

**Education Policy in Education for Democratic Citizenship and the
Management of Diversity in South East Europe**

Stocktaking Research Project

Country Report: Slovenia

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1. National context - social, political and cultural

At the beginning of its existence as an independent nation in 1990, “Slovenia was in a relatively strong position” (OECD). With a population of 2 million, it had been a prosperous part of former Yugoslavia, bordering Italy, Austria and Hungary, with close links not only to them but also to Germany and other Western countries. Its ethnical structure is rather homogenous and has not changed significantly since 1991 (according to the 1991 census Slovenia comprised approximately 88% Slovenes, predominantly Catholic, with Hungarian and Italian minorities at the Hungary and Italy borders, and some economic immigrants from other parts of former Yugoslavia - Serbs, Croats etc.). The Italian and Hungarian minorities (0.16 % and 0.43 %, respectively) and the Romany community have constitutional and legal protection.

In 1991, the most far-reaching political changes occurred: the formation of Slovenia as an independent state, the adoption of the new Constitution which introduced representative democracy based on the principles of human rights and the rule of law and, last but not least, the implementation of a multi-party system and market economy.

If it is possible to differentiate between the overall situation of Slovenia and other parts of former Yugoslavia in 1991, important facts which influenced its overall political situation were –

- its relatively uncomplicated ethnic composition,
- its geographical location, somewhat distant from the influence of ‘Belgrade’s’ politics,
- the high political consensus of the nation and the major political parties for democracy as against any form of totalitarian rule.

In 1991, Slovenia gained independence swiftly and without falling into the catastrophe of civil war. The 1992 elections were a demonstration of the acceptance of a broad set of common political aims - to gain economic and social prosperity and to accede to the European Union.

After the country had gained independence, substantial changes were necessary in many areas, including the legal and governmental systems and, of particular importance from the point of view of vocational education and training, the industrial structure and the labour market. In the years following independence, the gross domestic product (GDP) fell substantially and unemployment increased.

Slovenia has had a continuous macroeconomic stabilisation policy throughout the last decade. Since 1993, economic growth has been positive. The latest estimates suggest an annual growth rate of between 3.5 and 5.2 per cent for the past five years (1996-2000).¹ Estimates of GDP buying power per capita for the year 2000 showed

¹ Slovenian GDP between 1996 and 2000: 3.5 %, 4.6 %, 3.8 %, 5.2%, 4.6% (Office for Macroeconomic Analysis). In 1999, gross national income (GNI) per capita (Atlas method) grew to 10,000.0 US\$ (World Bank).

that Slovenia reached 73 % of the EU average.² Following a high rise in unemployment upon independence, in accordance with ILO standards, the unemployment rate has been falling in the past three years and reached an average of 7 per cent last year (which was below the 8.4 per cent EU-15 average - Office for Macroeconomic Analysis). Slovenia has gone through many changes, building a liberal and competitive market economy, and generally speaking has been in a similar situation to other countries in transition. Nevertheless, due to a relatively fast economic recovery society has managed to retain relatively stable social structures with the education system being one of main generators of its social cohesion.

One of the most important elements of the governmental policies during the past decade has been a strong measure of continuity in the process of reform. Since 1992, all existing significant political parties have participated in different government coalitions, but the main characteristics of the electoral body have remained stable. Surprisingly, in the 1992, 1996 and 2000 general elections, the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia Party was the leading party and formed the government coalitions. One of the positive effects has been that different governments during the past decade have ensured the already mentioned continuity in the economic and other policies, including education policy and its reforms. Slovenia is at present negotiating to enter the European Union and it seems as though it will meet the economic, political and other criteria for EU membership.

1. Policies and legislative base

General Considerations

The fundamental feature of the past decade has been that throughout the period the education system has been going through a gradual but thorough reform.

At first, between 1990 and 1992, when former Yugoslavia was disintegrating and Slovenia became an independent state, the educational policy was not one of the priorities of the first democratic government, but the governmental party coalition, which formed the government in May 1992, began preparations for major educational reform. The theoretical and conceptual part was prepared and publicly discussed in the years 1992 to 1994. The result of this was the *White Paper on Education in the*

² Czech Republic, following Slovenia among CEFTA countries, according to this indicator reached 63 % last year. Among those accession countries, Slovenia was in the period between 1995 and 2000 the most successful in decreasing the arrears of BDP per capita buying power against the EU average – in 1997 has overtaken the less developed EU countries, Greece, and has come near to Portugal according to those estimates (Office for Macroeconomic Analysis, Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies).

Republic of Slovenia, which was published in January 1995 (English version 1996).³ Following these conceptual guidelines, the process of legislative and curricular reform was based on the political, cultural and moral values reflected in human rights, the rule of law, pluralistic democracy, tolerance and solidarity. The overall philosophy and principles forming the basis for renewal were: (1) accessibility and transparency of the public education system, (2) legal neutrality, (3) choice at all levels, (4) democracy, autonomy and equal opportunities, and (5) quality of learning to take precedence over the accumulation of facts.

The next year, in February 1996, the parliament adopted the most important acts of the new educational legislation (*The Organisation and Financing Act, The Pre-school Institutions Act, The Primary Education Act, The Grammar Schools Act, The Vocational and Professional Schools Act* and *The Adult Education Act*).⁴ In subsequent years acts on professional and academic titles, school inspectorates, music schools and the placement of children with special needs followed. Following a different developmental logic, the *Higher Education Act* was adopted back in 1993 and was changed last year.

Briefly, the main changes introduced by the reform were:

- diversified programs at the pre-school level;
- the eight year primary and lower secondary school program (compulsory school) was extended by one year through early admittance into school at age six ;
- in the field of assessing knowledge in the nine year school program new features of the system were a descriptive assessment in the first three years and external examinations after the third, sixth and ninth years of schooling, early start of learning first foreign language, different forms of internal flexible differentiation in the second cycle and partial external differentiation with electives and ability groups in the third cycle (last three years of compulsory school);
- at the upper secondary school level the most important change was the introduction of external final examinations (*matura*) as an entrance ticket to university studies; and,
- in the field of vocational education and training, a new so-called dual system was introduced.

The inspection service was abolished and a new system of inspection was introduced. New educational legislation enabled independent (private) kindergartens and schools to be financed through state funds to the amount of 85 to 100 per cent of running costs.

After the education system had obtained a new legal framework in 1996 the process of reworking the curriculum for the entire pre-university education system began. The bulk of the curricular reform was carried out between 1996 and 1999. Nevertheless, the processes of implementing particular major changes required by the

³ Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji, J. Krek (ed.), Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Ljubljana 1995; The White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia, ed. J. Krek, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ljubljana 1996. Internet – Slovene and English version: http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id_slo.htm.

⁴ Šolska zakonodaja (School Legislation), Ministry of Education and Sport, Ljubljana 1996.

educational legislation will not be completed until 2005. Following the renewal of most curricula, in 1999 the ministry initiated a development of additional mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of changes and the quality of work of individual schools. Quality assessment and assurance, based on the principle of institutional self-evaluation with external support of professional institutions, is becoming one of the strategic goals.⁵

The general conclusion on educational reform could be that it seems to have succeeded in modernizing and liberalizing the educational system and also to develop it further in material terms. The reform also required that some new professional public institutions were to be established - for example, National Adult Education Centre (1990 - *Andragoški center Slovenije*, ACS), National Examinations Centre (1993 - *Državni izpitni center*, RIC), Centre for VET (1995 - *Center za poklicno izobraževanje*, CPI), School of Principals (1995 - *Šola za ravnatelje*, ŠR), Centre for Out-school Activities (1995 - *Center za šolske in obšolske dejavnosti*, CŠOD).

Paradoxically, as a result of the reform, the educational system has been both centralized and decentralized. In general, educational legislation has strengthened a democratic and functioning system of power-sharing. It has been promoting teacher and school autonomy, expert autonomy, etc. But on the other hand, there have been several steps towards centralization. Finances should be mentioned. Before 1990, the finances of the educational system were decentralized. Schools were financed mainly through municipalities, with the effect that in less prosperous regions teacher's salaries were considerably lower. Therefore, after the new state had emerged, the system of finances was centralized. It has been a quick solution to attain equality and transparency, which was even more necessary in the unpredictable circumstances of the development of a new system of municipalities.

The Slovenian education system is still in the process of implementation changes defined by legislation and curricular documents and evaluation of the solutions that have already been implemented in the system. At the moment, there is hardly any discussion about solutions and possible changes in the future. The reason could lie in the fact that decisions were widely accepted and that, therefore, there seems to be no requirement, neither publicly expressed plans nor wishes for major educational reform at the moment. In addition, a number of the most contested

⁵ For more about the educational reform see: Pavel Zgaga, "Educational Policy and Quality in Education". In: "Ways Towards Quality in Education". Ed. by I. Stronach et al. Open Society Institute Slovenia, Ljubljana 2000, pp. 39-50. And Pavel Zgaga, Development of Educational Policy in Slovenia 1991-2000, Conference on National Education Concept Paper Proceedings. Open Society Institute - Institut of Educational Policy (Budapest), International Renaissance Foundation (Kyiv), Ukrainian Academy of Science. Kyiv, 24-27 January 2001.

solutions have already been modified. A less generous interpretation would be that it might also be a sign of stagnation in the field of educational policy. In any case, there is still a pressing need to improve the financial position and material conditions of the education system.

In the near future, the renewal will probably focus on ensuring the transparency of the system, enabling an objective judgement on whether the system is functioning properly, and gradually building and changing the existing structure. The government, which was established after the 2000 elections, has a strong position in parliament and has a mandate till 2004. It is building its educational policy on the existing legislative and curricular basis, developed in the previous decade. Since EDC/MofD has been an integral component of the reform and the government is building its educational policy on the existing legislative solutions and curricular documents, its EDC/MofD policy is also being based upon the accepted legal and conceptual framework.

There are no “special” EDC/MofD programs of the National Government or the World Bank. Educational policy and measures of the National Government include EDC/MofD as a component of the curricular reform.

The constitutional and legal basis

According to the Constitution, adopted in 1991, international agreements and conventions become a part of the internal legal order. “Laws and regulations must comply with generally accepted principles of international law and with treaties that are binding Slovenia. Ratified and published treaties shall be applied directly” (Article 8 of the Constitution).

The Constitution itself guarantees basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and constitutionally protected minorities. »In its own territory, Slovenia shall protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall protect and guarantee the rights of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities« (Article 5 of the Constitution). Human rights and freedoms are in greater detail defined in the second part of the Constitution (*Articles 14 to 65*).

Article 11 defines that “the official language in Slovenia is Slovene” and at the same time guarantees that “in those municipalities where Italian or Hungarian national communities reside, Italian or Hungarian shall also be official languages”. *Article 64* defined in detail special rights of the »autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities« in Slovenia.⁶ *Article 65* defined that the status and special rights of the Romany community in Slovenia »shall be regulated by law«.

Article 7, stipulates: “The state and religious communities shall be separate. Religious communities shall enjoy equal rights; they shall pursue their activities freely.” According to the *Constitution*, the separation of the state and religion has been one of the basic principles of the state which has been an important factor in discussions and concepts of citizenship education in Slovenia ever since.

Educational legislation

In this report, it is impossible to analyse in great length the whole structure of educational legislation from the perspective of EDC and diversity. Particular solutions within the framework of educational legislation will be discussed in greater detail later in the text. Here, we will refer to general educational objectives which are embedded in its entire structure. These basic values and principles were defined in the most “general” law, covering organisation and financing of pre-university education, namely in *The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (OFEA), Article 2*:

“The education system in Slovenia shall aim to:

- guarantee optimum development to individuals regardless of their sex, social and cultural background, religion, national origin and physical and mental handicaps;

⁶ Article 64 - Special Rights of the Autochthonous Italian and Hungarian National Communities in Slovenia: »The autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities and their members shall be guaranteed the right to use their national symbols freely and, in order to preserve their national identity, the right to establish organizations and develop economic, cultural, scientific and research activities, as well as activities in the field of public media and publishing. In accordance with laws, these two national communities and their members have the right to education and schooling in their own languages, as well as the right to establish and develop such education and schooling. The geographic areas in which bilingual schools are compulsory shall be established by law. These national communities and their members shall be guaranteed the right to foster relations with their nations of origin and their respective countries. The state shall provide material and moral support for the exercise of these rights.

In order to exercise their rights, the members of these communities shall establish their own self-governing communities in the geographic areas where they live. On the proposal of these self-governing national communities, the state may authorize them to perform certain functions under national jurisdiction, and shall provide funds for the performing of such functions.

The two national communities shall be directly represented in representative bodies of local self-government and in the National Assembly.

The position of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the manner in which their rights are exercised in the geographic areas where they live, the obligations of the self-governing local communities for the exercise of these rights, and those rights which the members of these national communities shall also exercise outside these areas, shall all be regulated by law. The rights of both national communities and their members shall be guaranteed irrespective of the number of members of these communities.

Laws, regulations and other general acts that concern the exercise of the constitutionally provided rights and the position of the national communities exclusively, may not be adopted without the consent of representatives of these national communities.”

- educate for mutual tolerance, developing the awareness of the equality of rights for men and women, respect for human diversity and mutual co-operation, respect for children's and human rights and fundamental freedoms, and fostering equal opportunities for both sexes and thereby the capacity to live in a democratic society;
- develop language proficiency and skills as well as promoting the awareness of the position of the Slovene language as the language of the Slovene state, and--in ethnically mixed areas--fostering and developing the Italian and Hungarian languages in addition to Slovene;
- foster the awareness of individual's integrity;
- develop the awareness of citizenship and national identity as well as the knowledge of Slovenia's history and culture;
- enable participation in European integration processes;
- promote choice at all levels of education;
- offer education adapted to the level of development and the age of each individual;
- guarantee equal educational opportunities in regions with special developmental problems;
- guarantee equal educational opportunities to socially deprived children;
- guarantee equal educational opportunities to children, youth and adults with special needs;
- promote lifelong learning;
- enable everybody to acquire a broad base of knowledge and obtain a qualification;
- enable as large percentage of population as possible to obtain the highest possible level of education without lowering the level of difficulty;
- enable as large percentage of population as possible to develop and achieve the highest possible level of creativity.⁷

A key characteristic of the Slovenian education system is *Article 72* of the Act which has defined the precise meaning of "school autonomy" and has regulated the "autonomous use of school property".⁸

⁷ The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (OFEA), *Article 2*. In: Šolska zakonodaja (School Legislation), Ministry of Education and Sport, Ljubljana 1996. Internet government site: <http://www.mss.edus.si/zakonodaja/F/Z96237FZ.asp>. All quotations of the OFEA English (unofficial) translation are taken from: http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id_slo.htm.

⁸ "Activities not related to education may be carried out in public pre-school institutions or schools only with the permission of principals.

Activities of political parties and their youth shall be prohibited in pre-school institutions and schools. Religious activities shall not be permitted in public pre-school institutions and schools and pre-school institutions and schools with concession.

Religious activities of the preceding paragraph of this Article shall include:

- sectarian Bible study or religious education aiming at establishing that religion;
- instruction in cases when educational contents, textbooks, teacher training and suitable characteristics of teachers are determined by religious communities;
- organised religious rituals.

Upon the proposal of a principal, the minister can exceptionally permit Bible study or religious education to take place in a public pre-school institution or school or a pre-school institution or school with a concession outside class and after regular hours, if there are no other premises suitable for such activity in that local community.

Authorised state officials--with the exception of inspectorates and the state auditing agency need the principal's permission to perform their duty in a pre-school institution or school.

An official may enter the premises of a pre-school institution or school without the principal's permission if so authorised by law or a court decree or if that is unavoidable in order to make an arrest or protect people and property" (*Article 72* of OFEA).

1.1. Education for Democratic Citizenship

1.1.1. Curriculum

*The White Paper*⁹ in its introductory part devoted much attention to citizenship education.

Principles stated in *The White Paper* explicitly demand **education for democracy**: “Knowledge and the critical power of reasoning acquired at school are instrumental in facing ideological, political, religious and other possible tendencies and pressures. Therefore curricula and employment of teachers, education experts and administrators should be independent from the momentary relation of political forces in the society.” “The neutrality of public schools with regard to the view of life should be guaranteed by laws and other regulations. It is essential that children, parents, teachers and the wider public be acquainted with democratic elements of our and other cultural traditions.”

... and **education for and participation in democratic processes**: “The starting point of education in pre-school institutions and schools is the child's and human rights. Both institutions accustom children to acceptable ways of becoming part of the community, which is directly connected with education for tolerance, solidarity and responsibility.” “The undisturbed course of life and work in pre-school institutions and schools as institutions ensures fundamental rules of behaviour and communication, originating from the notion of the individual's freedoms as not limiting the freedom of others.” “The essential premise for the participation in the democratic processes is also the development of a critical spirit, personal decision-making and autonomous judgement.”

Last but not the least, school is regarded as a place that **creates and forms a democratic public**: “School plays an important role in forming a democratic public, and in the development of the capacity to participate in the democratic processes. Curriculum contents and subjects (variations of the so called civic education) as well as curriculum forms are important for such a process.”

Those fundamental principles which have been laid down in *The White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia* could be regarded as a framework not only for the legislative solutions but also for education policy in the last decade in Slovenia.

The result of the curricular reform that took place in the years 1996-1999 has been a new national curriculum which includes new syllabuses for pre-school institutions, compulsory school (primary and lower secondary school), upper secondary schools (for all programs at that level) and vocational education and

⁹ The draft of the ‘Principles and Theoretical Points of Departure’ was prepared and the final version was edited by Eva Dolar Bahovec, Zdenko Kodolja, Ljubica Marjanovič Umek, Pavel Zgaga, Mojca K. Šebart, Marjan Šimenc, and Janez Krek. In: *The White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia*, ed. J. Krek, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ljubljana 1996. – “The Principles and Theoretical Points of Departure” were first publicly discussed in February 1993. Later, the text was presented at many consultations on the conception of the system of education and was reviewed by Bojan Borstner, Zdenko Medveš, Braco Rotar, and Darko Štrajn.

training programs. A key change in the process of preparing the new national syllabus has been the move from defining the contents of a particular subject to defining only its educational aims, which has provided teacher autonomy in choosing their methods of teaching and subject content. In general, the defined aims in the syllabus correspond to the values and principles stressed in *The White Paper* and in educational legislation.

The place of *civic education* in the curriculum

In principle, in the national curriculum documents and laws, citizenship education is regarded as civic education which teaches about society, human rights, democracy, the political system, etc.

The White Paper has stated that public education – and therefore education for democratic citizenship – has to have a *lay* and *universal* character: “Public education has a lay character and should not be under the monopolistic influence of individual churches, parties or groups with various ideological conceptions of life. Lay pre-school institutions and schools are institutions with room for all regardless of their personal concept of life, religious, philosophical or other convictions and opinions.”

But in fact, in Slovenia there are, as there were historically, two divergent concepts of the position of “civic education” in state run schools.

According to the first, which at the moment is based in law, not only the contents of civic education are learned or taught through different subjects of the curriculum but are also conveyed through a specific subject which is *compulsory* for *all* students. It teaches values that reflect a consensus of fundamental values and value systems and must, just like all other subjects in state schools, meet the criteria of *non-ideology* or *neutrality* according to which indoctrination must not be the objective of the educational process.

The second concept of civic education has two variants. According to this concept, the contents of civic education should be put into effect in variant A as a *compulsory* subject for *all* students (in state schools) based on a specific/particular value system. In Slovenia, both the Church and the Communist Party demanded from schools that a certain world view should permeate through this and all other subjects; in the first case, it should be Catholicism, in the second, Marxism. In variant B, civic education is conceived as a subject which is *an alternative* to (optional) religious instruction classes. In fact, the latter is the primary concern of this variant. The subject is conceived as religious instruction classes of a particular (Catholic) religion and therefore it has to be optional. As a consequence, its alternative – i.e. a citizenship education which is perceived by the Church as ‘lay ethics’ – ‘becomes’ an optional subject.

The White Paper was in favour of the first concept, which was accepted in the process of adopting the educational legislation. The second concept has its supporters but today no one is favour of variant A. The foremost and probably most insistent advocate of variant B in Slovenia is now the Roman Catholic Church.

The new *nine-year primary school* curriculum includes a subject called *Civic Education and Ethics*, which is an obligatory subject, one hour per week throughout the 7th and 8th grade (3.3 % of hours of the total amount of hours in the 7th and 8th

grades). The subject is in fact a successor of a subject with an interesting history. In former Yugoslavia, the subject was called “Socio-moral Education” (at the upper-secondary school level it was called “Self-management and the Fundamentals of Marxism”) and in the nineties - before curricular reform - the subject remained a part of the curriculum, conceived as an experiment. At that time, it was called ‘Ethics and Society’. The subject ‘Socio-moral Education’ was an obligatory subject in the 7th and 8th grades in eight-year ‘primary school’ (3.0 % of hours in the total amount of hours in the 7th and 8th grades. This also means that in nine-year primary school the subject begins one year earlier than at the previous eight-year school curriculum but curiously it has not been included into the school curriculum of the ninth grade).

Besides that subject, the new curriculum of the nine-year primary school has three weeks per school year earmarked for practical activities such as cultural activity days, science days, *community work* and sports days. Each school defines for itself, in its annual program of work, the educational aims and contents of activities.

In the process of curricular reform, groups of experts in different subject areas such as history, geography, social studies (a subject in the lower grades of primary school), had to work together in order to make a coherent syllabus for EDC as a cross-curricular subject. Therefore, the educational aims of different subjects such as history, geography etc. include, or at least should include, EDC aims. The general orientation of this work has not been concerned with including aims of *civic education* in syllabuses but more generally “knowledge about society”.

It should be mentioned that the new curriculum increases the number of hours designed for foreign languages in the new nine-year primary school: the first foreign language is started in the fourth grade (when children are nine years old) and a second foreign language is added as an optional subject in the seventh grade.

The upper-secondary school level curriculum includes different subjects that could be linked to citizenship education, such as philosophy, sociology, history, geography, etc. But the secondary school (gymnasium) program does not have *civic education* as a separate subject. There is the intention, at least from the part of the Office of Education, to include a new subject called *citizenship culture* as a separate and more distinctive subject in gymnasias program. This year a group of experts were brought together in order to prepare it. Indeed, within the framework of the *compulsory electives* (up to 300 hours, which is 6% of the total amount of hours of the program) schools have to carry out 15 hours of *civic culture* and another 15 hours of *peace education*. In comparison with all other subjects, compulsory electives are different because there are no syllabuses for compulsory electives at the national level, only recommendations, and they are often performed as excursions, camps, activities etc. Although schools have an opportunity to offer civic education of up to 150 hours, they usually offer only the required minimum of 15 hours. The concept of compulsory electives has enabled them to be carried out by school teachers and outside actors. The requirements concerning formal education for participants have been relaxed, and since six percent of hours of all four-year programs is not something to be neglected in financial and other terms, this aspect of the program has created quite a vivid scene which offers different programs and a variety of participants e.g. NGO’s and also individual free-lance experts. Schools choose among programs and providers on the basis of the *Catalogue of Compulsory*

Electives, which is edited and published each year by *Board of Education*. It is worth mentioning that out of 370 pages of different program offers, only three pages are occupied with offers for *civic culture*, which is the minimum.

Vocational education and training: in two, three and four years programs there is a subject called Social Sciences which should in principle provide space for civic education (civic culture). The two-year programs contain 85 hours of Social Sciences (4,2 % of the total curriculum). Two-year programs, which accept pupils who have not finished compulsory school, contain 190 hours of Social Sciences (5.6 % of the total curriculum). The aims of civic education inside this subject should be similar to the primary school subject Citizenship Education and Ethics precisely because it has been intended for pupils that do not complete elementary school. Three-year dual system programs contain a minimum of 105 hours of Social Sciences (2,4%) and three-year non-dual programs a minimum of 210 hours (5,6%). Four-year vocational education and training programs have 140 hours of History and 140 hours of Social Sciences (5,5% of the total curriculum). In fact, the programs do not contain proper civic education contents because in the course of the curricular reform three scientific disciplines (History, Geography and Sociology) have occupied the whole space of the subject Social Sciences with their specific subject matter.

Schoolbooks for this subject in the three-year program exist, but there are no new materials or schoolbooks for the two-year program.

From the perspective of citizenship education at the level of vocation education and training, the fact that civic education is not a separate scientific discipline, as sociology, history and geography are, has a deep impact. Because of the professional interests of experts in the above-mentioned scientific disciplines, the subject Social Sciences is divided among the three with the unfortunate result that the contents of *civic education* are not introduced. Indeed, teachers have their professional autonomy and the syllabus offers possibilities for teaching civics. But since teachers of Social Sciences regard the teaching of democracy (civic education), generally speaking, as something rather alien, and as there has not been enough external support for them, we may speculate that this is not likely to happen in practice.

1.1.2. *Structural/organizational*

Current legislation, particularly the *Organization and Financing of Education Act* (OFEA), defines governmental policy that reflects a respect for democratic principles and human rights in the management and administration of schools. We have cited Article 2 of this *Act* above, from which it is evident that the fundamental goals of the education system demand of schools a positive and inclusive ethos. With regard to the structure and organization of the system, we might make mention of the fact that, on the one hand, legislation has imparted basic responsibility and, with this, a wide jurisdiction in management to the principal but, at the same time (1) it has established bodies (the School Board, Parents' Board) that ensure school autonomy to individual schools in relation to the state and local communities; (2) it has made possible, in a series of provisions, the professional autonomy of teachers (syllabi that define only educational goals, not methodological routes and the actual contents; the teacher has autonomy in deciding on the use of educational materials, textbooks, etc.);

and (3) legislation entirely different from before now safeguards the personal information of children and parents. It should be mentioned that the school must have bodies and services, such as teachers' working groups and advisory services, that assure greater expertise in conducting lessons and democratic procedures in dealing with individual pupils.

Public pre-school institutions and schools have **councils** (*Article 46*) which are composed of **three** founder representatives, **five** pre-school institution's or school's staff representatives and **three** parent representatives.¹⁰ This ratio gives considerable decision power to teachers and therefore supports the autonomy of a school in the field of its management.

According to *Article 66*, in each public pre-school institution or school, a **council of parents** shall be formed to implement parents' interests in an organized manner. Councils of parents shall be composed of one representative from each class elected by the parents at their meetings.¹¹

In order for principals to lead and manage schools democratically and successfully, upon the adoption of the legislation a special Principals' School was established. It is the policy of this school to emphasise the importance and effectiveness of participative styles of management. Thus the school contributes, through its educational programs, to building a positive democratic organisational culture in schools.

1.1.3. Teacher training

All programs for teachers that teach in public schools are at university level (four years study). The universities have autonomy in creating these programs. Teachers that teach in the first six grades of primary school and teachers of a limited number of other subjects (chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics, home

¹⁰ The authorities of the councils (*Article 48*) are:

- to appoint and remove the principals of pre-school institutions and schools,
- adopt pre-school's or school's development program, yearly program of work and the report on its implementation,
- decide to introduce above-standard and other programs,
- discuss the reports on educational problems,
- make decisions on the complaints concerning the status of pupils, apprentices, secondary-school students, vocational-college students and adults,
- the complaints concerning the rights, duties and responsibilities of staff resulting from their employment contracts, the complaints of parents concerning pre-school's or school's educational activities,
- and perform other tasks determined by law and the charter.

¹¹ Councils of parents shall:

- propose above-standard programs;
- approve principal's proposals for above-standard services;
- issue opinions on proposed development programs for pre-school institutions or schools and annual programs of work;
- discuss principal's reports on educational problems;
- discuss parents' complaints concerning education;
- elect their representatives to councils of pre-school institutions or schools;
- perform other tasks in compliance with law and other regulations.

economics), who study in two faculties of education (at the University of Ljubljana and at the University of Maribor) have in their study program two subjects (philosophy and sociology) which also prepare them for teaching citizenship and a special subject didactic of citizenship education. Teachers of other subjects (that do their studies at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences) such as their mother tongues, foreign languages and even history and geography, etc. don't have in their program such subjects and they are less prepared for teaching civics. This is a gap in their study programs but the state has no direct means of influencing program decisions at the university level.

Education policy systematically encouraged in-service training of teachers (IST). In the area of citizenship education there was a lot of work done continually year after year in so called "study groups" of teachers. They – as in other subject areas - include virtually all teachers of the subject *Civic Education and Ethics* (and also others that express concern for that area). That work was necessary because - as has already been mentioned - at the beginning of the nineties, the subject was conceived as an "experiment" called *Ethics and Society* and it has been through great changes in the last decade. Study groups of teachers are financially supported by the state and organised through the *Board of Education of Republic of Slovenia* (which is in fact an independent counselling service that works directly with schools, but the majority of its projects are financed by the state). It is in the special *Catalogue of In-Service Teacher Training*, where the officially approved programs are published each year. In previous years different providers offered only a small number of programs in the field of citizenship education.

Many programs in vocational education and training are being introduced. Teachers should know the new syllabus including citizenship education but there is some evidence of the opposite. Unfortunately, there is no additional education for teachers in the field of civic education, except in study groups.

In-service training offered by other institutions – especially faculties – has been less important, although faculties and other institutions have the capacities to offer more.

There were a number of successful international conferences that aroused interest in citizenship education, positively influenced the perception of citizenship education as a subject among teachers and introduced some practical experience.

1.2. Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion

1.2.1 Curriculum

The White Paper refers to several points that are directly or indirectly connected with the question of how (the following) education legislation should provide for education for democratic citizenship and how it should in general deal with the problem of diversity. – *The White Paper* stresses **the principle of plurality of cultures and knowledge**: "Schooling is also a process of education and cultural integration, of becoming part of the culture which surrounds us. In addition to becoming integrated into our own specific culture and national tradition, which should

be present at all levels of the school system, it is necessary to become acquainted with other cultures and civilisations, to be taught mutual tolerance and respect for being different. Learning about other cultures does not mean only getting to know related cultures or those which are present in a certain area but also others; that is the bedrock of the education for tolerance. Attention should be drawn to the fact that a sharp delineation between 'our' and 'their' or 'alien' civilisation, 'national' and 'popular' culture, moral education and 'entertainment', etc. is questionable". Besides the national one, it introduces the European dimension with the phrase "parallel learning" about national and foreign cultures, which plays an important role in forming and disseminating the national culture and in understanding the processes of European integration, migrations, political changes, etc. In addition to the balanced study program in history and geography, the curriculum should be based also on the insights "of anthropological and ethnographic studies pointing to great differences in evading life, bodily habits, satisfaction of the basic needs, clothing, socialising and competition, sexual behaviour, etc. Such intercultural comparisons help in broadening the spirit loosening and setting in context ethnocentricity (Eurocentricity included). They also help to achieve a better understanding of one's own cultural identity and tradition."

The basic values of the system should also be **the principles of equal opportunities, non-discrimination and optimal development**: "The state ensures possibilities for an optimal development regardless of sex, social and cultural background, religion, nationality, physical and psychological condition, etc. (stipulations in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and the Convention on the Rights of Children)." In order to be able to implement these rights, we have "to establish a democratic education system, making it possible to implement the principle of equal opportunity together with the requirement to make provisions for differences (individual differences, group differences and differences in the rate and pace of development), the right to choose and be different." "The principle of equal opportunity complements the demand for quality and in-depth-treatment connected with a diversified provision at all levels, which enables us to implement our right to choose various educational paths and contents. These rights and obligations are also tied to the special position of children and other categories of the population (minorities, members of various philosophical and ideological movements, adults, etc.)". The education system should organise "additional care" for "culturally and socially deprived children; they should make up for social deprivation and interrupt the vicious cycle of school failure". The right to equal opportunities is directly connected with the need for properly trained educators, a funding system and a developed scholarship system. At the same time, a more effective integration of children from culturally weaker environments into school activities "should not lead to lower knowledge standards and assessment". On the contrary, "it should be based on the introduction of mechanisms for balancing the initial state (the so-called starting base) and providing equal opportunities for the achievement of results".

The *White Paper* also stressed the importance of how the education system deals with **the differences between sexes**: "As far as the difference between sexes is concerned, the emphasis should shift from formal rights of non-discrimination to substantive ones and the provision of equal opportunities at all levels of the education system. Therefore, while discussing the rights of children, we should also speak of the rights of girls and the contradictory character of the idea of equal opportunities in an

unequal system of education, in which the members of one sex are still privileged in one way or another. With the introduction of coeducation for boys and girls, the apparent discrimination at the school system level was eliminated, but more subtle power mechanisms, typical of the school as a contemporary institution, (such as the organisation of school life, concrete teaching practice and styles, communication between students and teachers, etc.) continue. Teaching girls "how to lose" is still preserved in the "hidden curriculum".

There is **explicit reference to the principles of equality and diversity** with the warning that they are antagonistic. Neither of them should be "neglected" at the expense of the other. "It is typical of primary school that it tends to unite equality with diversity at the same time. It should be pointed out that the common consent on education being everybody's right (without any discrimination of an individual or a group) does not mean equal education for all". The point here was that equal education for all was not necessarily being achieved by simple unification as in the *ancien regime*. –Therefore, "equal opportunities in education should be co-ordinated with the individual's right to be different and with the society's right to use the available resources and the human and material potential in the optimal way, with respect to the overall development, as well as with the right of a democratic state to ensure that each individual can, and is, prepared to participate in democratic processes. Equality should not be a synonym of equalisation or even suppression of individual differences and limitation of pluralism."

The White Paper introduces the principle of autonomy of teachers and schools "in relation to the state and authorities" and "in their relation to "extra-curricular" forms and kinds of knowledge or beliefs", requires the criterion of professionalism and explicitly links those principles with the notion of *civic literacy* and the knowledge of *human rights*. "The autonomy of pre-school institutions and schools in their relation to the state shall be guaranteed by the funding system and the manner of recruiting educators, educational professionals and administrators. Selection criteria should be publicly known, impartial and controlled by the public. The most important criterion is a thorough knowledge of the field taught and one's own professional discipline (knowledge of the discipline in its non-canonical form with all the open questions, various solutions, the history of science, etc.) as well as the knowledge of psychological and pedagogical principles. Due to the characteristics of the period in history which we live in, we should especially stress civic literacy and the knowledge of human rights."

A principle of autonomy is regarded as based on individuals, and their autonomy and individuality which should be protected. "The autonomy of pre-schools and schools as institutions is connected with the autonomy of individuals, which goes also for teachers and their position in the education system as well as for pupils and students. Care should be taken to protect the individuality and privacy as well as to reinforce the control of the collection of data on children and their parents."

According to the constitutional principle of separation of the state and the religious communities, *The White Paper* links the principle of autonomy to the question of religious education and the role of religious communities in relation to the public education system in general. "The requirement for the autonomy of school as an institution of the modern era is connected with the separation of the state from the church. Religious education as a confessional subject is therefore not a component of the curriculum of public schools. Schools, however, should be consistent in assuring possibilities for teaching and informing on world religions, teaching on the contents

and customs of Christianity and other religions (within the framework of the existing syllabus or as a special non-confessional subject upon religions), etc.”

The White Paper also stressed the importance of schools being open to their surroundings. “The autonomy of pre-school institutions and schools does not contradict their opening to the immediate and broader environment and associating with other institutions transferring knowledge and culture, with theatres, museums, galleries, libraries, orchestras, sports societies and other associations, etc.”

Because these principles define the formation of school legislation and the entire curriculum reform, including the preparation of syllabuses, we may say that, on the basis of legislation and curriculum documents, the question of managing diversity has been appropriately raised.

Because public schools in Slovenia may use only officially approved textbooks, these textbooks go through a process that ensures that they do not contravene the established goals of the school system. However, there is no study that has investigated the actual presence *or absence* of these questions in textbooks.

Language instruction for children from both of the indigenous minorities has been resolved in a systematic and suitable fashion, as will be described below. According to its needs, however, an individual school may provide additional language instruction for pupils whose native language is not Slovene through additional class time or supplementary lessons. This form of instruction takes place according to the circumstances of the individual school (this supplementary instruction occurred on a wider scale when refugees from the countries of the former Yugoslavia arrived in Slovene elementary and secondary schools). Schools also carry out supplementary language instruction on the basis of bilateral international agreements, for example, in Arabic, Albanian, Macedonian, etc.

1.2.1. Structural/organizational

The educational legislation has established a democratically structured education system which respects diversity and promotes social cohesion, both at the school level and the level of the entire educational system. Here, we should only mention that the principles of school and teacher autonomy and a division between expert and political decisions are deeply imbedded into the system. (See also: 1.1.2. and 1.3.4. Quality Assurance)

In Slovenia, the Italian and Hungarian minorities¹² have a special arrangement for education at the elementary school level.¹³ The Romany children are integrated and there are some special provisions for them.

¹² Cf. also *Report submitted by the Republic of Slovenia pursuant to Article 25, Paragraph 1, of The framework convention for the protection of national minorities*, European Commission against racism and intolerance (ECRI), Report on Slovenia, Council of Europe.

¹³ OFEA in *Article 3* defines the Slovene language as the language of instruction in pre-school institutions and schools and also guarantees special provisions for the Italian and Hungarian minorities: “Pursuant to this Act and a special Act, pre-school institutions and schools offering education and instruction in the Italian language (pre-school institutions and schools in the language of the national

The Hungarian minority - In areas where there is a Hungarian minority (the eastern part of Slovenia on the border with Hungary), we have a system of bilingual elementary schools. Pupils from different language groups are not separated; instead, lessons take place at the same time (alternating) in two languages, Hungarian and Slovene. In the past, one teacher conducted lessons in both languages, but in the new nine-year elementary schools (currently in the first three grades) two teachers are present in the class for all subjects, alternating during the instruction between one teaching in Slovene, the other in Hungarian. The pupils are separated only after they decide which of the two languages will be their first language and the other their second language. All of them learn both, in the course of which more hours are devoted to the first language than to the second. This kind of system applies to the entire elementary school. There are four such elementary schools with affiliated schools.¹⁴ Altogether, 987 pupils attend bilingual schools. There are no special statistics at the state level for how many pupils in these schools choose one or the other language as their first language. Because these schools are in fact bilingual and because the children are not divided for anything, it is possible to conclude that they represent a very good model that encourages diversity and at the same time ensures social cohesion.

The Italian minority, which lives in western Slovenia in the maritime Primorje province and along the border with Italy, has a system of separate schools, in which instruction takes place in Italian. The pupils also learn Slovene, which is only one of their subjects (in Slovene-language schools in this area Italian is also studied from the first grade onwards; this is an exception within Slovene elementary schools, because this subject does not have the status of a foreign language. In addition to Italian, pupils in these schools, as in the standard program in nine-year elementary schools, begin to learn their so-called first foreign language in the fourth grade and they choose a second foreign language in the seventh grade). There are three elementary schools for children of the Italian minority.¹⁵ Altogether there are 468 pupils in 43 classes in these schools (an average of 11.3 pupils per class, with 4 in the smallest class).

The teachers in these schools often come from Italy, because there is not a sufficient number of teachers in Slovenia with suitable education and knowledge in Italian.

The Romany children - In comparison with the regulation and protection of the status of the two minorities, the situation for the education of Romany children is

minority) shall be established in areas populated by Slovene nationals and the Italian minority and defined as ethnically mixed areas.

Pursuant to this Act and a special Act, bilingual pre-school institutions and schools offering education and instruction in the Slovene and the Hungarian language (bilingual pre-school institutions and schools) shall be established in areas populated by Slovene nationals and the Hungarian minority and defined as ethnically mixed areas.”

¹⁴ Lendava with 646 pupils + affiliates with 32, 33 and 14 pupils; Genterovci with 84 pupils;

Prosenjakovci with 76 pupils + two affiliates totalling 11 pupils; and Dobrovnik with 11 pupils.

¹⁵ Vincenzo de Castro in Piran (7 classes and 72 pupils and three affiliates: the first with 4 classes/36 pupils, the second with 1 class/4 pupils and the third with 5 classes/47 pupils), Dante Alighieri in Izola (9 classes/116 pupils) and Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio in Koper (11 classes/149 pupils and three affiliates: 2 classes/11 pupils, 2 classes/15 pupils and 2 classes/18 pupils).

not so well-regulated, both *de facto* and *de jure*. They do indeed have constitutional and legal protection, but the latter is still incomplete.

The larger concentrations of Romany pupils are found in four regions: in Dolenjska around Novo Mesto and Krško, in Bela Krajina, in Štajerska in Maribor and in Prekmurje around Murska Sobota. There are about 1,200 Romany pupils in elementary schools (and about 100 in secondary school programs) and they are integrated, with few exceptions. Because of an initial language deficit, Romany children are sometimes placed in homogenous groups in the first grade until, at most, the fourth grade of elementary school. There are 8 such classes altogether, and they are limited to 16 pupils per class. Classes with three or more Romany children have a lower limit (21).

The schools receive additional funds for individual or group work with Romany children. In addition to the benefits provided by the current system, the state finances meals, textbooks, excursions, etc. for Romany children. The state also approves scholarships for students of Romany background for all types of pedagogical studies. There are also textbooks adapted for Romany pupils, but only in Slovene. Official *Guidelines for Program Adaptation for Romany Pupils in Elementary Schools* also exist to aid in the integration of Romany children in elementary schools.

However, one of the larger lacunae in the current system is that there are no programs, textbooks or trained teachers for conducting lessons in Romany as their native language and, in addition, the educational program does not envisage courses in which it would be possible to address Romany history and culture. As a matter of fact, the state recently financed the appearance of the first workbook for Romany language instruction, which is a first step in the right direction. Moreover, the Board of Education has organised teacher study groups for teachers that instruct Romany children, but within IST — in contrast to numerous IST programs for both other minorities — there are currently no made-to-order programs (financed by the state) for training teachers that instruct Romany children. The situation for pre-school education is likewise not satisfactory: it is only recently that preparation began for a curriculum adapted for the children of Romany parents. The inclusion of their children in public pre-school institutions in places where the municipality has constructed pre-school institutions within Romany settlements has turned out to be successful and yielded good results, although these are only individual cases because legislation assigns the building and financing of pre-school institutions to municipalities.

To conclude: in the area of the education of Romany children, the state should first of all implement the necessary measures for the preparation of a special curriculum for Romany children and, generally, invest greater effort in the systematic resolution of their status.

If single schools include within their student body individuals from a range of ethnic and/or religious groupings, inclusive arrangements are made to meet the educational needs of these groupings within the school's timetable and curriculum, mainly concern teaching languages, but, of course, schools have different means for meeting pupils' needs – curricular and extra-curricular activities. When teachers refer to national cultural and religious holidays, they should also refer to other, non-national religious and cultural holidays, customs, etc., according to the differences and needs of the pupils in the classroom – but there is no empirical research ascertaining to this.

1.2.2. *Teacher Training*

The situation of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) is similar to the above description. The situation of In-Service Teacher Training (IST), which relate to the issues of diversity and social cohesion, is much better, due to the wider range of programs in *The Catalogue of In-Service Teacher Training*.

1.3. *Cross Cutting Issues*

1.3.1. *Life-long Learning*

There is a visible link between national policies in the public school system and youth, and education for employment policies. In the last few years there has been co-operation between ministries, which has resulted in a range of programs, the most important of which is Program 5000, described below. There are no significant differences between education policies on EDC and MofD in general schools and in vocational education and training (VET), and a national policy on adult education includes issues of EDC and MofD.

The educational reform has raised awareness that adult education should become a priority and a developmental necessity in Slovenia. The reform of adult education is based on the implementation of a **life-long learning** strategy. Although it has not been adopted yet, **the adult education master plan for the period until 2010** is a key document for Slovenia to implement its strategy and main goals of adult education which are a higher level of basic knowledge and skills of the adult population and a systemic link of formal and non-formal, school and non- school education.

Adult education is a complex and diverse system including, in addition to traditional and formalized forms of education leading to the acquisition of educational qualifications, rather simple non-formal new and alternative forms of adult education.

The high degree of complexity of adult education is reflected in the network of numerous and diverse educational and other institutions and education programs. Traditional institutions providing adult education courses as their core activity are called *ljudska univerza* (peoples' university). Schools and higher education institutions, basically providing youth education, also offer formal education courses for adults, adapting the organization and programs to the needs of adult learners. Such forms include basic education courses for adults, vocational education (in particular apprenticeship), evening *gimnazija* programs, vocational and *matura* courses, post-secondary vocational colleges, and part-time higher education studies.

In the field of EDC and MofD, an important role in adult education is played by organizations offering education in parallel with their main activity, such as **in-company education centers**, and various organizations in the field of culture, politics, leisure activities and the like. Numerous education providers are not registered as educational institutions but as **clubs and associations**. Recently, a number of **private providers** have offered courses in fields such as foreign languages, computer software, etc. In addition, **various providers have developed alternative non-formal education programs**. These are designed for special target groups and are called Project Learning for Young Learners, University of the Third Age, Training for Life Success, Spiritual University. **New forms of non-formal education** have emerged within the framework of projects developed by the Slovenian Institute

for Adult Education, such as independent-learning centers, knowledge exchanges, study circles, distance education centers, and multimedia supported learning.

Inside the framework of the above-mentioned formal and non-formal education programs there are programs which are designed to educate for participation in a democratic political system and democratic life.

1.3.2. *Research and policy development*

There are several research institutions which carry out EDC and MofD research programs. The Institute of Education, The Institute for National Minorities, different institutes at Ljubljana and Maribor universities, and independent research organisations (The Peace Institute, etc.) should also be mentioned. In the previous decade, a policy of support for research in the field of EDC/diversity by the state was confirmed through measures of financing a number of research projects.

The subject Ethics and Society was developed as an outcome of research projects that were carried out over a period of several years.

Slovenia joined the international research project on citizenship education supervised and carried out by The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA); in Slovenia, it was carried out by the Institute of Education, Ljubljana, and financed through research projects.

Through the Office for Youth, which has been an integral part of the Ministry of Education, the state financed various research projects and international co-operations. We should mention a major research of the values of youth carried out in 1993, 1995, 2000, which is also related to MofD.

1.3.3. *International Co-operation*

A number of Slovenian schools are engaged in the UNESCO networks of schools. We might make mention of the Roots and Wings Project (RaW Project). The project is led by two schools: Ciril Kosmač Primary School Piran and Bratov Polančičev Primary School Maribor. Its basic goal¹⁶ is developing and consolidating the alliance among the young and enhance education for peace.¹⁷

A number of schools and teachers participated in other international projects. We should mention Comenius projects which have started in 1999, and the state also

¹⁶ **The active participation in the project is expected to bring the following:**

- Working and friendly ties among principals, teachers, pupils, and parents
- Sensitivity for the wealth of languages and cultures encompassing the participating schools
- Better communication skills - a better knowledge of basic communication language (English) and of the Internet.
- Wider and qualitative knowledge about people, regions, and countries of participating schools
- The very essence of our livelihood and its problems will be an ever-present prerogative for choosing the objectives and activities within the inner projects. Willingness for a more active and efficient solving of next-door problems will be solidified.
- Being different will raise curiosity and thus pave the way for the elimination of xenophobia and at the same time widen the horizon for co-operation. The fact of being different will change from the feeling of obstacle to a feeling of richness and new possibilities. All this can be obtained through learning about human rights and about how to live tolerating the contrasts and conflicts. Today the whole world is an educational atmosphere in which the young must find the way for their descendants to survive. - Etc.

¹⁷ About the project see <http://www.asp-mreza.edus.si/kik2001/ang/>.

financially supported a number of international conferences, for example the Council of Europe conferences in the field of teaching history.

1.3.4. *Quality Assurance*

Democratic learning environment and quality assurance

In Slovene public schools progressive education and democratic learning approaches are not something alien to teachers. In fact, democratic methods of teaching are prevailing. It needs to be stressed that over the last two decades schools have been introducing, on their own initiative and with the assistance of the profession, numerous changes to their work and teaching activities. For the last ten years the *Board of Education*, which has human resources required for direct work with schools and whose units cover the territory of the entire nation, has no longer carried out any inspection-related assignments but has instead begun to provide consulting services to schools and to work on assignments at the national level as part of the educational system reform and curriculum reform.

Following the adoption of new legislation, educational policy launched another large and general step towards a more democratic environment in schools, which will embrace the entire education system. Namely, in recent years, self-evaluation by schools, not external inspection, has been gaining importance as one of the methods of establishing the quality of a school's performance. Its final objective is to guarantee the quality of work of individual schools and therefore the efficiency of the school system as a whole. That is a long-term process and the result of it should be that schools and teachers allow themselves to function in a more democratic manner.

Why is school self-evaluation becoming one of the key items? A school, as an institution that needs to function as a whole, depends largely upon individuals and how well they work within it: whether their full potentials will be reached or not. With the liberalization of the whole of society in Slovenia, a process which had been ongoing since the early 1980s, the classical role of inspection services, which is to visit a school and conduct a survey of its overall performance, is becoming less and less important. In fact, inspection bodies lost those powers at the beginning of the nineties. Combined with the limited number of inspectors, the current act regulating inspection services limits inspection to dealing with reports of irregularities and examining the legality of a school's work. In other words, school inspection in Slovenia is not an institution that deals in an integral manner with the issue of the quality of an individual school's performance, and does not deal systematically with the aspects of the teaching process that take place in a classroom. Instead, for a number of years, a system of training for school principals has been in place in Slovenia, training them for assignments specific to their work. As has been mentioned, a special *School for Principals* has been set up which primarily focuses on additional training for principals where they learn managerial skills.

Over the last few years, the *School for Principals* has started to implement a "learning schools network" project which incorporates a limited number of schools each year (up to a maximum of eight). A team of professionals is established at a school which becomes part of the project; their objective is to encourage the ability for change. The project's goal is to enable schools to be prepared for change and to resolve problems. Within approximately six months, the school arrives at a point

where it can set its own priorities and decide which areas to tackle first (for example: work with parents, timetable and syllabus, homework,). Regardless of which area the school chooses, a culture of co-operation, of a different way of communicating and dealing with problems, is set up at the school, which empowers the school to function in a similar way further on, without any external assistance.

Another project of self-evaluation has been begun by the Board of Education, which developed an instrument for school self-evaluation, popularly referred to as the "Mirror". 30-40 schools take part in this project each year. They analyse overall school performance from the viewpoints of different participants – teachers and school management, pupils and parents – which are obtained with the help of set questionnaires. This allows the school to cross-reference and compare the viewpoints of all three positions.

Based on these experiences, it was agreed (1999) that Slovenia needs a national school self-evaluation project that will encompass all levels and all types of educational institutions. The Ministry of Education and Sport has started an initiative linking all important institutions with the human resources needed for the preparation of such an instrument – a self-evaluation model – which will provide support for the project as external school partners.¹⁸ In brief, this project includes day-care centers, primary schools and all types of secondary schools as well as other educational institutions. The goal of the school self-evaluation model, as currently organized, is not just to enable an evaluation in the sense of ascertaining, but also to contain built-in incentives for a school to make a transition from ascertaining its good and weak points to taking action that will result in higher quality (a move from quality assessment to quality assurance). This is not only built on a collection of opinions but also on a combination of information which is either already available to schools or can be obtained by them, and, of course, on the basis of questionnaires and other methods. The process is being developed based on instruments and experiences from other countries - from New Zealand and the USA to European countries. The aim of raising the “quality of work” in schools through self-evaluation is not to classify schools by quality. It should enable them to build up their autonomy according to their work and therefore function in a democratic way.

Nevertheless, we could not claim that in the present situation the functioning of schools is far from democratic. The established rules and procedures are democratic generally, but the teachers and principals need additional feedback about their work, and therefore the self-evaluation aims to raise the quality of work and to strengthen the democratic culture of each individual school.

1.3.5. *Information and Communication Technologies*

The Government has had successful policies concerning the introduction and use of ICT in schools since 1994 (the measures are briefly described below, see

¹⁸ Alojz Pluško, Andrej Koren, Andreja Trtnik Herlec, Anita Trnavčević, Darko Zupanc, Diomira Tkalčič, Ivan Lorenčič, Janez Krek, Ljubica Marjanovič-Umek, Mirko Zorman, Mojca K. Šebart, Renata Zupanc-Grom, Slavko Gaber, Vladimir Tkalec, Vlado Milekšič, Zdenko Medveš: *Ugotavljanje in zagotavljanje kakovosti v vzgoji in izobraževanju*, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ljubljana 1999.

2.3.4.). EDC and MofD have been explicit features of this policy mainly through different projects, establishing the internet in schools and meeting places.

2. Policy Implementation Measures

2.1. General Considerations

The structure of governmental and other institutions of the educational system has certainly secured the implementation of governmental policy in this area. It is probably not necessary to supplement the existing system of institutions. Governmental policy and the operation of NGOs is being supplemented in several areas. The key points where NGOs enter into the system are in the carrying out of compulsory electives in programs in four-year secondary schools on the part of NGOs, where they enter directly into the system through various programs that are supported by the Youth Department, and through programs for adult education.

Education for Democratic Citizenship

Measures

2.1.1. Curriculum

The bulk of measures for curricular support for schools is carried out through regular activities of The Board of Education, The Office of Education, through In-Service Training programs for teachers etc. Besides that ongoing endeavour, two projects from previous years should be mentioned.

As a measure of policy for active citizenship – promoting the value of solidarity - a nation-wide campaign for children's financial support in the investment in a school in Sarajevo and a school in Kosovo were instigated (also financially supported by the state).

The *Youth department* has been co-ordinating an ongoing project for the prevention of drug abuse called "*Let the Heart Speak*" targeted at primary school pupils from the fifth to eighth grade (11 - 15 years old).¹⁹ The main objective of the project is to familiarise young people with attractive and creative ways of finding their place in society. During an hour-long discussion with the guest, pupils talk about their wishes, fears, expectations, important events, etc., while the guest presents himself, his experiences, successes and failures, and the current activities that have made him/her known to the pupils.

2.1.2. Structural/organizational

The **Youth Department** (*Office for Youth*) deals with matters concerning the comprehensive inclusion of the role and position of young people in society, the

¹⁹ Its title comes from the song by the Slovene singer Jan Plestenjak, who was the first to agree to participate in the project.

improvement of conditions for the organisation and activities of young people and their organisations. It promotes young people's mobility, ensuring various benefits for young people (the youth card, subsidised travel, etc.), support for extra-curricular educational activities for young people and carrying out other measures whose aim is the comprehensive inclusion of young people in society.

Among the activities that the Department has carried out from its very beginning (it has been operating since October 1991) is the co-financing of youth programs, of which there are between 400 and 500 every year, and financial assistance to youth organisations. These must be volunteer, non-profit organisations with at least 300 members, of which at least 70% are between 14 and 27 years of age. They must have at least seven local-level units in different administrative units of Slovenia and carry out various programs of national significance to young people.

During the last years, particular attention has been paid to enhancing tolerance and raising public awareness in the field of human rights. Media campaigns on that topic met with a wide response, the number of projects supported and carried out is growing.

2.1.3. Teacher training

The problem of IST-programs in this field is that they are probably not targeted enough – more state-planned and financially supported programs are needed. (See 1.1.3.)

2.2. Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion

2.2.1. Curriculum

The Youth Department supported a campaign under the title "**Enjoy Being Different**" where people were invited to take an active part in making our society more tolerant and increasing mutual relations. They could participate in a number of programs organised by different non-governmental organisations, which were active in this field. On the basis of several studies, surveys and numerous responses from the public it can be said that the campaign managed to get through to the majority of people - especially to youth. There has never been more said or written about being different and about tolerance and the problems related to them, in schools, different organisations, media; youth were becoming more active in this field.

2.2.2. Structural/organizational

Of particular importance for improving the quality of education in material terms and enhancing social cohesion was the *Act on the Provision of Funds for Urgent Education Development Programs*, adopted in 1994. This provided additional funding for the construction of pre-school institutions and schools, computer literacy programs, textbooks and modern educational technologies, foreign language learning and school meals. The *Act* represents a concrete and major case of the link between educational and social policies and measures to foster social cohesion and equal opportunities. Within its framework, a project of financing light

meals and lunches for socially deprived children in schools should be stressed. Even today, an average 23% of pupils in primary and secondary schools have “free meals” (the percent changes according to the social environment of the school).

Centre for Out-school Activities In the last decade this specialised Centre was established by the state, which owns a network of premises and buildings around Slovenia. The Centre runs a range of different programs, which are mainly concerned with activities in nature and community work within the communities where the centres are located. The Centres are spread throughout Slovenia and there are two types of premises - camps²⁰ and day centres²¹.

The Office for Youth carries out the program of establishing so called **Youth Centres**. A network of youth centres targeted at young people, regardless of organisation or belief, is being set up in Slovenia in co-operation with municipalities and youth organisations and their associations. These centres, numerous throughout Europe, but, regrettably, scarce in Slovenia, give young people the opportunity to come together and spend their free time creatively. As a result of this project there are already centres operating in Domzale, Velenje, Murska Sobota and Koper, while in many other towns (Ptuj, Idrija, Gornja Radgona, Sezana, Brezice, Tolmin, Nova Gorica, Krsko ...) they are being prepared.

Through the project called “**Open schools**”, public schools opened their doors for others and became a kind of meeting place. The advanced phase of the project requires investment in the school buildings to become real “sites of citizenship”, but last year the project de facto didn’t go a step further.

2.2.3. *Teacher Training*

See 1.1.3.

2.3. *Cross Cutting Issues*

2.3.1. *Life-long Learning*

A special government program called **Program 5000, aimed at education of the unemployed**, was launched in 1998/99. Every year the program is prepared jointly by the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Because the basic aim of this project is to raise the level of education of the unemployed and to reduce the structural occupational discrepancies concerning qualifications in the labor market, individual programs have been designed in such a way as to offer the opportunity for unemployed individuals to obtain formal qualifications at any level, ranging from basic to higher education. In 1999, over 23,000 unemployed persons participated in Program 5000 and other education and training programs for the unemployed, including programs such as assistance in career planning and job seeking, personal development, in-service training, etc. 5,528 young unemployed people were pursuing the degree with the help of the Program 5000 in the year 1999/2000.²²

²⁰ Ajda, Bohinj, Breženka, Burja, Čebelica, Fara, Gorenje, Jurček, Kavka, Kranjska Gora, Lipa, Medved, Paninka, Rak, Soča, Škorpiljon, Strk, Trilobit, Vojsko.

²¹ Arboretum, Bistra, Čopova hiša, Groharjeva hiša, Ljubljana –Zoo, Zamejstvo, Pohorski dvor, Rakov škocjan, Selo, Velenje.

²² Poročilo o izvajanju “Programa 5000 v šolskem letu 1999/2000” (Program izobraževanja brezposelnih oseb), Zavod RS za zaposlovanje, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Ljubljana 2001.

As a result of the reform, adult education is characterized by impressive program diversity. Schools and higher education institutions offer formal education programs, the organization and timetables of which are adapted to the needs and interests of adult learners. Awareness is also growing that content and methods should be adapted to adults. **Non-formal education programs** are designed for various target groups, such as employed people seeking to improve the quality of their life, individuals pursuing a hobby, the unemployed, marginal groups, ethnic groups, and foreigners. With the exception of courses which require a certain level of prior knowledge, access to most non-formal education courses is unrestricted. Curricula are open, practically without limitations, and mostly with no specific duration; a document certifying the completion of a course or a special license is awarded at the end.

A new act introducing a **certification system** was adopted in 2000. This will enable the assessment and verification of vocation-related knowledge, skills and experiences acquired out-of-school. It thus makes it possible for individuals to obtain a **vocational qualification** in ways other than through formal schooling. Candidates will undergo a knowledge assessment procedure by a special commission to obtain a state-approved certificate (called *certifikat* in Slovenian) attesting their ability to perform certain vocational tasks. Vocational qualifications obtained in this way can be used by their holders to find a job or further training, demonstrating that part of an education program has already been mastered.

2.3.2. *Research*

The most important research in this field was youth studies carried out at the request of the *Youth Department* by the *Centre of Social Psychology - Youth Studies*, which was founded as a research unit of the Social Sciences Institute at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. So far, the *Centre* has carried out three studies on the values and lifestyles of young people. The first in 1993 surveyed secondary school pupils, the second in 1995 university students, the third in 2000.

Apart from this, the same team prepared for the *Youth Department* the first national report on young people in Slovenia. In the next few years new studies and national reports will probably follow, their aim being the higher quality of planning and an overhaul of measures to improve the situation of young people. The results of the studies and national reports are published regularly.

In 2001, the state sent out invitations for two major public official tenders (Fundamental and applicative research programs and The Competitiveness of Slovenia 2001-2006). The first one has been closed, and through it a number of projects in this field will be financed - a study on civic education as a cross curricular subject and further research on the results of IEA civic education studies, amongst others.

2.3.3. *International Co-operation*

Since 1997, Slovenia has gradually become involved in European programs of education (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth), full membership in May 1999.

At the beginning of 1997, Slovenia joined the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity - [the North-South Centre](#) operating under the

auspices of [the Council of Europe](#). The Slovene government empowered the Youth department to cooperate and co-ordinate work with the Centre, whose activities are focused on the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights in accordance with the principles of the Council of Europe.

The Youth department has also undertaken a number of tasks as part of the preparations for joining the European Union, especially within the "**Youth for Europe**" program. The program aims to support youth exchanges and European co-operation in the field of youth.

2.3.4. *Information and Communication Technologies*

In 1993 parliament adopted the law on investments in education and this was the beginning of rapid development in the field of ICT.

The mission of the Developing Computer Literacy program is to:

- train teachers and pupils for using information technology,
- implement a standardisation of computer supported transfer of data between schools and other institutions,
- unify computer software used for teaching and administration purposes in schools,
- supply schools with up-to-date computer and data equipment and provide the possibilities for research and development in the field of implementing new information technologies in schools.

From 1994 to 1999, more than half of the whole number of teachers, principals and other school workers attended *ICT-seminars* (29.000). Didactic and other ICT programs have been used in 650 day care centres, primary, lower and upper secondary schools, dormitories and faculties. In the same period schools have bought 10.020 computers, 450 computer projectors and also other equipment which were (co-)financed by the state funds. From the year 1994, there have been five ongoing strategic research projects and many other research and development projects. As a result, the number of students per computer has decreased in lower secondary schools from 82 students per computer in 1995 to 25 students per computer in 1998 (IEA/SITES).²³ Between 80 and 90 percent of computers are connected to the Internet.²⁴

2.3.5. *Quality Assurance*

See above.

2.3.6. *Finance*

Through the nineties the government has raised educational budget from 4,8% GDP (1992) to 6,0% GDP (1996) and since then it has remained approximately at that level.

²³ Barbara Japelj, Mojca Čuček: "Druga mednarodna raziskava uporabe informacijskih in komunikacijskih tehnologij v izobraževanju, IEA/SITES, Pedagoški inštitut, 2000 Ljubljana, p. 90.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 101.

For further development of citizenship education, study groups of teachers, which are organised through the Board of Education of Republic of Slovenia, should be strongly financially supported by the state.

3. Views from the grass roots

3.1. *General considerations*

Because of its relatively favourable circumstances, the operation of international non-governmental organisations in Slovenia is rather less significant in comparison to the position and operation of non-governmental organisations in some other countries. Organisations that we should make mention of are the Open Society Institute, Amnesty International, UNICEF, the IDC of the Council of Europe, the Legal Information Centre for NGOs, EIP Slovenia, etc.

3.2. *Chosen approach to data gathering*

This section of the report is based on primary data and secondary data. The main sources of information were the 2001 IEA study on citizenship education and the structured interviews with state officials, counselors in various professional institutions and representatives of NGO's, i.e. those who have already worked in the field of EDC and MofD.

3.3. *Findings*

The IEA study offered the most relevant results regarding teachers' opinions. A summary of the most significant responses from teachers (not from average teachers, but rather from teachers of average pupils, teachers of Ethics and Society, History and Slovene) in the IEA study in Slovenia follows:

The place of civic education in the curriculum:

- 57% of them say that this is an important topic,
- 83% say that it should be included in humanities,
- 67% would include it in all topics,
- 1% would have it as an extra-curricular activity.

The goals of civic education:

- 97% agree strongly with the statement that in civic education it is necessary to teach pupils to respect the law,
- 4% to join a political party,
- 65% to serve in the armed forces,
- 72% to participate in peaceful protest and
- 69% to disregard laws that violate human rights.

87% of them say that civic education is very important for the political and civil development of pupils, and 81% that it is very important for the state.

Regarding **what they place the most emphasis on during civic education lessons** or where they would place the greatest emphasis, they say that:

- 30% of us devote attention to knowledge of society, and 8% would;
- 30% of them say that they devote attention to critical thinking, and 34% would;
- 5% to co-operation between pupils, and 18% would;
- and 35% to values, and 40% would.

The **opinion of teachers regarding necessary improvements** (teachers chose the three most significant aspects, out of ten):

- 47% of them believe that better materials are needed,
- 23% more materials,
- 41% training with regard to working methods,
- 54% training with regard to content,
- 28% more opportunities for personal projects and
- 13% more autonomy.

A deficiency of the questionnaire was that there was no question regarding the teaching method where pupils choose topics that they discuss in class and which, according to some other data, is often used among teachers of ethics and society.

Another difficulty with this topic is the fact that the topic is primarily taught by teachers that do not conduct enough lessons and therefore their average identification with the topic is low. According to statements by counsellors, attendance in study groups is also low.

The research has drawn attention to the two most problematic points for pupils: a negative relationship towards government institutions and towards immigrants (the results are quoted below). However, teachers also have a similar relationship to the government and politics. Teachers themselves call attention to the fact that, if teachers have a low level of confidence in institutions, they then unconsciously transfer this to pupils.

An important (bottom-up) incentive to educate pupils in how to conduct arguments and to participate in public debates is taking place in many schools, supported by Open Society Institute.

4. Conclusions

Since the unfinished curricular reform has covered the entire educational system, it included almost all relevant citizenship education/diversity issues at the level of educational **policies, legislation and curriculum**. But this does not mean that there are no problems in the field of EDC/MofD.

A special curriculum for Romany pupils

At the most basic level of mere existence regarding **educational legislation, curriculum and policies**, we would like to stress that the only area where we have found a lacuna that has to be mentioned was a need for a special curriculum for Romany children. Indeed, the Romany community is not large in terms of population and the state has been facing many specific difficulties, which are not to be overcome easily. Nevertheless, in the area of educating Romany children, Slovenia should first of all implement the needed measures for the preparation of a special curriculum for

Romany pupils, which would enable Romany language, history and culture lessons to be taught.

An additional effort towards valuing diversity in the curriculum

The author of the report is not quite certain whether the state should not to do more for preparing pupils to live in a modern, multi-cultural society. The problem could be that following the formation of Slovenia as an independent state, the Slovene point of view as a multi-cultural society has vanished. In the recent past, Slovenia has not experienced large ethnic conflicts and is not a multi-cultural state compared to Britain, Canada or Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is precisely the problem; and it leads to the possibility of contentment with an opinion that diversity is not an issue that should be addressed to any great extent in the school curriculum. Recent IEA research has shown that *Slovenian pupils have extremely negative attitudes towards immigrants* - with the score 9.4 below the international mean, Slovenia is together with Germany (9.2), Switzerland (9.4), Latvia (9.5) and Hungary (9.5) among five lowest ranking countries.²⁵ Because there has been no additional appropriate research carried out in this field, concerning the curriculum and its outcomes, the author of this report can only speculate whether additional programs (IST, projects, curriculum, school books, self-evaluation, etc.), which would foster positive valuing of diversity, are not needed.

A deeper analysis of contents and implications of the concept of the civic education²⁶

We have already mentioned the interesting history of the subject which in the curriculum of Slovenian schools should fulfil the role of citizenship education. Those acquainted with the evolution of the subject of “Ethics and Society” after the transition to the new regime, will not be surprised to hear that the reasons for uncertainty and the tentative steps about the ways of teaching this subject and its contents in general are to be found *in the views of the teachers and the experts*.

Namely, civic education as education for values is now overwhelmed by the rise of permissiveness, by methods of progressive education and “culture of narcissism” (Lasch). From that perspective, the only mission that remains for the teacher is to enable the fulfilment of the *universal human potential* of each pupil and student. Education should only foster and release the child’s inner growth potential and reveal his or her own personal values, maxims, principles, norms and ideals. This affects the place of citizenship education because the teachers and experts are *themselves* victims of an illusion of individuality through the discourse of permissiveness. The illusion of *universal human potential* brings with it the fantasy that “universal human potential” and “the inner interest” of the children “themselves” will inevitably provide the contents which would be thought of as “civics”.

Therefore, in the last few years, the subject survived de facto as “hours” where the themes are defined by the students - “about the problems of youth” - and where students’ discussion is almost the only method of teaching. Even now, after the curriculum reform, a quite important portion of the available hours of the *syllabus* of civic education is assigned to topics that proved to be “popular” and “interesting for students”.

²⁵ Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries, IEA, Netherlands 2001, p. 105.

²⁶ See Janez Krek, Mojca Kovač Šebart: “Civic Education, Values and the Experience of a Breakdown of an Illusion”, Citizenship and Civic Education in Democracies (International Conference), ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, October 1998 (Canada edition in print).

Now, let us put the question “what are the beliefs of the Slovenian youth regarding the political sphere and “civic life” in general?”. In the first half of the nineties research has shown that Slovenian youth does not ascribe great importance to politics, with the exception of national identity: “National identity and the consequences derived from it are actually the only topics- conditionally speaking - of political identity, of the political consciousness of this younger generation.”²⁷ The same research on youth (carried out in 1993) indicated considerable changes of value preferences in comparison with the results of research carried out in the middle of the previous decade: “In comparison with 1985, 1993 saw a marked decrease in the importance of all problems connected with either the personal emancipation of young people or their political influence.”²⁸ Only 7.6 percent of the younger generation think that their problem is a lack of political influence, which could be interpreted as a move towards an a-political attitude. In addition, the recent IEA study on citizenship education (carried out in 1999) showed that pupils in Slovenia have *the lowest trust in government-related institutions* of all 28 countries.²⁹ As a result of that attitude towards the political field and with the “help” of the permissive approach in teaching the subject (“Ethics and Society”), which conforms to the value preferences of pupils, civic education lost most of the elements that help to develop citizens’ knowledge and skills for entering and participating in political life in general.

As a consequence, quite a considerable difference still exists between the content of civic education in the Slovenian syllabus and drafts of curricula and materials that are prepared for teaching civics by Civitas, for example. In Slovenia, much less attention is still paid to knowledge that enables understanding of the institutions of democracy and also less room is left for grasping some notions that are essential for entering into democratic political life. It is questionable whether civic education *in schools* provides the necessary standards required for all *in the reality* of democratic political life.

This leads us to **the first conclusion** concerning **the existing curriculum**: *even after the curricular reform there is a need to work on the curriculum precisely in the fields that represent the core of civic education, and in that regard foreign expertise could be of great help.*

The following questions should now be posed: Why has the new philosophy of education caused – if we overstate – the “devaluing or disintegration of contents” particularly in civic education? Why has it put it in a position which is incomparable with the strong positions of contents in core subjects? And what has happened to the civic education content in other subjects?

A possible explanation could be that the permissive concept was linked with the aversion towards “ideologies”, which could have a special effect on those who were in any way connected to the subject back in the seventies and eighties. The subject “Ethics and Society” emerged from the subject “Socio-moral Education”, which was conceived as civic education compulsory for all and whose educational aim was supposed to be the teaching of the belief in the “the self-management socialist system”. Encouraged by social events and the rise of the freedom of

²⁷ Vlado Miheljak, “Mladina vrača pogled”, M. Ule and V. Miheljak, eds., *Pri(e)hodnost mladine* (Ljubljana: DZS, 1995), pp.175.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 121.

²⁹ *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries*, IEA, Netherlands 2001, p. 96.

discussion in the eighties, this conception began to “break” in schools and among teachers, and it finally broke down with the emergence of the democratic political system in the new state. The subject, with its aim of inculcation of belief, was increasingly comprehended as indoctrination even by teachers themselves. For nearly a decade (in the nineties) civic education in Slovenia seemed to carry with it the experience of the breakdown of illusion regarding its own aim.

It was probably because of the hidden and unarticulated *preservation* of the form of the aim, i.e. the aim of the inculcation of belief, and not because of some “unfavourable external circumstances”, that teachers and experts *did not dare* to establish the proper aims and contents for citizenship education (especially civic education). The problem is (was) not that the experience of the breakdown of the illusion was too radical, but rather that it created a “new perspective”, that caused a withdrawal as a consequence of teachers’ own experience. Therefore, civic education remained in the interregnum: teachers did not want it to be indoctrination, but on the other hand, they did not manage to grasp it as equal to other subjects at the level of knowledge and in the mediation of values. It is due to the false specificity of the aim that the subject was established and comprehended as an exception among subjects.

Nevertheless, why should a subject like civic education have a radically different aim from the rest of the subjects? A possible “guilty conscience” of teachers and the discontent about civic education can endure as long as the education of this subject is interpreted through the *demand* for the education of illusion, merely as the inculcation of belief.

This leads to **the second conclusion on curriculum**. The first step towards self-assurance in the concept and instruction of civic education is therefore *the breakdown of the illusion* that indoctrination *is or can* be the privileged and exclusive aim of civic education. For example, teachers should teach “even about the homeland” in accordance with the criteria of objectivity, criticalness, and pluralism. *Therefore, In-Service Teacher programs, direct work with teachers and providing materials, knowledge and skills for teaching contents of civic education, are of vital importance. Without IST the aversion of teachers towards civic education as education for democracy will not be overcome.*

The reverse side of the same problem of ideology would be a situation, which is notably not the situation in Slovenia, but which could be the situation in those countries where teachers and education policy (after the fall of one ideology) uncritically accept programs of citizenship education, which had been brought from outside suppliers. Without a deeper insight into how the notions, skills and competencies of citizenship education can function in a particular social environment, that too becomes superficial knowledge, a routine new ideology “without real significance” for both teachers and pupils.

Therefore, we could ask **whether in the countries where civic education materials and programs are introduced by foreign institutions (NGOs, etc.), sufficient domestic, professional support was provided for adapting them** to specific circumstances of particular environments.

There were a number of successful international conferences that aroused interest in citizenship education, and positively influenced the perception of citizenship education. One of the problems of civic education is that civic education is not valued highly. Therefore, international conferences that are also attended by

practitioners not only bring expertise, but have a positive impact on the image of the subject.

From the perspective of a wider concept of citizenship education, other conclusions could be stressed. In order that an education system can function properly as a promoter of citizenship education and social cohesion, it has to function, and schools should operate, according to democratic principles. A correctly functioning education system is to a great extent dependent on governmental educational policy. Presumably, one of the greatest problems of education policies in new countries in SE Europe is their small size and lack of professionalism in educational policy, which is mostly dependent on the leading government officials and politicians. *Therefore, the assuring of quality and stability in education policy should be fostered through international seminars, workshops, influencing the construction of educational systems, etc.*