60+	2	0	0	-	0	0

Source: Statistical Office of SR (LFS 2Q), tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

The breakdown of unemployed by educational attainment is depicted in the following graph.

Graph 10

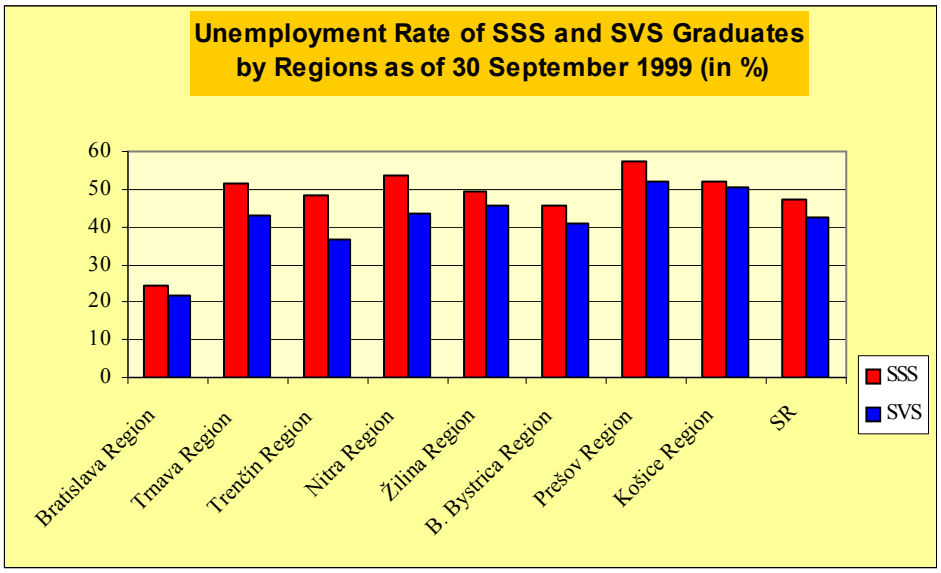


Source: Statistical Office of SR (LFS)

Despite the generally very well educated and trained population, a slow pace of restructuring and very modest growth of the economy cause low demand for the labour force. Over 20 % of the unemployed with low educational levels could be unemployed due to reasons linked to their low personal employability. However, alarming structural difficulties within the Slovak economy are indicated by 70 % of the unemployed with secondary vocational training (ISCED 3), and, especially, 38 % of the trained ISCED 3C unemployed. The high share of persons without maturity (i.e., ISCED 3C and less) in the total unemployed (65 %) is often stressed by analysts as a reason for action. It is often advocated that the share of graduates with maturity certificate within the age cohort should be increased. This is undoubtedly worthwhile. Nevertheless, it is expected that higher levels of education would increase their employability. However, it is worth notice that 22 % of persons with VET education finished with maturity contribute to the total number of those unemployed.
Relatively successful results of persons with secondary general education and higher education could be ascribed to their smaller share in absolute numbers. Additionally what matters are their personal qualities and the ability to place out VET trained persons from their positions, thanks to the high flexibility and currently mostly non-specific requirements of the labour market, rather than the value added by schools they attended.

Interestingly, the comparison of both VET streams shows little bit better results for trained persons in all regions. Worth noting are generally very high numbers of unemployed in all regions outside Bratislava region.

Graph 11



Source: National Labour Office of SR

Nevertheless, the unemployment rate by level of education (Table 23) and particularly the trend at the end of the 1990s educate us more clearly that the maturita value added is visible but moderate.

Table 23
1994-1999 unemployment rate by level of education (in %)

Education	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
No education	44.2	39.5	64.3	66.7	88.5	40
Primary	27.7	27.3	23.9	27.6	25.8	35.4
Trained (with certificate of apprenticeship)	14.8	13.4	11	11	12.7	18.1
Secondary with final exam	14	13.2	10.2	11.3	10.8	20.6
Trained with school leaving exam (maturita)	16.1	9.9	8.2	10.6	9.6	15.6
Full secondary general	13.8	14.7	12.1	14.6	13.8	17.3
Full secondary vocational	10.3	7.4	7.7	8.3	8.7	13.6
Higher	-	-	3.5	6.1	4.5	6.1
University	3.9	2.9	3.5	3.3	4.1	6
Total	14.1	12.4	10.8	11.6	11.9	17.2

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 4Q

A similar trend is readable within the development of school-leavers unemployment in the following table:

Table 24
Structure of school leavers unemployment in 1990-1999 (in %)

Year	Total	University	Full Sec. Vocational	Full Sec. General	Trained with Maturita	Trained
1990	100	21.7	43.3	22.0	5.6	7.4
1991	100	13.7	31.2	15.0	11.5	28.6
1992	100	8.8	25.1	12.6	12.6	40.9
1993	100	6.2	20.4	9.3	12.9	51.2
1994	100	4.8	20.6	8.9	13.2	52.5
1995	100	4.6	20.2	9.0	14.0	52.2
1996	100	5.1	22.0	11.2	13.8	47.9
1997	100	7.1	27.0	10.9	15.6	39.4
1998	100	9.1	31.6	10.6	16.6	32.1
1999	100	6.2	35.9	9.1	18.8	30.0

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education

The National Plan of Employment addresses the issue of easing the transition from school to work, adjustment of schools to a new situation and strengthening the links between VET and the labour market: "…make sure they (the schools) equip young people with a greater ability to adapt to technological and economic changes and with skills relevant to the labour market. Particular attention should be given to the development and modernisation of apprenticeship systems, to developing appropriate training for the acquisition of computer literacy and skills by students and teachers as well as to equipping schools with computer equipment and facilitating student access to the Internet ..."

Disadvantaged groups on the labour market are as follows:
(a) Juveniles who do not continue further vocational education and training
(b) Secondary school and university graduates
(c) Citizens above 50 years of age
(d) Persons with disabilities.
A more detailed report about social exclusion in the Slovak Republic is available in Hrebíčková M., Molnárová I., Hanzelová E. (2000).

The educational level of the members of the Roma minority is traditionally very low. There are no current valid data about the educational structure of the Roma population since any statistics of this kind would be considered as a violation of human rights in accordance with current Slovak legislation. Official statistical data refer just to those Romas who officially declared themselves Romas within census. Nevertheless, this might represent just about 15 % of the ethnic Roma population. From the data obtained before November 1989 it follows that close to 82 % of Roma men and 83.3 % of Roma women had only primary education or uncompleted primary education, 9.2 % of men and 3.4 % of women had secondary vocational education, slightly more than 1.0 % of Roma men and women had secondary education, 0.3 % of men and 0.2 % of women had university education, and 5.1 % of men and 8.7 % of women were without education. The level of education of the Romas is much lower as compared to that of the majority population.

Due to long-term unemployment, the majority of the Romas depend on the social assistance benefit. According to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family, almost 80 % of the Roma population depend on the state social network.

Following analyses (e.g., draft of Prognosis of Employment and Unemployment Development till 2006) prepared by MoLSAF, no decrease in unemployment is expected before 2003 if an optimistic view of development is held and even further increases in unemployment, peaking in 2003, are feared in the case of a pessimistic view.

2.4 Labour market policies

The first active labour market policies were introduced in 1991 and developed gradually. Until the end of 1996 the active labour market policies in Slovakia contained the following measures:

- socially purposeful jobs (private sector),
- publicly useful jobs,
- retraining,
- counselling,
- sheltered workplaces for the disabled,
- subsidies for shortened working hours,
- jobs for school-leavers.

Act No. 387/1996 of the Law Code on Employment stipulated the following measures:

- retraining,
- support of job creation,
- support of employment of specific target groups,
- support for prevention of layoffs,
- support for maintenance of existing jobs,
- support for elaborating proposals for revitalisation of employment,
- support for employment of the disabled.

Socially purposeful jobs were the most important throughout this period, followed by publicly useful jobs and retraining. Retraining has been used modestly and the rest of the programmes referenced above occupied only a negligible share of total expenditures. For a more detailed description of the active policy measures till 1998 see Lubyová M., Ochranková D., Vantuch J. (1999). In 1999, the active policy ground almost to a standstill due to lack of funding.

Table 25
Expenditures on labour market policy (in thousands of SKK)

Years	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total expenditures	3262454	5523670	2966154	3605869	6080559	7353506	7088593	7773826	7766302
Active policy	522505	3812793	1107216	1896202	3899107	4290374	3098692	2289140	474032
Passive policy (%)	84	31	63	47	36	42	56	71	94
Active policy (%)	16	69	37	53	64	58	44	29	6
Retraining (in % of Active Policy)	9.5	7.7	10.6	5.7	4.2	4.6	8.3	7.3	15.5

Source: National Labour Office of SR

Insufficient funding has resulted also in the very low participation of unemployed school graduates in LM active measures, as seen in Table XIX in Annex.

The only significant job creation in 2000 was due to the government decision from July 2000 to provide municipalities with SKK 1.5 billion (approximately EUR 35 million) for the

engagement of long-term unemployed persons for publicly useful jobs. This decision has enabled a temporary decrease in unemployment by creation of 69 000 jobs in co-operation with municipalities. Nevertheless, return to the same rate of unemployment is expected in January 2001, when almost all of these freshly employed workers will come back to the labour offices. A new round of publicly useful jobs is expected to start with spring 2001, since the same amount of SKK 1.5 billion has been provided by the government for 2001.

The Concept of Employment Policy to 2002, which was adopted by the Government of SR in November 1999, served as a basis for elaboration of a medium-term strategy of employment policy. In November 2000, the Government approved the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP), specifying the objectives of all measures, implementation terms and target groups; identified respective legislation and the source of funding. The report on NEAP implementation should be submitted to the Government by the end of June 2001.

NEAP, reflecting EU employment policy papers and recommendations, is built on EU employment guidelines and four „Luxembourg“ pillars:

- improvement of employability,
- development of entrepreneurship,
- support of the adaptation of companies and their employees,
- support of policies of equal opportunities for all persons.

Within the measures for the improvement of employability, the dominant recommendation is for further education with the aim of reaching a higher employment rate with correspondingly higher standards and structures in the education of labour force and resulting in more flexible qualification mobility in relation to labour market requirements. Special attention is paid to the transition of youth, graduates from all types of schools, to employment, and appreciation of highly-qualified work requiring university education. Specific measures involve concerns of the Ministry of Education, rationalisation of the secondary school network, structure of educational programmes and development of a modular system of education and training. Students' labour market appeal is related to the following skills:
Mathematical skills, communication skills, skills in information and communication technologies, learning to learn, creativity, flexibility and adaptability, ability to overcome obstacles and resolve problems, active language skills, preparation for lifelong learning and retraining options, technical and manual skills.

Within measures identified under the second pillar, the crucial point is the creation of conditions for development of counselling services for small and medium size-business entrepreneurs.

The third pillar includes motivating employers to enhance the qualification levels of their employees and to implement performance-oriented wage regulation and making them open to co-operation with social partners, which should be involved in this process.
Within the equal opportunities policy measures, there are two closely addressing the area of education:

- to provide development of a school network, with special focus on second chances, especially for young people without qualifications, for the long-term unemployed, older workers, and women re-entering the labour market,
- to create conditions for the renovation of qualifications in order to provide easier access to employment for people taking care of children and dependent family members.

The main principles of the employment policy should motivate unemployed people to accept a job or accept involvement in the preparation for employment, and prevent the exclusion of groups vulnerable in the labour market from society. NEAP prefers the creation of labour opportunities and the support of labour force employment.

2.5 Future skill needs of the economy

The Slovak Republic aims at being included in a larger geopolitical and economic area, is making efforts leading towards EU membership, and thus monitors EU positions concerning the role of human factors in economic development. Slovakia sees human resource development to be one of key factors of its economic development plan and carefully reflects the conclusions of the Lisbon and Feira European councils.

The "new basic skills" for active participation in working life, as identified by the Lisbon Council, and the conclusion understanding of lifelong learning as a guiding principle for the provision of education and training are recognised as a fully acceptable education policy direction by Slovak experts. Nevertheless, this vision must be considered in light of two basic activities:

- A process of working out the thesis of lifelong learning further and of considering general concepts of new skills
- A process of the development of appropriate political agendas, with identification of coherent strategies and practical measures.

With regard to the first issue, further operationalisation of such constructs as "technological culture and entrepreneurship" must be tailored in accordance with the current socio-economic status of the country. The same is valid to some extent for "social skills" which inevitably mirror a lot of cultural history of the country. Different to some extent is the situation with the last two relatively well-conceptualised "basic skills": IT competency and foreign language acquirement. There are three different phases within the techniques recommended to follow:

- Decomposition (followed by specification and operationalisation) - in case of complex concept (e.g., "social skills" should be decomposed into a set of relevant special skills)
- Specification (followed by operationalisation) in case of broad notions (e.g., "entrepreneurship" should be more specified by discussion of key players' representatives and subjected to conversion from an object relevant vocabulary to a subject relevant vocabulary)
- Operationalisation - when the constructed concept is clearly identified (e.g., foreign language acquisition should be represented in terms of measurable items).

With regard to the second issue, the shift from educational (schooling) environment to learning environment as a subject of study and the field of future political actions is recognised. It is perceived as a consequence of a gradually increasing recognition of the role of informal and non-formal learning. Drawing attention to the learning process as a more complex process, not being restricted to institutions any longer, leads to the discussion of a new paradigm needing different type of measures.
Additionally, newly shaped pedagogical terms stressing the aforementioned shift circulate extensively, e.g. learnability as a general quality of desired and expected output of the period before entering the labour market. Higher priority is given to acquisition of cognitive skills, reading with comprehension, information processing, and questioning. Lack of comparable data on the functional literacy of adults in Slovakia is heavily criticised with regard to this

(e.g., Slovakia did not participate in some important international surveys such as SIALS and even participation in the PISA project still remains unclear).

2.6 Conclusions as regards the key labour market issues and their influence on aspects of human resource development

Resuming the implications for the education sector, we will structure them into three types:
At the macro level, it is necessary to support enrichment of education services already provided by

- legislative backing of higher professional schools already existing on an experimental basis as a result of PRAHE projects of the 1990s; this could open the door for fostering post-secondary studies and non-university tertiary education as a good way to prevent immature youngsters from entering the labour market which is currently already lacking vacancies,
- legislative backing of a dual system of tertiary education promoting both non-university higher education and short track university education with currently unpopular bachelor's diplomas as fully recognised, effective and tailor-made higher education options,
- stressing and promoting the lifelong learning concept based education with its lifelong and lifewide aspects,
- improving the quality of legislation (e.g., by amendment to Act No. 387/1996 of the Law Code on Further Education and/or within the law on higher education to be prepared in 2001) with the aim of promoting lifelong learning and making it attractive for higher education institutions;
- supporting creation of regional educational policies as a consequence of the coming administration reform with decentralisation of competencies from central to local governments and state administration to self-governing bodies,
- development of EU compatible UOE standard based information systems providing decision makers at central and regional levels with valid and comparable data,
- development of a national quality assurance system as a prerequisite for effective decentralisation with a strong output driven VET policy with minimal regulation of the process of education and training,
- monitoring the quality of the pre-educational and infra-educational environments penetrating informal and non-formal learning,
- promoting VET social partnership in national and regional levels as the first step in development of political room and administrative skills and expertise within regions and as a prerequisite for future activities related to EU Structural Funds Projects and analogous Slovak central government-based disparity fighting interventions.

3. Modernisation of vocational education and training (VET) in the perspective of lifelong learning

3.1. Introduction

In the nineties, the idea of lifelong learning became a part of conceptual and legislative source documents relating to education at an improved frequency. The Act No. 172/1990 of the Law Code on Higher Education, namely its Article 24 stated that universities should enhance the "lifelong learning of the population, to which particularly continuing learning is rendered, necessary to execute specialised professions or jobs". The Act No. 386/1997 of the Law Code on Further Education considers continuing education/training a constituent part of the educational system in the Slovak Republic and of lifelong learning (Article 1, paragraphs 1 and 3). The policy statement of the Government of SR of 1998 reads that the Government understands learning to be a lifelong process and would thus establish conditions for the development of continuing learning. Conceptual documents of the year 2000 understand lifelong learning as a system. The draft Concept of the Development of Upbringing and Education in the Slovak Republic (the Millennium Project) considers lifelong learning

- to be the fundamental and primary principle of education,
- a system that makes the existing education system complete.

The draft Concept of Further Development of Universities for the 21st Century claims that the main mission of the university system is accomplished through six functions, two of which are characterised as

- contribution to educational development on all levels,
- rendering opportunities to the population for continuing education/training during their entire lives.

Lifelong learning discourse is strengthening the call for amendment of the Act No. 386/1997 of the Law Code on Further Education. This law has enabled education institutions to provide continuing training and what is particularly important, it contributed to the increase of part time studies at universities. Nevertheless, a tripartite body has been appointed for working on a new concept of this law with a special focus on creation of a supportive framework for implementation of lifelong learning.
Reflecting the growing significance of continuing training and the necessity of enhancing its link to initial training on one hand and the labour market requirements on the other, the Ministry of Education has decided to prioritise review of the recent role of social partners in vocational education and training as a part of its year 2000 plans and prepare a draft system and arrangements to enhance the collaboration of the Ministry and social partners.

A national conference on VET is being prepared for October 2001 to be held after the conclusion of the discussion concerning the National Education Programme (the Millennium Project). At the time when the wording of the draft act on upbringing and education would be prepared, a specialised section would be devoted to issues of lifelong learning within the context of issues put forth for discussion by the Memorandum of Lifelong Learning and by

the effort toward a more efficient inclusion of social partners in programming and monitoring the quality of vocational training.

The above examples confirm the efforts of decision-makers to establishing a coherent education system allowing people to obtain new knowledge, skills and faculties throughout their lives. The continuance of the traditional school-based educational system as well as insufficient stimuli to change, particularly an ongoing obsolete funding system and lack of a quality assurance system, however, hamper the initiative and the ad hominem nature of educational services. Changes in the role of formal and non-formal learning, particularly through the process of an increasing influence of informal learning, has only been attended to by specialists without any systemic attention paid to the same by the research community and decision-makers. There is a certain risk that – though having a government aware of changes arriving – adequate political instruments and efficient education policy would not be identified to uncover the consequences of hidden curricula. The hidden process may culminate in an open crisis and denial of traditional educational institutions by the extreme poles of the social spectrum: the elite (in particular the intellectual elite) on one hand and the paupers (in particular its outclassed layers) on the other.

3.2. Human resource strategy and priorities included in the National Development Plan

As reported by the National Human Development Report 2000, Slovakia ranked 40th with a 1998 Human Development Index of 0.825 which made it the third best of the post communist candidate countries, lagging behind Slovenia (29th) and the Czech Republic (34th) and before Hungary (43rd), Poland (44th), Estonia (46th), Lithuania (52nd), etc. Despite comparatively good results, "increasing poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation of many social groups in Slovakia, especially the Roma population where 100 % unemployment rates have been reported in some communities" and almost 11 % of the population living below the minimum subsistence level were pointed out. It is also stressed that almost 80 % of the Roma population has only primary education and that the overall youth unemployment rate in Slovakia increased dramatically to 32.1 % in 1999.

The actual human resource development strategy is worked out within the National Development Plan (in Slovakia called the National Plan of Regional Development). The NDP was prepared in accordance with the content-oriented and logistical plan adopted in April 2000, and in compliance with the following national policies:

- Medium-Term Concept of Economic and Social Development of the Slovak Republic
- Development Strategy of the Slovak Industry for the 21st century (Ministry of Economy)
- Development Plan for Agriculture and the Countryside (SAPARD) with ISPA Programme Objectives
- Integrated Plan of Regional and Social Development of SR adopted by the Decision of the Government of SR No. 923/1999
- Concept of State Regional Policy adopted by the Decision of the Government of SR No. 802/1997
- Strategy of the State Environment Policy adopted by the Decision of the Government of SR No. 619/1993 and the National Council of SR No. 339/1993
- National Environmental Action Plan adopted by the Decision of the Government of SR No. 350/1996

- Concept of the Territorial Development of Slovakia II adopted by the Decision of the Government of SR No. 903/1997
- Territorial Plans of the Regions (large territorial units) of the individual counties of SR
- Act No. 237/2000 of the Law Code on Territorial Planning and Building Order

and – naturally – several other legal standards.

The SWOT analysis of the society, economy and environment in the Slovak Republic performed pursuant to the NDP has suggested the following conclusions:

Strong points
- Gradually improving feedback between economic practice and the formation of economic legislation
- A decrease in tax burden of legal entities, a gradual return to normal in the financial market and improving parameters of the banking sector
- Improved conditions for the influx of foreign investment in the Slovak Republic
- Improved restructuring and increase in competitiveness through exported products of machinery, electrical engineering and electronic industry
- Enhancing export performance, with rising EU market shares in Slovakia's foreign trade turnover
- Modernised legislation allowing faster processing enhanced quality of the bankruptcy process course
- Adoption of the Public Procurement Act allowing – relative to the situation in underdeveloped regions – application of the clause on regulation and support to business activities right in those underdeveloped areas
- An ongoing globalisation trend on the part of foreign trade chains developing pressure on enhancing the competitiveness of local entities.

Weak points
- Ongoing deformation in the structure of industrial production and ongoing excessive manufacturing capacities reducing the efficiency and performance of the enterprise sector
- Low volume of direct foreign investment
- Inadequately working comprehensive allocation systems (capital market, collective investment, banking entities)
- Low payment discipline
- Non-transparent and partially working ownership titles resulting from the previous course of privatisation
- High financial burden of business entities
- Thin capitalisation, low profit rates and debts of enterprises – a slow pace of structural changes
- Low quality level of the production and managerial process in industry compared to investor requirements and an unsatisfactory standard of good business practice
- Declining pension incomes for the population
- A deepening decline in production aimed mainly at local markets
- Insufficient development of affordable and appropriately secure information technologies for small and medium-sized enterprises
- Growth in export performance linked to ongoing concentration of export performance in a narrow group of powerful exporters
- Increased export of industrial goods with competitiveness derived mainly from their lower price
- Great disparities between regions in social and economic parameters

- Great regional disparities from the point of equity investment inflow (equity investment + re-invested profit), influx of equity investment
- Non-existent coherent concept and know-how in the area of services and their high atomisation
- Unresolved issue of under-the-threshold procurement under the new public procurement act
- Low availability of soft loans and long-term loan resources
- Underdeveloped technical infrastructure
- Unresolved ownership titles to land
- Inefficient exploitation of natural resources focusing on non-renewables.

Opportunities

- Capital market development and development of allocation arrangements linked to the e-business development
- More efficient support to small businesses focusing on finance service and suitable information technologies
- Suitable support systems for creation of new efficient jobs
- Development of industrial zones through local and foreign capital
- Entry of new investors in existing manufacturing facilities, participation of regional authorities in the restructuring of existing manufacturing capacities
- Diversion of direct foreign investment to regions with low levels of industrialisation and a low exploitation level of existing manufacturing capacities
- Making use of the potential represented by the link between a foreign investor and a Slovak subcontractor
- Participation of a wider group of local enterprises in manufacturing and export
- Primary and induced development of business entities, strengthening of subcontractor links
- Making use of the potential of mutual co-operation between the Slovak industry and large foreign enterprises
- Including Slovak tourism capacities in hotel chains and reservation systems
- Exploiting the potential resulting from Slovakia's geographical location, mainly in regions neighbouring on EU countries
- Integration of regional development and territorial planning
- Exploitation of the local potential of regions linked to the cultural and natural heritage in the role of significant soft localisation factors.

Threats

The following may be identified as the basic threats to further development:

- Insufficient pace of structural changes
- Failure in gradually combating the weight of group interests in the society
- Lack of resources to implement development projects in the corporate sector
- Increase in exports of structurally difficult commodities of industrial production, particularly in the machinery, chemistry and metallurgy sectors
- Drop in performance of trade chains of Slovak origin resulting from a highly open market and low competitiveness compared to foreign trade chains
- National economic and environmental losses resulting from incorrect selection of areas for establishing industrial parks or zones
- Young educated people leaving the country to work abroad (the brain drain problem)
- Economy controlled by capital without local ties
- Criminalisation of the society.

Out of seven sectors' regional development programmes, one is directly aimed at the human resource development. Its sponsor was the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The workgroup also comprised representatives of the Ministry of Education, but the heaviest workload remained with the Ministry of Labour and the Research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.
The SWOT analysis of human resources has revealed the following findings (Part 2.3 of the National Development Programme):

Strong points
- Sectoral changes in employment disclosing a tendency typical of the developed EU countries: gradually, the share of industrial sectors and agriculture decreases while the share of services in the overall employed population goes up
- A high rate of the population's economic activity (both male and female)
- Growth of employment in the private sector and service sector
- A relatively high share of labour force with secondary education
- Existence of the National Labour Office as the main representative of public employment services and organiser of retraining for registered unemployed
- Full coverage of Slovakia by public employment services
- A sufficient number of public and private retraining facilities.

Weak points
- Economy incapable of creating a sufficient number of effective jobs, underlined by obvious regional disparities
- A high number of unemployed per single vacancy and apparent regional differences
- The labour force educational structure shows an irregular distribution of the various educational levels in the Slovak Republic: there is a dominant share of the labour force with an apprenticeship certificate (34.8 %) and full secondary vocational education (31.2 %). The share of the polar educational levels – basic and university - was 7.2 % and 10.8 %, respectively
- Lack of suitable jobs for the registered unemployed with a lower level of education or lacking education
- A low level of using retraining as a decisive instrument of working re-integration, its insufficiently specific nature and efficiency
- A low share of expenditures on active labour market policy in the total expenditures earmarked for the labour market policy (in 1999, it was only SKK 474 million, which made 6.1 % of the total funds earmarked for labour market policy)
- A high share of the labour force with lower secondary education (trained)
- An improper share of the labour force with university education
- Low territorial mobility of the labour force
- A low share of part-timers
- A low level of non-standard flexible employment formats
- Little collaboration among the school-based system, state administration in the education sector, public employment services, and employers aiming at adaptation of the content and scope of education to the job requirements.

Opportunities
- Increasing the share of the active labour market policy to improve the employability of the registered unemployed
- Active labour market policy programmes focusing on job creation, support to maintenance and operation of jobs, support to employment of special population groups, retraining, support to employers of populations with restricted labour capacity, disabled in the long run, to mitigate fluctuations in the demand and supply in the labour market

- Active exploitation of bilateral inter-governmental agreements on mutual employment of citizens between the Slovak Republic and the Federative Republic of Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. The most significant destination of those migrating for work is the Czech Republic
- Co-operation and co-ordination of all relevant partners in the field of human resource development
- Establishing a funding system for continuing training
- A higher intensity of collaboration of the school-based system, state administration in the field of education system, public employment services, and employers aimed at adapting the content and scope of education/training to the job requirements
- Extending the modular system of continuing training
- Reinforcement of the place and role of retraining in mitigating and removing the disparities between the labour market demand and supply
- Integrating the unemployed into various formats of continuing training
- Enhancing the accountability of employers for the development of professionalism, labour force qualification and its adaptability to changes in engineering and technology
- Participation in EU programmes aimed at unemployment prevention and elimination, creation of jobs and accommodation of the qualification structure of registered unemployed to the qualification requirements of jobs.

Threats

- Growth of unemployment and deepening of internal labour market problems
- Deepening of regional disparities and higher occurrence of unemployment in regions with a history without problems
- Further increases in marginalisation, edging of an ever-higher number of disadvantaged groups from the labour market, deepening of social exclusion, deepening of social instability
- Deepening of structural disparities between the labour demand and supply in the regions.

In an environment where planned-for market economy principles are applied in the transport sector accompanied by further increases in individual transport costs and a non-functional housing market, no significant positive turn may be expected in the territorial workforce mobility.

The major strategic intent of the National Development Programme is achieving a GDP growth reaching the level of 60 – 65 % of the EU average by the year 2006. For Slovakia to achieve that strategic goal four axes of development have been identified that require:

- Exploitation of the production potential in the regions
- Enhancing the innovative capacity in the regions
- Human resource development
- Improving the available infrastructure of the territory.

Should those key problem groups of the nation-wide development be resolved successfully, within the context of efforts seeking the social, economic and environmental optimum, then progress in achieving the following global objectives must be made:

- Creation of effective jobs and decrease in unemployment
- Support for continuous growth in competitive production
- Development of the technical and social infrastructure
- Development of production types and service based on exploitation of local resources
- Preservation and improvement of the environment
- Rural development and multi-functional agriculture.

A general overview of the structure of targeted areas is provided by the following table.

Table 26
Strategic objectives, major development axes, global and specific objectives (National Development Plan)

Strategic objectives of SR		Major development axes	Global objectives	Specific objectives
GDP growth at 60 – 65 % of EU average in 2006	Requiring a relative stability of the external environment, sufficient economic policy efficiency, public administration and devolution	Exploitation of the productive potential of regions, enhancement of the innovative capacity of regions, human resource development, improving availability and sufficient equipment of the territory with infrastructure	1.Creation of effective jobs and decrease in unemployment	Restructuring, micro economic adaptation and stimulation of corporate development
				Support for investment and allocation arrangements improving the long-term competitiveness and creation of effective jobs
				Information and technology support of enterprises
				Stabilisation of the labour market and decrease in unemployment in backward regions in the long run
				Support for construction production in the regions
			2. Support for continuous growth of competitive production	Support for sales with a special view to export
				Support for financial competitiveness
				Stabilisation of the business environment and its continuous improvement
				Continuous growth of competitive production and services with a special regard to small and medium enterprise
			3. Development of technical and social infrastructure	Modernisation and development of the transport infrastructure
				Development of transport serviceability and infrastructure of regions
				Development of the housing and technical infrastructure in municipalities, towns and regions
				Enhancing the labour market flexibility in the regions
				Development of social and health care in the regions
				Support to the educational system
				Public administration modernisation
				Support for the development of civic initiatives in the regions
				Support to marginalised groups
			4. Development of production types and services based on exploitation of local resources	Exploitation of resources generating economic growth and permanent competitiveness
				Development of tourism and health resorts
				Enhancing efficiency of power management and development of municipal power generation and distribution
				Building and enhancing quality of distribution networks
				Support to market service development
				Building and development of industrial parks
			5. Preservation and improving of the environment	Restoration of environmental functions in a territory
				Protection of water
				Protection of climate and air
				Waste handling and removal of old burdens
				Environmental awareness, upbringing and education
			6. Rural development and multi-functional agriculture	Sustainable development of rural areas
				Development of multi-functional agriculture
				Enhancing competitiveness in agriculture and forestry

Source: National Development Plan

3.3 Preparation for European Social Fund (ESF) implementation

The process of adaptation of Slovak regional and sectoral policies to EU compatible economic and social cohesion terms has been supported through the PHARE Special Preparatory Programme for Structural Funds in 1998. This Programme is aimed at improvement of programming and administrative capacity for regional and structural policies in Slovakia.
An "SPP Diploma" qualification programme for Slovak officials will be formulated under the SPP as a future requirement for key positioned Slovak officials involved in EU Structural Funds administration.
The European Training Foundation in Turin has been designated by the European Commission to be responsible for the implementation of the programme to support institution building to administer the European Social Fund in candidate countries.
The National Training Institute (NTI), the organisation responsible for provision of training on ESF to officials in state and public administration in the Slovak Republic, has been established at the National Labour Office, a public legal entity responsible for the labour market policy implementation. NTI closely co-operates with the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Regional Development. NTI two training managers appointed by NLO have been trained on EU structural policies in general and ESF in particular. The main tasks of NTI as adopted in the contract between ETF and NLO are the following:

- Act as a point for gathering information on relevant issues, like the employment strategy, which defines the scope of ESF interventions
- Analyse the policy approach pursued through the Structural Funds including ESF in order to develop training activities
- Maintain a good knowledge of the development of training in the field of the ESF as an instrument for promoting national employment policies
- Create and maintain a comprehensive database of current information on ESF development in the context of the employment strategies
- Transform material from a wide range of sources into effective course materials in the national language
- Identify key persons and institutions which can be expected to be involved in the ESF process
- Draft on a yearly basis a National Training Plan, with the agreement of the relevant authorities
- Maintain a dialogue between key actors involved in ESF.

Introductory training for high officials on the role of ESF as well as a national conference followed by regional conferences were organised in the period of 1999-2000. NTI training managers have conducted an overview of training priorities in order to set up short-, medium-, and long-term objectives for training programme development and to define what components of the training programme are topical and necessary in the pre-accession period.
Results of this screening procedure are as follows: Training is considered to be acquired by 1 200 participants at the central state administration level, 1 300 participants at the regional administration level and 30 trainers at the regional and local levels. Knowledge and skills identified as the most required to be adopted by the Slovak trainees are the following:

- knowledge of EU structural and regional policies,
- knowledge of the European Employment Strategy and the European Social Fund,
- knowledge of National Programming Documents, Strategies and Institutional Framework,
- skills in strategic planning and project management,
- skills in financial management and procurement.

3.4. Modernisation of initial vocational education and training (IVET)

3.4.1 Structure and organisation of the IVET system

3.4.1.1 General status of the education and training system

The concept of the current education and training system is still based on a social and political reflection of the society from the end of the 1960s to the beginning of the 1970s.
The 1976 reform of the previous Czechoslovak school system was a typical global reform of that time. Rather paradoxically, it reacted to the post-sputnik shock reforms in Western countries. However, it was also based on pedagogical and psychological analyses of the school system, which was lagging behind the new technological society requirements. The necessity to cope with a "scientific & technological revolution" and to prepare the younger generation for it – this was typical rhetoric of the 1970s. Political purges during the early 1970s stopped efforts of the 1968 communist regime reform. The atmosphere of political revenge has influenced the education sector severely and influenced education policy and the already starting educational reform as well. A strong emphasis given to the quality of vocational education had also an ideological undertone.

General education leading to "non-production sector" occupations was much less appreciated by the communist regime than education leading to productive worker occupations and to origination of "technical intelligence". Therefore, vocational aspects of secondary education were stressed by the so-called polytechnic principle. This meant students of grammar schools had to pass the basics of vocational training in some sectoral branches (machinery, electrotechnics, chemical technology, construction, agriculture, programming, economy). On the other hand, students of the newly created 4-year courses at SVS were for the first time allowed to receive full secondary education (ending with maturita examination), which entitled them to apply for higher education studies. Generally, this aspect of the reform was felt as an ideological intervention.
SVS were seen as schools privileged by the state and communist party. The main task of SVS was to produce a new working class intelligence. External study (with evening classes) was strongly affected by this as well. It often provided short track education for politically reliable people ending with higher education qualifications gained more easily and an easy career with politically directed promotion. All this damaged the reputation of SVS and external study within VET schools and universities.
There was a significant polarisation also inside vocational education and training. Whereas the Ministry of Education and the state administration funded both SSS and grammar schools, most of SVS were strongly affiliated to enterprises. SVS graduates were prepared for specific enterprises, which co-financed the schools. Contrary to SSS (and grammar schools), SVS were developed considerably. Moreover, SVS students received student benefits as incentives to attract their interest in courses seen important according to planned quotas and structures. SVS students were engaged, within their practical training, in productive work. Compared to other secondary school students, they also benefited from earnings.

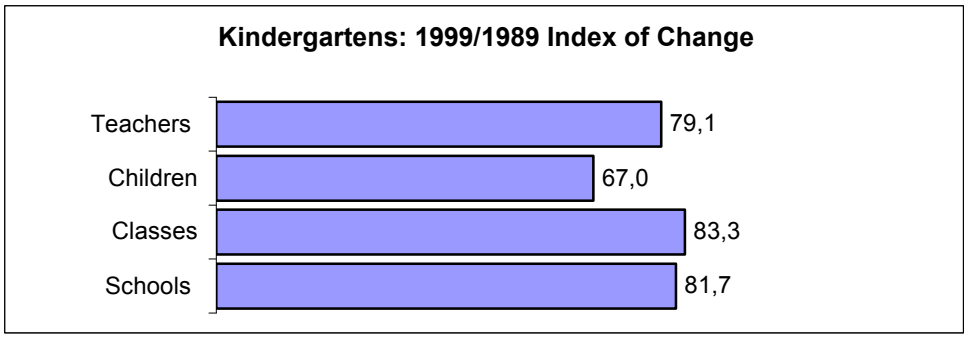
Since the 1976 school reform, there have been 3 streams of secondary education precisely defined - an academic general stream and two vocational streams following 8 years of basic school. The duration of compulsory education is fixed at 10 years. Thus, it has to be completed at secondary school. The end of compulsory education is not certified. It is expected that all, except extremely low achievers, finish at least 3-years of ISCED 3C education to obtain a certificate of apprenticeship, which is under the Slovak legislation terminology described as a fulfilment of "secondary vocational education".

Those VET students who finish 4 or 5 year courses finish with a “maturita“ school leaving certificate (ISCED 3A) and are assigned as fulfilling „complete secondary vocational education“.
These unlucky terms often lead to confusion. Those who do not fulfil ”complete vocational education (ISCED 3A) might however fulfil “secondary vocational education“ being able to finish 3 years lasting course and reach ISCED 3C education. It would be misleading to consider those not having the “maturita“ certificate as having not ”completed“ secondary vocational education. This is also a reason why we prefer terms “full secondary vocational education” referring to education leading to maturita and “secondary vocational education” referring to fulfilment of education not leading to maturita.
We will further describe the respective segments of the school system together with its fundamental changes in the period after the fall of communism, offering more detailed tables of trends and a chart of the whole actual formal education system together in the Annex.

Kindergarten (KG)

Pre-school education is voluntary and is provided by state subsidies and parents' payment. It prepares children for compulsory school attendance. An enrolment of children of at least 5 years of age is strongly recommended, developing an important education policy agenda. In comparison to the previous regime, unified programmes were abolished and parents' interest and teaching staff creativity generated activities that follow newly introduced guidelines and offer more scope for individuality of all - teachers and children. The service is provided for children from 3 to 6 years of age (sometimes even 2 years old). They are in groups of similar age in half-day or full-day alternatives. Over 90 % of pre-school age children were previously enrolled in kindergartens. This number declined to 70 % in the mid-1990s and is gradually coming back up to 90 %. Due to the severe decline in this population, there is enough room even in the reduced number of facilities, making teaching staff consider how to attract as many children as possible.

Graph 12



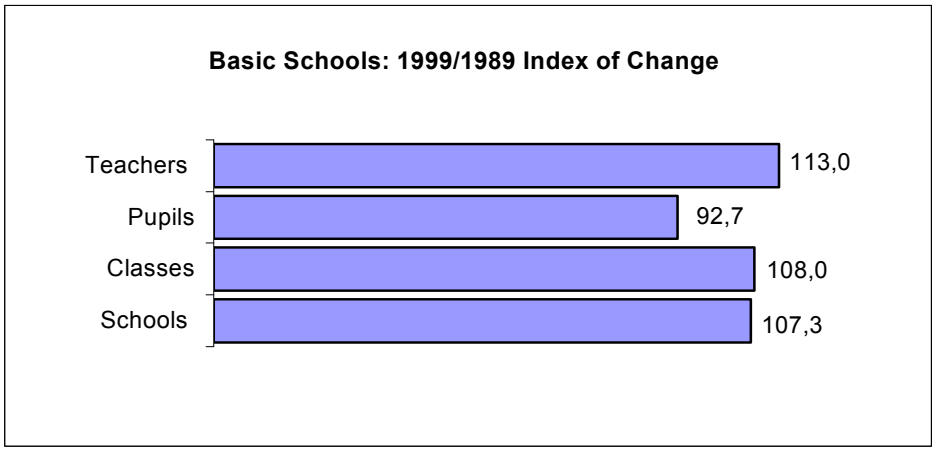
Source: Statistical Office of SR

In 1990 there were 4 025 kindergartens with 216 336 children in 9 296 classes, an average of 23.27 children per class and, and 18 620 teachers. The enrolment of 3-5 aged population has increased from 84.7 in 1990 to 87.1 in 1999, while the number of kindergartens has decreased to 3 310, the number of children to 161 818, the number of classes to 7 821, the average of children per class to 20.69 and the number of teachers to 15 807.

Basic schools (BS - ISCED 1-2)

Basic schools have the first stage (elementary) with grades 1-4 and the second stage (lower secondary) with grades 5-9. About 40 % of basic schools have 100 students or less. One third of all basic schools are restricted grade schools providing just elementary education, usually in classes with pupils of more than one grade. They are typical for rural hilly territories and/or ethnically mixed regions, often providing instruction in minority languages.
Instruction is provided by class teachers (sometimes with the exception of specialised lessons predominantly in Arts and Physical training) in elementary grades and by teachers typically with double specialisations (e.g. Mathematics and Physics) at lower secondary level. Science is taught as separate subjects (Physics, Chemistry, Life, Earth Science).
Slovakia scored well in Science and was among the top three European countries in Mathematics in the 1995 and 1999 international testing (TIMSS and TIMSS-R) of 8th grade basic school students. The basics of VET with limited practical training is provided within one specialised subject. Nevertheless, this subject is considered rather marginal, with low status and without any influence on further VET certification.
Children are due to enter the school upon reaching the age of 6 years. They could be enrolled when younger or older on advice of a counsellor and the wishes of parents, based on a test of school readiness. Since the school year 1998/1999 all students leave basic school after completion of the 9th grade, except those who left it for a longer form of grammar school (after 4^{th}, 6^{th}, or 8^{th} grade), or marginal low achievers, who leave it after 10 years of compulsory education before completing the 9^{th} grade, repeating some grades. Until the 1998/1999 school year the BS was in the process of expanding from an 8 grade form (based on legislation valid in 1976-1990) to a 9 grade form (in accordance with Act No. 171/1990 of the Law Code). This process of expansion contributed heavily to the decrease of readability of statistical data trends in the late 1990s.
BS graduates have, using the Slovak legislation terminology, reached a level of "basic education".

Graph 13



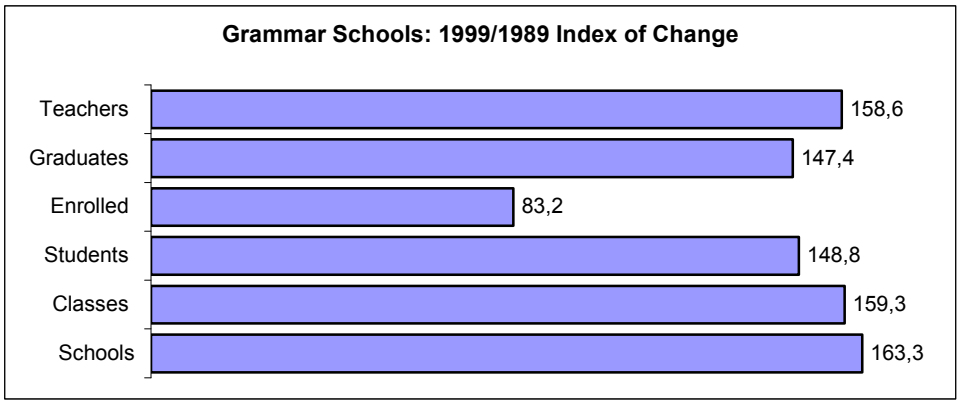
Source: Statistical Office of SR

In 1990 there were 2 358 basic schools with 721 687 pupils, 28 390 classes with an average of 25.4 pupils per class and a pupil/teacher ratio of 19.4, and 37 244 teachers. In 1999, there were 2 471 schools with 671 716 pupils in 29 773 classes, with an average of 22.6 pupils per class and a pupil/teacher ratio of 15.5, and 43 466 teachers.

Grammar school (GS – ISCED 3A)

Grammar school is a general education providing institution aimed at deepening theoretical knowledge and academic skills, and is considered the best preparation for university studies. It lasts at least 4 years (this is a main form, often called a short form of GS, enrolling graduates of BS) and at most 8 years. (Act No. 171/1990 of the Law Code newly supported the so-called long form of GS, for those who are considered exceptionally gifted or, rather, those whose parents expect there may be a better academic environment and/or prefer bypassing severe secondary school admission procedures after completion of basic school.) Study ends with a school leaving examination "maturita" which is an obligatory precondition for admission into higher education.
Long-form GS has currently come under criticism and is at risk of declining in its share of the enrolment, or even endangered by abolishment by yet to-be-prepared legislation. Despite that, its popularity has increased among parents. Currently, about 4-8 % of the relevant age cohort is funnelled through this form of study, often in private or church affiliated schools. There are derivatives of both forms of GS depicted in the chart in the Annex, a 6 grade long form which is rare and a 5 grade (1+4) short form accepting just BS or 8th grade graduates that offers very highly desired bilingual education (English, German, French, Spanish, Italian) in 18 bilingual grammar schools. The instruction and teaching staff of those schools are partly based/trained on Slovak system curricula and partly on a Guarantor country curricula. GS graduates have, using Slovak legislation terminology, reached a level of "full secondary general education".

Graph 14



Source: Statistical Office of SR

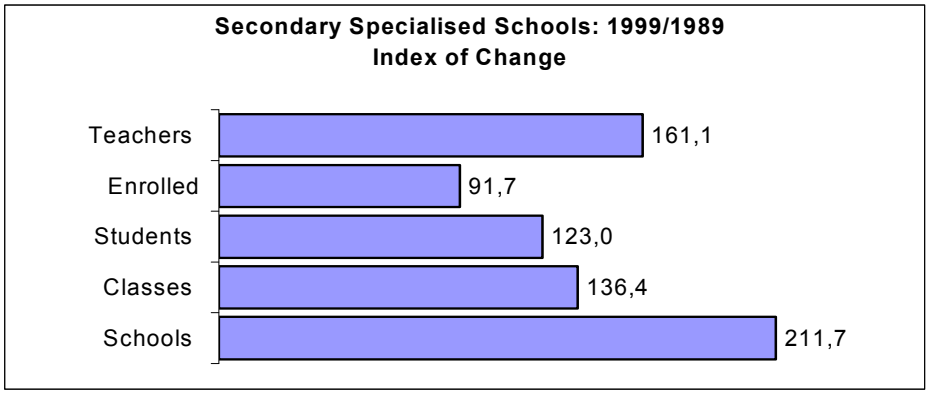
In 1990, there were 132 grammar schools with 55 336 students in 1 720 classes with an average of 32.2 students per class and a student/teacher ratio of 12.9, and 4 280 teachers and 11 422 graduates. In 1999, there were 209 schools with 76 662 students in 2 609 classes with an average of 29.4 students per class and a student/teacher ratio of 10.7, and 7 165 teachers and 15 421 graduates.

Secondary specialised schools (SSS – ISCED 3A, rarely ISCED3C)
Secondary specialised schools offering post-secondary service (ISCED 4B and ISCED5B)

SSS represents the first of two secondary VET streams. These schools prepare students for higher education mainly for technical universities and/or for professions requiring a good quality general and professional education with a firm grounding in theory. They are specialised in technology (in their official name they are called Secondary Industrial Schools with indicated specialisation, e.g. „of machinery", „of construction", etc.), agriculture,

economics, forestry, health care, library studies and pre-school teacher training, all typically offering 4 year studies finishing with „maturita“. Specialised schools for girls came back to the system in the early 1990s with the intention to offer society a social issues focused, but not firm, academic education. Some of SSS, backed by the same new legislation, are called Academies (e.g. Academy of Trade, Academy of Hotel Trade, etc.) offering five year studies. Conservatories are a special case rather close to non-university tertiary education offering 4 year studies, or 6 year and 8 year studies finishing with the „absolutorium“ (its content based are rated ISCED 5B).
As well, SSS offer traditional post-secondary non-tertiary education completed with “absolutorium“ and, very marginally, ISCED 3C courses culminating in a final exam not entitling one for admission to higher education.
SSS graduates possessing “maturita” certificate have, using the Slovak legislation term, reached the level of “full secondary vocational education”. SSS graduates possessing a certificate on final examination have reached the level of “secondary vocational education”, and graduates with an absolutorium diploma have reached the level of “higher professional education”.

Graph 15



Source: Statistical Office of SR

In 1990, there were 184 secondary specialised schools with 87 149 students in 2 820 classes with an average of 30.9 student per class and a student/teacher ratio of 10.5, and 8 337 and 18 296 graduates. In 1999, there were 379 schools with 99 070 students in 3 632 classes with an average of 27.3 students per class and a student /teacher ratio of 7.5, and 13 253 teachers and 30 242 graduates.

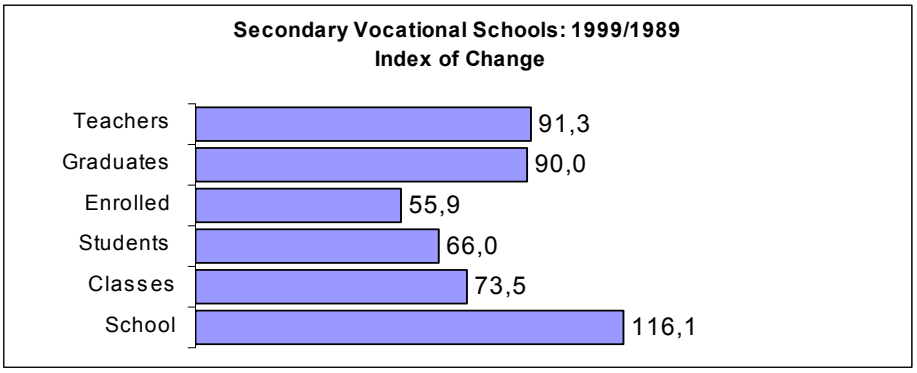
Secondary vocational schools (SVS - ISCED3C and ISCED 3A)
Vocational schools (VS – ISCED2C)

The vocational stream of training for worker occupations is represented by secondary vocational schools and affiliated marginal vocational schools. Vocational schools are designed for less demanding professions for pupils with learning difficulties at basic school, pupils who usually did not succeed in completion of a full 9 grades of BS.
Currently, SVS offer three year studies in ”training branches“ ending with a certificate of apprenticeship, 4 year (sometimes 5 years) studies in ”study branches“ ending with “maturita“ and a certificate of apprenticeship.
”Training branches“ graduates are qualified workers. They are not allowed to enrol for tertiary education. Due to the low absorption of the labour market and due to the higher social

status of a “maturita“ school leaving certificate, they very often apply for two years follow-up study providing them with a “maturita” examination.

„Study branches“ graduates could immediately apply for higher education. The share of students in study branches is gradually increasing, currently being over 46 %. Nevertheless, in comparison with grammar schools and secondary specialised schools, the priority of their education is vocational. As a consequence, they usually have difficulty in passing the admission test and in completing technical universities. In fact, not tending to a strict academic career, they are victims together with some graduates of SSS of the gap in the system. There is still no dual system within tertiary education. The amendment of the Act on Higher Education aimed at legislative backing of higher professional education failed to be accepted by the parliament. Currently, it is included within a new legislation proposal.
SVS “training branches” graduates possessing a certificate of apprenticeship have, using the Slovak legislation term, reached a level of “secondary vocational education”. Using the Slovak legislation terminology, “full secondary vocational education” can be attained by SVS “study branches graduates” possessing the “maturita“ certificate or graduates with a certificate of apprenticeship, who continue their studies with follow-up courses leading to the “maturita” certificate.

Graph 16



Source: Statistical Office of SR

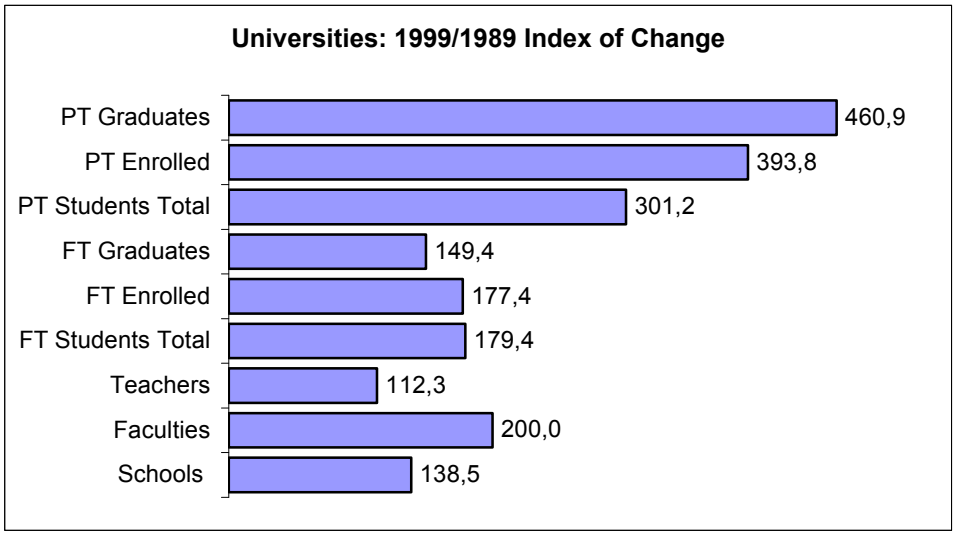
In 1990, there were 311 SVS with 149 981 pupils in 5 960 classes with an average of 25.2 pupils per class and a pupil/teacher ratio of 17.4, 8 623 teachers and 45 105 graduates. In 1999, there were 361 schools with 102 522 pupils in 4 374 classes with an average of 23.4 pupils per class and a pupil/teacher ratio of 13.0, and 7 892 teachers and 40 588 graduates.

Higher education

All Slovak higher education institutions are expected to provide university type education in accordance with the Act No. 172/1990 of the Law Code on Higher Education. There is no non-university tertiary education backed by law. Thus, all higher education schools should provide education closely linked to research. Nevertheless, under current terms, with the lack of funding for research and a huge brain drain of quality researchers this is hardly doable. This could paradoxically contribute to the establishment of a more complex system of tertiary education within new legislation planned to come into force in 2002. It is proposed that non-university education and non-research based tertiary education be allowed. Short track education should be popularised and not considered an uncompleted master's study anymore by the population of graduates of secondary schools. Higher professional education,

predominantly with regional influence should be supported. The new structure of tertiary education should be compatible with a Bologna declaration.
Currently, the master's study in Slovakia lasts 5 years, though sometimes 4, or 6 years. Bachelor studies lasting three years have limited popularity and are still rather rare, due to the fact that tertiary education is free. Some universities are already in a process of reshaping their studies to a three-cycle model: with bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies, however, bachelor studies are still conceptualised rather as a sort of the first phase education with a mid-term exam without recognised qualification.
Some SSS already offer a sort of non-university tertiary education providing 3 years of higher professional education with a close co-operation with a higher education institution. With regard to the content and organisation, these programmes offer regular bachelor studies (even developed within an international co-operation in the early 1990s). Graduates of these programmes, leaving schools just with “absolutorium“, are within statistical data on education usually marked with ISCED 5B. However, they are still not recognised by law, due to the missing legislative support within the Act No. 172/1990 of the Law Code on Higher Education. In the private sector, often in the banking sector, these graduates managed to achieve very high initial earnings, within the state sector, however, they are considered and paid as persons without higher education. (See Vantuch J., Brendzová D., 1998)

Graph 17



Source: Statistical Office of SR

In 1990, there were 13 higher education institution with 50 faculties, 54 350 full-time students and 9 434 part-time students, and 7 818 full-time teachers. Currently, there are 23 universities with 95 faculties, with 88 192 full-time students and 29 103 part-time students, and 9 049 full-time teachers and 2 085 part-time teachers.

There exists a subsystem of schools for students with special needs. Special needs schools provide education and training to mentally or physically handicapped students. Since the early 1990s there is an increased trend to integration of students with special needs. Inclusion efforts are supported by legislation. Despite that, these schools continue to play an important role in the assistance of students with special needs to cope with demands of society and the labour market.

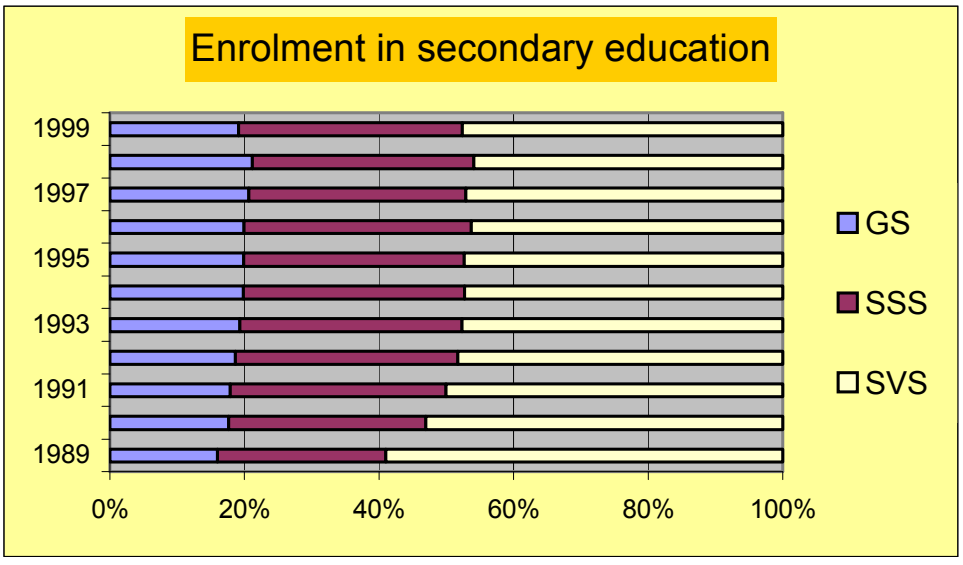
The system is completed with a set of specialised facilities providing special assistance to schools, or parents and students (e.g., pedagogical and psychological counselling centres, or offering very specialised education (e.g., shorthand institute, diverse language schools, etc.) Basic schools of arts are in fact of the lifelong learning type, being state subsidised institutions offering paid education in arts for gifted and/or motivated children and adults.

3.4.1.2 The entry to the initial VET system

Vocational education was burdened by an ideological undertone and some negative consequences have still remained. Whereas during the communist regime vocational education and training was - due to its quantifiable contribution - favoured over general education, immediately after the fall of communism, the interest in general education rose. Compared to vocational education, which was seen as forcing students towards work, general education was seen as a cultivation of spiritual wealth. For a short period, not yet influenced by the turbulence in the transformation economy, this ancient Greek view of the significance of education was reviving. Since jobs still seemed to be easily available, the aspect of training for occupation was weakened.

During the communist era, the numbers of graduates of worker professions and technical intelligence were planned in accordance with the command economy. These figures were planned according to the estimation of needs and the structure of the labour force, derived from planned industrialisation controlled by the state. According to this plan, 60 % of basic school leavers had to go to SVS, and just 15 % to grammar schools. Immediately after the political change, strong pressures occurred towards enhancing the academic, general education stream capacity. Enrolment trends of the 1990s concerning students in upper secondary education streams are shown in the following graph.

Graph 18



Source: Statistical Office of SR

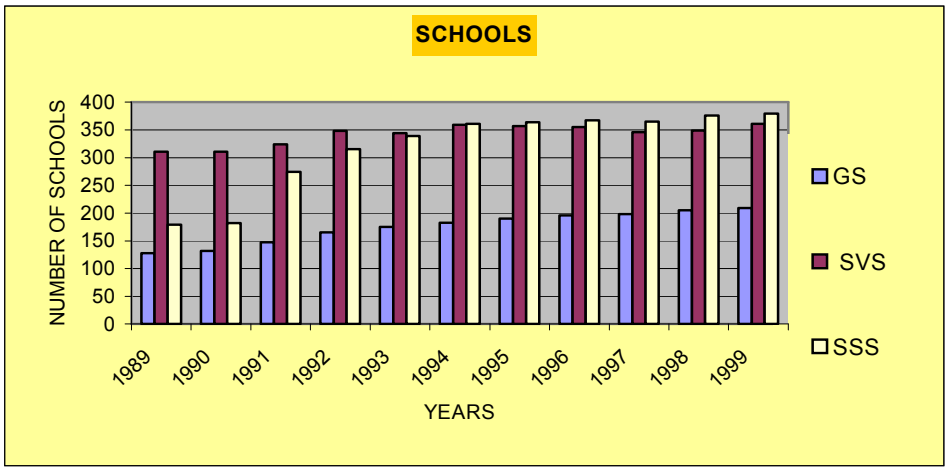
With respect to vocational education and training, there were pressures for increasing the capacity of SSS over the capacity of SVS. By the early 1990s, the number of students at SVS was falling significantly. The polytechnic principle was spontaneously rejected by grammar schools. Basics of vocational training at grammar schools were removed due to low student interest, with the exception of basics of economy and programming.

Additionally, a strong offensive started against SVS maturity branches. There was, for example, an open discussion in the parliament on an alternative to allow SVS to organise only three-year courses leading just to vocational qualification. The maturity stream at SVS representing initially less than 10 per cent of the population (and currently over 20 %) should have been cancelled. VET education leading to "maturita" within SVS was considered to provide insufficient quality oriented to training politically conformist working intelligence. This mostly ideological criticism against SVS ended with passage of Act No. 171/1990 of the Law Code, according to which the possibility of organising maturity courses at SVS was preserved. Later, a criticism of this stream of education acquired an obvious matter-of-fact character resulting from the competition between SSS and SVS, due to the gradually falling numbers of basic school leavers.

Nevertheless, this competition caused by shrinking demand and student interest driven SVS school policy should find a positive end in the future: convergence of SSS and SVS studies might lead to more frequent establishment of integrated VET schools providing both maturita finished studies and apprenticeship certificated training.

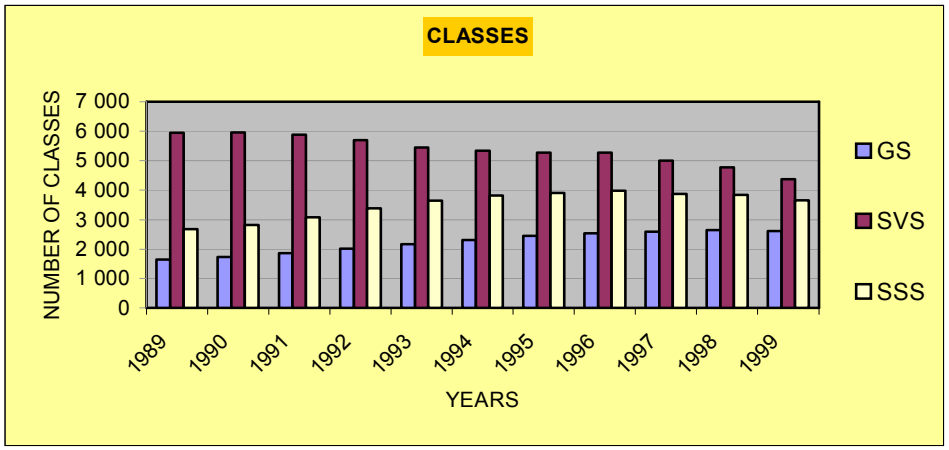
Basic trends of the 1990s concerning the number of schools, classes, students, as well as the number of enrolled, graduates and teachers in upper secondary education streams are shown in the following graphs. Trends presented in the graphs depict changes in preference concerning enrolment in secondary education and indicate both demand-driven unregulated development of schools and classes and structural changes in enrolment caused by more free choice of students.

Graph 19



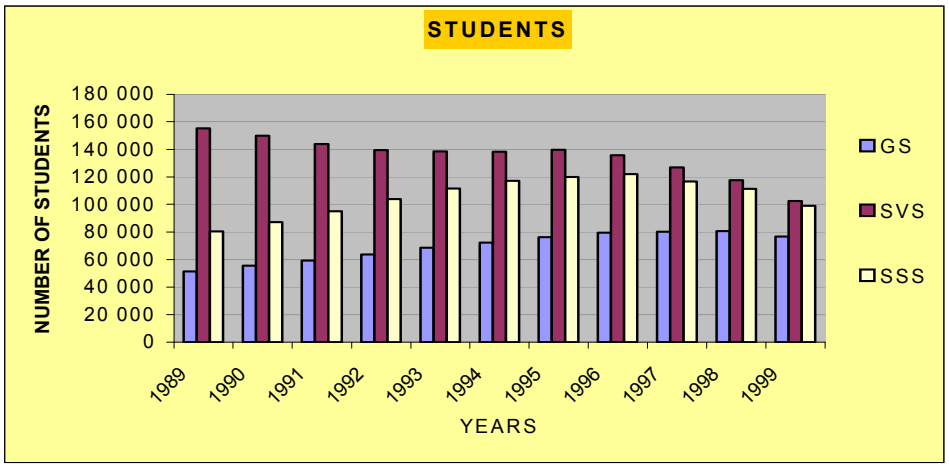
Source: Statistical Office of SR

Graph 20



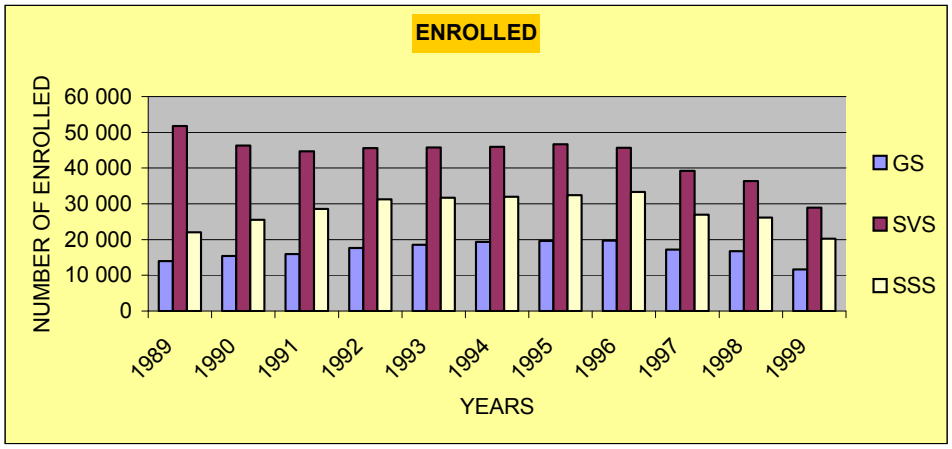
Source: Statistical Office of SR

Graph 21



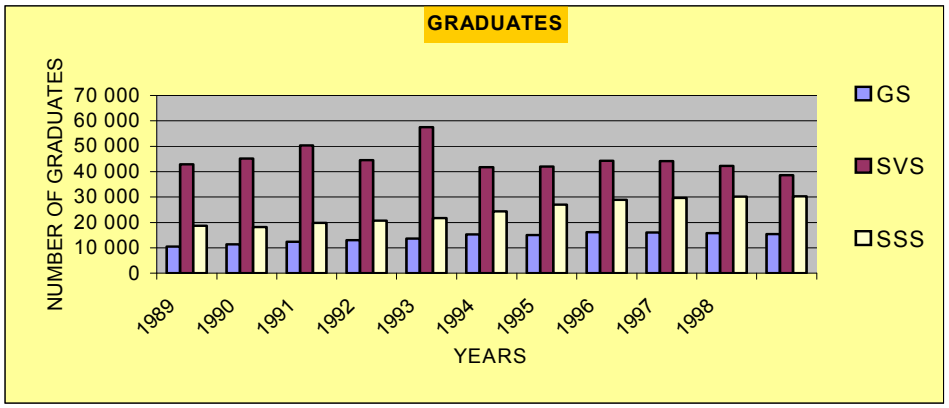
Source: Statistical Office of SR

Graph 22



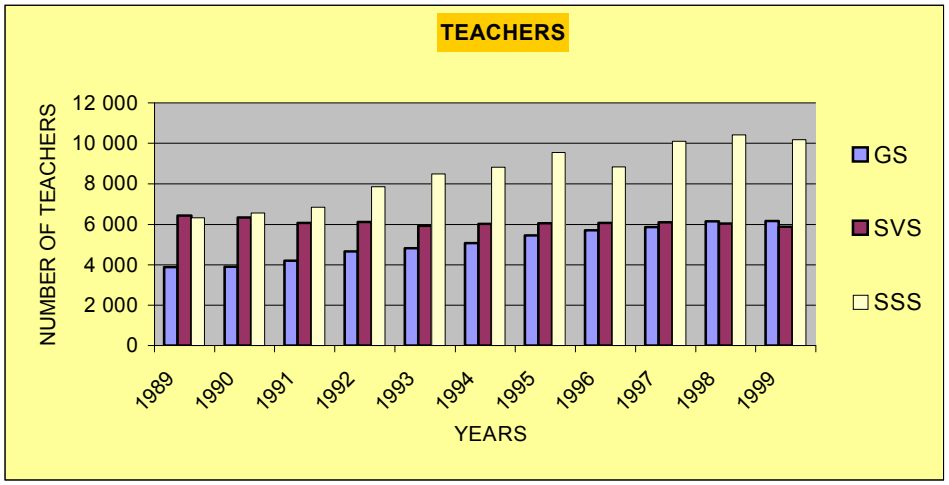
Source: Statistical Office of SR

Graph 23



Source: Statistical Office of SR

Graph 24



Source: Statistical Office of SR

With the fall of communism, vocational education and training not only lost its social and political status, but its economical base collapsed as well. The Slovak industry partly lost its production programme. Economic transition affected mainly military production, mechanical engineering, which suffered from Eastern markets' insolvency, as well as electrical engineering due to West European and Southwest Asian competition. Weak enterprises were losing interest in operating their vocational schools. They were also much less interested in training the working youth, who had future jobs in sponsored enterprises guaranteed according to their contracts with the enterprises. In order to prevent the SVS network form collapsing, the state took over the responsibility for financing all SVS students, which the enterprises declined to do. In the school year 1991/92 this referred to 70 %, in 1999 to over 97 % of all students enrolled. According to Act No. 171/1990 of the Law Code, vocational schools were taken away from enterprises and the establishing function was given to the respective ministries administering the particular branch of industry to which the enterprise with its vocational school belonged. This step was forced by the turbulence due to economic transformation and was guided predominantly by an effort to prevent the facilities and other assets of vocational schools from being sold by enterprises floundering in crisis. The Ministry of Education took over 51 vocational schools; sectoral Ministries administered 255 schools. Only 5 of them remained, due to special measures of the Ministry of Education, under the

administration of enterprises which proved their interest and had the necessary economic power sufficient for sustaining their affiliated SVS.

This situation posed a difficult interference for vocational education. The links with enterprises, which should have served not only as economic backing but also as a pragmatic corrector of trends in vocational education, were broken. In a sense, it could be stated that SVS started towards a transformation into schools similar in their nature to that of SSS. It is necessary to say that in this situation SVS acted in a pragmatic way: In the original conception of SVS, a maximum of 44 per cent of instruction time should have been allocated to general subjects. There was a 4-month vocational training course included in the initial education at SVS. After the completion of this course, and reaching the age of 18, the students were supposed to leave school and get a job. Organisation of this kind of training for SVS students was felt by enterprises, facing a thread of dismissing qualified skilled workers, as an unprofitable economic burden. More and more SVS had to face problems with achieving their aims of practical training. Practical training was gradually losing its scope and quality. There were no reasons for the new administration to motivate financially basic school leavers to study at SVS. Some students and their parents considered SVS - and partly also at some study branches at SSS - the second best choice. SVS facilities, which were not sold by enterprises, were leased to private grammar schools or to non-school institutions. At the same time, SVS made attempts to attract basic school leavers for new study branches, which were competitive to those at SSS.

Despite the fact that the severe decrease in numbers of SVS students stopped in 1993, the unfavourable situation has remained. Since 1996 SVS has repeatedly experienced a strong decrease in enrolment due to a decrease in the population (and increasing chances to be placed at GS or SSS) and due to insufficient job creation by the economy. SVS attempt to reflect the labour market, however, the situation in the labour market is not sufficiently transparent. An unclear conception of the economic transition, the non-existence of an act on bankruptcy and settlement, the fear of social commotion, which could result from the fall of gigantic enterprises - especially machinery, the fear of starting the restructuring of economy - this all has resulted in lack of information about the future nature of regional labour markets. SVS have been able just to estimate what study branches are not fully marketable but they have got no information available on future labour market needs. Consequently, SVS have turned their interest to the education service market and tried to satisfy the needs of basic school leavers. It should be stressed that this situation will last unless regional industrial policy is drafted, and restructuring, delayed for a long time, takes place. Until then, it is just an illusion to expect that SVS would be distracted from their policy of satisfying the demands of the basic school leavers' market and turn their attention to the labour market.

Since the initial period of economic transition, SVS have been trying to fulfil students' desire for maturita education. The reason is that, in Slovakia, social status has been traditionally enhanced by completion of secondary education ending with a maturita examination. Interest has risen in the study of branches of economics and, in students who think practically, predominantly in branches which lead to qualification for different trades in the service sector. The situation is particularly complicated for girls who are not oriented towards academic study. In the previous regime, there was a number of girls who did not fit the quotas for professions attractive to females, and who failed in the strong competition among those who were interested in studying in grammar schools. They were forced by the school system to join the middle stream of education, e.g. machinery and construction study branches at SVS. After 1989, specialised girls' schools were established in order to fill this gap in the

educational services market. Until now, however, this attempt has not reached it is a successful end from the legislative and curricular point of view, and specialised girls' education seems to lead to a dead end. Despite the obsolete gender-biased terminology these schools planned to offer an important alternative option which could be revived by continuing non-university or higher professional education which is still supported thought just rhetorically.

Private and church-affiliated schools are entitled to operate within all segments of the educational system. As is visible from Table XX in the Annex that provides basic data on public and non-public schools, students and graduates, the share of students within non-public schools is marginal, with one exception: There are almost 15 % of students at grammar schools in non-public schools. It is worthwhile mentioning that church-affiliated schools dominate in numbers over private schools in general education, and private schools dominate in numbers over church-affiliated schools within VET (see Table XXVII in Annex).

An analogous situation is observed in two newly started non-state higher education institutions: Private City University is business oriented and Catholic University humanities and teacher training oriented.

3.4.1.3 Training levels and paths within the IVET system and certification of outputs

There are no "regular" VET schools within level less than ISCED 3 in the Slovak Republic. Nevertheless, there are the so-called vocational schools affiliated with the secondary vocational schools typically providing 2-year training courses with specially adjusted curricula for marginal low achievers with trouble finishing basic schools, referring to level ISCED 2C. The official documents on completion of education within programmes with specially adjusted curricula are a certificate on final exam and a certificate of apprenticeship.
Secondary specialised schools finishing with maturita provide ISCED 3A education. An official document on completion of education is a maturita certificate.
Study branches at secondary vocational schools finishing with maturita provide ISCED 3A education. The official documents on completion of education are a maturita certificate and a certificate of apprenticeship.
Training branches at secondary vocational schools finishing with a final exam refer to ISCED 3C level. The official documents on completion of education are a certificate on final exam and a certificate of apprenticeship.
Programmes at secondary specialised schools finishing with final exam refer to ISCED 3C level. An official document on completion education is a certificate on final exam.
Vertical permeability at secondary vocational schools and secondary specialised schools is provided for within follow-up programmes leading to maturita for those students who completed their study just with a final exam. Follow-up programmes refer to ISCED 3A level of education. An official document on completion of education is a maturita certificate.
Secondary school graduates possessing a maturita certificate can apply for studies within post-secondary or tertiary levels of education.
Secondary specialised schools offer post-maturity programmes leading to additional vocational qualification. This type of study refers to ISCED 4A level. An official document on completion of education is a maturita certificate.
Some secondary specialised schools provide experimentally post-secondary higher professional education programmes finishing with absolutorium referring to ISCED 5B level.
A special type of secondary schools, conservatoires, provide 6-years programmes referring to

ISCED 3A level within the first four years completed by maturita, and ISCED 5B level within the 5th and 6th years completed by absolutorium. An official document on completion of higher professional education is a graduate diploma.
Higher education institutions provide closed bachelor's programmes and open bachelor's studies, determined as a pre-stage to master study, both referring to ISCED 5A level, master's study (magister's study, engineer's study and doctor's study) referring to ISCED 5A level, and Ph.D. study referring to ISCED 6 level. An official document on completion of education is a diploma.

With regard to assessment procedures at secondary school, marking is a precondition of overall assessment of students. The marking scale is as follows: excellent (1), laudable (2), good (3), satisfactory (4), fail (5). The overall assessment of students is carried out in mid-term and at the end of the school year when students receive certificates which include marking in subjects, assessment of behaviour and overall assessment. The certificate is an official document on completion of a secondary school grade. In the last year of study students take examinations based on which students are provided with diplomas as official documents to exit to the labour market and/or justify application for higher levels of education.

With regard to tertiary education, assessment procedures are stated by higher education institutions. They include continuous assessment by teachers during exercise/seminar; credit assessment at the end of semesters; examinations; and state examinations. With regard to certification the bachelor's as well as the master's study are completed by the state examination and the defence of a thesis.

There are no specialised bodies for assessment, certification, and award of diplomas and qualifications. The full responsibility lies with secondary schools which have just to follow a special decree of the MoE, and higher education institutions which have to follow the Higher Education Act. An Accreditation Committee as an advisory body to the government has a responsibility to check the fulfilment of the formal accreditation criteria of educational programmes, however, it has no tools and power to evaluate output quality.

3.4.1.4 Description of the training provision within each level and/or path

An extremely high number of study specialisations is typical for VET in Slovakia. Since criticism of the PHARE Strategic study on VET (Birks, Sinclair and Associates Ltd., 1993), this issue has been repeatedly discussed, however, only after the decline of the population and a gradual decrease in funds for education, both reduction of school networks and study programmes is in process. In accordance with the decision of the Government of February 1999, within the school year 2000/2001 9 schools should be closed and 21 more schools proposed to be limited and closed by 2003. In 10 cases schools of the same type should be merged. With regards to VET the two following decisions are important. In 39 cases, integrated schools (from SSS and SVS) should be created. This is worth mentioning because SSS providing VET training with maturita are operated by regional authorities and SVS providing predominantly VET training with qualification are operated by sectoral ministries. In some cases, the process of optimisation has been hampered by sectoral ministries. The multipartisan Rationalisation Commission is obliged to review a schools' network annually. However, only after the decision of the government is implemented into legislation and all secondary schools are operated by regional authorities, will an effective optimisation process come about.

In 163 cases study branches understood as providing training not demanded on the labour market will be limited and closed. In 32 cases study branches will be removed to other schools and in 9 cases new branches will be established. Six centres of practical training (providing practical training for SVS) will be closed. There is a high variance in decisions between regions with a minimum of 5 decisions (1.73 %) in the Trnava region and a maximum of 74 decisions (26.5 %) in the Prešov region. Altogether, there are 289 decisions valid for the school year 2000/2001 which leads to a reduction of 230 working places and savings of up to EUR 400 000 within the fiscal year 2000.

The number of study areas within SVS and SSS programmes is considered high. In the school year 1999/2000 there were 28 study areas comprising in total 1 104 specialisations and subspecialisations (detailed data are provided in Table XXVIII in the Annex).
The situation should be significantly changed after adoption of the National Standard of Secondary VET which has been already prepared by the State Institute of Vocational Education and Training. A set of 13 integrated groups of study and training branches as proposed in the draft national standard is as follows:

- Metallurgy, engineering and other metal-processing
- Electrotechnics and information systems
- Technical chemistry and food-processing
- Processing of hides, plastics, rubber and shoes production
- Textile and clothing
- Transport, post and telecommunication
- Building, geological survey and cartography, mining and mining geology
- Agriculture and forestry, water
- Economics and organisation, retail and services
- Pedagogy, social work and library
- Wood-processing and musical instruments production, printing
- Arts, applied arts and folk crafts
- Ecology, environment protection, health.

Adjustment of study programmes, however, run simultaneously. Tables XXIX, XXX, XXXI in the Annex present the numbers of programmes innovated and newly implemented at SSS and SVS since the 1994/95 to 1999/2000 school years. In total, there have been 55 SVS programmes (19 training programmes and 36 study programmes) and 71 SSS programmes innovated, while 70 SVS programmes and 83 SSS programmes were newly implemented.

In 1998/1999 there were 17 825 full-time teachers employed in ISCED 3 vocational and ISCED 4 education level schools. The teacher/student ratio was 7.41 compared to 7.71 and 7.28 at ISCED 3 general education level and ISCED 5+ level respectively (see Table XXII in the Annex).

With regard to the flow of students between different paths, data have not been statistically monitored. However, secondary school students are allowed to transfer to another school. Decision on transition and differential examination requirements are made by the headmaster of the secondary school to which that student applied. Tertiary education students have the right to apply for study at another higher education institution. Within higher education institutions students are allowed to transfer from one study branch to another under limitations set up by higher education institutions.

3.4.1.5. Access to further levels of education and employment

Access to education on the secondary level has increased in the 1990s due to a decrease in the population and due to the dominating student-driven policy of secondary schools. Similarly, a significant increase in enrolment in tertiary education has been observed due to education policy measures supporting an increase in enrolment in higher education and due to the rich network of universities covering all regions. Nevertheless, enrolment in tertiary education is still not high enough. It is caused by underdevelopment of higher professional schools and a relatively modest offer of post-secondary non-tertiary education. This might be one of reasons for the difficulties of non-academically oriented secondary VET school graduates in the labour market. Generally there is no problem with students returning to formal education. The system is dedicated to providing students with at least some training, e.g., the compulsory education is constructed in a way that pushes the main stream of students to continue after 9 years of basic school for at least one year more. In the society, education has a very high status and a three-year programme at SVS with a certificate of apprenticeship is considered a minimal level of training. Almost all of the population has traditionally had a tendency to complete education with maturita. Currently, all interested in and able to meet required standards could achieve maturita directly by graduating from their respective study programme or graduating from a training programme followed by the 2 years of follow-up courses except those who decide to enter the labour market. Nevertheless, with increasing poverty, youngsters might be pushed to enter the labour market or shadow economy sooner. A special case is students of socially challenged families, very often from Roma families, showing a lack of interest in education. A systemic failure is worth mention since it illustrates a lack of coherence and social policies: Some of the students completing compulsory education are absorbed by a social system immediately offering them a small amount of money (about EUR 42). For a lot of students from Roma families facing future unemployment even after completing training it is an attractive incentive to leave formal education too soon.

There is traditionally a very low drop-out rate in Slovakia. In the school year 1998/1999 the drop-out rate in secondary VET education was 3.61 %, including 2.75 % within maturita programmes and 5.54 % within non-maturita programmes. (For more detail see Table XXV in the Annex.) There is a long tradition of striving for achievement by students in our schools and removal from school due to inadequate performance which is often in fact linked with unacceptable behaviour or may be better explained lack of students' interest in their study. Nevertheless, there is just one significant feature indicating a lack of any achieved level of training – Roma youngsters from socially challenged families. This is true even for secondary and tertiary graduates. They all are asked by law immediately after graduation even before holidays to register at labour offices. Due to low absorption of the labour market they are immediately shifted to social services and become social benefit recipients. Almost one third of the unemployed are youngsters aged 24 and younger. This indicates that a voucher scheme funnelling all these social benefit recipients to further training or internships at their place of work might be a good measure for separation of those who are not interested in working from those interested yet lacking opportunities and/or experience.

Thus, the vertical permeability of the system should be increased. Lack of vertical permeability causes more trouble than a relatively low horizontal permeability. The quite premature streaming would be easily compensated for by emerging regional educational policies. Quite paradoxically, a solution of prevention of too early and/or narrow specialisation is linked with the current profile of general education. It would be a failure to funnel 30 % or even 40 % of the age cohort to current strongly academically oriented

grammar schools. The solution lies within proposed integrated secondary schools which bring together SSS branches and SVS study and training branches within one school. Integrated secondary schools have been already experimentally validated and proved to be a promising tool for bridging a gap between current streams. The possibility to establish integrated school should be embedded in law in 2001.

3.4.2 Responsible bodies

Responsibility towards VET has been a subject of criticism for a long time. The current structure is a result of forced changes in the previous model in the early stages of the transformation of the economy. There is an increased danger that weak enterprises will sell their school facilities during the process of their restructuring. With the exception of 5 secondary vocational schools which were affiliated to sufficiently strong companies (Slovnaft Bratislava, Hydrostav Bratislava, Matador Púchov, Duslo Šaľa, Dopravné podniky Bratislava). All other SVS came to be managed by the respective sectoral ministries in accordance with Act No. 171/1990 of the Law Code.

This measure, clearly considered as temporary, has in fact remained in force for a too long time, and restructured strong enterprises have still no opportunity to find a mutually beneficial solution for establishment of schools affiliated to enterprises.

Table 27
Secondary vocational schools and vocational schools by founders in 1999/2000

Founder	Number of SVS	Number of VS
Ministry of Education of SR (in fact by Regional Offices)	50	5
Ministry of Economy of SR	129	31
Ministry of Agriculture of SR	63	25
Ministry of Construction of SR	22	11
Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications of SR	11	0
Ministry of Defence of SR	1	0
Slovak Union of Production Co-operatives	3	0
Slovak Union of Building Co-operatives	7	0
Private	10	0
Church affiliated	5	0
Stakeholder company (enterprise)	5	0
Regional Office (newly created)	1	0
Total	307	72

Source: Ministry of Education of SR

A typical example is the car producer Volkswagen, which has repeatedly declared its interest in establishing a school able to prepare a tailored workforce for this expanding enterprise. Troublesome details are, first, that the Ministry of Education prefers to solve this problem in general way, with a newly prepared law which should be valid after 2002, rather than to handle an isolated case, and, second, that Volkswagen seems to prefer a German-type dual system solution rather than a Slovak type of secondary vocational school.

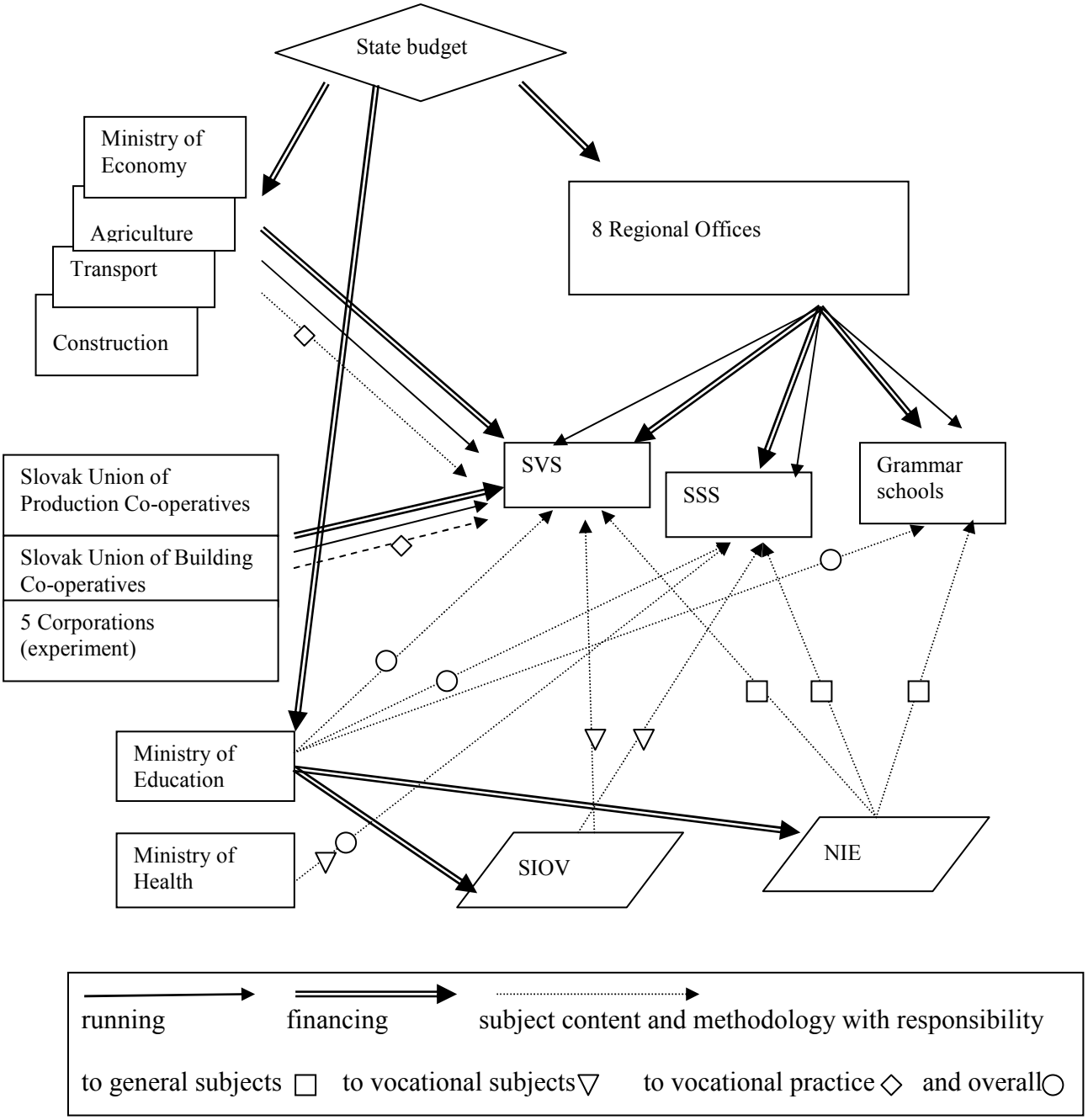
Nevertheless, weak links between blue collar training institutions and enterprises as a residuum of the early 1990's transformation process and of an obsolete state budget system based financing of VET represent crucial weaknesses of the current VET management structure.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the "Network of schools and school facilities". This register, maintained by the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, is issued annually and contains a list of schools and their study programmes approved by the Ministry of Education after sessions with Regional Offices of SR and other sectoral ministries (Article 6, paragraph 3, letter A of Act No. 542/1990 of the Law Code on State Administration in Education and School Self-government as amended by subsequent provisions). Enrolment in this register (usually referred to as a "Network of Schools") is a precondition for the existence of a school. A network of secondary health schools representing a special case of secondary specialised schools is created under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health.

State budget based financing of schools (incl. non-state schools) is linked to this network of schools. Therefore, the founders of church affiliated schools and private schools have a duty to submit applications for enrolment in the network by 31 October and 31 December, respectively, to receive validity for the next school year, and the founders of state schools by 15 January to receive validity for the next school year after that year. Adjustment of the school network is annually a subject of hard negotiation, predominantly with regard to the network of study and training branches which are subject to reductions in order to achieve more effective allocation of funds. Reductions are related to the population decrease and to competition among schools to satisfy students (and parents) study demands. The network is finalised by the Intersectoral Committee consisting of representatives of regional offices, sectoral ministries and other relevant bodies, such as the National Labour Office, the Slovak Small Craft Association etc. Due to the current management structure it is in fact impossible to find agreement on decisions harder than changes in a programme of study. The Ministry of Education as well as regional offices who are designed to be responsible for establishment and maintaining of all secondary schools except non-state schools are not able to implement the decision of the Intersectoral Committee in case of sectoral ministry disagreement. Therefore, an amendment of the law is being prepared which explicitly abolishes responsibility of sectoral ministries for establishment and maintaining of SVS formerly maintained by enterprises within their area of operation. In opposition to this change, which will strengthen the regional competence and contribute to coherent regional educational policy, sectoral ministries will expand their subject content competence on the quality of training in SVS to all secondary VET schools (i.e. inclusive SSS). Regional offices are responsible for elaboration and adjustment of the rationalisation strategy of the secondary schools network in accordance with a regional development plan.

Following is the scheme of the current VET macro-management structure with an indication of the coming change:

Competence scheme (without military, policy, church affiliated and private subjects)



After the abolishment in 1996 of School Offices directly managed by the Ministry of Education and their embedding into the regional/district offices under the purview of the Ministry of Interior and directly financed from the state budget, the position of the Ministry of Education has changed dramatically. The Ministry of Education has remained responsible for legislation concerning education, inclusive of general financing schemes and for overall educational policy, however, it has lost a substantial part of its power by no longer controlling the financing of schools. In fact, the Ministry of Education has only an overall responsibility

for curricula and methodology at schools. Nevertheless, schools are quite autonomous in decisions about proposed alternatives, yet strongly limited in their development plans financially by the regional offices. Regional offices might indirectly influence the "pedagogics" by decisions about the number of classes to be opened and per capita contributions provided for the next school year. All schools are free to renew up to the 30 % of the content and relocate up to the 10 % of week hours in accordance to the study programme priorities, however they must stick to the list of obligatory subjects. Schools are also free to introduce new subjects, however, without claims for obligatory funding from the state budget.

There are two institutions managed by the Ministry of Education with responsibility for issues related to the content of education. The National Institute for Education (NIE) is responsible for curricula at basic schools and grammar schools and for general subjects within SVS and SSS. The State Institute of Vocational Education and Training (SIOV) is responsible for content related issues at SVS and SSS sharing its responsibility with NIE (concerning general subjects) and sectoral ministries with their sectoral institutions (concerning practical training at SVS).

NIE is fully responsible for preparation of documents providing the framework for curricula for relatively few general subjects. NIE makes use of advisory bodies consisting predominantly of teachers of relevant subjects for elaboration of the documents which are finally approved by the Ministry of Education. SIOV acts as an interface between the Ministry of Education and other key players in VET. It would be not possible to produce all documents for all branches and specialisations by the limited SIOV staff and it would be impossible to respect the complexity of VET curricula. Multipartisan expert commissions for vocational education and training at secondary specialised schools and secondary vocational schools precisely stipulated by the Ministry of Education since October 1999 are the guarantors of the reflection of diverse standpoints. Commissions are founded on a tripartite principle and serve as advisory and co-ordination bodies aiming at monitoring developments in respective occupations and branches, preparation of proposals and adjustments of the structure of study and training branches, participation in preparation of educational standards, profiles of graduates, curricula, and textbooks, and participation in the assessment of educational programmes of schools. In all commissions SIOV staff members are responsible for following the methodology of preparation of documents and for administration finalised by approval of the Ministry of Education. There have been 16 expert commissions headed by the expert representing sectoral ministries and 18 expert commissions headed by an expert from the State Institute of Vocational Education and Training.

Directors of schools are appointed by the founder, i.e. all SSS are appointed by a Head of a Regional Office, while a Head of Department of Education of a Regional Office has no direct official influence on the personnel policy. With the amendment of Act No. 542/1990 of the Law Code already prepared as mentioned above, the positions of directors of state secondary vocational schools will be the same as the positions of directors of SSS. A teaching staff policy as well as other staff recruitment policies are the full responsibility of directors of schools. Teaching and learning methods are the complete responsibility of a teacher though school methodological bodies could discuss and agree upon recommendations with regard to this. Four methodological centres (originating within four administrative regions) as well as SIOV could stimulate teachers to investigate innovations by provision of ad hoc lectures and/or in-service training courses stipulated by the respective decree of the Ministry of Education.

The School Inspection, which supervises schools independently according to their general plan or in response to a request of either the Ministry of Education or in extraordinary cases a regional office, has a tendency to focus on observance of legal rules and implementation of principles set up by the Ministry of Education for educational management of schools. Inspection is responsible for the annual report on the status of education in the SR, however, it lacks efficient tools for quality assessment. Except for the annual "Monitor" measuring the quality of educational output in selected general subjects within the "maturita obliged" cohort, and international IEA based comparative studies, there are hardly any other valid data about educational output. Particularly, there are no valid and comprehensive data measuring specialised VET competence outputs. The first signs of improvement are expected with regard to OECD led PISA project. Nevertheless, a systemic solution is still pending.
In the reform of the state administration in 1996, the so-called horizontal integration, school offices were cancelled and the independent school inspection was cancelled. All of its competencies were transferred to district and regional offices. By the amendment of Act No. 542/1990 of the Law Code on State Administration in Education and School Self-government, in 1999 the State School Inspection has been renewed since 1 January 2000. The State School Inspection is a central state administration body. It is headed by the Chief School Inspector appointed for a 5-year period by the Minister of Education. The Chief School Inspector is responsible for preparation of an Annual report "on the status and level of education in schools and school facilities... based on inspection findings". It seems significant that the law is not speaking explicitly about the quality of schools or the quality of educational outputs. The Chief School Inspector could submit a proposal for withdrawal of the director of the school or school facility and submit the proposal to discard a school or the school facility from the respective network due to serious defects that were found. School Inspection Centres, being dislocated parts of the State School Inspection, have been established in all 8 regions. Within all regional offices there are specialised departments with responsibility for different levels of education and organisations rather than for the content of education:
a Department of pre-primary schools and facilities, a Department of basic schools, a Department of Basic schools of arts and school facilities, a Department of secondary schools and facilities (Article 2 of Decree No. 32/2000). Positions of school inspectors are filled by competition following the terms determined by the Chief School Inspector. Experienced pedagogical staff are recruited for specific temporary tasks. School inspection related to vocational aspect of training at secondary health schools is within the responsibility of the Ministry of Health.

It will be necessary to strengthen the involvement of employers and professional organisations in VET and in the employment of students. Employers' federations, the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Slovak Small Business Chamber, the Slovak Agriculture and Food Chamber, the Slovak Craft Industry Federation, professional associations, guilds, and the whole entrepreneurial sphere should play a more significant role in stating requirements for graduates' profiles as well as in projecting conditions for employability of graduates. It should be stressed that out of all the organisations mentioned just the Slovak Small Business Chamber is legally authorised to operate within VET in accordance with Act No. 126/1998 of the Law Code on Slovak Small Business Chamber.

3.4.3 Financing
3.4.3.1 Financing of state schools

There are two basic types of state run organisations within the education system: contributory and budgetary, with an advance payment organisation as a derivative of the budgetary organisation. Just the first two are legal entities. Within VET, SVS belong to contributory organisations and SSS to budgetary organisations.

Financial management of budgetary organisations is based on a system according to which all costs of schools except of capital funding are covered from the budgets of schools. Schools are given funds from the state budget via local educational authorities (LEA). Any capital investment is allocated directly by LEA. Capital investments may be renewal of a roof or special programmes of MoE (e.g., modernisation of heating). Due to the lack of means, fundamental investments in equipment improvement are extremely rare. The first priority to be covered is wages of educational staff and operational expenditure for the basic running of schools.
All school incomes except those provided by parents via parents' organisations are conveyed via the state budget. It means that schools are not allowed to use their own incomes directly. Although those incomes might be negligible, such a method of financing does not motivate schools to expand their profit-making activities.

Financial management of contributory organisations is based on the subsidy from the state funnelled by LEA. This subsidy should cover personal and operational expenditures. The establisher of the school covers the school capital investment. Contributory organisations can keep their income from their productive work and from depreciation. Nevertheless, they are systematically pushed to extend their profit-making operations by cuts of the state subsidy. Shares of the subsidy decline dramatically. In fact, these schools could expect just wages and levies to be covered by the state under the current trend.

Advance payment organisations are not independent accounting units. They are getting advance payments from their establishers. They operate on those pre-payments during the whole year. A typical case is that of small basic schools whose management is solely focused on “teaching”, not being interested in being granted legal entity and expanding its responsibility beyond quality instruction.

The system described above has roots in a previous regime type of management despite reforms affecting LEAs. Till 1990 National Committees, a special mixture of state administration and self-governing bodies, fulfilled the role of LEAs to all VET schools except SVS affiliated to enterprises. In the period of the so-called “sectoral management” between 1991 and 1996 LEAs were directly managed by the MoE. Allocation of all funds for education was in the responsibility of MoE and its quite autonomous offices (4 regional with responsibility towards secondary schools and special schools, and 42 district offices responsible mainly for basic schools and kindergartens). After the administration reforms in 1997, MoE lost its offices which have become just departments of integrated offices with a wide territorial responsibility. Thus, since 1997 the role of LEA with regard to secondary schools and special schools has been covered by 8 regional offices and by 79 district offices responsible for allocation of funds for basic schools.
Since this reform, the budget for regional schools is to be approved within the law on the state budget, separately from the budget of MoE within special chapters of respective regional offices. Within the regional office, budget expenditures for education are purposely marked,

and out of these funds there are special funds marked for SVS and centres of practical training which provides practical training for those SVS which do not have the capacity to do so themselves. The following illustration is from the year 1999: MoE expenditures were (in thousands) SKK 6 772 693, mainly for higher education, science, sport, and directly managed sectoral organisations. The Trnava Regional Office budget, the smallest among all 8 regional budgets, represented (in thousands) SKK 4 596 094, out of which SKK 2 491 212 were marked for education, of which SKK 365 556 were specially market for VET schools of other establishers. These funds were further allocated in agreement with founders (e.g., other ministries establishing SVS). Education expenditures varied around 50 % of expenditures allocated by regional offices within the respective territory (amounting at an extreme to 66 % in the capital Bratislava region).

Despite some differences,

- until 1990 territorial self-governing bodies were involved in allocation of funds for schools, in contrast to later models, these self-governing bodies were politically biased through one political party control,
- from 1991 to 1996 a sectoral management model secured exclusive usage within the education sector of all means originally allocated within the state budget for education; needs claimed by schools were administered bottom up to MoE, then negotiated with the Ministry of Finance and government and embedded (after cuts, of course) into the law on the state budget prepared by the government. After approval (and usually just slight changes) the administration of funds went backwards to schools under the exclusive supervision of MoE and by managers (very often former teachers) appointed by the MoE,
- since 1997 MoE has been totally excluded from the management of financing and territorial management has been restored; however, in more and smaller territories still under exclusive administration – this is why this model is considered temporary, education is scheduled to go under the responsibility of self-governing bodies in the future.

The dominant governing body presides over school initiatives. This is significant with regard to budgetary organisation. The present regime is characterised by a rigid control of subordinated organisation that pays little attention to the character of links between LEAs and schools. Although directors of schools have a tendency to prefer the former sectoral model, where their counterpart at LEA was a director of a legal body with a strong competence, over the current model, where their natural counterpart for negotiation is just a head of one of the departments of an integrated territorial office, the substance of financial management has remained the same. All budgetary organisations which are due to return their incomes to the state budget are kept passive in fund-raising by this. On the other hand, due to insufficient funding schools are pushed to fund-raising in co-operation with affiliated non-profit organisations. Such an affiliated but independent organisations with strong but often not visible links to school, have actually one main task – raising funds that are not “eaten” by the state budget. These extra budgetary funds are predominantly used for school equipment improvement, compensating for a shortage of funds allocated for these purposes within obtained budget.

The contributory organisation may keep its income, however, it might be subjected to even more severe cuts than budgetary organisations. The reasoning is that they are free to earn on their own behalf and should develop activities compensating for the lack of means from the state budget. Thus, the result might be as shown in Table 28.

Table 28
Selected SVS 1996-2000 basic financial management data (in thousands SKK)

Secondary vocational school	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
expenditure total	11069	16307	17154	18469	19743
subsidy of state	6262	8275	9388	9391	7299
to earn from own activities	4807	8032	7766	9078	12444
wages inclusive levies and insurance	4001	5422	5410	6364	6716

Source: Information from school management, tabled by author

Even contributory organisations are pushed into activities to compensate for the unmotivating consequences of the system of financing. They are also used to create affiliated non-profit organisations for fund-rising - not because of the fear of losing income from the state budget as it is within budgetary organisations, but for hiding at least part of their income. Being successful in earning results in severe cuts in subsidies. Thus, activity and success are punished in both cases by the current system.
Obligatory ritual dances are performed when claiming financing from superior bodies. It is the role of the director of a school towards LEA to ask for more funding than is really needed (calculating upon cuts). The regional office and the Ministry of Education do the same when fighting for their budgets in the process of preparation of laws on the state budget. The superior body, on the other hand, has always to stress a lack of funding and not to accept claims, understanding that some cuts are justified due to such strategies traditionally adopted by subordinates. Unfortunately, by "obligatory cuts" the ability of subordinates to survive is currently sorely tested. These ritual dances, initially accompanying efforts for increasing efficiency in allocation means, have nowadays developed to hard strategic games because of what seems a permanent decrease in overall funding of education.

Table 29
1990-1999 education expenditure in comparison to state budget and GDP

Indicator	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Education expenditure share in state budget (%)	10.96	13.18	13.89	10.04	10.7	13.8	12.25	12.6	16.2	14.7
Total education expenditure share in GDP (%)	5.1	5.51	5.9	5.2	4.38	5.05	4.55	4.71	4.46	4.39
ISCED 0-2 Education expenditure in % of GDP	1.9	2	2.2	1.89	1.61	1.97	1.92	1.83	1,73	1,76
ISCED 3 General Education Exp. in % of GDP	0.5	0.18	0.19	0.15	0.13	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.16
ISCED 3 Vocational Education Exp. in % of GDP	0.59	0.73	0.92	0.89	0.74	0.94	0.61	0.91	0.84	0.79
ISCED 5 –6 Education Expenditure in % of GDP	0.97	0.95	0.97	0.826	0.65	0.78	0.74	0.77	0.75	0.7
Total Education Expenditure in current prices (bill. SKK)	14.2	17.6	19.6	19.2	19.3	26.1	26.2	30.8	32.0	34.2
Inflation rate – consumer prices		61.2	10.1	23.2	13.4	9.9	5.8	6.1	6.7	10.6

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, adjusted and tabled author: Financing of primary and secondary education in the Slovak Republic. Regional project. Ministry of Education of SR 2000
Notes:
- total sum includes extrabudgetary sources,
- within the breakdown by ISCED, expenditures of special and non-state schools are not included since they are not available broken out by level of education,
- within ISCED 5-6 expenditures include expenditures in a broader sense, i.e. research, accommodation and food.

Between 1990 and 1996, the budget for education approved by the parliament was funnelled to regional schools under the full competency of MoE. In co-operation with the Financial Committee at the level of MoE, total means were divided into inclusive lump sums for schools under the competence of respective LEAs. Directors if LEAs were encouraged to negotiate with subordinates and consult with a territorial school board – a sort of self-governing body – before distribution of means to respective schools. The process had two weak points:

- allocation of funds was based on tradition, just adjusting from the previous year's status,
- any adjustments were sensitive to the personal relations of subordinate to superior.

Thus, even regions or schools disadvantaged from the previous regime had a chance to improve their positions based on personal contacts and the assertiveness of their respective directors.

Two changes were scheduled in the replacement of the inherited, non-transparent system of financing. Within the first step, often called "objectivisation", transparency has increased by making use of algorithms and allocation formulas based on per capita funding.

Nevertheless, the second step, "setting of normatives", has not been fulfilled despite several efforts. These normatives should be elaborated as taking three levels:

- minimal, guaranteeing the lowest limits which should not be cut as it refers to a minimal requirement and to a minimal acceptable quality of education/training service,
- standard, reflecting the agreed "standard" level of service,
- advanced, reflecting requirements resulting in innovations, technology progress etc. (e.g. with regard to ICT).

Unfortunately, these "normatives" were not elaborated and were very often mixed up with objective criteria for allocation. As a consequence justified/unjustified claims for funding are often hard to differentiate, in particular, with regard to the quality of equipment crucial for enhancing the quality of teaching. With abolishment of "sectoral" management the favourable period for elaboration of normatives finished. Currently, MoE has less possibility to engage LEAs for such work due to the fact that the workers needed for making the necessary analyses related to this change are now outside the education sector. Moreover, a current management model, where LEAs administrative purview lies with a state administration, is going to be changed soon with LEAs administrative purview being shifted to newly created self-governed regions.

Regional differences in financing schools will be discussed referring to Table 30. VET schools are represented here just by secondary specialised schools which being budgetary type organisations are more easily subjected to this kind of analysis than SVS which are contributory type organisations.

Table 30
1999 SSS budget per student by regions (in SKK)

Indicator	Bratislava region	Trnava region	Trenčín region	Nitra region	Žilina region	Banská Bystrica region	Prešov region	Košice region	SR
Budget total	20750	21751	23746	23827	20675	21347	25507	22311	22442
Wages	12271	13131	15066	14265	12573	13313	15022	12926	13527
Goods and Services	3816	3407	2951	4137	3327	2922	4762	3046	3531
G&S reduced*	1841	715	1137	2387	769	704	817	816	1150

Source: Ministry of Education of SR, tabled by author
* Fixed costs (e.g. energy, renting) deducted from goods and services
Note: 1 EUR equals approx. 42 SKK

Regional disparities in funding visible with regard to SSS in the table above are observed within other school types as well. Some data could be taken from the following table affecting schools of another budgetary type.

Table 31
1999 education budget per student by school type (in SKK)

Indicator	Region with minimal subsidy per student	Region with maximum subsidy per student	SR
Kindergartens	17251	20103	18667
Basic schools	13970	16807	15073
Grammar schools	15493	18750	16700
Secondary specialised schools	20675	25507	22442

Source: Ministry of Education of SR, tabled by author
Note: 1 EUR equals approx. 42 SKK

Disparities, predominantly with regard to the purchase of goods and services, are easy to see. Per student data referred to as "reduced goods and services" indicate the current tight situation in the education sector. Coverage of variable costs is tremendously insufficient. Thus, improvement in the quality of equipment from the state budget is impossible, as visible from the following table.

Table 32
1999 budget for reduced* goods and services per student by school type (in SKK)

Indicator	Region with minimal subsidy per student	Region with maximum subsidy per student	SR
Kindergartens	215	647	381
Basic schools	187	672	332
Grammar schools	536	902	677
Secondary specialised schools	715	2387	1150

Source: Ministry of Education of SR, tabled by author
Note: 1 EUR equals approx. 42 SKK

Thus, fund-raising through affiliated non-profit organisations is really inevitable. In addition to these means, other sources not amenable to overall statistical analysis are means provided by parents. Parents are often asked for contributions that should, in fact, be covered by the state budget (e.g., new textbooks for English, just to name a typical concrete example, or unspecified contributions for copying, paper purchases, etc.).
Such data about contributory organisations are not available, but an example of the secondary vocational school mentioned earlier makes clear that these schools have to fight for complementary funding in an even more sophisticated way. To cover their expenditures, in addition to state contributions they earn money from their own productive work. They are raising funds via soliciting non-profit organisations and in an informal way from parents' contributions.

A similar picture can be obtained from the following 1999 budget analysis showing a typical bare-bones budget securing just the basal operation of schools.

Table 33
1999 education expenditure (in billion SKK)

Expenditures	Total	ISCED 0	ISCED 1-2	ISCED 3 General	ISCED 3 Vocational	Special Schools	Other Institutions
Current expenditures – Total	32. 57	3.36	9.9	1.16	7.05	1.05	10.05
staff income (wages, salaries , etc)	15.6	1.95	6.08	0.72	2.02	0.68	4.15
- out of this teaching staff	9.8	1.55	5.29	0.62	1.1	0.59	0.65
insurance and levies	5.7	0.73	2.2	0.26	0.57	0.24	1.7
goods and services	5.56	0.68	1.6	0.18	0.39	0.13	2.58
- out of G&S : energy , water, communication	3.01	0.57	1.3	0.11	0.2	0.067	0.76
- out of G & S : goods	5.2	0.03	0.12	0.024	0.05	0.027	4.95
Current transfers	5.69	0.005	0.01	0.002	4.07	0.002	1.62
- out of this: for non profit NGO and individuals	5.69	0.005	0.01	0.002	4.07	0.002	1.62
Capital expenditures - Total	1.62	0.02	0.4	0.07	0.31	0.020	0.8
Total expenditures	34.19	3.38	10.30	1.232	7.36	1.07	10.85

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by author
Notes:
Total data include officially recognised extrabudgetary means, in other cases (special schools and ISCED level based data) extrabudgetary means are not included.
Private and church affiliated schools are included in „Other Institutions“ column since ISCED level based data are not available).
Any wages and salaries referring data are just about budgetary type organisations (and except contributory type organisations, e.g. SVS, due to different type of accountancy).

3.4.3.2 Financing of non-state schools

As a consequence of current accounting practices, there are no nation-wide data about the state budget-based education expenditures of private and church-affiliated schools, calculated by the type of school, within regular annual statistics. Valid nation-wide data would have to be collected by special action.
There is a difference between financing of church-affiliated schools and financing of private schools. There is no legal basis for distinguishing between the financing of public and church-affiliated schools. Thus, in principal, church-affiliated schools are to be financed equally with public schools.
In contrast to church affiliated schools, financing of private schools is stipulated by Government decision 113/91 of the Law Code, which left decisions about the upper limit of subsidies at the discretion of the MoE (now at the discretion of the regional office). Just a minimal level of funding was prescribed, which simply said equals to costs saved by the public school sector due to provision of this service by the private sector (variable costs affecting various teaching aids inclusive of textbooks). In 1991 this meant up to 20 % of the budget compared to less than 5 % of budget in 2000. This minimal guaranteed limit would not enable the survival of a private school, therefore, the contribution is substantially higher. In the early 1990s it varied between 60 % to 90 % of the contribution to a comparable public school. Currently, it is just about 50 % with a tendency to further decrease and consequently forcing an increase in fees paid by parents. The amount of the state contribution to private schools is not fixed and its provision depends on a year-to-year decision. This makes financial programming for private schools very complicated.

In addition to a state subsidy, an establisher has to contribute to the school budget. Private establishers are usually troubled by facility rental. Church-affiliated schools are usually located at facilities owned by churches or at "converted" former state schools offered by the state. Private school establishers are authorised to collect obligatory fees, which amount to up to 25 % of the average monthly wage in Slovakia. Church-affiliated schools do not require regular fees. Of course, both church-affiliated and private schools ask parents for informal ad hoc contributions.

Differences between financing of "state" and "non-state" schools have gradually developed into an important political agenda, with right wing political parties addressing discrimination in the financing of church-affiliated and private schools. Their political agenda importance is also partly due to the dramatic worsening in financing of education in general. Nevertheless, discrimination by law affects just private schools and not church-affiliated schools. In practice, however, there are really slight differences between state and church-affiliated school funding from the state budget, depending on allocation practices of the respective regional offices. Differences usually have roots in the fact that state budget contributions for state and church-affiliated are not calculated from the same budget items. There is a separate lump sum budget line for transfers for all types of non-state schools. This might provoke decision makers at regional offices to preferable funding of state schools, taking into account that contributions of establishers of non-state schools could enhance the standard of non-state schools. An example for this is as follows: Wage bonuses of educators depend not just on the quality of their work but also on the total means allocated for this purpose by regional offices. This sum is usually stated as a percentage of the total payroll. This percentage is usually the same for schools within the region, varying in the range of 10 % to 15 % of the payroll between regions. However, it was possible to find the following decision in an allocation algorithm of the regional office: 13 % of the payroll was allocated for bonuses for teachers of state schools in comparison of 10 % of the payroll scheduled for church-affiliated schools. Just to complete the topic: Private school teachers' compensation depends only on the decision of the school establisher, which in trying to attract best teachers offers higher salary than does state school. Nevertheless, their salary is very sensitive to the purchasing power of parents.

As can be seen from Table 34, selection of criterion yields distinctly different conclusions regarding school budgets.

Table 34
State budget expenditures in education at state and non-state schools

Schools by establishers	Criterion A (in SKK)	Index	Criterion B (in SKK)	Index	Criterion C (in SKK)	Index
State	15943	100	21045	100	7063	100
Church	15733	98.68	16591	78.8	12432	176
Private	8303	52.1	9814	46.6	4990	70.6

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by author
Notes:
Criterion A – expenditures calculated per student referring just to equivalent type of schools.
Criterion B - expenditures calculated per student referring to all schools and school facilities, i.e. referring also to very costly services (e.g. for children at risk) which are not yet provided by non-state establishers.
Criterion C – Expenditures in cost units referring to all costs of all schools and school facilities; a sort of efficiency measure.

Criterion A might be interpreted as a measure of the level of discrimination, indicating a slight discrimination between comparable church-affiliated schools and considerable discrimination between comparable private schools (predominantly from the private schools preferring tax payers' point of view).
Criterion B indicates that provision of costly service (at other institutions than regular schools) is still a state responsibility. It would be worth further study to clarify whether non-state subjects are disinterested in such a demanding service or whether they are administratively excluded from the provision of such special service.
Criterion C refers to cost units of services of respective providers/establishers. Again, a further in-depth study would be necessary for discernment of a valid interpretation.
The first hypothesis might indicate that church-affiliated schools provide for service less effectively than state schools.
The second hypothesis might indicate that church-affiliated schools focus on a higher standard of service than state schools.
The third hypothesis might indicate that the state provides for more complex service than non-state subjects (or is clever in selling in service that is in fact not necessary and would be not demanded if not provided for free).

Anyway, both more transparent systems of accountancy and more sophisticated analyses are needed in this sensitive area.
Nevertheless, some consequences seem to be worth offering with regard to the future non-state school development, and particularly, to institutions focusing on costly service, e.g. VET.
In case non-state subjects would be able to provide for more cost effective service than state managed subjects, a Private Schools Association requirement for equal per capita contributions for all institutions regardless the type of establishers would sound justified.

3.4.4. Social dialogue and involvement of social partners

At present, a social dialogue in the Slovak Republic has a solid legislative provision. It is well developed at the top level, however, it is less developed at regional and local levels.
A venue for the highest level of social dialogue is represented by the Council for Economic and Social Agreement (CESA). Results of the process at the highest level, i.e. between the Government of SR, the Trade Union Confederation and the Federation of Employers' Associations, are laid down in the basic document, a General Agreement.
A social dialogue focused on vocational education and training is a quite new issue within Slovak education. So far, vocational education and training, as a subject of social dialogue, is not sufficiently developed at the top, as well as at sectoral or enterprise levels. Therefore, there is but a small number of good examples which could be used for further strengthening of the social dialogue in this field. This lack of experience and related lack of administrative maturity is a weakness of the Slovak Republic with respect to accession into the EU. In particular, we need competency in effective future utilisation of the European Social Fund. Successful development of social dialogue at regional and local levels is conditioned by solving two systemic issues related to vocational education and training as a whole:
- administrative reform leading to decentralisation and de-etatisation of decision making, which is already in progress,
- reform of financing of VET which is still even not developed as an agenda for discussion by key national players.

With creation of an institutional infrastructure in the natural regions in Slovakia and with further development of local policies, regional social dialogue and even regional social dialogue related to VET will increase in importance. Nevertheless, the extent of fiscal decentralisation, still not agreed upon, is of the highest relevance with regard to this.
Changing the system of financing VET is a basic prerequisite of VET reform. The current model of financing VET is outdated and hampers social partners' initiative. Rules for creation, administration, and division of respective financial sources and definition of financial needs of trainees, educators, and the educational environment relating to all levels, forms and segments of education are to be newly established. It is necessary to establish a natural economic environment, and to assure an effective allocation of sources for both current provision and future development of VET. It is not possible to stimulate employers to take more care of VET, e.g. by formulating graduate profiles or co-designing any VET output standards, and, subsequently, to motivate them to participate in quality control, without their direct participation in financing VET. Involvement of employers in financing VET will enable enhancement of a regional and local tripartite dialogue agenda and could force employers to participate more actively and more concretely in formulating VET policy issues on basic or sectoral levels. Regional focus and incentives for stimulating entrepreneurs could lead to initiatives resulting in crucial change.
It should be stressed that in the General Agreement signed in March 2000, there is an education policy-related measure on the gradual demand and supply harmonisation in the labour market. Nevertheless, it is not complemented by measurable outputs. Labour force quality enhancement issues, motivation tools and employability issues linked with VET are not tackled within this document.

Several working groups operate within CESA, focusing on elaboration of standpoints and comments upon documents discussed by the government and proposals of legislative norms regulating specific fields. Based on the initiative of participants of the Staff Development Programme initiated by the European Training Foundation in 1996, a proposal was worked out to establish a Committee for Vocational Education and Training as the top tripartite body within CESA aiming at vocational education and training as a whole. Despite support from each of the tripartite participants, this committee was not established. This failure was caused by interruption of the social dialogue at the highest level in 1997 and a conflict of interest with already existing working groups within CESA with overlapping orientations. Nevertheless, the experience from the last years' development indicates that the most important tools for initiation of further progress are related to the administrative and VET financing reforms and to the creation of an environment supportive of initiative rather than of creation of a top-agenda-focused body.

The ETF initiated working seminar on social partners' involvement in VET held in Senec on 11-12 May 2000, contributed substantially to further progress. MoE took the initiative to revive the co-operation between several government-linked institutions and social partners. The State Institute of Vocational Education and Training has been authorised by MoE to develop the new mechanism of co-operation with social partners and co-operation with social partners will become a special issue tackled within the national VET conference organised by MoE in autumn 2001.
Hopefully, another recommendation of the aforementioned Senec working seminar will come gradually into force: It was suggested to appoint an institutional guarantee from an education sector (the State Institute of Vocational Education and Training or the Institute of Information and Prognoses) for designing a new model of financing VET and to establish a tripartite working group responsible for elaborating the project "Draft Model of Multisource Financing

VET". Nevertheless, the current position of the Ministry of Finance in the process of elaboration of a new tax system shows a lack of support for any decrease in the taxi and levies load which is a precondition of a new multi-source model of financing VET.

3.4.5 Curricula development

3.4.5.1 Provision of curricula

As explained within the description of subchapter 3.4.2 the Ministry of Education approves the so-called basic pedagogical documents that provide a framework for the curricula for respective educational programmes. Any of the subjects represented in the expert group could start the initiative but typically, it is schools that are most active in promoting innovations within these documents. It does not necessarily mean that changes are school needs driven. Changes might be initiated by other subjects but schools are pushing the finalisation of the process mostly whenever it might increase their chances of attracting more students. It refers to originally too narrowly specialised VET schools. Currently, almost all SVS are student demand driven rather than labour market driven. A regional education policy is expected to develop after the public administration reform creating more autonomous, self-governed regions scheduled for the year 2001.

As mentioned, 30 % of the content and 10 % of the study time could be adjusted to regional needs by the schools. Nevertheless, teachers often stick to "old content" unless they are pushed to the innovations by technological acceleration. Quite significantly, some general subjects are taught in accordance with the documents and textbooks from the 1980s.
Currently, the NIE is responsible for general subjects related aspects of curricula, the SIOV for vocational subjects related aspects of curricula. Ministries with their specialised institutions should influence the quality of practical training.

3.4.5.2 Quality assessment

Despite a lot of changes within "basic pedagogical documents," the lack of a VET quality assurance system remains a weak point of VET. Not surprisingly, establishment of the National Curriculum Committee and the Institute for Curriculum, Standards, Accreditation, Certification in VET are proposed within the Millennium project. (One of the possibilities would be to expand SIOV responsibility for the whole VET system and to develop a quality assurance model.)

The current certification process is school driven within the framework stipulated by the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, the current system based predominantly on inner quality assessment is not protected against erosion of quality. There is no systemic force counterbalancing the tendency of schools to soften the required output standard if it is inevitable for the school (e.g. due to the decline of quality students caused by population decrease or by loss of experienced teachers, etc).

There are some efforts to bridge this gap. The Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Žilina had annually supervised final exams at SVS, voluntarily participating in the experiment officially approved by the Ministry of Education. In the final year of the experiment in 1998/1999, 38 schools with a total of 3 036 students participated. The experiment has been positively evaluated and it is expected that with new legislation, participation of social partners and an even more active role of social partners within final exams will be stipulated.

Similarly, the Small Business Association is showing an interest in revitalisation of guilds and their involvement in licensing of craftsmen and linking the number and quality of new craftsmen to the regional labour market needs.

Nevertheless, as has been stressed several times, without a new model of financing VET a really active role of social partners is hardly to be expected. Without financing reform, social partners will not be given stimulus for development of their own VET experts and for the development of their immanent position. Social partners are too often represented by "adopted" directors of schools or other educators who cannot represent a genuine social partners position.

A single player (except directors of schools) which might be considered directly responsible for the assessment of the quality of VET is a school inspection. Nevertheless, it is not so clearly expressed in the relevant legislation and as a consequence inspection has no tools available for quality assessment, and development of such tools is not expected from the inspection. Thus, the inspection has primarily an administrative focus within the inspection of schools. In accord with the annual report of the State School Inspection on the status of education in schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic in the school year 1999/2000, excellent conditions for development of student personality, a very good quality of educational outputs in vocational subjects, and good quality of management with regard to practical skills have been reported concerning SSS. The most dangerous feature threatening the quality of SSS is seen in a gradual decrease of laboratory and workshop equipment.
Within the SVS network, insufficient quality of instructors of practical training as well as bad conditions for practical training in general were reported as a crucial weakness. Traditionally, less interest of students in general subjects and increased absenteeism (as measured in the number of lessons missed) were observed. For the whole VET sector, an increasing gap between material and personal resources observed in schools and expected educational outputs is considered the highest threat for VET in the Slovak Republic.

3.4.5.3 Educational and occupational standards

The development of educational standards for ISCED 3 level of VET is in process. In accordance with the priorities of SIOV a "National Standard of Secondary Vocational Education" (NSSVE) has to be submitted to MoE by the end of 2000.

Within educational standards, the following partial standards are defined: input standard, output standard, achievement standard, and content standard.
NSSVE has been worked out for three levels of vocational training (i.e., except for higher professional and higher education) and served for elaboration of the draft "Basic Educational Programme of Secondary Vocational Education" (BEPSVE), which was prepared together with NSSVE. Within the BEPSVE there have been proposed

- educational levels with a standard length of education and training,
- key skills,
- characteristics, achievement standards, and content standards of general education,
- characteristics, achievement standards, and content standards of vocational education.

In the next stage, the National Institute of Education will have to complete a general education related part of this document.
With regard to the process of elaboration of occupational profiles and related educational standards, NSSVE development is of crucial importance. The elaboration of occupational profiles and educational standards has to be strongly related to the NSSVE. After the approval

of NSSVE as a final guideline document, the process of developing occupational profiles and educational standards will continue. This is the education sector's point of view.
Simultaneously, RILSAF has worked on elaboration of occupational standards. Since 1996, when the government resolution "to prepare occupational standards with consequently pursued educational standards" was adopted, about 470 occupations of about 3000 occupations registered on the labour market (ISCO-88) were analysed in accordance to the procedures and methods for processing of occupational standards adopted by RILSAF. However, even RILSAF experts prefer to call the obtained outputs "occupational characteristics" rather than "occupational standards". Over 300 occupational characteristics related to VET schools were sent to SIOV for further processing of related educational standards.
Nevertheless, such a manner of developing occupational and educational standards seems not to be efficient enough and the Government intention to finish this work by the end of 1998 had to be rethought. The involvement of social partners is inevitable for the improvement of occupational characteristics to occupational standards and for the development of educational standards derived from and linked to their more effective involvement. It seems to make little sense to work on occupational standards and educational standards separately, to be impossible to obtain quality outputs without creating conditions for fruitful co-operation of experts from relevant sectors, and to enable adoption of a natural client-centred approach. An intersectoral committee might bridge the gap between the MoE and MoLSAF whenever necessary, but the risk of developing standards not adequately fitting "real needs" cannot be solved by such a body. Without "real" involvement of social partners, and predominantly employers (which is in accordance with our view related to their "real" engagement in financing VET), both standards will continuously suffer from lack of applicability. Moreover, without "real" social partners' involvement a key player contributing to the validation of standards and to the continuing innovation of standards is missing.

3.4.5.4 Innovative activities

Heavily influenced by PHARE VET Reform Programme SR 94.03, the dissemination of experience with the modular approach towards curricular development is in progress. Ninety-five new curricula - already prepared - are being continuously improved and adjusted to 20 pilot schools' needs. The modular approach stressed by the Millennium project is often interpreted as almost ideal and the single one possible in future VET inclusive of initial VET. Despite decisive support for further development of modular approaches within VET, SIOV has warned MoE that targeted training of curriculum developers is an inevitable precondition for wider introduction of the modular approach. Moreover, the modularised curriculum must be understood just as an alternative to the traditional curriculum and not as the single possible pattern.
Following the recommendation of the PHARE Programme, SIOV disseminates the programme outputs by providing training for curriculum developers and local education authorities' administrators. This training offered in modular form will allow SIOV, with the support of trained multipliers, to support the modularisation of curriculum in additional schools. For this action schools of the following branches will be eligible: Machinery (No. 23 and 24), Electrotechnics (No. 26) and Construction (No. 36). A relevant new project starting with a selection of schools from eligible branches has been submitted to MoE.

The Leonardo da Vinci EURO-BAC project has provided expertise and facilitated the work on standards in SR. The SIOV aim is to develop standards based on EURO-BAC standards. EURO-BAC standards have been already introduced in 2 pilot SSS schools (Secondary

Industrial/Technical School for Transport in Bratislava and Trnava), both experienced and knowledgeable about modules, standards and curricula development from the PHARE VET Reform programme.

3.4.6. Legislation

During 1999, work on a brand new law on upbringing and education (which will replace the many times amended school act originated by the previous regime – Act No. 29/1984 of the Law Code), work on a new higher education act (which should replace Act No. 172/1990 of the Law Code), work on new laws on research and development, and work on a new act on financing of education continued. A new act on upbringing and education should be linked to the "Concept of Development of Upbringing and Education in the Slovak Republic for next 15-20 years (the "Millennium" project)" published in January 2000. The "Millennium" project served as a basis for drafting a document "National Programme of Upbringing and Education" published in Teachers Newspaper No 3/2000. Within pillar No.11 "Vocational education and lifelong learning" of the National Programme, lifelong learning and further development of VET is recognised to be of the highest priority: "The National Programme emphasises and drafts lifelong education as an inevitable subsystem of education which is due to respond promptly to labour market and world globalisation needs." The National Programme is supposed to be approved by the government in 2001.

Furthermore, the current high share of students within VET is criticised and it is proposed that the share of enrolment in the general education, i.e. in the grammar schools, be increased.
Establishment of the National Curriculum Committee and the Institute for Curriculum, Standards, Accreditation, Certification in VET were among other proposals on establishment of new institutions. The currently still missing tertiary higher professional education with ISCED 5B is explicitly mentioned within the new scheme of a formal education system.
A new model of multi-source financing VET and LLL together with linking initial, continuing and unemployed centred training is advocated.

The higher education act should be linked to the "Concept on Further Development of Higher Education in Slovakia for 21st century" published in Comenius University 2000.
A new higher education act should introduce a new status of higher education institutions. Universities which are currently confederations of faculties should become single legal entities (with faculties losing their legal entity status) within public law and be controlled by Managing Boards. A development plan for respective faculties and thus the structure and profile of graduates should derive from a university development plan respecting the content of education and training autonomy of faculties, however, stressing the strengthening of the coherence within the university. It is too soon to assess the impact of this intention on technical universities, of course, faculties are strongly against this intention considering it as dangerous centralisation unacceptable for big and strong enough faculties which are often larger than small universities. The most important message for VET is legislative support for establishment of higher professional schools which will solve the difficulties of higher professional schools currently still operating within their original "experimental status".

New research and development legislation should be linked to the "Concept of State Research and Development Policy (till the year 2005)" and a new model of financing of research and development in the SR which have already been adopted by the government.

A new act on financing of schools should introduce an objective model of financing enabling an allocation formula based financial flows. If this approach is adopted, the transparency of allocation of funds will be increased. Nevertheless, no efforts concerning implementation of multi-source financing of VET are visible yet.

Other new legislation is related to rectification of previous changes considered politically hot and needing a rushed intervention. The right to receive bilingual certificates, a long-time practice stopped by the Ministry of Education during the previous election period, has been expressively confirmed by the new wording of Article 11 of Act No. 542/1990 of the Law Code. Consequently, in schools (inclusive of VET schools) with other than the Slovak language of instruction, all pedagogical documentation is bilingual and students are given certificates in the Slovak language and in the language of instruction.

Transformation of basic schools to a nine-year format has been completed, and, due to the new Paragraph 4 of Article 19 of Act No. 29/1984 of the Law Code, only students of a special type of grammar schools, a 5-year bilingual grammar school, can leave a basic school after finishing its 8th grade. Consequently, all students entering VET schools (except marginal low achievers failing to finish basic schools in regular time and continuing training at vocational schools within 2-year training programmes) have to finish basic school. Thus, ten years of compulsory education must be finished, completing the first year of secondary school for almost 100 % of the respective age cohort.

Act No. 301/1999 of the Law Code amending Act No. 542/1990 of the Law Code has reversed the impact of the "horizontal integration" administrative reform from 1996 on school inspection. A State School Inspection independent of regional offices and with a high level of autonomy in relation to the Ministry of Education has been established. More detailed information is available in section 3.4.2.

The first private higher education institution, School of Management, has been established in Trenčín by Act No. 286/1999 of the Law Code.

The first church-affiliated higher education institution, Catholic University, has been established in Ružomberok by Act No. 167/2000 of the Law Code.

As a consequence of a need for major change of the secondary schools network two important amendments of Act No. 29/1984 of the Law Code have been proposed

- affecting the possibility of establishing an integrated VET school, offering within one school programmes originally offered by SVS and SSS. Currently, within the same school building legally independent SVS and SSS schools operate sharing the same staff and facility,
- clarifying the position of sectoral ministries towards secondary vocational schools and definitely shifting competencies towards all secondary schools (except secondary health schools) to regional offices,
- amending legislation about schools for pupils with special needs with the aim of preventing discrimination of children with special needs. New names of schools are proposed and inclusion in the main stream of the population should be supported.

3.4.7. Weaknesses, strengths and future government priorities in initial VET

Weaknesses and strengths of IVET already thoroughly discussed within the previous subchapters will be reviewed here from the MoE point of view. Within an elaboration of the Programme Statement of the Government for Years 1999-2002 the following strategic goals in the field of secondary VET have been identified in accordance with the document Reform of Schooling and Education System (MoE, October 1999):

- transformation of VET guaranteeing required graduate profiles, their social adaptability and working mobility,
- achievement level, quality and range in provision of VET comparable and compatible with EU based on national and internationally comparable occupational and educational standards worked out in co-operation with social partners,
- harmonise certificates of VET with EU practice and engage employer associations and professional associations in the process of certification,
- modify the VET policy focus from reflection on current well described features towards prediction of impacts of future changes; develop monitoring VET and enhance research and development in the field of VET,
- support transition from industry based VET to knowledge society based VET, strengthen ICT implementation into VET, improve access to lifelong learning,
- re-profile VET with the focus on a more general professional profile of graduates with enrolment into VET after 15 years of age and specialisation after 16 years of age with the intention to set and stipulate achievement at the following levels of VET: basic vocational, secondary vocational, full secondary vocational, higher vocational (which means, however, non-tertiary education),
- promote free choice of educational paths at integrated secondary schools feeding all levels of VET and a wide range of educational programmes,
- strengthen links between VET and the register of occupations, and partnership between VET institutions and representatives of employees, establish a strong network of governmental, non governmental and public legal institutions providing for the infrastructure of VET,
- enhance flexibility and permeability of VET systems and bridge currently isolated initial and continuing VET,
- support current trends towards an increase in autonomy of VET institutions and decentralisation of decision making competencies with a main priority to improve the quality of educational services and the quality of outputs linked to occupational requirements as identified by employees,
- clarify terminology and elaborate a transparent, stable set of terms, definitions and explanations used within VET,
- support a transparent and socially oriented system of financing VET, enabling achievement of VET qualification for free, effectively linked to institutions of the labour market and social partners,
- achieve an agreement on future development of VET among key VET players; establish an intersectoral tripartite body with efficient links to the public for monitoring and managing crucial issues within VET.

3.5 Modernisation of continuing vocational training (CVT)

Lifelong learning is becoming more and more important for the population in the productive age range. The increasing dynamism of economic development gradually leads to establishing preconditions for intensification of continuing vocational training. One may not claim that a single concept and a single system of lifelong learning has been created, however, various sectors have created their own proprietary human resource development concepts that are being implemented, which is a positive sign. All those activities bear characteristic features of continuing vocational training of specific work and professional groups.

Primarily, continuing vocational training is training for public administration officers. The concept was adopted in 1995, it has been updated and will follow the awaited devolution in public administration. In the administrative system, all categories of state administration officers plus selected categories of officers in self-government would take obligatory vocational training. During their careers, the state administration officers would basically go through adaptation, initial, and preparatory training, take selected qualification finishing courses (innovative, specialising, and language training) or training linked to the execution of their jobs or – while preparing for a promotion – may take functional training.

Since 1996, teachers in primary and secondary schools have established their own system of continuing training. It is sponsored by specialised workplaces and managed by the Ministry of Education pursuant to the Decree of the Ministry of Education of SR No. 42/1996 on In-service Training of Educational Staff. The following formats are provided: introduction of beginning pedagogy staff into practice, training of senior executives, continuing training, specialised innovative studies, specialised qualification studies, and broadening studies. The formats listed are provided by schools, the National Institute for Education, Methodological Centres (Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, and Prešov), universities, and training entities reporting to other central authorities.

On the national level, legislation regulates continuing training of specific professional groups like health care staff, fire protection and civil defence crews, employees of the power sector, environment, veterinary care, and forest management, police corps members, and judges and other justice officers, etc.
In collaboration with non-state institutions providing continuing training, various professional associations run continuing training programmes for professional staff groups as they need it.

In addition to official requirements with an impact on continuing vocational training, there is a strong inclination of individuals toward training derived from their own initiative. Statistical reviews in the field have revealed that people in all age categories almost equally take part in different training activities, particularly in language training. There has been high interest in management, bookkeeping, and marketing training courses. These training opportunities are extensive, provided mainly by private training institutions.

3.5.1. CVT provision (from the supply side perspective)

Even before 1989 Slovakia developed a relatively extensive network of training institutions providing continuing vocational training. Originally, continuing vocational training was realised in the form of external study (evening classes) and in the form of training of employees in enterprises.

For external study, which took place at secondary schools and at higher education institutions, employer approval was requested, since employees were entitled by law to work allowances. The interest of enterprises in enhancing employees' qualifications was usually connected with career promotion, which was, however, dependent on the approval of political bodies. With rising economic difficulties in the 1980s, enterprises took over the funding of training organisations. Higher education institutions provided for just know-how and certification of students. There were the so-called training centres, which belonged to the standard social infrastructure of every enterprise. Training centre facilities were usually located in attractive surroundings, and served both as training centres and recreation facilities for employees. Besides having an educational function they had also a socialisation function. In education and health care, the system of continuing education was guaranteed by the state, and career paths were regulated by special legislation. Specialised sectoral institutions also operated in other sectors of the economy.

After political changes, the system of continuing vocational education and training has undergone more significant changes than has initial vocational education. With the economic transition and economic decreases, continuing vocational education lost its economic backing. External study was, partly justifiably, seen as an ideological tool of the previous regime. Continuing education institutions in the public sector suffered from restrictions in the state budget, and within the educational sector their activities were reduced to a minimum. There was no means for training at enterprises facing the restructuralisation process. Many training centres closed down or changed their field of operation, many facilities went through privatisation, and new enterprises started to utilise them commercially. Development was mostly uncontrolled. In 1993, the situation changed. Interest in continuing education has been increasing with the economical revival. There have been non-state institutions already established that are on the market. Continuing education and adult education have been provided by tradesmen and by institutions established under the Trade Code, as well as under the Act on Foundations and the Act on Association of Citizens.

The Trade Licensing Act (1994) allowed provision of training/education by free trade (when filing for the Register, no professional qualification was requested). By the end of 1997, some 7 thousand entities of the type were registered with the Ministry of Interior of SR with their scope of operations covering education. One may expect that several of them did not provide education, and several of them closed down for different reasons. (There is harsh competition from large non-state training institutions like e.g. Academy of Education with its centres/branches in 38 Slovak towns or cities, with a wide supply of training courses focusing on retraining or specialising, language or interest-motivated.)

According to Act No. 386/1997 of the Law Code on Further Education, continuing vocational education and training has become, together with education in primary, secondary schools and institutions of higher education, a legitimate part of the educational system of the Slovak Republic. Continuing education is seen as lifelong education, and everybody, regardless of age and educational attainment, has the right to continue his/her education in accordance with his/her abilities and interests. The act specifies establishment of continuing training institutions, conditions of accreditation, issuance of certificates of completed training, etc.

For the time being, continuing vocational training is provided both by schools and non-school entities, the majority of which are private enterprises.

Secondary schools and universities may provide specialised courses or post-maturity training mainly in the fields of study provided in the format of daily studies. The type of offers and their number, however, depends on the school.

While working on the PHARE project ”Multi-Country Co-operation in Distance Education” during 1995-1999, distance study centres were established at universities (Slovak Technical University Bratislava, Slovak Agricultural University Nitra, Technical University Zvolen, Technical University Košice and Žilina University). Those centres have created the Slovak Distance Learning Network, providing altogether 33 training activities under the framework of lifelong learning, reaching from one week up to 9 semesters. Thirteen of the training activities are carried out in a distance format. The universities listed and others, along with out-of-school-based institutions, are starting to increasingly offer information technology-based training, and with the financial support of the Open Society Fund, the first on-line learning projects are being prepared. There have been attempts to establish a virtual university.

In several universities, centres of lifelong or continuing education have been established (Technical University Košice, Slovak Technical University Bratislava, Žilina University and Comenius University Bratislava) preparing or offering specialisation courses for university graduates or secondary school leavers. They are mainly training activities in the branches of studies in which the university faculties have been accredited, but also have other subjects of focus.

Newcomer foreign institutions introduced correspondence formats of study (the German Correspondence Academy, the First Czech Correspondence School) as well as the distance format of learning (City University Bratislava).

Continuing vocational education is also provided by sectoral educational institutions (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture, Institute of Bank Education) or schooling and training centres in large enterprises or companies (Slovnaft, a. s., Bratislava, VSŽ Košice, Volkswagen). They provide training tailored to the current needs of the companies or sectors.

For the time being, the situation in the development of continuing vocational training cannot be seen as being highly transparent. It is impossible to obtain exact quantitative data on institutions devoted to education or to what extent education is their core business. There are no detailed data available concerning the quality of their training programmes, trainers, working methods, etc. Rough information about the numbers of participants in courses and training that are offered by training institutions and by companies that have requested provision of training for their staff may be derived from the statistics of the Institute of Information and Prognosis in Education (reporting to the Ministry of Education) and from a relatively low number of research studies performed by research workplaces. This Institute issues an official list of education institutions along with a list of programmes with or without accreditation. The list is based on the outcomes of a statistical survey performed annually. The survey was first conducted in 1997. The network of institutions and programmes was first published for the year 1998. The annual publication is expected to help regional and district labour offices, professional advisors, and basically the public by providing information on the supply of continuing training in the regional labour markets. The discipline of statistical reporting is expected to improve with time and a quality assurance system for the various programmes would be developed. The obligation to file annual statistical reports by

educational institutions is laid down both in the act on statistical surveying and the act on further education.

As a complete statistical overview of the quantity and structure of training institutions has not become available yet (annually, only some 300-350 filled in reports are returned), the following data are to be considered rough estimates.

Depending on the type of training institutions, mostly secondary schools (30.46 %), followed by training institutions of natural persons and legal entities (29.23 %) operated in continuing education in 1997. In 1998, there were more educational institutions of natural persons and legal entities (27.52 %) followed by secondary schools (24.83 %). In 1999, secondary schools took the leadership again (26.53 %) followed by educational institutions of natural persons and legal entities (25.51 %). Those two types of institutions dominated. An increase may be observed with universities (starting with 7.38 % in 1997 and growing to 15.99 % in 1999). On the other hand, civic associations showed a declining trend (from 8.92 % in 1997 at 4.76 % in 1999). Other types of training institutions remain at an approximately stable values: the educational institutions of state administration authorities – approx. 9 %, educational institutions of towns and municipalities – around 2 %, of co-operatives – under 2 %, professional organisations – around 2 %.

With a view to their legal format, the structure of training institutions was the following in 1999: predominantly state-budget funded organisations (34.35 %), followed by budget-cofinanced organisations (21.43 %) and entrepreneurs – natural persons (20.07 %), limited liability companies (10.88 %), joint-stock companies (4.08 %), and associations, unions and clubs (3.74 %). The first three legal forms indicated were on the top of the list both in 1997 and 1998, however, in a re-shuffled order. The most decisive increase is reported by budget-funded organisations (18.46 % in 1997 compared to 20.13 % in 1998 up to 34.35 % in 1999). Unlikely though it was, budget-cofunded organisations show a decrease (starting with 31-69 % in 1999 through 27.18 % in 1998 to 21.43 % in 1999). Natural persons doing business reported a development from 16.92 % in 1997 to 20.47 % in 1998.

The networking process of local training institutions representing approximately 30 % of all institutions seems to be missing, at least at the end of 1999. Training institutions with a chain of facilities in various Slovak regions stand for some 6.5 % and in every district 3 %.

According to a study carried out by the Research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Srnánková Ľ., Kostolná Z., Czíria Ľ, 1998; Czíria Ľ., Srnáková Ľ., 1998), the leading topic focuses on computer literacy (given by almost two thirds of institutions in the group under research), on improvement of vocational qualifications relating to the profession concerned (58 % of institutions in the group under research) and on acquiring a new profession (59 %). Relatively frequent is the focus on labour organisation, management and leadership, etc. (49 %), followed by accounting and finance (45 %) and communication skills (43 %). A relatively high number of institutions provide training or courses also devoted to labour law, learning or improving a foreign language, the art of business negotiations, advertising and marketing, as well as approaching clients and the basics of entrepreneurship.

As for the time aspect, most institutions focus in particular on short-term courses and training (learning activities covering 1 to 5 days in the study mentioned were provided by approximately two thirds of institutions; programmes lasting 6-25 days were offered by over 50 % of institutions; and those of 1-3 months by almost 60 %). Courses and training covering

longer time periods were infrequent, comprising 20 % or less. With a view to their organisational format, institutions focus mostly on retraining (which was rendered by 81 % of the entire group under research). Another frequent offering was complementary, extending and specialising formats of study (offered by almost three quarters of institutions).

The quality assurance of continuing vocational training is characterised by three approaches. The training programmes in secondary schools are assessed by the Ministry of Education. The schools are included in the chain of secondary schools. Their programmes then constitute the basis of courses rendered by secondary schools within continuing education.

Universities/faculties are accredited by the Accreditation Committee of the Government of SR pursuant to criteria laid down for the individual branches of studies. Parts of those programmes make a specialised offer of continuing vocational training. However, universities also prepare new educational programmes based on the said accreditation and delivered by their own teachers.

Continuing training institutions submit to the accreditation process compliant with the Act No. 386/1997 of the Law Code on Further Education. For that purpose, the Accreditation Committee (of the Ministry of Education) is appointed and regulated by a statute issued by the Ministry of Education.

Any training institution may apply for accreditation of its programmes, which comply with the following conditions:

a) Education activities stated fall in the scope of their business
b) Submit a project of educational activity and teaching documents including characteristics of their graduates and the resulting opportunities in the labour market
c) Submit documentation on trainers available
d) Demonstrate materials and equipment available to provide for that educational activity in the format of a declaration (Article 7 paragraph 1 of the Act).

The Accreditation Committee was established by the act on employment in 1991. At that time, its role was accreditation of retraining activities requested by labour offices in their pursuit of the active employment policy. Gradually, the interest in accreditation of educational activities on the part of educational institutions increased. By adoption of the Act No. 386/1997 of the Law Code on Further Education, the Committee was established compliant with a legal standard applicable to the education sector and extended the accreditation procedure, making it an opportunity for accrediting all educational activities. Educational activities are assessed by specialists with a view to their training content, methods, and formats, however, from a formal perspective only. Pursuant to that assessment, the Committee decides about the award of accreditation certificates. There has not been any feedback allowing identification of those projects which really provide good quality training.

Annually, the Committee considers some 350-400 applications (to issue an acknowledgement of accreditation for a training activity, to issue a duplicate of a credit, to approve an innovation of accredited training activities, etc.), debates these, and issues some 200 acknowledgements of accreditation. In addition to that activity, the Committee provides professional advice in the preparation of training projects, provides information and consultancy to state authorities, training institutions, professional reviewers, submits information on activities accredited for the Announcer of the Ministry of Culture of SR and the Ministry of Education of SR.

Insufficient maturity or lack of readiness of customers (both the enterprise sector and the population) may be considered a grave barrier to continuing education development.
Customers usually lack a clear idea what knowledge and skills may improve their chances of being employed. They usually are not able to express their interest in terms of objectives allowing them to articulate the need to improve specific skills. They usually infer only general interest in the field of education related to the dominant features of their jobs. That gives considerable room to specialist advisors who would help in harmonising the offer of educational services and the real needs of the education receivers. Individual satisfaction of the customer with the course taken does not necessarily rest on any real improvement of his/her potential to find a job.
Another significant barrier to continuing education is the quality of trainers. Experience based training with clearly set, objective goals is slowly getting underway. That relates to the still insufficiently ad hominem behaviour of customers as well as to the Slovak education tradition preferring theoretical and generic as opposed to practical training. The quality of trainers or the quality of their work would no doubt increase with the establishment of a living market of educational services, a market that is still exposed to hypothermia by the lack of financial resources due to insufficient purchasing power of the population and due to insufficient legislative incentives in the recent tax and levy policy.
In addition to the problems mentioned, the already established continuing education institutions stress the necessity of further finalisation of the act on continuing education aiming at:

- Linking the concepts held by individual educational segments, especially education of the adult and the continuing vocational training
- Enhancing the guarantee of professionalism in services rendered by training institutions including an adapted procedure of awarding accreditation, e.g.
    - Award of a business licence in the area of personnel advisory and educational services as a tied trade
    - Laying down more rigorous criteria for the award of accreditation to training programmes
    - Restricting the term of validity of accreditation
    - Introducing accreditation of training institutions but not programmes.

3.5.2. CVT provision (from the demand side perspective)

3.5.2.1 Participation of employed in vocational training

According to a research study carried out in the initiative companies associated in the Management Partners Group (2000) covering 100 profit-oriented companies with over 50 employees, one may conclude that most companies, in particular enterprises (companies) with higher numbers of staff have a certain training system introduced. An open training system, for instance, was used by 81 % of companies participating in the study and the in-house closed training system was used by 57 % of the companies.

As for the numbers of those participating in corporate training, some information is provided by the data from the aforementioned research study carried our by the Research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (RILSAF). The data present a basis for an estimate that approximately every third employee would take part in training or in a course prepared by his own employer, with a moderately increasing trend. At the same time it is, however, necessary to add that a certain number of enterprises (that must not be underestimated) focus on certain staff groups in the provision of corporate training only. In the mentioned study by RILSAF for instance, only 15 % of enterprises provided for training of all their employees and only

a thin quarter (24 %) of them assumes retraining of all employees during the following 2 – 5 years.

The problem of corporate training in Slovakia is not the issue of quantity (the number of training or courses, the number of training participants, etc.) that much but rather the issue of the approach of management toward that phenomenon. Continuing vocational training is still not perceived by management as a strategic tool that may contribute to raising the efficiency of the company's operation. In most enterprises in Slovakia, human resource development still seems to lack a concept linked to building up competitiveness or a competitive advantage for the future. The efforts of Slovak managers in the field of personnel management focus rather on operative aspects of HR management, on the solution of current problems rather than grasping the problems vis-à-vis the strategic objectives of the enterprise. That conclusion may be supported by data from the study mentioned showing that a sizeable part of enterprises lacks any plan, programme or project of HR development (in the group under research, up to 70 % of enterprises). At the same time, 40 % of managers stated that the entity they represent in the study would pay only marginal attention to matters of cultivation of the professional potential of their employees and 15 % admitted that the issue was of no relevance.

The situation is conditioned on the recent state of finance and economy in the Slovak enterprise sector. Under the existing conditions when enterprises frequently combat extant manufacturing, technical, and pressing financial problems, training of workers in the enterprise is forced to the background, being judged as less crucial. In that situation, enterprises render resistance against investment into the training of their workers and focus rather on recruitment of a "plug-and-play" qualified employee. In a study conducted by the Research Institute of the National Economy of University of Economics (Matulčíková M., Srna O., Brendzová D., 2000), using structured interview of selected business entities and institutions, 4 respondents of 16 selected business entities and institutions when asked about the specifications of requirements concerning training institutions have attributed the lack of such specifications to the fact that they recruit "ready" professionals not needing any training.
Interviews with managers of diverse companies yields the message that the management would consider the issue of human resources extraordinarily important admitting at the same time that not sufficient attention is paid to those issues. Slovak entities typically address only urgent and isolated problems and usually lack comprehensive and compact strategies of human resource development and support to career advancement.

In addition to those objective economic factors, there also are subjective factors that work in Slovakia and are related to lack of experience of a considerable part of our managers in managing companies under the market economy. As investment made in training of employees cannot be expressed in figures standing for profit, thus Slovak enterprises often underestimate the importance of the issue.
The above statement applies to the overall situation. It is however necessary to say at the end that a series of progressive enterprises (firms) operate in Slovakia with a thoroughly developed training policy. They mostly are the so-called top companies, i.e. those in a stabilised economic situation, that expand, invest in technologies, etc. They include for instance the aluminium smelter ZSNP, a. s., Žiar nad Hronom, the oil refinery Slovnaft, a. s., Bratislava, the central bank Národná banka Slovenska, and others.

A special category is that of foreign-affiliated companies. The research carried out by the Foreign Trade Department, University of Economics Bratislava (Ferenčíková S., 1999a,b,c)

suggests that in this group of firms, investment (in human resources) has constantly been growing from 1991 onwards, relating also to the growth of number of those companies. At the same time, investment per capita was growing, too, which is an illustration of an investment boom in human capital within the given time span in enterprises of the type. In 1998, of 28 enterprises willing to share the data, SKK 1 million (USD 25 000) per capita on average was invested in human resource development. That is a value five times the average annual wage in those enterprises.

With respect to the issue of human resource management, it has been found, however, that in Slovak enterprises systems of staff assessment vis-à-vis their prospective work are only applied in certain major progressive firms. According to the outcomes of the aforementioned survey carried out by Management Partners Group, career plans were applied in 25 %. Of those companies not using career planning 34 % reportedly intended to introduce it, however, 40 % would not even consider its introduction in the future. In the research carried out by RILSAF covering enterprises with fewer than 50 employees as well, only 4 out of 157 (3 %) paid attention to planning employee working careers.

With respect to identification of training needs, enterprises employ mainly a methodology based on assessment of workers or their individual development plans. Another method that is applied focuses on forecasting of training needs related to development needs. However, such approaches that are more concept-oriented are typical for certain large enterprises only. Most enterprises – according to the available outcomes of the research – do not employ a systematic approach; i.e., approaches that are applied are based only on the subjectively perceived needs of the employees themselves or approaches are used that react to urgent training needs in given areas. These methods lack links to a corporate development strategy. A sizeable part of enterprises lack methodology completely. In the research performed by Research Institute of National Economy of University of Economics for instance, 6 out of 16 respondents, i.e. almost one third claimed not to have any methodology prepared to identify training needs of their company employees.

According to the research of RILSAF, the leading topics in training courses requested are accounting and finance (55 % of enterprises), engineering knowledge and abilities (50 % of enterprises) and computer literacy (46 % of enterprises). Somewhat less frequent (20-25 %) are courses focusing on labour organisation, management, leadership, labour law, and learning of foreign languages. Relatively seldom in the preparation of training are topics considered that relate to the ability of marketing the company production or the ability of finding one's way in light of competition from other firms. For instance, in the advertising and marketing industry, only 13 % of enterprises of the group researched had their employees trained; only 15 % of enterprises paid attention to customer relations and 12 % to the art of business negotiations.
The above statements are confirmed by the outcomes of a research study carried out by the Research Institute of National Economy. According to that study too, mostly computer and language courses were preferred.

When considering future training needs, certain shifts may be observed in the approach of management that may signal the realised need to expand abilities or skills of one's employees involving a new dimension. Compared to the situation at the time of the research, managers of the enterprises studied preferred training topics devoted to labour organisation and management (by 27 % more) but also to the development of their employees' creativity (by 10 % more). The need for shaping an adequate company image was more pronounced (by

11 % more) but also for an orientation toward advertising and marketing (a difference of 12 %), for shaping customer relations (a difference of 7 %), for the art of business negotiations (a difference of 10 %) as well as for developing communication skills of employees (a difference of 8 %).

In foreign-affiliated companies, in particular large ones (by the number of employees), usually more attention is devoted to the training of employees. Stress is put on the training of local managers, their most important skill being considered speaking foreign languages, and the so-called functional training aimed at mastering their managerial posts in compliance with recent management principles. As for blue-collar categories, the management in those enterprises mainly note the importance of acquiring new engineering skills and abilities (so-called engineering training). Training focusing on teamwork development is considered necessary too and training to develop and enhance the efficiency of the working process is becoming more and more significant (Ferenčíková S., 1999a,b,c). To motivate the employer sector, it will be necessary to address in particular the financial coverage of continuing vocational education in the future, either directly or indirectly (e.g., by decreasing the tax burden). A higher acceptance level of continuing vocational training within the context of general corporate management may also be achieved by putting higher stress on training of corporate managers mainly in personal management or human resource management.

3.5.2.2 Participation of unemployed in vocational training

As has been already mentioned, within the meaning of the Act on Further Education, retraining has been included in the lifelong learning system as a part of vocational training. As a result, anyone showing an interest in continuing training has the right to be trained at any time of his/her life, depending on his/her abilities and interest.

Administrative committees of regional labour offices approve regional retraining programmes prepared by the employment and development departments. The programmes are inspired by the regional development programmes, labour market analysis, labour market demand and monitoring of vacancies in the region as well as by recent labour market requirements and adopted national retraining programmes.

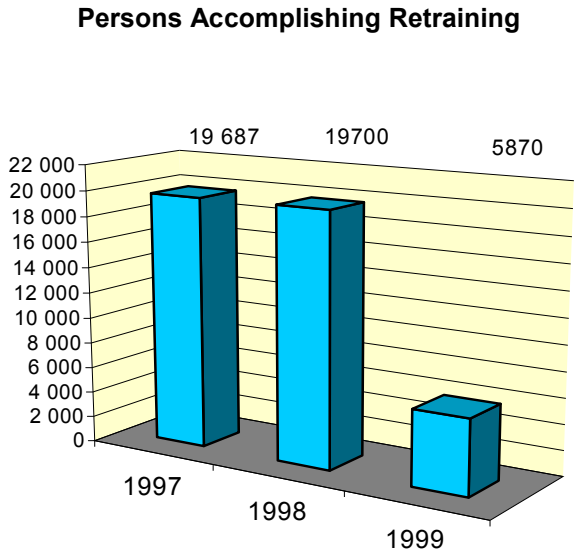
For 1999, regional retraining programmes were adopted in 6 regions, excepting Bratislava and Nitra. For illustration, priorities of the retraining programmes in two regions (Trnava and Košice) follow:
The retraining programme of the Trnava region focused particularly on:
- Blue-collar professions (women tailor – sewer, bricklayer, painter, welder, baker, shop assistant, cosmetician, hair-dresser, and mending services)
- Computerised book keeping and economics
- Small and medium enterprises in industrial and farming operations, rural tourism, tourist guide
- IT specialising on exploitation of computers in construction and machinery designing combined with English or German languages
- Social services.

In 1999, the Regional Labour Office Košice had attendees at the following courses of the county retraining programme:
- Small and medium-sized enterprise support programme
- Secondary school leavers and university graduates programme

- Programme of support for enterprises in tourism and agro tourist services
- Programme for women's work and enterprise
- Blue-collar professions support programme
- Social workers training programme
- Projects focusing on search for job or becoming employed
- Computer literacy programme.

In 1999, retraining belonged among the most widely used tools of the active labour market policy. The fact that the number of persons who completed their retraining compared to 1998 and 1997 sank considerably due to a lack of financial resources is alarming.

Graph 25



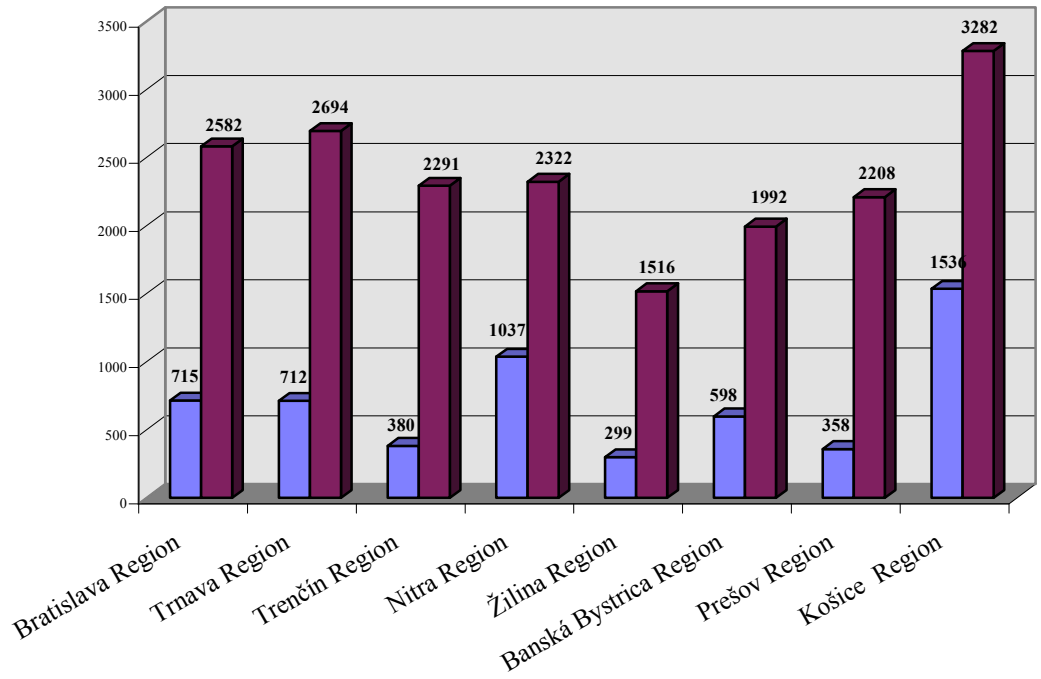
Source: National Labour Office of SR

Due to the lack of funding, out of 18 887 individuals in total interested in retraining in Slovakia, only 5 635 registered unemployed were given that opportunity, 35 % of whom had been registered by labour offices over 12 months (see Graph 26).

As visible from the Graph 27 the age structure of the registered unemployed taking retraining courses bears a certain resemblance to the age structure of all registered unemployed in the Slovak Republic. One of the differences is a low share of registered unemployed taking retraining up to the age of 18 and only a few per cent higher share of registered unemployed taking retraining in the age group between 19 and 24 compared to the age structure of all registered unemployed. The largest group of registered unemployed taking retraining was that between 19 and 24 years of age (996 persons), the least numerous in the age group up to 18 (119 persons).

Graph 26

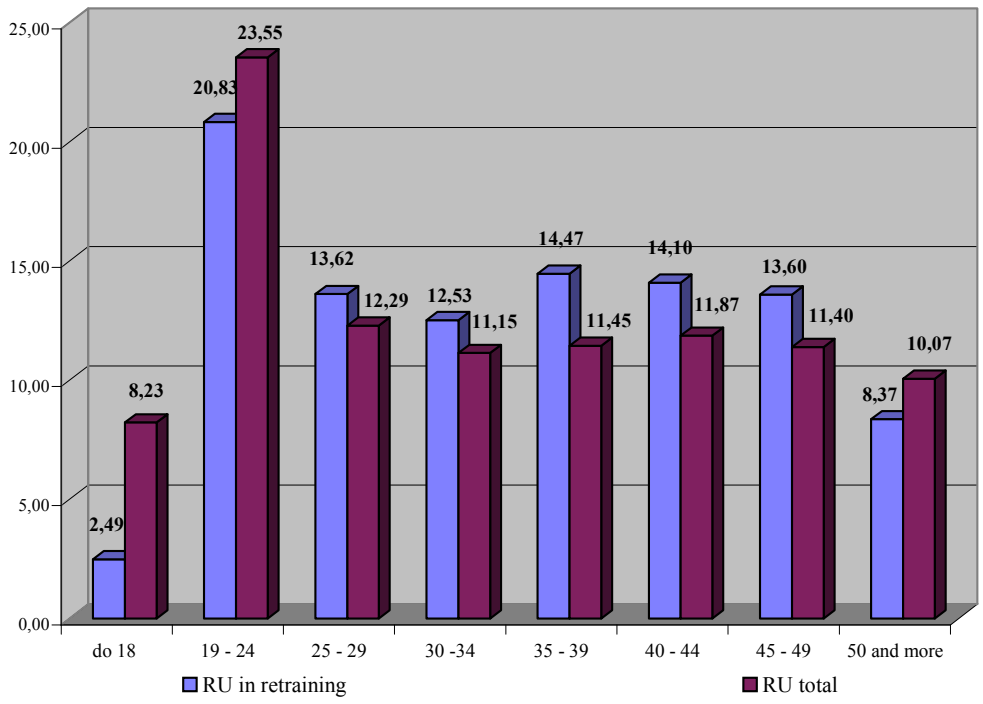
Interested in Retraining and Registered Unemployed in Retraining in 1999



Source: National Labour Office of SR

Graph 27

Registered Unemployed in Retraining by Age in 1999 (in %)



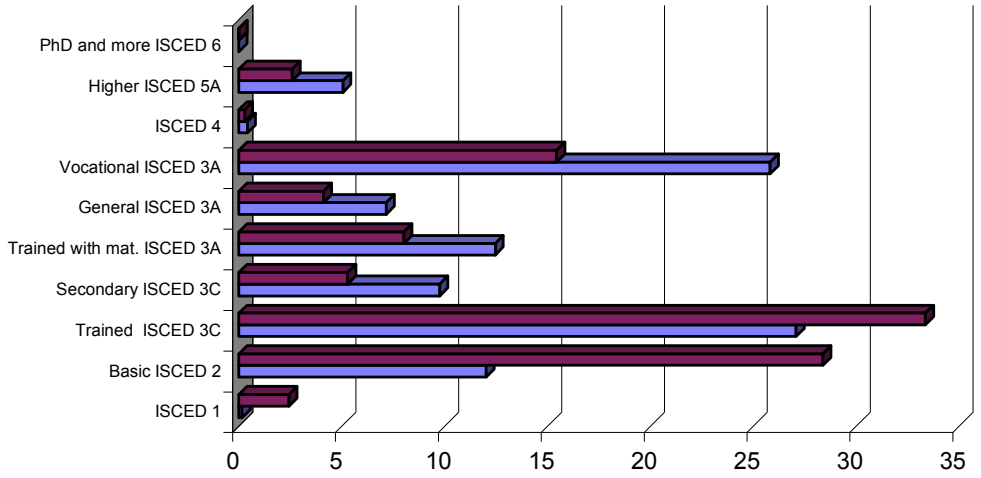
Source: National Labour Office of SR

The educational levels of the re-trained registered unemployed is higher than that of all registered unemployed. The lowest share taking retraining was that of registered unemployed with incomplete basic education. That may be evidence that the opportunities resulting from the provision of Article 80 paragraph 2 letter c) of the Employment Act (allowing take preparatory courses to additionally complete basic school by registered unemployed) is made little use of in practice. A low share of the registered unemployed in retraining with completed basic education compared to the share of that category in the total number of registered unemployed may be considered insufficient.

A serious issue is that most of the registered unemployed included in retraining had apprentice education and training or full secondary vocational education including a maturita exam. That is evidence of the changing labour market requirements along with the fact that the same group has problems finding jobs immediately after leaving secondary schools, revealing an inconsistency between supply and demand-based profiles.

Graph 28

Registered Unemployed in Retraining by Educational Level in 1999



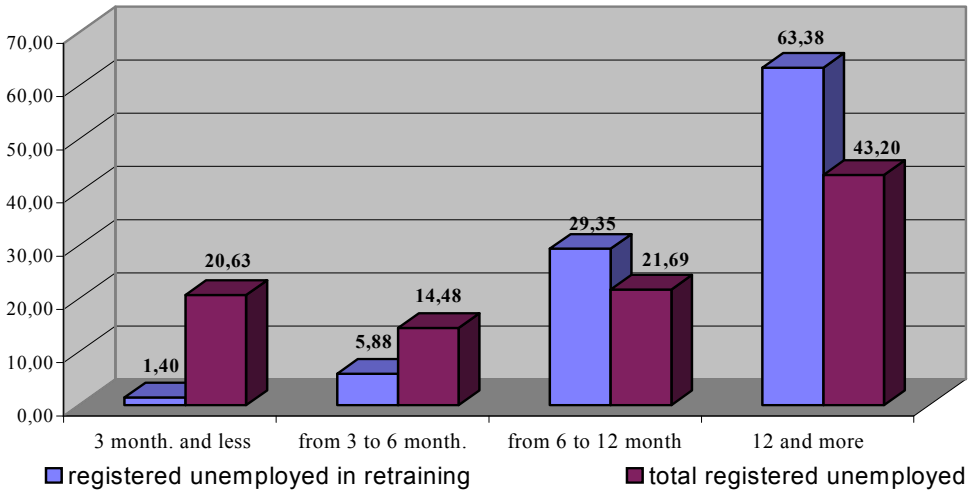
	ISCED 1	Basic ISCED 2	Trained ISCED 3C	Secondary ISCED 3C	Trained with mat. ISCED 3A	General ISCED 3A	Vocational ISCED 3A	ISCED 4	Higher ISCED 5A	PhD and more ISCED 6
Registered unemployed	2,44	28,39	33,36	5,29	8,03	4,12	15,45	0,29	2,60	0,01
In retraining	0,17	12,03	27,09	9,77	12,47	7,17	25,83	0,42	5,06	0

Source: National Labour Office of SR

With a view to the duration of registered unemployment before taking retraining, the share of long-term unemployed is the highest. That was reflected by the focus of most retraining courses on this group of registered unemployed. This situation corresponds with the intention to arrive at a decreased long-term unemployment rate and subsequent removal of problems of long-term unemployment.

Graph 29

Registered Unemployed in Retraining by Duration of Unemployment in 1999

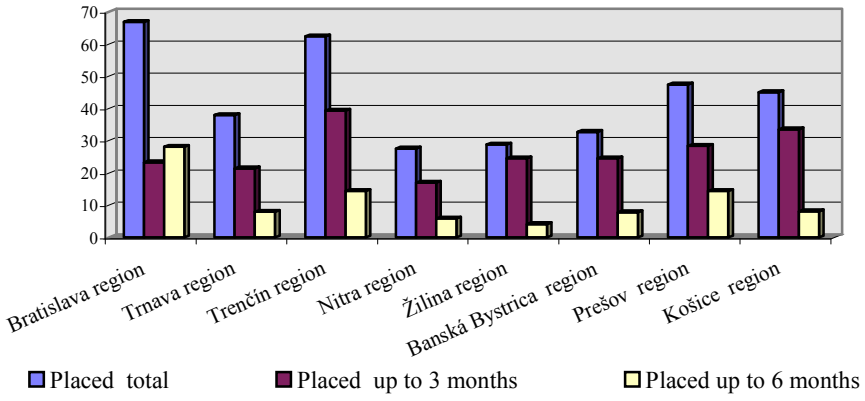


Source: National Labour Office of SR

Retraining success has been derived from the total number of registered unemployed that completed their retraining courses in 1999 and were employed afterwards. During the period studied, altogether 2 924 persons were employed, which is 46 % of the total number of registered unemployed who completed their retraining.
Having a look at that indicator, one may discover significant regional differences. The highest success rate in employing retrained registered unemployed was recorded in the Bratislava and Trenčín regions, with the success percentage exceeding 60, which resulted mainly from the absorption capacity of the labour market in those regions as well as from the number and structure of vacancies. The success rate of placement of those who completed retraining courses of under 30 % was attached to the Žilina and Nitra regions.

Graph 30

Registered Unemployed Placed in Jobs after Completing Retraining in 1999



Source: National Labour Office of SR

3.5.2.3. Participation in individually motivated vocational training

Information concerning the structure of individually motivated vocational training rests on statistical source documents of the Institute of Information and Prognosis of Education relating to continuing education.

Out of 1 995 evaluated training activities in 1999, 57.39 % were rendered in the daily format, 25.21 % in a different format, 8.87 % in the out-of-school format; 5.76 % of cases in an unknown format (no data were provided), and 2.76 % in the correspondence format.

Out of the same number of training activities evaluated (1995) with a view to the type of training, 48.72 % represented continuing vocational training (professional, additional, extending), 17.64 % accredited retraining, 13.03 % another type of training, 7.57 % social and cultural studies, 5.91 % civic studies, and 2.36 % non-accredited retraining.

The age structure of participants in continuing training during 1997-1999 was the following: up to 19 years of age between 13.84 % and 14.61 %. The age of 20-29 was characterised by values 23.90 % in 1997, 24.19 % in 1998 and 32.86 % in 1999 (the highest increase in all age groups). In the group from 30 to 39, the situation is relatively good: 26.41 % in 1997, 26.83 % in 1998 and 24.69 % in 1999. The age group from 40 to 49 achieved the following values: 23.16 % in 1997, 24.07 % in 1998 and 18.43 % in 1999 (the highest decrease). The age group between 50 and 59 showed a falling trend: 12.13 % in 1997, 9.51 % in 1998 and 8.05 % in 1999. There is a slight increase in the age group 60 and over – 0.56 % in 1997, 0.79 % in 1998 and 1.38 % in 1999. It is necessary to point out that the statistics related to the entire scope of continuing training, not only vocational. The 60 and over age group may rather take interest-motivated than vocational training.

Individuals often face a barrier to recognition of continuing vocational training: they underestimate their own need for improving their training, and are not convinced about the effectiveness of investment in their own training. There are no stimuli sufficiently motivating them to retrain, e.g. CVT is not a preferred or even emphasised condition of a higher appraisal. Due to wage equalisation without merit incentives, a standard motivation - higher wages - stimulating employees to acquire higher qualifications has been missing. The middle-aged and older generations are not used to caring for increasing their price at the labour market. A preventive intervention should be supportive. Many educational institutions provide psychological training aimed at the development of social competencies. However, it is often too late, since due to recent practices these institutions are almost exclusively focused on the unemployed and not on working people who are endangered by unemployment but are not stigmatised yet. The law does not stimulate unemployed people to get involved in retraining, for example by the unemployment benefit rates.

3.5.3 Responsible bodies

Decision-making powers and obligations vis-à-vis continuing (vocational) training are scattered among central state administration authorities as follows:

Funding of continuing vocational training: From its budget, the Ministry of Education co-funds the operation of state schools (secondary and universities), contributing in particular to their operation and to the wages of their staff who also deliver continuing training; and provides grants for various KEGA (Cultural and Educational Grant Agency) projects. Under

its active policy, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family funds accredited retraining activities. It is however necessary to point out that the contribution has been permanently declining in recent years.
Quality of continuing training is assured by accreditation of training activities. Accreditation is within the powers of the Ministry of Education. Accreditation of training institutions applies to universities (Accreditation Committee of the Government of SR), secondary schools (by including them in the chain of basic and secondary schools), which is derived from the assessment of branches of studies, staff and institutional provision. Accreditation of non-school educational institutions in continuing training has not been performed yet. In this training subsystem, there is an obligation to accredit only retraining courses; other programmes and courses may, but do not have to be, accredited.
The management of continuing training is based on the relationship between the central authorities (ministries) and the local level. On lower levels, associations of employers, educators and local governments or state administration have not been established to co-ordinate the development and performance, monitor the quality, decide as necessary on the need to change the content of education/training or distribution of funds within their powers. Nevertheless, labour offices have been established on the regional and district levels with tripartite Governing Committees taking care of one segment of continuing training, i.e. retraining.

3.5.4. Financing

Under Article 10 of Act No. 386/1997 of the Law Code on Further Education as amended, continuing education may be financed by:
- Payments of participants in continuing education/training
- Employer funds paid in the format of income taxes
- A special subsidy from the state budget
- The Budget of the National Labour Office for retraining of the unemployed or employees
- Funds of municipal budgets
- Funds of foundations and other legal and natural persons as well as funds of employers
- Other

According to research carried out by RILSAF, most training institutions financed their activities from payments by training participants (77 %). Another source of financing relatively often used by those institutions (in particular vis-à-vis retraining) was the budget of the National Labour Office (38 % institutions).

Table 35
Financial coverage of operations in training and advisory & consulting institutions (1998)

Sources of financing	Institutions (%)
Training participants	77.0
Employers (under Act No. 286/1992 of the Law Code on Income Taxes)	24.3
Other sources of employers and other legal and natural persons	23.0
Special subsidy from the state budget	12.2
National Labour Office	37.8
Municipalities	2.7
Foundations	8.1
Other sources	13.5
No answer	1.4

Source: Research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
Note: As respondents could mention more than one possibility, the total percent exceeds 100 %.

Over half of the training institutions in the research study admitted financial problems of diverse types (lack of funding in existing or potential clients – 54 %, lack of funds to pay good trainers – 35 %, lack of funding for adequate hardware – 23 %, etc., the need for financial assistance or support to continuing training). At the same time, particular relieves for training institutions are proposed as well as potential ways of fund-raising for training (e.g., by transferring a certain share from wages/salaries in enterprises).
A complete picture of the structure of resources for financing of continuing training is not available as the chain of those institutions has not been completely identified by the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education of the Ministry of Education of SR (IIPE) and its report form on continuing education Dalv (Ministry of Education of SR) 1-01 approved in 1996 and prepared every year. More reliable data will be available when the discipline in reporting improves, as the law does not allow imposing sanctions on institutions reluctant to co-operate. Data identified by the IIPE covering years 1997 – 1999 are summarised in Table 36.

Table 36
Sources for financing of continuing education

Sources of Financing	Year 1997 (%)	Year 1998 (%)	Year 1999 (%)
Subsidies from the state budget	17.50	18.48	19.18
Sources outside the budget	1.64	5.62	3.77
Ordering legal entities	29.77	20.53	15.97
Training participants	25.12	35.68	37.10
Labour offices	8.90	5.70	0.54
Donations of local natural and legal persons	0.25	1.21	0.10
Donations of foreign natural and legal persons	0.42	0.20	0.04
Revenues from other operations of the training entity	7.55	8.05	7.53
Other sources	8.85	4.52	15.76
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
Total in SKK thousand	546,733	681,105	803,630

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education

This sample of well-disciplined institutions also demonstrates a typical aggravation of conditions in the labour market. To improve or maintain his potential employability, a citizen must draw from his own resources. In 1999, the highest share in financing of continuing training was from the training participants (37.10 %), followed by subsidies from the state budget (19.18 %) and by the ordering legal entities (15.97 %).
In 1999, labour costs of employees stood for 61.2 % in the structure of costs of training institutions, 37.2 % went to trainers for their teaching work and 1.6 % was for fares and subsistence.

Retraining is covered by the means from the basic fund of the National Labour Office destined for active labour market policy.
Compliant with retraining plans based on letters of offer and personal negotiations with training institutions, the district labour offices prepare their financial plans. The costs of retraining of the registered unemployed are completely covered by the district labour offices. Such costs also include

a) Expenditures on subsistence within the meaning of Article 8 paragraph 1 of the Act No. 119/1992 of the Law Code on Travelling Allowance, as amended
b) Accommodation costs supported by a voucher or invoice following an order

c) Travelling expenses from the place of permanent domicile to the place of the retraining course, including local mass transport.

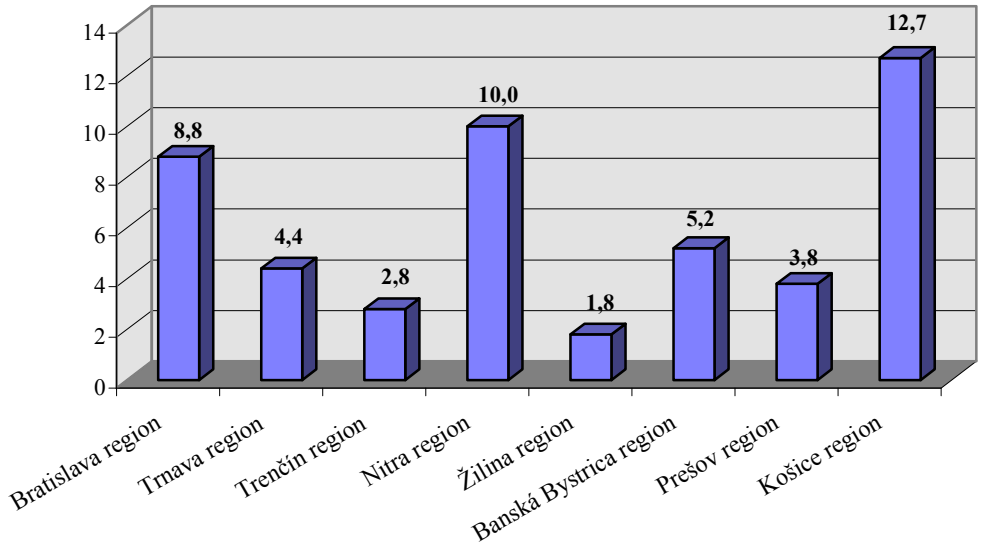
In extraordinary and justifiable cases, the director of a district labour office may even allow the use and payment for one's own motor vehicle amounting to the fare of public means of transport.

Should a registered unemployed – of grave health, family or private reasons – interrupt or fail to complete retraining he is not obliged to pay back the costs of retraining to the district labour office. The gravity of reasons is examined by the district labour office. Should he interrupt or fail to complete retraining for the said reasons, the retraining may be completed with the next course of the type.

The total agreed amount on retraining started in 1999 was SKK 49 491 thousand, of which SKK 9 586 thousand was destined for fares, accommodation and subsistence of the course participants. At the same time, retraining of 3 364 persons was additionally financed from agreements entered into in 1998, which had an impact on drawing funds for all expenses related to retraining (which was SKK 73 658 thousand). The most means for retraining were expended in the counties of Košice, Nitra and Bratislava as seen in Graph 31.

Graph 31

Total Costs of Retraining of Registered Unemployed Started in 1999 (in million SKK)



Source: National Labour Office of SR

The total costs of retraining begun by the registered unemployed in 1999 by individual counties of the Slovak Republic correlate approximately with the number of registered unemployed in the retraining courses in the individual counties. The average costs of retraining per registered unemployed were SKK 8 782, of which approximately SKK 1 700 were earmarked for fares, accommodation and subsistence of the course participants.

There was, however, a great variance in the average price of courses per participant (including the costs of subsistence, accommodation and fares), the minimum average course price of

SKK 5 966 reported in the Žilina region and the maximum of SKK 12 240 in the Bratislava region.

3.5.5. Social dialogue and involvement of social partners

As has already been mentioned, the Council for Economic and Social Agreement represents a venue for social dialogue at the highest level. Social dialogue on this level results in the General Agreement concluded between the Government, the Trade Union Confederation and the Federation of Employers Associations. On the branch level, social dialogue is carried out through collective bargaining. Partners for collective bargaining are respective employers' union and branch trade unions. Collective bargaining on this level results in collective agreement at the master agreement level (CAMAL).

The overall picture on incorporation of VET issues in collective bargaining can be outlined based on the content analysis of CAMALs valid for the period of 1999-2003.
Out of the total number of 56 valid collective agreements at the master agreement level, vocational education issues were covered in 23 of them, which represents just 41 %. With regard to content, the individual provisions of these CAMALs were oriented towards the following areas:

1. Enhancement of qualification and retraining - in a majority of collective agreements regarding enabling education and training with the aim to increase qualification or retraining of employees. Furthermore, agreements referred to intensification of qualification - in terms of the obligation to create conditions on the side of employer and the obligation to enhance continuously qualification needed to carry out official positions or performance in agreed job places on the side of employees.
2. Structural changes and retraining - these issues are included in CAMALs of Trade Unions roofing labourers and employers in the agricultural sector. This refers to the preferential offer of retraining to their own employees.
3. Enhancement of qualification of graduates - in terms of providing for appropriate professional practice with the aim to obtain practical experience and skills needed for reliable work performance and professional growth (included in 1 CAMAL).

Overall, the aforementioned issues are incorporated in CAMALs mostly in proclamations based on valid labour regulations in this field.

On the basic level social dialogue is carried out in enterprises and organisations and results in collective agreements regulating specific employment conditions, wage development, adjustment of working hours, working conditions, social care etc. Vocational education and training issues are included on different levels of elaboration. In some of them these issues are paid appropriate attention.

A special form of social dialogue is institutionalised by various tripartite advisory, expert or consulting bodies, commissions etc. They are often established within state or public legal organisations.

In the field of vocational education and training, predominantly the National Labour Office of SR has to be mentioned within this context. The NLO was established as a public legal institution with the aim of assuring the existence of a labour market policy. The NLO carries out its activities through self-governing and executing bodies. Self-governing bodies, represented by the Board of Directors and Supervisory Board on the NLO level and Governing Committees on the regional and district labour office levels, consists of equal

numbers of representatives of employees, employers and the state. With regard to continuing vocational education, particularly retraining, their competencies in the following are important:

- elaboration of labour market policy priorities and labour market policy measures drafts,
- approval of procedures of execution of labour market policy and approval of principles regulating utilisation of funds on active labour market policy.

3.5.6 Curricula development

The content of continuing training is not approved on the national level. Secondary schools and universities rely on their accredited branches of study.
Recruitment and selection of teachers/trainers depends on the standing of a particular educational institution. For teachers in basic and secondary schools, qualification requirements are laid down by a legal regulation (Decree of the Ministry of Education of SR No. 41/1996 on Professional and Educational Competence of Educational Staff, the amendment of which is being prepared). University teachers must comply with the necessary professional qualifications when being hired. In non-school institutions, mostly teachers of secondary schools and universities work in trainer positions. As suggested by the outcomes of the already mentioned statistical survey by the Institute of Information and Prognoses, trainers with a university degree accounted for over two thirds of all training during 1997–1999 (1997 – 67.82 %, 1998 – 77.01 % and 1999 – 72.13 %). Approximately one fifth of trainers were secondary school leavers (1997 – 21.29 %, 1998 – 15.49 and 1999 – 19.95 %) and less than a tenth of trainers had a certificate of apprenticeship in their professions (1997 – 10.88 %, 1998 – 7.50 % and 1999 – 7.92 %).

Both the content and trainers along with the training methods have been influenced by the position of educational institutions in the education system. Classical face-to-face education prevails in school-based institutions (mainly secondary schools). Universities have started and support new formats of studies introduced by new training methods based primarily on exploitation of information technologies or based on multi-media (distance learning, on-line courses, etc.).

In 1998 and 1999 (in accordance with a survey of the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education), continuing training programmes focused mostly on social sciences (1998 – 42.59 %, 1999 – 48.37 %) and technology science and disciplines (1998 – 37.16 %, 1999 – 29.87 %). These were followed by training programmes focusing on agriculture, forestry and veterinary sciences (1998 – 5.42 %, 1999 – 5.66 %) and natural sciences (1998 – 3.46 %, 1999 – 3.36 %).

In continuing vocational training, training contents prepared for initial training were not exploited. The new content was created rather as a follow up to initial training based on practical requirements.
Retraining courses are offered in the educational market with a content that may be applied in the respective region for the retraining of the unemployed.

Schools (mainly universities) prepare projects with new courses, training programmes specially focusing on specific professional issues, finishing or expanding the already acquired secondary or university vocational education.

In corporate training, the content of courses is tailored to the employer. Enterprises employing large staff have their own training institutes providing comprehensive training programmes for their own employees.

Private training institutions prepare their own projects of training activities, with their contents focusing on the requirements of the regional labour market (retraining courses) oriented in general toward language training, exploitation of information technologies in practice as well as courses focusing on issues of management, marketing and working with people.

Many courses intended for accreditation have their content arranged into modules with specific focus allowing tailor-made training programmes in specific areas to be offered.

There is no direct link between training content and the labour market. Occupational standards prepared on a central level leading toward educational standards are missing. As already thoroughly discussed within the 1999 SNO reports, preparatory works on educational standards for secondary vocational schools are under way. Nevertheless this process currently seem to have slowed down. A new boost could be expected after the completion of the Secondary VET National Standard drafted by SIOV and submitted for approval to the Ministry of Education.

Co-operation of employers and professional associations with school and extra-school educational institutions in regions has started developing over the preparation of training contents as required by the labour market.

The development concept of the education system ("Millennium") highlights the need for secondary vocational education to be connected to students' practical lives. The concept stresses the need for these school leavers to posses general knowledge, to be able to adapt concepts to practice, and to have the capacity for continuing their vocational training.

3.5.7 Assessment and certification of skills (including access to formal qualifications and diplomas)

The assessment and certification of skills are based on formal qualifications – maturita certificates or university diplomas. The most valued certificates on completion of CVT are certificates on completion of retraining and certificates on completion of special training which is required in some professions by regulations in effect. Official documents of education provide a basis for classifying an employee in a wage class. They demonstrate his professional vocational education for performing his job in an appropriate working position. Employment in state-owned enterprises, public administration, teachers, physicians, etc. is governed by official qualification regulations. Private entrepreneurs do not apply those criteria unless the performance of specialised activities is conditional to having a certificate of vocational qualification.

3.5.8 Legislation

There are four basic legal regulations relating to the field of continuing vocational education: the School Act, the Act on Higher Education, the Act on Further Education, and the Act on Employment.

Act No. 29/1984 on the System of Primary and Secondary Schools (the School Act), as amended regulates the establishment and operation of basic and secondary schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic. It is a fundamental legal standard of the education system. Following up the adopted concept of development in upbringing and education, a new act would be prepared along with the act on the school system funding.

Act No. 172/1990 of the Law Code on Higher Education, as amended regulates the establishment and operation of universities in the Slovak Republic. In fall 1999, the Government adopted a new development concept for Slovak universities. In January 2001, the new draft act on higher education is expected for submission.

The Act No. 386/1997 of the Law Code on Further Education and the Modification of the Act No. 387/1996 of the Law Code on Employment, define continuing education, its types, institutions rendering the same, their accreditation as well as funding resources. In 2001, its amendment would be submitted for treatment in the legislative process.

The Act No. 387/1996 of the Law Code on Employment regulates – in addition to the basic objectives – retraining.

In addition to the acts listed, specific parts of other legal regulations or complete legal regulations regulate continuing vocational (specialised) education.

In the field of public administration:
- Order of the Government of SR No. 157/1997 on Special Qualification Requirements for Performing Certain Activities in County Authorities and District Authorities

In the field of health care:
- Decree of the Ministry of Health of SR No. 79/1981 of the Law Code on Health Care Staff and Other Specialised Staff in Health Care.

In the field of education:
- Decree of the Ministry of Education of SR No. 41/1996 of the Law Code on Professional and Educational Competence of Educational Staff
- Decree of the Ministry of Education of SR No. 42/1996 of the Law Code on In-service Training of Educational Staff.

In the field of the environment:
- Order of the Government of SR No. 72/1996 of the Law Code, modifying and amending the Order of the Government of SR No. 163/1992 of the Law Code by which the Qualifications for the Execution of Offices in State Administration Environment Authorities Requiring Professional Qualification are Laid Down.

In the field of fire protection:
- Act No. 126/1985 of the Law Code on Fire Protection (Article 51)
- Decree of the Ministry of Interior of SR No. 82/1996 of the Law Code by which Certain Provisions of the Act of the Slovak National Council on Fire Protection in the Field of Prevention Are Executed
- Decree of the Ministry of Interior of SR No. 83/1996 of the Law Code by which Certain Provisions of the Act of the Slovak National Council on Fire Protection Relating to Fire Protection Crews Are Executed

- Decree of the Ministry of Interior of SR No. 66/1995 of the Law Code on Secondary Schools of Fire Protection, as amended by the Decree of the Ministry of Interior of SR No. 108/1999 of the Law Code.

In the field of civil protection:
- Act No. 42/1994 of the Law Code on Civil Protection of the Population, as amended.

In the field of the power sector:
- Decree of the Ministry of Economy of SR No. 366/1998 of the Law Code, by which the Details of Qualification Requirements, Teaching and the Scope of Testing the Professional Qualification, Establishing and Activities of Examination Commissions and Professional Qualification Certificates for Doing Business in Power Sectors Are Regulated.

In the field of veterinary care:
- Act No. 337/1998 of the Law Code on Veterinary Care and on the Modification and Amendment of Certain Other Acts.

In the field of forest management:
- Act No. 100/1977 of the Law Code on Management in Forests and State Administration in Forest Management, as amended.

3.5.9 Weaknesses, strengths and future government priorities in CVT

An officially accepted and CVT focused SWOT analysis has not been worked out. Nevertheless, the National Development Plan has addressed CVT with a lot of SWOT based measures. Summarising NDP based analysis and key players' points of view, the strengths and weaknesses of CVT are in particular the following:

Strengths
- Quantity of educational institutions providing continuing training
- Quality of trainers (mainly university teachers) and continuing training managers
- Increasing interest of the population in continuing training (both formal and informal)
- Growing interest of employers in training of their own staff
- Hidden potentials of the entire education sector, awaiting positive changes.

Weaknesses
- Worries of a failure to implement new concepts relating training modernisation
- Little financial support from the state for continuing training; the direct support is falling, the indirect (tax relief) is minimal
- Occupational and educational standards even in formal education missing
- Comprehensive approach to the assessment of educational quality missing
- Insufficient legislation (an amendment of the Act on Further Education is inevitable)
- Acknowledging and stressing of continuing training as a tool of human resource development
- Collaboration with social partners in continuing training development.

3.6 Links between IVET and CVT

As described in more detail within sub-chapter 3.5.1, there is a fairly well developed network of institutions providing CVT in Slovakia. A ratio of 1:1000, one institution per 1000

economically active citizens, indicates the density of this network. Despite the fact that all these institutions tend to the provision of programmes accredited by MoE, links between IVET and CVT are still underdeveloped. Quite typically, programmes and certificates of CVT are between formal and non-formal education/learning. Certificates obtained rarely help re-entering the formal system or supplement the qualifications provided by the formal system.
Tighter links would be promoted by bridging institutional gaps between management of respective sectors of VET (MoE Regional Schools Section, MoE Higher Education Section, MoLSAF/NLO), and mainly, by changing the current segmented system of financing VET. In fact, it is very difficult to make use of means originally addressed to IVET, CVT and training for the unemployed in synergy; it is hard to bridge gaps between these three sector financing flows.

The quality of CVT programmes varies. Accreditation by the MoE guarantees all formal attributes of appropriately developed courses. However, the accreditation process is not focusing on evaluation of educational output. Non-accredited courses might possess high quality despite improvisation and a lack of formal documents. There is no regulating body in this market except formal regulation by the Accreditation Committee of MoE (it is a different body than Accreditation Committee accrediting higher education programmes which is an advisory body of the government).

Access to CVT is mostly influenced by the personal means available.
Inhabitants, and especially those who should be interested in further learning, have no sufficient means of paying for training. The labour market policy is almost reduced to provision of unemployment benefits due to the lack of funds allocated for an active policy.
Training within enterprises is influenced by the status of the enterprise.

- multinational organisations (even with Slovak management) stick to their approved training culture with slight adjustments to the local culture,
- large national organisations continue their tradition of running specialised training centres providing ad hoc training in co-operation with lecturers selected by the training centre head in co-operation with personnel management, usually without an HRD plan and SWOT analysis-based concept of further development,
- SME preferably accept staff not needing further training and just provide the necessary on-the-job training, very often at the expense of trainees' time and money.

3.7 Vocational guidance and counselling (VGC)

A three-pillar VGC system has been established in the Slovak Republic.

The first subsystem is based on the traditional guidance system of the educational sector represented by a school counsellor at schools and counselling facilities located at administrative centres of the Slovak Republic. It is stipulated by Act No. 279/1993 of the Law Code on school facilities and the Decree of MoE No. 43/1996 of the Law Code on Guidance and Counselling Facilities. A school counsellor is a teacher, very often without any special initial training. These counsellors are selected by directors of schools among experienced teachers who work in exchange for reduced teaching loads for their counselling services. They provide the service ad hoc whenever asked for service, and based on an annual plan of the school counsellor. In some schools there are school psychologists who might be helpful in VGC and might effectively co-operate with the school counsellor. Nevertheless, school psychologists, introduced to the education system after the political change, are still very rare

in schools due to the lack of educated school psychologists and lack of funding at schools for opening this position. More often they are engaged part-time.
There are 8 regional and 77 district Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling Centres (PPCC) responsible for provision of consultation to students, parents and educators, providing psychological diagnostics and submitting proposal for improvement of the psychic and social development of children, and participating in the rectification of identified problems as a priority field of service. Additionally, they should provide VGC and offer information about school profiles and the situation on the labour market. They should assist school counsellors and school psychologists. Twenty five Special PPCC provide similar services for children with special needs, their parents, and educators, school special education counsellors, and psychologists dealing with children with special needs.
The service of individuals and counselling centres is backed by three institutions managed by MoE. The Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathological Psychology has been traditionally responsible for methodological and professional assistance as well as for co-ordination of guidance and counselling in the field of responsibility of MoE. An increasing demand for career guidance and counselling conditioned by the changed situation at the labour market, however, leads to an increase in the volume of practical service and new kinds of requirements which cannot be provided by a research institute. Moreover, there is a lack of means for both, simple supervision of services of PPCC and in-depth research in this field. The National Institute for Education whose main task is related to curricula development has been given since 1999 the responsibility for assistance of Special PPCC. The State Institute of Vocational Education and Training with similar responsibility concerning curricula at VET schools has a unit which should support VGC at schools. This duty has been fulfilled in co-operation with Methodological Centres (regional in-service teacher training centres). In 1999 a special refresher course for school counsellors consisting of 200 hours of direct training and based on the Decree of MoE on in-service training was developed. Nevertheless, an umbrella institution with full responsibility for diverse counselling and guidance services is periodically proposed by respective expert bodies from this field. Unfortunately, under the current financial terms the creation of a traditional brick and mortar institution is hardly to be expected unless professional associations created in 1990s, e.g. the Association of School Psychologists or Association of School Counsellors, or the Chamber of Psychologists take the leadership in development of a non-profit institution with such a field of operation.

The second subsystem is based on institutions managed by MoLSAF represented by the network of Psychological Counselling Services Centre with its local unit centres. Its service is predominantly in family counselling and vocational and career guidance is present as a sub-component of family counselling. The scope of VGC is sensitive to the competence of the staff.

The third subsystem with close links to the second one is composed of the network of the regional and district labour offices of the public legal National Labour Office. They provide counselling services under the responsibility of the respective department of counselling of the labour office.
In accordance with the Article 36 of Act No. 387/1996 of the Law Code on Employment, individual or group counselling is provided through
a) Information-counselling services, that concentrate on providing for information and recommendations about employee possibilities; on assumptions and requirements of job performance; on training and retraining possibilities, employment support and unemployment benefits.

b) Professional counselling services include providing for professional advise and information focusing on solving problems related to finding a job, harmonising personal abilities with the requirements of a certain job performance and influencing the decision making and behaviour of citizens on the labour market.
Counselling is provided by the labour offices free of charge. Nevertheless, individual counselling suffers from low absorption of the labour market, making directed counselling rarely effective as well as from the lack of means. Strong conflicts among experts is related to the decision not to consider VGC part of the active LM policy. Thus, even modest sources allocated for an active policy cannot be used for VGC. Consequently, a lot of newly registered unemployed are promptly transferred to the passive receipt of unemployment and social benefits.
In 1998, supported by the PHARE programme, Information and Counselling Centres (ICC) were established affiliated to all regional offices. ICC are responsible for establishment of a comprehensive system of information on newly created job positions, on various occupation requirements, on training opportunities, and on provision of counselling and guidance predominantly to the registered unemployed.
There are over 50 „Labour Clubs“ operating in association with labour offices. They predominantly concentrate on the psychological aspect of unemployment rather than on simple provision of labour market information. Within group communication they motivate the unemployed to search for jobs, and try to prevent them from becoming socially isolated and socially excluded.

The guidance within both pillars of the labour sector should be backed by the RILSAF. This research institute, similar to other institutions directly managed by ministries, currently has troubles with its identity. Declining means for research and increased demand for ad hoc service for MoLSAF as well as demand for labour market intelligence indicates future reconstruction of responsibilities and competencies. The Centre for Professional Information established with the support of the PHARE programme at RILSAF is nation-wide responsible for the development of the system of inter-linked information for schools, counselling institutions, and labour offices based on information on job descriptions, qualification requirements, personal preconditions, and risks associated with respective occupations.

In parallel to these three pillars there are other counselling bodies of limited impact. Nevertheless, worth mention is a National Youth Information Centre established in 1997 with executive units territorially spread. Its activities are aimed at advisory meetings for youngsters with professionals of diverse professions informally supporting rectification of their problems. The National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance affiliated to the National Agency of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and under the umbrella of the Slovak Academic Association has been established to expand information about VGC within the country and internationally. Its mission falls in enhancing the participation of new players, e.g. social partners in vocational guidance and supporting transnational projects aimed at improving the quality of VGC.

Private institutions booming immediately after the political change and very often affiliated to international institutions provide headhunting on special request for specific positions, or provide for services for solvent professionals looking for career change. Nevertheless, private job mediating is legislatively backed by Article 34 of Act No. 387/1996 of the Law Code on Employment. The National Labour Office is authorised to licence this activity for a period of 5 years while the payment requested for job mediation from employer or employee is limited by the set tariff of maximum prices.

The whole VGC area must be subjected to in-depth changes:

- It is necessary to adjust the pre-graduate education of educators and in-service training of educators and the within education sector acting counsellors to the new labour market conditions. Pre-graduate education is still not sufficiently influenced by new conditions at the labour market and still sticks rather to theoretical frameworks than to development of practical skills. In-service training suffers from the lack of means and direct institutional coverage.
- Opening of educational programmes aimed at preparation of career advisors – specialists in this field might provide for improvement in the efficiency of this service currently rarely provided by non-specialists.
- Provision of quality information and the most open policy possible enabling wide access to information on an individual basis bottoming up with Internet services compatible with EU standards should be considered more important than institutional coverage of information services.
- Lack of natural feedback among all employment services endangers the whole system more than a complicated unclear spread of competencies between different players. A regulating body responsible for quality assurance is of crucial importance.

4. Management training

According to the outcomes of a research probe by Srnánková Ľ., Kostolná Z., and Czíria Ľ. (1998) the services of training institutions are relatively widely used by a wide corporate sector. In the referenced research, services of out-of-source training institutions providing corporate training were used by three-quarters of enterprises. Representatives in the management of those companies voiced their positive standing toward the supply of training programmes, in particular with a view to the possibilities of choice from suitable training types as well as to the quality of those services. There were, however, reservations about the price for those services.

A major part of the programmes of studies rendered by training institutions focuses mainly on mid-level management. 60 % of the institutions researched offered training programmes for that group, 57 % of the institutions for their specialists. Programmes for top management and self-employed persons are offered by fewer institutions (41 % and 42 % of institutions, respectively).
In materialising their training policies, enterprises focus mainly on specialised workers and mid-level management. According to the research by RILSAF, almost 60 % of enterprises focused on training provided to specialists and approximately 40 % enterprises on mid-level managers. These employee categories are also preferred in future training plans. Less frequent is training and courses intended for the top management (29 % enterprises). That may be considered a relatively critical fact as – with a view to numerous shortcomings in the human resource management – the need for training for that employee group is highly relevant.

It is, however, necessary to point out that there are sufficient offers by private training institutions or those included in the structures of universities for managers who find time for their continuing education/training. An example of the first one, literally specialising on training of managers and corporate consultancy in the area of human resources is Ibis Partner, Ltd., which issues the magazine Manažér with nation-wide coverage. Another example is the Centre of Continuing Education (University of Economics), a repertory of specialised seminars and training courses offered every year and co-organiser of specialised seminars.

The former Czechoslovakia was the only Central European country where the private sector was completely destroyed under the communist regime. Unlike in the neighbouring communist countries, private rendering of petty craft services, retailing, inn keeping, and accommodation started completely from the scratch in 1999. No wonder that repeatedly stress is put on intensified business education at schools. Family traditions have been disturbed and there is in fact nothing to follow up. The first incentive toward business development, in particular for practical education in economics, for grasping the free market economy were the experienced-based learning programmes “Bata Junior Achievement” and the computer-aided simulation programme “A Week of Economics” attractive mainly for secondary specialised schools from 1991 onwards. A network of training firms operating in the secondary specialised and secondary vocational schools is of fundamental significance for the development of entrepreneurship. At the present time, there are 154 training firms in Slovakia, for which the Slovak Centre for Training Firms (SCTF) was established within the State Institute of Vocational Education and Training (SIOV), providing full information support, simulation of contact with the Registry of Businesses, the trade licensing office, the tax authorities, bank and social and health insurance agencies. In addition to the infrastructure

support, SCTF annually organises fairs for training firms and provides for contacts of Slovak training firms with those in 9 countries. No doubt that such project-based and experience-based training is the best possible entrepreneurial training for all segments of the Slovak educational/training system. The intention of SCTF to expand the project even to basic and grammar schools needs to be closely appraised. Resolving the financial coverage for the project of a wide-scope establishment of training firms would also contribute to achieving reform intentions in the field of vocational training. The call for introduction of a subject focusing on entrepreneurial development and orientation toward the world of labour would be satisfied by compliance with the National Programme of Upbringing and Education for the next 20 years, whose pillar No. 3 calls for approximation of school to life and a decrease in information burden in favour of functionality in the content of the curriculum. It would be a disaster if – instead of project-based activity training – academic training based on a rigid number of classes laid down ahead of time, so typical for traditional subjects, would prevail.

5. VET teacher/trainers, managers and administrators

5.1 Teachers, schools/training institution managers and administrators competencies

In Slovakia, desperately lacking teachers after the World War I, a higher education qualification for teachers of primary and secondary schools was required soon after World War II. Despite current considerations, elementary school teachers might be required to complete only bachelor's level study, though teacher training for all types of schools is regular master's level study so far. Qualification requirements for teachers and other educational staff are stipulated by the Decree of the MoE No. 41/1996 of the Law Code on Professional and Educational Competence of Educational Staff. This decree has been valid in its newest amendment since 1 January 2000 for state, church affiliated and private schools. Graduating from university, one is granted a general professional competence for the teaching profession which must be completed by educational competence unless one has graduated from a teacher training programme. Even a graduate from such a programme who is interested in teaching at a school for children with special needs is required to pass an obligatory in-service training programme in special education unless they graduated from special education as well.
Young teachers, even considered fully qualified, are supported in their transition to direct service by an experienced teacher appointed by the director of the school. The quality of this assistance is supervised by the director of the school who decides upon prolongation and/or other changes in the organisation of this assistance.
Passing the so-called first qualification exam, which is due just after 5 years of practice, is a precondition for promotion to a better wage tariff due to the gained certification of higher professional competence.

Passing the second qualification exam is again certified, however, without obligatory promotions. Employers may add a bonus to the obligatory tariffed wage.
Institutions authorised for conducting qualification exams are regional methodological centres (in-service teacher training centres), the National Institute for Education, higher education institutions and, especially with regard to VET, also sectoral institutions of ministries running secondary vocational schools.

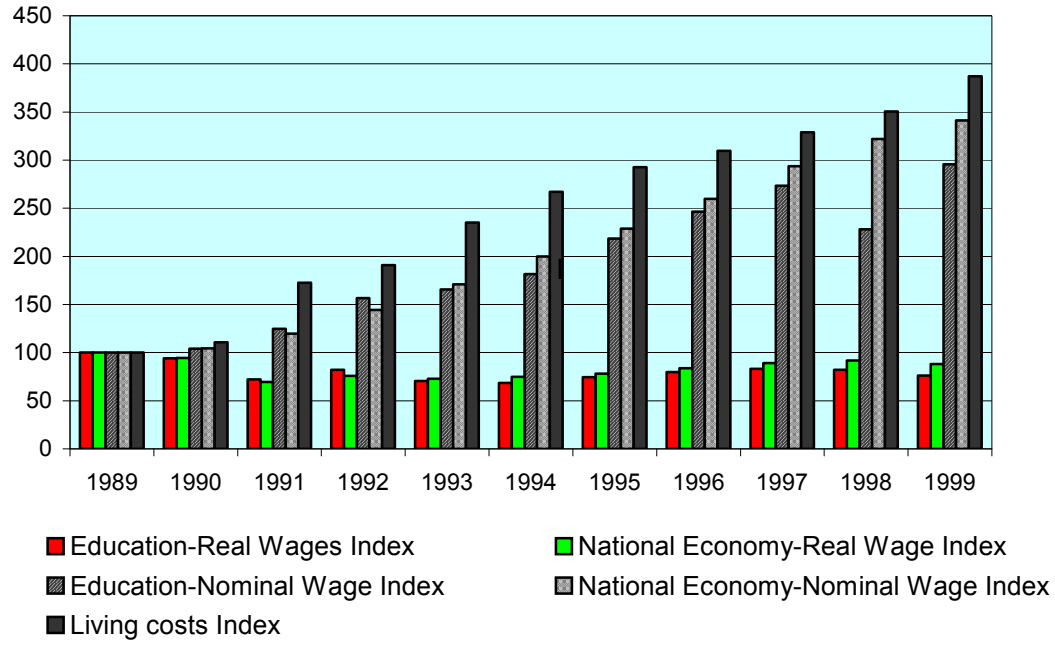
There are three typical paths to advanced careers of educators
- from teacher to director and higher administrator,
- from teacher to methodologist – organiser of in-service training or curricula specialist at the National Institute for Education or SIOV,
- from teacher to inspector and lower level administrator.

There is no educational programme for managers and public administrators for the education sector at the university. Directors of schools and almost all institutions within the education sector, as well as administrators, are former teachers.
Qualification requirements for educational leaders, e.g. director of school, is 5 years of practice at school, completing in-service training in leadership stipulated by a Decree of MoE No. 42/1996 of the Law Code on in-service training, and passing the first of two qualification exams, which all educators might be subjected to during their professional career, based on

their choice. Similarly, methodologists and inspectors are required to pass required training in accordance with Decree No. 41/1996 of the Law Code and serve a precisely set amount of the year at school.

Graph 32

Comparison of Real and Nominal Wages Indexes in Education and National Economy



Source: Statistical office of SR

The compensation in education is extremely low and the difference between the national average wage and the education sector wage has increased, representing just 78 % of the national average in 1999. The current real wage of educators is in the main stream over 20 % below the wage of the command economy period. As a consequence brain drain, ageing, and increasing burn-out is observed among teaching staff. The annual increase in wages is below inflation levels and the official tariff wage promotion is usually realised at the expense of bonuses due to insufficient increases or even decreases in total payroll means.

5.2 Pre-service training of teachers and trainers

Teachers are prepared at universities in three forms:
A special teacher training programme with a full coverage of methodology, pedagogy, and psychology within the programme.
Graduation from any educational programme which is naturally linked with some subject taught at schools, completed in parallel with or after graduation from supplementary teacher training, usually lasting for two years, offered by the same university.
A graduate from a higher education institution who has not originally planned to become a teacher could obtain a full qualification after completing supplementary teacher training

offered by any authorised institution. It is usually the university they graduated from or a regional methodological centre or other higher education institution, e.g. some faculty of education.
With regard to content of education, sticking to "abstract theory" is heavily criticised and more links to practice requested. Undoubtedly, at universities where teacher training is considered rather a complementary activity to academic education, subjects on psychology and pedagogy are less represented than at faculties of education which are specialised on teacher training. Nevertheless, even for teacher trainers, criticism about a lack of links to practice at schools is valid. With the gradual end to obligatory post-graduate studies of teacher-practitioners at universities, an important source of feedback and correction for university professors has been lost. With a decrease in funding and a brain drain from schools, the quality of practical training of student teachers suffers enormously. Experienced teachers, even if available, are not interested in co-operation with universities as mentors of student teachers.

In comparison with general subjects where methodologies and methods of instruction have been quite deeply elaborated, for VET school teachers of vocational subjects, less training is offered directly aimed at concrete instruction. They are usually subjected to "general didactics" training aiming at general teaching methods without close links to the content to be taught in future. Surely, vocational teachers are those who would stress an interest in very practical training within their initial training and would be interested in this kind of training within in-service training.

Teachers of general subjects are usually qualified for two subjects. In practice, however, they have a preference for one of these. They might teach even subjects for which they are not qualified and still receive a full salary provided they are qualified for subjects representing at least 50 % of their teaching load. This measure, valid for all qualified teachers, contributes to the steady increase of hours taught without requested qualification and is a consequence of the aforementioned decline in teacher status.
VET schools' teachers of vocational subjects are higher education institution graduates, typically engineers, who completed supplementary teacher training and, rarely, are graduates of teacher training programmes for vocational subjects, e.g. University of Economics teacher training programme for teaching economics.

Instructors are minimally graduates of secondary VET schools from relevant programmes and with three years of practice in their profession/craft. They are obligated to graduate from supplementary training organised by methodological centres or universities averaging from 200 lessons up to 300 lessons in 2-year courses. Some of them make use of study at newly opened 3-year bachelor studies. The formal qualification of instructors is adequate to legal requirements. However, the brain drain to the private sector and technological underdevelopment makes practical training at VET schools a weak point, as e.g. indicated by the school inspection annual report.

Examples of curriculum (Matúšová S. et all,1998):

Supplementary training for educators (C – credit, E – exam)

1st year	Winter	Summer	
Introduction to study	5C		
Social ethics		5E	
Biological aspects of adolescents	5E		
Psychology of youth		5E	
Social psychology		10E	
Pedagogy fundamentals		20E	
Organisation of educational work	10E		
Methodology of physical training and games	10C		
Methodology of aesthetic education			10C
Methodology of technical education in leisure time			10C
Environmental education			10C
2nd year			
Educational psychology	10E		
Sociology of youth	5E		
Theory of teaching	20E		
Methodology of physical training and games			10C
Methodology of aesthetic education	10C		
Methodology of technical education in leisure time			10C
Methods of remedial education			5C
Educational practice0			10C
Theses			C

Subjects of a leaving exam: Pedagogy, Psychology, Methodology of Education

Supplementary training for instructors (C – credit, E – exam)

1st year	Winter	Summer
Introduction to study	5C	
Social ethics		5E
Biological aspects of adolescents	5E	
Psychology of youth	5E	
Pedagogy fundamentals	20E	
Theory of teaching		20E
Methodology techniques		10E
Didactic of technical subjects		10C
Didactic of technical training		10C
Environmental education		10C
2nd year		
Educational psychology	10E	
Psychology of work	5E	
Didactic of technical training	20C	
Theory of education		20E
Management of upbringing and education	5C	
Methodology of teaching and student assessment		5C
Economy of vocational training	10E	
Pedagogical practice	10C	
Theses		C

Subjects of a leaving exam: Pedagogy, Psychology, Methodology of vocational training

5.3 In-service training of teachers and trainers

In-service training is stipulated in detail by the Decree of MoE No. 42/1996 of the Law Code on In-service Training of Educational Staff in concert with the Decree of MoE No. 41/1996 of the Law Code on Professional and Educational Competence of Educational Staff.
Diverse types and forms of in-service training such as

- introduction of new teachers into practice,
- refresher work in-service training,
- specialised innovative studies for selected staff leading to achievement of the first qualification exam and followed by promotion,
- specialised qualification studies expanding the competence of qualified teachers to teach selected subjects and/or deal with children with special needs,
- training in leadership for future or newly appointed directors or deputy directors,

and competencies sharing among schools, universities and methodological centres which are specialised in-service training institutions are specified. Unfortunately, the most important is missing – a transparent client centred system of funding or at least co-financing of in-service training. Means for in-service training are allocated to methodological centres institutionally in a lump sum and are not linked to individual teachers so they cannot be used as incentives for personal development of teachers. Moreover, funds allocated for in-service training are being reduced to nothing. Also, requirements to recognise the right of every educator to a determined amount of days for further training financed or at least co-financed have been raised, but the traditional obsolete system of financing of inset still lasts. In contrast to previous practice, methodological centres are not able to reimburse the travel costs and accommodation of trainees. Thus, teachers working outside the seats of methodological centres are disadvantaged. Moreover, those very dedicated to their profession participate in in-service training rather than those who might really need it. The quality of in-service training currently depends on the ability of methodologists from methodological centres to attract quality lecturers for extremely low fees and on fund-raising skills.
The same rules are applicable to teachers of grammar schools and VET schools, where general subject teachers might feel discriminated against by the fact that teachers of vocational subjects with an engineer diploma are automatically promoted after 5 years of teaching practice without needing to pass the first qualification exam. The same is applicable to those teachers of general subjects who received an academic title, e.g. PhDr. in humanities or RNDr. in science. In contrast to technical university graduates who are given a title engineer automatically after graduation from master's study, the title Dr. is not awarded automatically after graduation from master's study but after completion of the examina rigorosa which includes the defence of a thesis.
Nevertheless, a better service is traditionally provided for general subjects than for vocational subjects which would require specialised methodologists who are rarely interested in employment at methodological centres. The best chance for vocational teachers and instructors are international projects aimed at curricular innovations, e.g. organised by SIOV or based on school partnerships within Leonardo da Vinci and Comenius programmes.
Second future chances must be created by involvement of social partners in quality assurance as has already been stressed several times within previous chapters.

6. Research on VET and international co-operation for VET modernisation

The Ministry of Education is a central state administration body with a nation-wide responsibility towards research and development (R&D).
Recently, new legislation on R&D has been drafted in accordance with the concepts of National R&D Policy till 2005, introducing transparent rules inclusive of a new model of financing.
The Government advisory committee for research and development is assisting the government by reviewing all relevant documents discussed at the government, predominantly

- documents related to the development of national R&D policy and its implementation in respective sectors,
- R&D relevant legislation,
- proposal of the national budget with special regard to the allocation of means for R&D.

This multilateral committee of 31 members headed by the Minister of MoE contains state administration represented by respective ministries, R&D institutions from the autonomous education sector, the private sector, the national sector and corporate representatives as consumers of R&D outputs. One of the very demanding and for researchers crucial task is to supervise the set of topics of the national R&D programme elaborated under the responsibility of MoE before approval by the government.

Resulting R&D projects financed by the state budget are subject to public competition in accordance with the Act on Public Procurement. MoE is responsible for elaboration of annual reporting to the government about the status of achievement within respective projects.

Analogously, a set of state R&D orders is prepared under the guidance of the MoE and reviewed by the committee and approved by the government. These R&D projects are rather concrete sectoral objective-driven than national R&D policy-driven compared to the previous case. R&D initiatives of individuals or customers are to be processed by the Grant Agency for Support of R&D or by the Innovation Fund in the field of industry.

Such a decree on R&D project management is to be complemented by the decree of MoE on a national information system and by the decree stipulating evaluation, accreditation, and certification of research institutions introducing a transparent standardised system of periodic assessment of R&D institutions.

Nevertheless, a solid administrative infrastructure alone could not prevent the observed collapse of research in the Slovak Republic caused by the lack of funds for research and ongoing restructuring of both research institutions and corporations which might develop and stimulate customers for at least part of R&D in the future.

Currently, R&D activities are conducted at

- institutions of Slovak Academy of Science,
- universities,
- sectoral research institutions,

- private institutions.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to identify coherent top-down incentives indicating and guaranteeing state interest in resolving clearly marked problems related to VET except for institutional funding of the so-called main tasks of sectoral, directly managed institutions, such as the National Institute for Education, the State Institute of Vocational Education and Training, the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, the Research Institute of Children Psychology and Pathological Psychology, and the research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Individually initiated research aimed preferably at basic theoretical issues is funded and administrated by a grant agency VEGA (Science Grant Agency). It has 16 research branches out of which two are relevant with regard to vocational education and training, No.12 Science on society and No.13 Science on human being. The second state agency offering grants within the education sector is KEGA (Cultural and Educational Grant Agency). Both of these agencies are, however, not of decisive importance due to the lack of financing. A regular grant for a project within VEGA would be appropriate just for covering the purchase of publications and a regular KEGA project could be considered as an incentive for elaboration of a textbook for university students.

Moreover, underfinanced faculties prefer activities other than currently insufficiently paid R&D and universities as a whole suffer from brain drain which often allows erosion of research activities. In fact, a division between real Humboldtian universities and non-research universities would be easily possible. There are no research teams, there are just individuals interested in VET research within universities. There is no research institute specialised on VET in Slovakia. Research in this field was maintained by the research institute located in Prague within the former Czechoslovakia, with predominantly an implementing unit at NIE in Bratislava. In contrast, research in the field of labour was maintained by the respective research institute located in Bratislava with operation within the whole of Czechoslovakia. Thus, a difference in the research capacity between newly created SIOV and continuing RILSAF has roots in this history. Hopefully, with a stronger administrative infrastructure and a larger transparent inflow of means into R&D in VET, the attractiveness of research to young scholars and the quality of the research itself might be revived.

Redefinition of research focuses of the State Institute of Vocational Education and Training, the National Institute for Education, the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathological Psychology, the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, and the Research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which contribute to research according to their missions, complemented through appropriately set priorities and incentives for research from the Slovak Academy of Science and universities, could contribute to full coverage of research fields in VET and LM.

Specific work in the R&D field has been done by private or non-profit institutions focusing on analyses and desk research of a wide scope, however, referring to VET, very often making use of international grants and co-operation. Such institutions as S.P.A.C.E (Social Policy Analysis Centre), IVO (Institute for Public Affairs) and INEKO (Central European Institute of Economic and Social Reforms) are some important examples.

A developed research infrastructure and R&D experience might have exceptional value in participating in community programmes. Participation at Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe has been positively evaluated by the decision sphere in Slovakia so far. Besides some of Comenius' activities promoting partnership of VET schools, Leonardo da Vinci alone represents significant support directed at VET. Therefore special attention will be paid to it later.

Slovak membership in the "Fifth Framework Programme of the EU for Research Technology and Demonstration Activities" has been named "corresponding with the standard of neighbouring partner countries" within an SR report on progress in integration into the EU. In the course of SR participation in the 5th FP, since 1 September 1999 to February 2001 85 proposals were adopted, coming from 62 entities in the SR.
Nevertheless, significant worsening of the environment in the education sector might cause a decrease in activity and challenge the efficiency of SR financial contributions, not just in relation to the Framework Programme but also to other programmes (e.g., EUR 2 068 000 for Leonardo da Vinci and EUR 2 131 000 for Socrates II in 2000).

Valorisation of the Leonardo da Vinci (LVD) 1998/1999 programmes has shown again the importance of support of school co-operation as a vehicle of bottom up driven reform.
Not surprisingly, again and again projects involving educational twinning (Heuras) provide excellent support for institutional improvement of selected secondary VET schools. SCOTVEC has significantly influenced curriculum development culture by introduction of a module system to VET teachers. These examples were recalled as successful (they are, however, in need of further support, being at risk of missing the right timing and loosing the initial impulse).
According to the valorisation report, Building on achievements of transnational projects in vocational training, Report 2000, projects within the Leonardo da Vinci programme have been assessed as providing possibilities for enhancing the quality of secondary vocational and university training, as well as teacher and trainer training, accelerating innovations in education, allowing co-operation with international partners with regard to comparison and improvement of curricula, enhancing flexibility of the education system as a whole, creating links between vocational training and respective industries, and transferring new methodological approaches in further education. The Leonardo da Vinci programme has provided funds for launching experiments in vocational training, establishing international contacts, and enhancing the quality of vocational training by using ICT.

7. Role of National Observatories

The network of National Observatories was created by the European Training Foundation in PHARE, TACIS, and MEDA countries. The main objective of this network is to gather, analyse and disseminate targeted information on vocational education and training policies. The Slovak National Observatory of VET has specified its principal tasks as follows:

- Prepare regular qualitative and quantitative reports on developments in vocational education and training
- Create links between the different national vocational education and training initiatives
- Improve the information flow linking labour market needs and the supply of vocational training
- Identify vocational training policy options
- Contribute to the identification of areas for bilateral/multilateral co-operation
- Define priority areas for future actions in vocational education and training
- Establish links with Observatories in other countries to exchange knowledge and expertise on vocational education and training.

During 1998-2000, the SNO and its network prepared the following outputs:

- National Report on Vocational Education and Training
- In-depth Study on Continuing Vocational Training
- Survey of Teacher/Trainer Training in Vocational Education and Training
- Key Indicators - survey of statistical data
- Employment and Labour Market in the Slovak Republic
- Role of Social Partners in Vocational Education and Training in the Slovak Republic
- Vocational Education and Training Against Social Exclusion,

and contributed by papers and organisational co-operation to a number of conferences and seminars related to VET and the labour market. The SNO as a very small unit of two persons financed by ETF and hosted by the State Institute of Vocational Education and Training is dedicated to facilitating transmission of information on VET and the labour market between Slovakia and the EU and so contributing to smooth integration of Slovakia into the EU. By integration of the Slovak Republic into the EU the initial role of SNO will be transformed. A special role could be again assigned to this unit depending on the status of VET reform, on VET key players' conceptualisation of the VET system as a whole, and on further co-operation of the Slovak Republic with Cedefop.

8. Conclusions: challenges and future needs

8.1 Prolegomena of any further fundamental improvement

For the current situation of transformation of the economy and the transition of society in the Slovak Republic the underdeveloped market of educational policies is a crucial feature. Despite the long-time overall support "for education" of all political parties presenting positive rhetoric and in-depth analyses of the current status of education and its background already completed, an undisputed strategy of change still does not exist. Moreover, even alternative education policy scenarios free for adoption by concurrent political powers are not developed in a way that would lead to understandable implementation and prediction of results.

Recognition of acceptance of a sort of **falsification criteria** is a condition sine qua non of any acceptable education policy programme and thus any further positive development of future educational reform(s).

Any education policy programme (and any measure proposed within it) must be formulated in a way enabling a decision about whether programme/measure objectives have been achieved or not. Otherwise, political leaders could not be held accountable and will always make use of the opportunity to escape from their responsibility in the twilight of vague declarations and promises.

Gradual erosion, even the risk of irreversible declines observed in the 1990s due to ineffective transformation of the economy must be stopped by a radical decision regarding the future model of financing of VET.
A current model based on centralised public funding leads to both insufficient as well as ineffective allocation of funds. Acute future public expenditures related to

- pension scheme reform preventing from the collapse of current PAYG system,
- investment in environment protecting the infrastructure which is a precondition of integration into the EU,
- investment in restructuring of the Army in relation to aspirations to enter NATO,
- constantly high social protection expenditures caused predominantly by slow progress in fighting unemployment,
- repayment of debt and future investment in improvement of quality health service which is always considered a first priority by inhabitants,

as well as continuing pressure on further reduction of public finance indicate that sufficient funding of education sector from the state budget is impossible and a stable increase of funding hardly possible.

A new model of financing of higher education and a new model of financing VET still pending is a crucial prerequisite of the reconstruction of the education sector. Through clearly set political agendas education must be given a chance at fair competition for both private and public financial means.

- It is hardly possible to provide tertiary education for free for all interested. Introduction of paid tertiary education is inevitable, however, complemented by tools preventing social discrimination; e.g., by compensating such an investment for the future applying tax credits or tax deductions for parents and/or former/working students themselves.

- As soon as possible, the entrepreneurial sphere must be engaged in direct transparent payment of VET. It is untenable to provide for training of the workforce in terms of input into the business for free in exchange for non-addressed forced payments to the state budget. Establishment of levy-type funds connected to corporate tax relief is one the the well-known options.
- Any decentralisation in the education sector must be accompanied by fiscal decentralisation, complemented by central interventions alone fighting disparities within agreed programmes. Otherwise, any intended "modernisation of public administration" would lead to preserving the current model of claiming payments from other than one's own sources and to continuing risks of unbalanced networks of schools and educational programmes, and thus to ineffective allocation of means.
- Segmented financing of VET following traditional segmentation IVET, CVT and unemployed retraining represent very serious obstacles to provision of client-centred education/training. Cohesion of measures supporting human resource development in various forms (e.g., also fighting unemployment by retraining) could be achieved, and the idea of lifelong learning would be turned from slogan to implemented practice, only if traditional administrative barriers inhibiting integral education service are overcome.

The lack of finances available to the education sector results in the clearly visible modernisation debt of educational facilities and the decreasing status of educators (when measured by living standard). This is accompanied by a hidden process of erosion of some fundamental values. Still the high status of education in the population must be protected as it is highly endangered by transition from the old command driven economy based society to a future market economy based society.

Current failure to value real individual added value is, however, a sign of failure to fight turbulence not just accompanying but also endangering the transition itself. This of course does not mean just protection of brick and mortar based education but support and protection of an education environment stimulating and valuing learning rather than education. Even risking blame for social engineering, actions for moderation a contradiction between the predominantly value driven climate of schools and children and the predominantly money driven life of adults - the world of labour must be reconsidered. Increased erosion of the motivation to learn, weakening of intrinsic stimuli to learn cannot be compensated for by any future investment in improvement of educational service of educational institutions and improvement of a previously discredited mission of educators. No in-depth VET reform and no VET policy measure could be achieved without addressing a system of financing together with redefinition of status and links among respective players in the VET system, identifying and promoting stakeholders, providers and clients in their natural positions whenever possible.
Excessive brain drain from education and a lack of attractiveness of education for young professionals cannot be recouped without recognition of the fact that the education sector provides for both immeasurable values based improvement and measurable (e.g. by increase of employability and/or increment in income) improvement of the educated/trained.
Education is a mission but whenever there is a possibility to identify measurable improvement, a door for educational entrepreneurs and for their paid services will have to be opened in order to prevent a decrease in quality.

It is again important to stress the exceptional fragility of a society in transition and a very likely outcome: a transition result featuring lower than expected parameters due to underestimated and uncontrolled transition costs. This all is not just about vocational and

general education or compulsory and post-compulsory education, but of course it has exceptional application with respect to VET.

Additionally, prior to implementation of actions or even final action plan elaboration based on conceptual documents already prepared, the feasibility study analysing reasons blocking VET reform efforts must be thoroughly worked out.

8.2 Sub-system affecting changes

Already clearly visible trends of shifts from
- teaching to learning,
- teaching/learning process to teaching/learning output,
- from reduced school based learning support to holistic educational environment promotion,
- from free spirit exploration and personal satisfaction via personal enrichment to utilisation marketing of competence (very likely rather negative and uprooting us from the ancient Greek tradition continuing up to modern times and still present at universities of Humboldtian spirit),

indicate inevitability of promotion of
- school effectiveness and school improvement processes complemented by quality assurance of any educational/training service provided, thus acceptance and creation of the condition of an emerging **inner market** in provision of educational services,
- action research and prediction of future education/training output demand oriented research leading to identification of
  - new values, knowledge, skills and attitudes required,
  - a repertoire of tools strengthening their achievement.

It is necessary to distinguish between the importance of valuing personal intellectual enrichment and promoting employability. There is a need to move from theoretical to operational terms—to actually implement ideas rather than merely to discuss them. Typical examples, yet curricular evergreens, include general recommendations for “encyclopedism elimination”, “creativity promotion”, “knowledge in practice application” etc. The only likely working and the only eligible idea should be concrete good practice examples backed by rich casuistics concerning
- School effectiveness and school improvement, accreditation processes, input and output analysis and quality assurance in general
- Relation between theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and habits
- Basic skills identification, flexibility of labour force
- Utilising of knowledge in practice, counselling and guidance at the school level.

8.3 International co-operation

Four VET steps introduced by PHARE must be stressed here and recognised as worthy of further development.
- Curricular innovations implemented directly at secondary schools in co-operation with partner schools
- Introduction of a binary system in tertiary education by both upgrading secondary schools and creating non-university higher education

- Establishment of a network of distance education centres
- Establishment of the Centre for Professional Information (CPI) with a responsibility to work out occupational standards.

The first aforementioned issue has shown that a bottom-up initiated and worked out curricular reform is doable and worth supporting. The second topic addresses the systemic failure of the Slovak education system which forces not strongly academically oriented secondary school graduates prematurely to enter the labour market which is currently almost dead. The third topic refers to the need to promote new skills within both educational service providers and consumers. Unfortunately, ICT skills are very likely to be promoted just by political rhetoric and business driven hardware purchase instead of from the support of a fundamental change in the educational environment as a whole. It is necessary to strengthen the co-operation of the VET schools sector with social partners and strengthen links between job requirements and training objectives. An expanded CPI idea leads to co-operative elaboration of occupational and educational standards. All these examples out of other positive results are stressed here because of their pro-systemic character.

One lesson of PHARE activities and LDV projects worth stressing again and again is that concrete local changes should be prioritised before support of "global reform" efforts.
According to our opinion, the most effective investments are investments in the partner school co-operation programmes because they

- address financial means directly to the place of change,
- mobilise human resources in schools and their collaboration with social partners at the local level,
- establish innovative centres encouraging changes or at least programmes of changes in related areas,
- enhance the operability of global reform intentions.

List of acronyms and abbreviations

BEPSVE	Basic Educational Programme of Secondary Vocational Education
BS	Basic school
CESA	Council of Economic and Social Agreement
CSI	Chief School Inspector
CVE/CVT	Continuing vocational education/Continuing vocational training
EC	European Commission
ESA	European System of Integrated Economic Accounts
ESF	European Social Fund
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUR	European currency
G&S	Goods and services
GDP	Gross domestic product
GS	Grammar school
ICC	Information and Counselling Centre
IIPE	Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
IT	Information technology
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
KG	Kindergarten
LEA	Local educational authority
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSAF	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family
NACE	Nomenclature générale des activités économiques (General Classification of Economic Activities of the European Community)
NDP	National Development Plan
NEAP	National Employment Action Plan
NIE	National Institute for Education
NLO	National Labour Office

NSSVE	National Standard of Secondary Vocational Education
NTI	National Training Institute
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units
PAYG	PAY AS YOU GO (pension system based on financing pensions exclusively from contributions of working people)
PHARE	EU assistance programme for eligible Central and Eastern European countries (originally designed for Poland and Hungary, later extended)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPCC	Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling Centres
R&D	Research and development
RILSAF	Research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
SAPARD	Special Action Programme for Pre-Accession Aid for Agriculture and Rural Development
SCOTVEC	Scottish Vocational Education Council
SCTF	Slovak Centre for Training Firms
SIALS	Second International Adult Literacy Survey
SKK	Slovak crown
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SNO	Slovak National Observatory
SIOV	State Institute of Vocational Education and Training
SSS	Secondary specialised school
SVS	Secondary vocational school
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
TIMSS	Third International Mathematics and Science Study
TIMSS-R	Repeat of Third International Mathematics and Science Study
UOE	UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat
VET	Vocational education and training
VGC	Vocational guidance and counselling

List of major organisations

1. **Public Administration bodies responsible for or influencing in great extent VET or VET schools**

- **Ministerstvo školstva SR**
  (Ministry of Education of SR)
  Stromová 1, 813 30 Bratislava, http://www.education.gov.sk
- **Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR**
  (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of SR)
  Špitálska 6-8, 812 41 Bratislava, http://www.employment.gov.sk
- **Ministerstvo hospodárstva SR**
  (Ministry of Economy of SR)
  Mierová 19, 827 15 Bratislava, http://www.economy.gov.sk
- **Ministerstvo zdravotníctva Slovenskej republiky**
  (Ministry of Health of SR)
  Limbová 2, 831 05 Bratislava, http://www.health.gov.sk
- **Ministerstvo financií Slovenskej republiky**
  (Ministry of Finance of SR)
  Štefanovičova 5, 813 08 Bratislava, http://www.finance.gov.sk
- **Ministerstvo kultúry Slovenskej republiky**
  (Ministry of Culture of the SR)
  Nám. SNP 33, 813 31 Bratislava, http://www.culture.gov.sk
- **Ministerstvo vnútra SR**
  (Ministry of Interior of SR)
  Pribinova 2, 812 30 Bratislava, http://www.civil.gov.sk

2. **List of Research Institutions and Organisations**

- **Štátny pedagogický ústav**
  (National Institute of Pedagogy)
  Pluhová 8, 830 00 Bratislava, http://www.spu.sanet.sk
- **Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania**
  (State Institute of Vocational Education)
  Bellova 54, 831 01 Bratislava, http://www.siov.sk
- **Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva,**
  (Institute of Information and Prognosis in Education)
  Staré grunty 52, 842 44 Bratislava, http://www.uips.sk
- **Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie**
  (Research Institute of Child Psychology and Patho-psychology)
  Trnavská 112, 821 02 Bratislava, http://www.vudpap.host.sk
- **SARC – Centrum pre rozvoj, vedu a techniku,**
  (Centre for Development, Science and Technology)
  Staré grunty 52, 842 44 Bratislava, http://www.sarc.sk

- **Výskumný ústav práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny**
  (Research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family) - controlled by MOLSAF
  Špitálska 6, 812 41 Bratislava
- **Agroinštitút**
  (Agro-Institute) - controlled by Ministry of Agriculture of SR
  Akademická 4, 949 01 Nitra
- **Inštitút zahraničného obchodu a vzdelávania**
  (Institute of Foreign Trade and Education) - controlled by Ministry of Economy of SR
  Nobelova 16, 836 14Bratislava
- **Ústav vzdelávania a služieb**
  (Institute of Education and Services) - controlled by Ministry of Construction and Regional Development
  Bárdošova 33, 833 12 Bratislava
- **Inštitút pre verejnú správu**
  (Institute for Public Administration) - controlled by Ministry of Interior
  Schneidra-Trnavského 1/a, 844 10 Bratislava
- **Inštitút pre ďalšie vzdelávanie zamestnancov v zdravotníctve**
  (Institute for Further Education of Employees in Health Sector)
  Limbová 12, 833 03 Bratislava
- **Akadémia vzdelávania**
  (Academy of Education)
  Gorkého 10, 815 17 Bratislava

3. Social Partners Institutions

- **Slovenský živnostenský zväz**
  (Slovak Craft Industry Federation)
  Nevädzova 5, 821 01 Bratislava, http://www.szz.sk
- **Asociácia zamestnávateľských zväzov a združení SR**
  (Federation of Employers' Associations of SR)
  Nobelova 18, 831 02 Bratislava, Slovenská republika, http://www.azzz.sk
- **Konfederácia odborových zväzov SR**
  (Trade Union Confederation)
  Odborárske nám. 3, 815 70 Bratislava 1, http://www.internet.sk/kozsr

4. EU Educational Programmes' co-ordination bodies

- **Národná agentúra programu Leonardo da Vinci v Slovenskej republike**
  (National Leonardo da Vinci Programme Office)
  Staré grunty 52, 842 44 Bratislava, http://www.saaic.sk/Leonardo/index.html
- **Národná kancelária programu SOCRATES v Slovenskej republike**
  (National Socrates Programme Office)
  Staré grunty 52, 842 44 Bratislava, http://www.saaic.sk/Socrates/index.html

5. Other important bodies

- **Národný úrad práce SR**
  (National Labour Office of SR)
  Župné nám. č. 5-6, 812 67 Bratislava, http://www.nup.sk
- **INFOSTAT – Inštitút informatiky a štatistiky,**
  (Institute of Informatics and Statistics)
  Dúbravská cesta 3, 842 21 Bratislava, http://www.infostat.sk
- **Štatistický úrad Slovenskej republiky**
  (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic)
  Miletičova 3, 824 67 Bratislava, http://www.statistics.sk
- **Asociácia inštitúcií vzdelávania dospelých**
  (Association of Adult Education Institutions)
  Stromová 1, 813 30 Bratislava
- **Akreditačná komisia pre ďalšie vzdelávanie**
  (Accreditation Commission for futher education)
  Stromová 1, 813 30 Bratislava
- **Štátna školská inšpekcia**
  (State School Inspection)
  Staré grunty 52, 842 44 Bratislava

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Annex

Table I Average gross wage per sections (average wage = 100)

Sections	1991 x/	1994 x/	1998	1999
Total	100	100	100	100
Agriculture, hunting and forestry 1/	100	82	78	78
Fishing	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Industry	102	103	103	104
Mining and quarrying	118	117	110	112
Manufacturing	100	98	100	100
Electricity, gas and water supply	119	139	133	134
Construction	102	103	100	92
Trade and repair	90	91	107	107
Hotels and restaurants	84	82	75	76
Transport, storage and communication	102	105	106	108
Financial intermediation	140	187	193	186
Real estate and business activities	99	106	121	122
Public administration and defence	111	117	124	122
Education	94	82	82	78
Health care and welfare	105	86	91	85
Other services	98	89	85	88

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
1/ including fishing
x/ 1991 and 1994 data are available just for businesses with 25 and more employees
n.a. – data not available

Table II Population

Years	Total (as at the end of the year, in thousands)	Urban population in % of total population	Population density per sq. km
1990	5311	58.7	108
1994	5356	57.0	109.2
1998	5393	56.8	109.9
1999	5399	56.7	109.9

Source: Statistical Office of SR, Statistical Yearbooks of SR 2000, 1995 (1994 population density data), Statistical Yearbook of the CSFR 1991 (1990 population density data), tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ ETF

Table III Natural increase per 1000 inhabitants

Years	Natural increase
1990	4.8
1994	2.8
1998	0.8
1999	0.7

Source: Statistical Office of SR, Statistical Yearbook of SR 2000, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ ETF

Table IV Population by gender and age groups as at the end of the year

Age groups/Years	Total	M	F
TOTAL			
1990	5310711	2595913	2714798
1994	5356207	2608901	2747306
1999	5398657	2625126	2773531
0-14			
1990	1330509	679503	651006
1994	1225988	626676	599312
1999	1069374	546980	522394
15-19			
1990	440460	224240	216220
1994	476491	242784	233707
1999	447766	228762	219004
20-24			
1990	372497	189723	182774
1994	419816	213635	206181
1999	475444	241822	233622
25-34			
1990	814242	414878	399364
1994	762774	386359	376415
1999	787709	399129	388580
35-44			
1990	790828	397138	393690
1994	837522	421012	416510
1999	808589	407129	401460
45-54			
1990	526621	250796	275825
1994	591896	284797	307099
1999	724908	355020	369888
55-59			
1990	246303	113897	132406
1994	232623	106096	126527
1999	253976	116698	137278
60 +			
1990	789251	325738	463513
1994	809097	327542	481555
1999	830891	329586	501305

Source: Statistical Office of SR, Statistical Yearbooks of the SR 2000 (1999 data), 1999 (1994 data), 1994 (1990 data), tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

Table V Working and non-working age population (in thousands)

Specification	1990	1994	1998	1999
Total	5311	5356	5393	5399
Pre-working age (0-14)	1329	1256	1102	1069
Working age (M:15-59; F:15-54)	3059	3194	3332	3361
Post-working age (M:60+; F:55+)	922	936	959	968
Population of non-working age per 100 persons of working age	74	69	62	61

Source: Statistical Office of SR, Statistical Yearbooks of the SR 2000, 1999, 1994, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

Table VI Population of 14 to 25 year olds in 1999

Years	M	F	Total
14 year olds	44664	42868	87532
15 year olds	44924	43186	88110
16 year olds	45584	43407	88991
17 year olds	45834	43609	89443
18 year olds	45662	44190	89852
19 year olds	46758	44612	91370
20 year olds	48675	47368	96043
21 year olds	48555	47118	95673
22 year olds	48746	46545	95291
23 year olds	48557	46457	95014
24 year olds	47289	46134	93423
25 year olds	47271	45587	92858
Total 14-25 year olds	562519	541081	1103600

Source: Statistical Office of the SR, LFS, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
M - Males
F - Females

Table VII Active population by age groups and educational attainment (in thousands)

Age groups	1994						1999					
	Educational attainment by ISCED level						Educational attainment by ISCED level					
	Total	5+	4	3g	3v	0-2	Total	5+	4	3g	3v	0-2
15-60+	2429.8	294.4	x/	100.5	1697.2	337.7	2556.3	263.2	x/	146.9	1881.7	264.6
15-19	117.6	-	x/	6.1	93.7	17.8	105.7	0.1	x/	9.0	82.3	14.2
20-24	285.5	10.9	x/	13.0	248.1	13.5	331.5	10.7	x/	27.4	277.7	15.7
25-34	657.3	93.9	x/	27.4	480.1	55.9	665.1	79.8	x/	38.0	511.3	36.0
35-44	767.5	103.5	x/	30.7	511.3	122.0	741.8	77.8	x/	29.6	551.9	82.5
45-54	481.8	61.5	x/	20.4	297.5	102.4	590.0	72.6	x/	36.4	387.8	93.2
55-59	91.3	15.7	x/	2.3	55.7	17.6	98.6	14.5	x/	4.8	59.8	19.6
60+	28.9	8.9	x/	0.7	10.8	8.4	23.6	7.7	x/	1.5	10.8	3.6

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
x/ Data on ISCED 4 level are included within ISCED 3v level.
g – general
v – vocational

Table VIII Activity rate by age groups and educational attainment (as % of the given group in total)

Age groups	1994						1999					
	Educational attainment by ISCED level						Educational attainment by ISCED level					
	Total	5+	4	3g	3v	0-2	Total	5+	4	3g	3v	0-2
15-60+	59.5	86.7	x/	49.9	78.4	24.6	59.6	83.5	x/	54.2	77.8	20.6
15-19	24.8	-	x/	29.2	84.4	5.2	23.2	100.0	x/	32.6	82.7	4.3
20-24	71.2	90.8	x/	24.5	79.4	58.5	70.1	86.1	x/	33.0	80.2	50.8
25-34	85.7	93.4	x/	74.2	87.0	71.8	85.8	93.5	x/	80.2	87.2	64.9
35-44	92.2	96.7	x/	91.9	93.9	82.7	91.0	94.2	x/	93.7	93.2	76.1
45-54	84.2	97.8	x/	85.0	89.1	67.6	84.3	97.8	x/	84.5	87.1	67.9
55-59	39.4	80.0	x/	28.0	50.9	18.7	39.7	76.8	x/	43.8	46.7	21.5
60+	3.6	23.9	x/	2.9	5.4	1.6	2.9	18.5	x/	5.6	4.9	0.7

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
x/ Data on ISCED 4 level are included within ISCED 3v level.
g – general
v – vocational

Table IX Activity rate by gender and age groups (as % to given group in total)

Age groups	1994			1999		
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
15-60+	59.5	69.0	50.8	59.6	68.1	51.7
15-19	24.8	25.5	24.2	23.2	23.4	22.9
20-24	71.2	82.4	59.7	70.1	79.3	60.6
25-34	85.7	96.6	74.5	85.8	95.4	76.1
35-44	92.2	95.9	88.5	91.0	94.7	87.3
45-54	84.2	91.6	77.4	84.3	89.1	79.7
55-59	39.4	68.3	15.1	39.7	65.0	18.1
60+	3.6	6.7	1.4	2.9	5.2	1.3

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
M - Males
F - Females

Table X Employed persons by ownership sector (in thousands)

Sectors	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	2104.3	2138.1	2217.5	2207.1	2201.4	2128.4
Public sector	1404.6	1308.4	1278.8	1193.0	1106.5	1055.2
Private sector	699.7	829.7	938.7	1014.0	1094.9	1073.2

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

Table XI Employed by sections of economy (in thousands)

Sections of economy	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	2104.3	2138.1	2217.5	2207.1	2201.4	2128.4
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	216.2	197.9	197.2	205.7	178.9	153.8
Fishing	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.5
Industry x/	829.1	827.2	864.8	863.9	868.3	818.0
Mining and quarrying	35.7	28.7	32.2	45.5	35.3	29.7
Manufacturing	554.9	573.2	594.9	561.9	577.2	546.1
Electricity, gas and water supply	46.9	44.9	53.7	55.0	52.5	50.5
Construction	191.6	180.4	184.0	201.5	203.3	191.8
Trade and repair	200.9	222.5	223.2	253.3	265.4	263.3
Hotels and restaurants	51.7	56.7	64.6	60.3	60.6	65.2
Transport, storage and communication	162.1	163.3	170.8	157.6	174.7	165.1
Financial intermediation	26.8	30.4	32.4	28.0	37.2	37.1
Real estate and business activities	83.7	95.8	88.0	72.5	74.6	78.0
Public administration and defence	127.8	136.3	156.3	161.1	155.5	150.2
Education	185.6	170.1	176.4	169.0	166.7	166.4
Health care and welfare	141.2	144.4	145.5	148.5	143.5	155.8
Other services	78.6	93.3	98.1	86.9	75.9	74.9

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Note:
x/ Industry = Mining and quarrying + Manufacturing + Electricity, gas and water supply + Construction

Table XII Employment structure by sections of economy

Sections of economy	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total employment = 100						
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	10.3	9.3	8.9	9.3	8.1	7.2
Fishing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Industry	39.4	38.7	39.0	39.1	39.4	38.4
Mining and quarrying	1.7	1.3	1.5	2.1	1.6	1.4
Manufacturing	26.4	26.8	26.8	25.5	26.2	25.7
Electricity, gas and water supply	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.4
Construction	9.1	8.4	8.3	9.1	9.2	9.0
Trade and repair	9.6	10.4	10.1	11.5	12.1	12.4
Hotels and restaurants	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.8	3.1
Transport, storage and communication	7.7	7.6	7.7	7.1	7.9	7.8
Financial intermediation	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.8
Real estate and business activities	4.0	4.5	4.0	3.3	3.4	3.7
Public administration and defence	6.1	6.4	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.1
Education	8.8	8.0	8.0	7.7	7.6	7.8
Health care and welfare	6.7	6.8	6.6	6.7	6.5	7.3
Other services	3.7	4.4	4.4	3.9	3.5	3.5
Share of female employment in total employment for a given sector						
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	30.3	30.5	32.0	32.8	31.0	29.8
Fishing	-	-	-	-	100.0	66.8
Industry	48.2	47.0	46.9	47.4	46.2	46.4
Mining and quarrying	20.2	13.7	15.2	16.7	14.7	11.9
Manufacturing	41.5	41.9	41.5	41.2	41.0	40.7
Electricity, gas and water supply	19.5	18.5	16.4	19.9	14.1	17.7
Construction	10.9	9.6	10.0	8.4	8.5	9.8
Trade and repair	55.2	58.1	58.5	57.8	57.4	61.1
Hotels and restaurants	64.2	64.1	54.7	65.3	67.4	63.4
Transport, storage and communication	31.0	32.0	31.6	30.4	30.6	28.9
Financial intermediation	79.5	69.5	69.8	71.9	74.9	73.4
Real estate and business activities	46.3	41.7	35.5	43.4	40.2	39.0
Public administration and defence	45.3	40.8	46.3	46.6	49.1	45.2
Education	74.0	77.4	77.3	79.9	80.8	78.4
Health care and welfare	81.0	79.4	79.6	79.7	79.5	81.0
Other services	43.2	41.7	47.0	49.8	50.1	49.9

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

Table XIII Employed by educational attainment and gender (in thousands)

Educational attainment	1994			1998			1999		
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
Total	2104.3	1173.2	931.1	2201.4	1211.6	989.8	2128.4	1159.1	969.3
ISCED 5+	282.6	169.4	113.2	264.5	148.0	116.6	250.5	137.7	112.8
ISCED 4	x/	x/	x/	x/	x/	x/	x/	x/	x/
ISCED 3 (vocational)	1490.7	871.8	618.8	1594.9	925.5	669.5	1579.9	902.1	677.8
ISCED 3 (general)	87.5	33.0	54.5	129.2	45.0	84.2	123.8	46.3	77.4
ISCED 0-2	243.5	99.0	144.5	212.8	93.2	119.6	174.2	73.0	101.2

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
x/ Data on ISCED 4 level are included within ISCED 3v level.
M - Males
F - Females

Table XIV Registered unemployment and unemployment by LFS

Specification	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Register data									
Unemployed (in thousands)	106.3	301.7	304.7	365.5	362.5	331.3	341.7	367.2	465.3
Unemployment rate (in %)	4.2	12.0	12.0	14.4	14.3	12.9	13.1	14.1	16.5
LSF - ILO definition									
Unemployed (in thousands)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	325.5	326.6	278.7	286.2	305.5	403.8
Unemployment rate (in %)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	13.4	13.3	11.2	11.4	12.1	15.8

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, National Labour Office of SR (register data), months corresponding to LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Note:
n.a. – data not available

Table XV Unemployment rate by age groups (%)

Sex	Total		15-19		20-24		25-29		30-34		35-44		45-54		55-60		60+	
	1995	1999	1995	1999	1995	1999	1995	1999	1995	1999	1995	1999	1995	1999	1995	1999	1995	1999
Total	13.3	15.8	41.5	48.8	18.2	24.5	16.7	16.5	12.3	16.1	11.1	12.3	7.5	10.1	6.3	10.9	8.6	7.1
Males	12.8	15.7	46.6	47.0	20.1	25.2	13.1	15.5	10.7	14.2	10.4	12.5	7.9	10.7	5.5	12.6	7.0	4.8
Females	13.8	15.9	35.8	50.8	15.6	23.5	21.5	17.8	14.2	18.4	11.8	12.0	7.0	9.4	9.7	5.8	12.4	13.1

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

Table XVI Share of unemployed in the total population for the same level of educational attainment

Sex	1994						1999					
	Educational attainment by ISCED level						Educational attainment by ISCED level					
	Total	5+	4	3v	3g	0-2	Total	5+	4	3v	3g	0-2
Total	100	3.6	x/	63.5	4.0	28.9	100	2.7	x/	69.7	5.3	22.3
Males	100	3.2	x/	66.0	2.8	28.0	100	2.6	x/	73.5	2.4	21.5
Females	100	4.0	x/	60.4	5.4	30.1	100	2.8	x/	65.2	8.7	23.3

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
x/ Data on ISCED 4 level are included within ISCED 3v level.
g – general
v – vocational

Table XVII Unemployed by duration of unemployment (in thousands)

Age groups	Total	Duration of unemployment				
		3 months and less	4-6 months	7-12 months	13-24 months	25 months and more
15-60+	403.8	51.1	64.3	91.2	75.1	112.3
15-19	51.6	5.4	8.4	24.3	8.6	4.1
20-24	81.1	12.4	14.8	17.6	18.7	16.3
25-29	54.3	6.2	10.6	9.5	8.6	17.8
30-34	54.0	6.1	7.8	9.4	10.8	18.3
35-44	91.1	11.4	11.5	17.0	17.2	32.4
45-54	59.3	8.0	9.0	11.5	9.3	19.1
55-59	10.8	1.4	1.9	1.9	1.4	3.9
60+	1.7	0.3	0.4	-	0.4	0.3

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q 1999, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

Table XVIII Unemployment rate of graduates (%)

Educational attainment	1994		1998		1999	
	After completion of school		After completion of school		After completion of school	
	1 year	2-3 years	1 year	2-3 years	1 year	2-3 years
ISCED 5+	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.1
ISCED 4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
ISCED 3 (vocational)	1.2	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.4	0.9
ISCED 3 (general)	3.1	0.5	1.6	1.1	3.0	1.7
ISCED 0-2	1.9	1.4	1.4	3.1	1.4	2.4

Source: Statistical Office of SR, LFS 2Q, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

Note:

n.a. – data not available

Table XIX Participation of unemployed graduates in LM active measures, by educational attainment

Year/ Educational attainment	Training and retraining	Subsidised works				Job placement xx/
		§88	§89	§90	§91	
1998						
ISCED 5+	72	13	33	18	66	
ISCED 4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a	
ISCED 3 (vocational)	1231	31	243	166	1079	
ISCED 3 (general)	429	2	15	5	105	
ISCED 0-2	0	0	12	0	28	
1999						
ISCED 5+	19	2	1	6	22	
ISCED 4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a	
ISCED 3 (vocational)	272	11	25	17	267	
ISCED 3 (general)	57	0	0	1	16	
ISCED 0-2	0	0	0	0	14	

Source: National Labour Office of the SR, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF

Notes:

§88 of Act No. 387/1996 of the Law Code on Employment, Agreed job with self-employed person

§89 Agreed job with employer

§90 Agreed job for a school graduate or juvenile

§91 Agreed publicly useful job

xx/ Job placement after completing training courses for the unemployed:

1998 - about 77 %

1999 – about 65 %

n.a. – data not available

Table XX Structure of school system by type of schools

School year	Schools by ISCED level														
	0-2			3 general			3 vocational			4			5+		
	T	P	NP	T	P	NP	T	P	NP	T	P	NP	T	P	NP
Number of schools															
90/91	6163	6161	2	134	132	2	539	539	0	x/			13	13	0
94/95	6218	6118	100	184	151	33	769	725	44	x/			14	14	x/
98/99	6080	5959	121	207	157	50	778	728	50	x/			18	18	x/
Number of students															
90/91	959221	958454	767	56027	55865	162	261250	261250	0	4891	4891	0	65050	65050	0
94/95	878351	850440	27911	65036	59746	5290	273121	266110	7011	4794	4180	614	82415	82384	31
98/99	858214	827496	30718	61665	52831	8834	240520	231140	9380	5110	4104	1006	122886	122744	142
Number of graduates															
90/91	xx/			12516	12516	0	78525	78525	0	2072	2072	0	11117	11117	0
94/95	xx/			15063	14147	916	65711	64080	1631	2223	2029	194	12451	12451	0
98/99	xx/			15648	13803	1845	75090	72392	2698	2195	1808	387	21320	21288	32

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
x/ Number of schools is not included since the 4A and 5B programmes are organised within secondary specialised schools
xx/ Number of basic school (ISCED 0-2) graduates is not statistically monitored
T – Total
P – Public
NP – Non-public

Table XXI Schools by school governing authority

Specifications	1990/91			1994/95			1998/99		
	schools	students	graduates	schools	students	graduates	schools	students	graduates
Primary and lower-secondary - ISCED 1-2									
State administration	2674	741516	x/	2712	675157	x/	2620	658798	x/
Other	2	767	x/	89	27510	x/	99	30023	x/
Upper-secondary general - ISCED 3									
State administration	132	55865	12516	151	59746	14147	157	52831	13803
Other	2	162	0	33	5290	916	50	8834	1845
Upper-secondary vocational - ISCED 3									
State administration	539	261250	78525	725	266110	64080	728	231140	72392
Other	0	0	0	44	7011	1631	50	9380	2698
Post-secondary non-university- ISCED 4									
State administration	xx/	4891	2072	xx/	4180	2029	xx/	4104	1808
Other		0	0	xx/	614	194	xx/	1006	387
Higher- ISCED 5+									
State administration	13	65050	11117	14	82384	12451	18	122744	21288
Other	0	0	0	xx/	31	0	xx/	142	32

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
x/ Number of basic school (ISCED 0-2) graduates is not statistically monitored
xx/ 4A and 5B programmes are organised within secondary specialised schools

Table XXII Selected educational indicators in 1998/99

ISCED levels	Schools	Students	Teachers (full-time employed)	Teacher/student ratio (%)
Total	7083	1288395	90933	7.06
ISCED 0-2	608	858214	59408	6.92
ISCED 3 general	0207	61665	4752	7.71
ISCED 3 vocational	0778	24052	17825	7.41
ISCED 4	x/	5110	x/	x/
ISCED 5+	0018	122886	8948	7.28

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Note:
x/ Programme 4A is organised within secondary specialised schools. Number of schools and teachers is included in ISCED 3 vocational.

Table XXIII Obligatory education of foreign languages in 1998/99

Foreign languages	Students total	in % of school students by ISCED level				
		0-2	3 general	3 vocational	4	5+
English	399381	57.62	14.23	28.15	x/	
French	26223	40.41	24.72	34.87		
Spanish	2035	16.56	60.93	22.51		
German	289844	36.8	17.06	46.14		
Russian	4607	62.18	4.56	33.26		
Italian	1523	9.13	34.67	56.2		
Others xx/	60787	76.56	6.23	17.21		

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
Included are just full-time students who are learning foreign language as an obligatory subject.
The number of students learning foreign language at Higher Education Institutions is not statistically monitored.
x/ Data are included within ISCED 3 vocational (data concerning education of foreign languages are monitored just within the school as a whole, and, therefore, it is not possible to indicate the number of students within ISCED 4 programmes).
xx/ Included are students learning Slovak language as an obligatory subject at schools with the other language of instruction than the Slovak (Hungarian, Ukrainian, German language of instruction), i.e. schools for national minorities for whom Slovak language is not a mother tongue.

Table XXIV Public expenditures on education in 1999 (in thousands SKK)

Specifications	Total	of which by ISCED level									
		0-2		3 general		3 vocational		4		5+	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	33615512	15347597	45.66	1235859	3.68	6200423	18.45	xx/	xx/	4381168	13.03
of which:											
investment	1411086	417386	29.58	69247	4,91	170929	12.11	xx/	xx/	562826	39.89
wages	13456883	8125750	60.38	623116	4,63	2778492	20.65	xx/	xx/	1491811	11.09
social facilities x/	2361106	xx/	xx/	xx/	xx/	xx/	xx/	xx/	xx/	584191	24.74

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
x/ grants to students, accommodation, means, etc.
xx/ data are not statistically monitored
Total includes total expenses from the state budget except expenses on health, police and military schools.
ISCED 0-2 includes state and municipal pre-primary school facilities, basic schools, total special schools (without classification according to ISCED) and total church-affiliated schools (without classification according to ISCED)
ISCED 3 general includes state grammar schools
ISCED 3 vocational includes secondary specialised schools (except health, police and military schools), sport schools, secondary art schools, secondary vocational schools, private schools total (without classification according to ISCED), school agricultural and forestry enterprises
ISCED 4 is included within ISCED 3
ISCED 5+ includes universities, theological faculties, foreign students care, foreign information, school agricultural and forestry enterprises
wages includes data taken from payroll lists; wages of all educators, except health, police and military schools.
social facilities includes – with regard to state schools school catering, dormitories, accommodation and catering facilities for universities, scholarship; with regard to church-affiliated and private schools data are according to ISCED classification are not available (except universities), just data on total expenses are available.

Table XXV Drop-outs from education 1998/99

Specifications	General education			Secondary VET with maturita exam			Secondary VET with qualification			Total secondary VET		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Number of drop outs from for a given year	986	1218	2204	2742	1823	4565	2594	1535	4129	5336	3358	8694
Drop-out rates in a given year (%)	3.80	3.41	3.57	3.54	2.06	2.75	5.45	5.69	5.54	4.27	2.91	3.61

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
M - Males
F - Females

Table XXVI Enrolment in education/training at ISCED level 3 1998/99

General Education			Secondary VET with maturita exam			Secondary VET with qualification			Total Secondary VET			Total secondary Education		
M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
25961	35704	61665	77377	88567	165944	47621	26955	74576	124998	115522	240520	150959	151226	302185

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, tabled by the Slovak National Observatory/ETF
Notes:
M - Males
F - Females

Table XXVII Private and church-affiliated regional schools in the school year 1999/2000

Schools	Church-affiliated	Private
Basic schools	92	4
Grammar schools	38	17
SSS	11	27
SVS	5	10

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses

Table XXVIII Study programmes at SVS and SSS in the school year 1999/2000

Area of study	Specialisations and subspecialisations		
	SVS	SSS	Total
Physics and mathematics	-	1	1
Mining and mining geology	4	12	16
Metallurgy	9	15	24
Engineering and other metal-processing	2	24	26
Engineering and other metal-processing (SVS)	98	-	98
Electrotechnics	57	46	103
Technical chemistry of silicate chemistry	37	10	47
Technical chemistry (w/o silicate chemistry)	45	24	69
Food-processing	30	20	50
Textile and clothing	37	17	54
Processing of hides, plastics, rubber and shoes production	27	4	31
Wood-processing and musical instruments production	30	8	38
pulp, paper processing and printing	18	2	20
Building, geological survey and cartography	41	31	72
Transport, post and telecommunication	28	35	63
Special technical specialisations	-	18	18
Agriculture and forestry	1	68	69
Veterinary sciences	-	3	3
Agriculture and forestry (SVS)	42	-	42
Economic sciences	-	1	1
Economics and organisation, retail and services	10	36	46
Economics and organisation, retail and services (SVS)	57	-	57
Legal sciences	-	4	4
Library and information sciences	-	8	8
Pedagogical sciences	-	2	2
Pedagogics	-	8	8
Arts, applied arts and folk crafts	-	85	85
Arts, applied arts and folk crafts (SVS)	49	-	49
Total	622	482	1104

Source: State Institute for Vocational Education and Training

Table XXIX Innovated study programmes at SVS and SSS

School year	SVS		SVS total	SSS	Total
	training branches	study branches			
1994/95	1	3	4	6	10
1995/96	4	2	6	12	18
1996/97	0	0	0	15	15
1997/98	5	6	11	14	25
1998/99	4	21	25	14	39
1999/2000	5	4	9	10	19
Total	19	36	55	71	126

Source: State Institute of Vocational Education and Training

Table XXX Newly implemented study programmes at SVS

School year	SVS				Total		
	Training branches		Study branches				
	officially implemented	experimentally implemented	officially implemented	experimentally implemented	officially implemented	experimentally implemented	Total
1994/95	2	3	3	1	5	4	9
1995/96	0	5	2	2	2	7	9
1996/97	2	1	1	4	3	5	8
1997/98	2	3	2	8	4	11	15
1998/99	4	9	4	5	8	14	22
1999/2000	1	2	4	0	5	2	7
Total	11	23	16	20	27	43	70

Source: State Institute of Vocational Education and Training

Table XXXI Newly implemented study programmes at SSS

School year	SSS		Total
	officially implemented	experimentally implemented	
1994/95	10	1	11
1995/96	8	4	12
1996/97	7	0	7
1997/98	9	3	12
1998/99	6	21	27
1999/2000	11	3	14
Total	51	32	83

Source: State Institute of Vocational Education and Training

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