

CHANGES OF PHYLOSOPHY AND SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA

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The processes which characterized the educational work of the last decade in the Republic of Slovenia, could place this period in the chapter called »ten years of changes«. The processes in which new theoretical concepts were explored and prepared and afterwards the changes applied in practice have lately become subject of interest of other countries in the region and of broader international public. The specialists in the region (particularly in the countries formed at the territories of former Yugoslavia) will easier understand these processes, because many of the troubles in early nineties had been equal or similar. Different historical circumstances had separated the course of events in those countries, but the obtained experience could now be usefully exploited. During the last decade we took advantage, largely and critically, of other countries' experience in a narrow region and thus facilitated creation and quality of our essential specialist decisions, therefore this report might be interesting to readers in those countries as well. In this survey I wish to present the overall problem in education, which we were (or still are) facing, the philosophy of approaching their analysis, resolving methods and obtaining results. I am convinced that the reading public in SEE countries will be able to adopt those elements which could serve to progress of local educational system in current circumstances.

1. Solution of accumulated current problems (1990—1993)

For many Central and Eastern European countries, early nineties represented a great turning point in history. Since we are referring to familiar and widely analysed processes, we need not explain here the significance of these events. If we observe the problems of educational system in the context of political and social processes from the beginning of the period when former Yugoslav republics were obtaining independence, we could simply state that we were not dealing with third-class topics, which were crucial in development of modern democratic nations. Namely, in the late eighties we had been faced with two strategic challenges, the challenge of transition into a modern open and pluralistic society (»transition«), which was at the time distinctive only for Central and Eastern European countries, and the challenges of modern information and knowledge based society, which from the eighties on represented a global challenge. I am convinced that the processes in the sphere of education in our country are misinterpreted, if observed only from the former challenge. Certainly, these processes are more complex in our situation, because owing to specific historical coincidence both »regional« and »global« factors have been covered, and we should always bear in mind that changes of educational system are not necessary (only) because of political changes. They are necessary because of global social, cultural and overall civilization changes.

We were fully aware of these big words in the early eighties; I recall to intensive discussions of that time on »postmoderne« or on »reinventing civil society«. When, in the concurrence of historical events, an opportunity arose to take over the steering wheel and start a new ride dreamt of for years, the image had soon become more pragmatic. The author of this text joined

in the spring of 1992 to the new team of the Ministry of Education and Sport (and had stayed there for eight years, until 2000). The team members were mostly from universities and research institutes. The central problem was not the lack of fresh ideas, but on the contrary, solution of accumulated problems. Changes of political system required some urgent changes of educational system. This implied changes which were not related to introduction of modern learning strategies, alternative methods and the latest accomplishments of science and profession, but the demand for completely pragmatic functional and administrative solution, for instance: how to perform transition from the old financing manner, the so-called »SIS«¹, to classical budget manner, but avoid the collapse of educational system, and, if possible, to advance it? How to perform changes concerning the way of appointing school heads, but at the same time assure responsibility of schools to the community, how to increase motivation of teachers and parents but avoid »partitocracy«? Therefore, it implied necessary formal changes of legislation, especially in the field of organization and education budgeting, the status of the teaching staff and collective contracts, regulation of private schools and their introduction into educational system, particularly concerning quality, options for the learners to move from one school to another, etc. Besides internal problems, one cannot forget strategically crucial bilateral and multilateral negotiations on recognition of school reports (diplomas) and taking part in international educational projects. There were also well-known problems with providing education for children-refugees from former regions at war. Briefly: instead of rapid and efficient parade changes of entire philosophy and educational system, we got stuck in the mud of real life. And we have learnt the first, perhaps crucial lesson: real life is always in the first place.

2. Problems of «transition» and their solutions (1991—1995)

The notion that real life is always in the first place does not assume that we should give up analysing it and preparing programmes of changes. On the contrary, genuine accumulated problems present only the point of departure to gradual changes and improvements of the system. Numerous topics could be included among central genuine problems, from which the strategy of changes arose. Here we shall concentration the most significant ones.

Coincidence of regional social and political changes with global civilization changes, aforementioned, have affected, at a definite level, enormous change in needs of the labour market, as well as in individual educational interests and ambitions. Relation towards education, acquired knowledge and skills has begun to change. Knowledge becomes not only the (more and more important) formal requirement for entering active life, but increasingly influences the status of an individual and his or her opportunities in the »open society«. The existing educational structure – particularly at the secondary and tertiary level – have imposed a difficult question: how to satisfy requirements for placement at schools and faculties. This issue was not difficult only for the lack of financial resources, but also because of specific »transitional« processes. Collapse of former »economic giants« and increase of unemployment have led, inside the educational system, to large and instant changes concerning educational interests of young generations: e.g. former popularity of engineering technician was replaced almost overnight with the popularity of shopkeepers and economists. Besides the basic changes in professional orientation, the number of those who continue secondary, and after that, higher education, has largely increased. This caused a great pressure on school network, which needed

¹ SIS – “community of self-managing organizations”: institutional framework of the previous regime that pool their resources to satisfy mutual needs, especially in education, health care, insurance, culture, science, etc.

be adapted, expanded and improved.

Current accumulated problems, which at first seemed not to be much in relation with philosophical and strategic issues of the renewal of educational system, started requiring exactly the following: more detailed analysis, simulation of potential developmental scenarios, search for teaching methodology which would enable to confront negative processes. The basic problem relating to educational system of a country in transition could easily be formulated: *availability of quality school for all who wish and can*. Disregard of this principle would imply delay for the future, but it bears risk for the problem to grow up to unconceivable level. This does not concern only the young people who remain »in the streets« burdening national strategies and social programmes, but also gradual decay of school network, decreasing motivation of teaching staff, etc. This dark image could be avoided only if it stimulated us to pragmatic solutions of burning problems, and would be effective solely if it cared for long-term functioning and quality of educational system.

With changes of educational interest and subsequent adaptation of school network, this understanding requires rational approach to material conditions of education. This implies textbooks, their availability, modernity and quality, alternatives or opportunities to choose. There are as many social issues related to education: scholarships, hostels, meals, transportation costs, etc. as well as issues concerning advancement of teaching staff and all other specialists working in education. Finally, there are also new challenges, which should not be considered as luxury or caprice: that is introduction of modern technologies in education, learning foreign languages, lifelong education, international mobility, etc. Briefly: there is a saying that we are not rich enough to buy cheap things. When referring to national interests, the same saying is equally illustrative. If the basic functions of education are not regularly supplied, it leads to collapse of the system. Its revival is much more expensive for a country account, and in some elements incurable (for instance, a generation that misses its opportunities), and in some cases priceless (social and cultural impacts).

It would not be unusual for educators to have such thoughts. On the contrary, it is normal, but not sufficient. Education ought to be considered as a national priority, but also demand from it real results. In Slovenia, concerning this, vital importance had the *Law on providing resources for important development programmes in the field of Education in Republic of Slovenia*, which was enforced at the Parliament in 1994, and which, at the moment of enforcement, guaranteed 27.548.000.000 SIT (today approximately 122.000.000 EURO) of additional resources for the period 1994-1999. Thus Slovenia had in mid-nineties made a rise from 4.8% GDP to 6% GDP spent for education, in other words, it reached the level recommended by UNESCO and other organizations.

One of the key arguments that allow the aforementioned conclusion and facilitate making political decisions on priorities is a quality organizational and management of the system as well as development of services and experts who guarantee advancement. At mid nineties a great attention was turned to organization of the Ministry of Education and its services. In fact, in the circumstances that we found ourselves in the situation of establishing the country, we first had to establish the Ministry. Our educational communities and some other forms of organizations could not have been considered as a qualified part of state administration, which would be able to face the challenges of a given historical situation.

The concept of democratic, open society does not end with establishment of qualified and

authorized machinery of government. Education presents an area in which competences of government and civil society should be carefully distributed – for the rights of learners, parents, local communities, for autonomy of science and profession. Based on some traditions, which had been common, new expert bodies grew up during the nineties. Thus we had inherited the Expert Board for General Education of the Republic of Slovenia, with a modified form and function. In the early nineties, after becoming aware of extreme importance of vocational education, a separate Expert Board for Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Slovenia was also established, and with new perception of lifelong education an Expert Board for Education of Adults was formed. Those three expert bodies were certified in new laws from 1996, and afterwards, by the decision of Government and Ministry, some other specialized groups of experts were established (particularly important was the National Curricular Committee, as well as specialized bodies for education of children with special needs, for music education, for foreign languages, etc.) This review does not deal with tertiary education, but we will add that similarly to these a Board for Higher Education was founded in 1994. All these expert bodies have gathered a number of experts in various fields of education, and other fields (e.g. employment, trade unions, associations, etc.), which enable a broad circle of initiatives and open exchange of ideas.

In these bodies experts have come together – both individual experts and representatives of certain institutions, who have some legal authorities (for instance, acceptance of curricula, creation of new regulations, etc.). An important role in professional support belongs to expert departments. The first position occupies the Department for Education of RS (*Zavod za šolstvo*), which deals with developmental and counselling work in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. During the nineties some new departments and institutions were founded. In 1991 it was the Centre for Adult Education of Slovenia, in 1993 the State Examination Centre (preparations of Matura, design of external examinations), in 1995 Centre for Vocational Education and Training (linked also with the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Chamber), School for Principals (school heads were obliged to pass an examination for which they get prepared at the school, they are also expertly trained in issues concerning school management, quality, etc.), and, finally, Centre for school-in-nature activities (a network of hostels at the location belonging to former military watchtowers – school in nature, sports, associating among young people, etc.).

All those new departments appeared, more or less, as a response for solving instant problems, but throughout their development they took over certain special assignments at particular strategic areas of educational system. Through solving accumulated problems new instruments and knowledge were created for an overall reconstruction of the system.

3. Examining the development of education in international context

As we have already mentioned, the reform of education was in a narrow link with international cooperation. Bilateral cooperation, predominantly with European Union countries, was largely used for exchange of experts and examination of foreign practice. At the very beginning, some young experts were supported to engage in special issues studying in various European countries (thus, for instance, the teaching staff of the School for Principals was established). Visits to institutions of these countries enabled our approach to knowledge and experience, which were significant in creating strategy of changes of our educational system. It also enabled creation of database and bibliography, adoption of methodology of monitoring

educational system, and at some semi-formal (but extremely influential!) level, personal contacts with recognized foreign experts.

Still more important, in a certain sense, was the inclusion into multilateral programmes. Fortunately, for some programmes of European Commission Slovenia had an open road at the very beginning. In the early nineties the programme TEMPUS attracted a lot of attention of the broader public. It was, indeed, concerned with higher education, but through Faculty of Education at the University in Ljubljana and some other academic institutions, extremely important projects were developed for education of teachers and advancement of teaching process at schools (Science, Foreign languages, First cycle teaching, etc.) In the scope of the programme PHARE (now the closest to its philosophy is the programme CARDS) we managed to develop a series of projects for advancement of vocational education both at secondary and at higher level. Besides these projects of European Commission, which represented both moral and crucial material support, we ought to mention a very useful cooperation with international organizations as the Council of Europe and UNESCO, and in the second half of the nineties, the increasing cooperation with OECD. Thanks to those organizations we could utilize international expertise and bring international experts. Such visits and specialist support were mainly important with developmental projects, for instance, introduction of Matura and external examinations or the reform of higher education. In this context we have to mention our inclusion in international researches of learning results (e.g. TIMS) which required a great deal of our investment, but they proved worthwhile in detailed control of functioning of education, obtained results and their comparison at international level.

In the second half of the nineties, at such basis and in the field of education started the so-called »inclusion into Europe«. There are negotiations between governments of candidate countries and European Commission about over thirty areas. While I am writing this, Slovenian delegates are bringing to end the negotiations about the last of those areas. Negotiations in the area of education were on agenda at the very beginning (1997) and were concluded fast and successfully. On that ground in May 1998 Slovenia was enabled to enter the programmes of European Union in the area of education and training: Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Young for Europe. Our schools and universities, teachers and students, experience this entrance, in the first place, as stimulation for quality of their achievements.

4. Introduction of new externally assessed Matura examination (1993—1995)

One of the most significant projects in the last ten years certainly is the introduction of *Matura*. The decision on new Matura was brought in 1989 as one of many ideas in the tide of school innovations of the time. Tumultuous events in the following two years had slightly slowed down that project, but after 1992 there were energetic preparations for a concrete implementation. With the assistance of some international experts, as already mentioned, numerous examination commissions for individual subjects started work, tests were designed, external assessors trained, system of assessment simulated and all the necessary logistics prepared. System of external assessment is complex and demanding. Potential mistakes in this system are more obvious, and could be more fatal than in traditional assessment. This caused anxiety not only to students (and parents), but teachers as well. It was an innovation with which we were familiar only from papers reporting experience from some Western European countries, therefore, no wonder that some even experts felt some anxiety.

The most usual reproaches from layman circles was articulated as a warning of »overburdening« the learners. In fact, we are not talking about a systematic criticism here, but are rather transmitting an evaluative judgement known to all modern permissive cultures about such (still) unfamiliar innovation. This reproach slightly began to dissolve in the process of issuing the so-called *Matura catalogues*, understood also as »contracts« between a school and learners. These catalogues represented a systematic attempt of introducing (minimum) standards, which the school is obliged to offer the students, and he or she is obliged to gain knowledge of. The culture of Matura examinations has promoted the transparency of tasks and schematic preparation for examinations as opposed to traditional, often repressive culture of examinations as almost mystical initiation. Long-lasting debates on procedures and writing voluminous Matura regulations have helped in solving another important issue, the issue of fairness and objectivity in determining knowledge as well as transparent and democratic procedures. Objectivity of the results of externally assessed Matura examination was the final argument in convincing high school teachers (this decreased the informal, but existing, pressure, for instance from parents with »status« on teachers) and university professors. After introducing external Matura the Universities gave up their separate entrance examinations, and the recent years practice proves that such decision was correct. In subject Matura commissions both high school teachers and university professors sit, which lessens doubts and constructively links both levels of educational vertical.

After intensive two-year preparations of commissions, assessors and logistic services at national level, and teachers and students at schools, in 1994 a trial Matura was performed in about 10% of all schools. The exercise passed without any problems, therefore the following year (1995) Matura was performed in all secondary schools. Apart from comprehensive high schools (the so-called »gimnazija«) students from vocational and technical schools (four year study) could have taken Matura, or, for some time, they had another option, to take a »non-external« final examination. Introduction of Matura examination forcefully initiated preparation of conceptual changes in secondary education.

5. New concept of education and new legislation (1993—1996)

It was deliberately intended to solve the burning problems through engagement on several developmental projects as it was the project of Matura examination (we can mention, for instance, new approaches to kindergartens, descriptive assessment in primary school or early language learning, dual system in vocational schools, new higher vocational schools as a part of tertiary education, etc.), and first positive experiences convinced us that the moment has come for overall new concept of upbringing and education. For that reason a large spectrum of experts and teachers were animated and organized, and they started work on synthesising results of theoretical research and real-life experience. The final target was preparation of the national strategic document and adoption of new legislature.

The former was accomplished in *The White Paper on upbringing and education in the Republic of Slovenia* (February 1995; English translation 1996; Serbian translation 2001), which begins with philosophy, principles and theoretical standpoints, and then elaborates all significant elements of educational vertical separately: from public kindergartens, nine-year primary school, high schools (comprehensive, technical and vocational), vocational schools at secondary (two-year, three-year and four-year programmes) and higher (two-year) level, higher education (principally three-year professional or four-year university studies) and, finally,

lifelong education, that is education for adults. Education of teachers assumes university study. This document also contains conceptual analysis of public and private schools: public schools are grounded on legal neutrality and mutual values as democracy, solidarity, tolerance, and they forbid confessional, ideological or similar activities, whilst private schools do allow special educational doctrines or confessions, being, at the same time, financed from budget account with a large percentage (85%).

In line with the *White Paper* ran the preparation of new legislation, almost as a »package deal«. As soon as 1993 the Parliament adopted the Law on higher education, which, among other things, introduced externally assessed Matura examination as a condition for enrolling university studies (until recently, for enrolment at professional higher education one could apply even with the diploma of – internally assessed - final examination) and abolished entrance examinations. Together with publication of *White Paper*, the Ministry terminated the two-year work on preparation of bills, which many experts and lawyers had worked on. In spring 1995 the Government sent this package of regulations to the Parliament. The procedure of three parliamentary readings lasted exactly one year. Thus, in spring 1996 the following laws were passed: Law on organization and financing education as an »umbrella« law and subordinate laws including Law on Kindergartens, Law on primary school, Law on vocational and technical education, Law on Gymnasium, Law on Adult Education. After several months Law on school inspection was also passed, departing traditional concept of school inspection and introducing more contemporary forms. It was accompanied with introduction of self-evaluation process and quality assurance at schools.

The »package« of six laws has been followed by some other. Thus, in 2000 the following laws were passed: Law on directing children with special needs, Law on music schools and Law on national professional qualifications. In addition, amendments to some laws from 1996 were passed or have been prepared. In recent years more than 300 laws, by-laws and other legal regulations have been prepared. They are concerned with legal system, which will enable real changes in the work of schools and kindergartens.

6. Introduction of new laws in educational practice (1996-2000)

With the adoption of new legislation the altered system of education has become a norm and waited to be realized. The period from 1996 to 1998 was marked with changes of contents, which were trusted to the special expert body appointed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, *The National Curricular Council*. The Council was responsible for creation of new curricula on the whole vertical, and they were assisted in this job by curricular commissions for individual levels (primary school, vocational and technical schools, gymnasium, adults, etc), curricular commissions for individual school subjects and work of teacher groups. Thus a great number of specialists and teachers were involved in the process of preparing and piloting suggested new curricula. Two-year debates were heated and open, but mainly led to consensual decisions. The National Curricular Council was obliged to present the suggested new curricula to legally authorized expert boards (Expert Boards for General Education, Vocational Education and Training, Education of Adults; see above, point 2) and in most cases they were approved in the school year 1998-1999.

6.1. Pre-school education

The basic task of curricular changes in pre-school education was the inclusion of as many children as possible (now over 60% of the children are included) in kindergartens with flexibility and growth of quality of kindergarten programmes. New curriculum for (public) kindergartens was adopted in March 1999. Its principles stem from the Convention on children's rights, while conceptually it implies transition from traditional emphasizing of contents over the process of early upbringing and education. It is directed to motivation of child and pays more attention to individualization. Among the areas of performance in the new curriculum there are movement, language, art, society, nature and mathematics, which are constantly linked and interrelated. Elements of new curricular philosophy are also visible in emphasizing respect of family identity, inclusion of parents in work planning, children's rights to gradual adapting to the kindergarten, etc. New curriculum offers greater flexibility, particularly with offering shorter (e.g. half-day) programmes. Its introduction into kindergartens is gradual: about 25% of kindergartens have (voluntarily) started introducing the new curriculum in 1999 and in 2002 it is already offered nearly elsewhere.

6.2. Primary school

The most commented and probably also most important decision approved in the Parliament was the decision on *nine-year primary school* (instead of prior eight-year primary school). It begins at the age of six, with »soft« introduction, which illustrates the overall change of philosophy concerning the entrance at schools: in that process a (kindergarten) educator and a (class) teacher are working together with a group. New primary school is divided in three »triads«, at the end of which national evaluation control of achievements is assumed (it was executed for first time in spring 2002). Control at the end of first and second triads implies monitoring, while external control at the end of primary school will affect with half of the points to general achievements (the other half is from teachers). Nine-year school is accompanied with numerous didactic and content changes, for instance, descriptive assessment, introduction of (flexible) differentiation and choice elective subjects in the third triad. Each pupil has to choose three elective subjects from natural-technical and social-humanistic groups. Until now over 40 different elective subjects have been devised (a school has to offer at least six elective subjects, respecting the school's tradition, local particularities, specific interests of children or community, school potentials, teaching staff, etc).

Introduction of nine-year primary school is also gradual. First 10% of schools (based on public competition) started in 1999-2000, around 25% of schools will be engaged in 2000-2001, 30% of schools in 2001-2002 and all schools in 2003-2004. Introduction of new nine-year school was accompanied with *systematic teacher training* (obligatory supplementary education). During this period of gradual introduction of nine-year primary school particular attention is also paid to the modernization of the »old« programme of eight-year primary school. At the same time, some strategic issues are under discussion. One of the most crucial problems in the field of primary education is the huge decrease of population, which also conditions the decrease of existing (broad) school network. Extension to nine years and improvement of standards (for instance, smaller groups) could in these circumstances lower down some pressures, which would have risen, in other case (e.g. surplus of teachers)

6.3. Vocational education

In the sole philosophy of vocational education and training the most important principle is the partnership between schools and enterprises. This principle is already reflected in the Board for vocational education and training, which has triple structure (educators, employers and trade unions). New labour market requirements are the starting point in designing new curricula. This implies the design of flexible programmes of vocational education. There are short two-year programmes, intended particularly to young population at risk, as well as alternative forms of education, like production schools (training of marginalized young people to re-enter the regular school system). The system has kept traditional three-year vocational schools offering »dual« (practice at craftsman) or »school« (practice in school workshop) system. The dual system covers up to 5% of entire secondary school population, and has never been intended to represent a great educational »motorway«: it is dependent to interests of young people and offers of craftsmen and enterprises. Four-year technical schools have become the predominant form of vocational education and training, but needed a new position in the changes of entire education, particularly in relation to technical gymnasiums. There is a system »3+2« for those who finish three-year vocational school and wish to get the qualification of a *technician* (additional two years of study).

These forms are mostly continuation of programmes, which existed even before, but some innovations were introduced as *craftsman course*, *vocational course* and *higher vocational colleges* (two-year). *Craftsman course* gives qualification of a skilled craftsman, and *vocational course* is intended for gymnasium students who do not wish to continue higher education, but wish to acquire certain qualification for work. *Higher vocational colleges* are part of tertiary education, but they are separated from higher education. They aim for acquiring top qualification, and they should take over also a role of developmental agencies in regional centres of Slovenia. In Slovenia nowadays there are already over 20 such schools (public and private) with around 5000 students. Those schools play a positive role particularly concerning education of adults (in cooperation with larger regional enterprises).

Vocational education had also undergone many didactical and content changes, and at systemic level most important was the transition from final examination (introduced in 1990-1991) to »vocational matura« (partly externally assessed examination) introduced in the school year 2001-2002. The amended Law on higher education (1999) now allows students with »vocational matura«, under certain conditions, enrolment at university studies.

6.4. High school (Gymnasium)

Traditional high school (gymnasium), which disappeared in the reform of early eighties when the specialized training was introduced, was re-established already at the end of eighties. Its re-establishment was accompanied with modernization of programme and some other innovations, of which the most important was introduction of Matura in 1995. This is why curricular changes from the late nineties were not that big for gymnasium as they were for, say, primary school. Conceptually, gymnasium remains the preparation for higher education, and the growing interest for education in them and interest for flexible programme offer have led to differentiation of *general gymnasium* and *technical gymnasiums*. Both of these provide general education, but technical gymnasiums are »coloured« in such way that certain part of the programme (for instance, technique or economy) get more weight, and the scope of some other subject gets decreased. General gymnasium was also accompanied with some didactical

and content changes, and, perhaps, the most important one is the development of elective subjects. Just as »vocational course« enables passage in the system for gymnasium students who do not wish to study at the university, introduction of one-year »matura course« enables students from vocational schools to prepare for taking external Matura examination and enrolling higher education.

6.5. Education of teachers

In line with all these changes the system of education of teachers has also changed. In fact, already in mid-eighties a decision was made to transform the former Teachers training academies into Faculties of Education at the universities. It is not only renaming, but assumes different concept, which takes into account gradual necessary changes of education system as a whole. The concept of university teacher training intentionally contains a researching component, distinctive for university studies in general. On the other hand, introduction of undergraduate university studies was directed towards creation of conditions for postgraduate (specialization degree, MSc, PhD). This was obtained until mid-nineties.

Besides undergraduate (*pre-service*) teacher education and training, increasing attention is directed to further specialization (*in-service* education and training). Today, in-service training has many forms. The most massive is the continual training. There are obligatory annual modules, which assemble the majority of teachers. Special expert council selects modules at the basis of public competition, taking into account the diverse and flexible offer for schools and teachers to make their own choice. The Ministry does not have any impact on content decisions, but by means of financing (partially or completely) can stimulate the programmes, which are particularly important for development of education. Various institutions manage these programmes, from Department of Education to higher education institutions, research institutes or professional associations.

Another form of specialization is the so-called university credential programme (short programmes lasting between two months and one year). These programmes are designed and performed by higher education institutions (mostly faculties of education). Candidates obtain licence for teaching a new subject or performing certain curricular innovations, etc. Thus, for instance, in recent years there was a huge interest of teachers in a programme for working in the first triad of primary school, for early language learning, for teaching science (in the third triad), programme for teaching religion and ethics and some other elective subjects of the third triad. There are also special programmes which prepare the »two-subject« (primary or vocational school) teachers for intensive teaching of one subject in gymnasiums. Last but not least, there is a special credential programme for issuing teaching licence to graduates of non-educational university studies (for instance, engineers working in technical schools, etc.)

Finally, we must not forget another form of specialization, which implies studies for obtaining the university diploma for the former Teacher Academies' graduates (associated degree; two-year college). This study is organized at the universities for the employed teachers with years of practice; it is financially supported from the state budget. Its main results are advancement of teachers, freshening their knowledge and even their personal promotion.

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Note: Some of the above works could be found (also in English) at Internet web site <http://www.see-educoop.net> and <http://pef.pef.uni-lj.si/ceps/>