

SUMMARY

To evaluate the policy achievements of the educational governments after their four-year periods is one of the traditions of EDUCATIO. The present issue of this kind is the fifth one in the series. It publishes papers focused on the burning issues of the Hungarian education policy between the period 2006–2010.

According to relevant educational data, (higher) education expansion is not only growing, but it is also changing in its character. National policies mutually influence each other and thus a *world-wide* net of expansion is emerging out of *national* strategies of expansion. Hungarian politicians and experts, in contrast, argue that the size of higher education should be shrunk, mostly for demographic reasons (smaller age cohorts going into higher education, which may limit student access and higher education qualities in the foreseeable future). A closer look at Hungarian data proves, however, that the demographic argument is false. While the total number of students accessing higher education is smaller today (2006–2010) than earlier, the number of full-time students is still growing, and the process is faster than in the first part of the 2000s. If one reduces higher education capacities, freshmen and -women in their early twenties are at risk. Expansion is especially dynamic in the general (higher) education sector, mostly because, according to the author, this strategy is supported by the Bologna Process. The regional expansion of (higher) education seems to have been stagnating since the year 2000; though the economic and social impact of local institutions will remain important in both regional and local development.

Ildikó Hrubos: "Bologna" continues. At the start of European higher education reform in 1999, the year 2010 was earmarked as the deadline by which time one should have introduced it and achieved the desired goals. 2009 was the year of evaluation of the process, and the last bi-annual conference of ministers in Leuven/Louven-la Neuve - placed more emphasis on planning for the next time period, i.e. up until 2020. Based on "country reports", the conference determined that reform had been introduced in all participating countries as far as the most fundamental of goals is concerned, though to varying degrees and depths, and with many different 'solutions' or ways of operating. Therefore, the process can be viewed as a success, but it is also obvious that full completion will take more time, and there remain open questions and unsolved problems in many areas. The performance of Hungary got a better than average score according to the quite simplified standard criteria.

The paper reviews the results achieved in more important parts of the reform (transforming the structure of education, student mobility, institutional autonomy, the handling of diversity) in the European Higher Education Area, and in Hungary. When evaluating the Bologna process in Hungary we need to keep in mind that many of the problems related to introducing reform were being experienced in practically all participating countries. Most of the 'special' differences in Hungary were being faced by all of central and Eastern Europe, and were directed by the coinciding of different higher education reforms occurring within a short time period. We have to differentiate between these factors and possible mistakes, the less successful elements, and things caused by misjudgement or misinterpretations in Hungary. International comparison, studying foreign examples that are considered the best, is generally useful - yet it is worth always thinking in terms of the system as a whole and of models during our research. Without this, we can fall into the error of only looking for - and invariably finding - justification for our *own* theories instead of understanding the complex interconnections of issues.

Gabor Halasz: EU Membership and Educational Development: Hungary, 2006-2010. The article analyzes the effect of Hungary's membership in the European Union on its educational development in the period 2006–2010. It tries to answer two parallel types of question. On the one hand, it explores how far Hungary has become an effective member of the European Union in the domain of education; and, on the other, it explores the influence of its membership in the community on the development of its national system. The focus of the analysis is directed towards four specific themes. First, the author examines how far the national education policy agenda has become similar to the agenda of the community, that is, how far the nation's policy has become Europeanized. Second, it assesses the performance of the national system using the perspective of reference values and benchmarks set by the community. The article then explores the impact of major national development programs financed from EU funds and specific problems accompanying the implementation of such programs, in the light of relevant and available data. Finally, it looks at the role Hungary could play in shaping community policies during the period examined - with special stress being given to the prospective Hungarian EU presidency in 2011.

Zsuzsanna Horvath: Maturity Examination Questioned. Zsuzsanna Horvath presents two 'narra-

tives' relating to the secondary school leaving examination (*érettségi vizsga*, 'maturity examination'). The educational research narrative understands the maturity examination as a tool in the mechanism of the educational system. Since the secondary school system has changed to its foundations in recent decades, the maturity examination also needs to change, i.e. taking into account international trends. The traditional maturity examination has been substituted by up-to-date examination procedures between 2006-2010; and a double-deck maturity examination system (basic level, high level) has been introduced. A socio-historical narrative, however, points out the many-fold social and cultural function of the maturity examination. The history of the maturity examination shows that the traditional forms and procedures could always meet the changing needs of society and the economy. Two questions, therefore, arise: (a) If this is so, why should we change the procedures? (b) In the future, could international procedures meet the same needs that the traditional maturity examination did?

Eva Tot: For how long does a Hungarian learn? The study gives an overview on changes - and reasons for changes lacking - in the field of 'learning outside of school'. The focus is implementation of the national lifelong learning strategy launched by the government at the end of 2005. The author looks at the declarations and, then, the real outcomes, describing at the same time some revealing elements within adult education and the training system.

R. Katalin Forray & Anna Pálmainé Orsós: Social Equality vs Cultural Identity: An analysis of the Gypsy/Roma educational policies of the Hungarian government, 2002–2010. Two policies of Gypsy/Roma education are differentiated in this paper. Policy A deals with the Gypsy/Roma communities as socially disadvantaged groups; while policy B recognises them as cultural minorities and aims at integrating them into the cultural minorities of Hungary. Policy A uses education as a means for socio-economic equality. Policy B uses schools and other institutions for developing Gypsy/Roma cultural identity by conveying and disseminating their cultural heritages. The two policies are partly complementary, but are partly contradictory. Their representatives have been competing from the political transition (1990) on, and can also be connected to political ideologies and party politics. 2002–2010 proved to be a period for the domination of policy B. Various socio-economic government projects have been initiated, some partly successfully (and some not). Educational institutions, however, supporting policy B (the cultural identity of the Gypsy/Roma communities) failed. A more successful and educationally-orientated government may have to find a better balance between the two policy alternatives and their representatives in the future, therefore.

Z. Attila Papp: Financial educational support for Hungarians living abroad (2006-2010). The paper presents the way Hungary supports different Hungarian minority communities living outside of Hungary and their educational needs. After parliamentary elections in 2006, a huge restructuring and centralization of state institutes related to this field occurred. Beginning in 2007, principal financial resources were transferred to the Prime Minister's Office and its Homeland Fund, while some resources remained in the scope of the Ministry of Education. Two big educational projects (educational-pedagogical support by Status Law, and the Sapientia University in Romania) were implied by PMO.

Educational support via the Homeland Fund were around 1 billion HUF in each year, and in the newly-formed decision-making structure the emphasis was put on the existence of the (mainly informal) accord of a regional minority political party or interest representation institutions. Using this process, one can claim that decisions were being made not exclusively on the basis of professional criteria.

The Ministry of Education used to support students studying in Hungary and students learning the Hungarian language in neighbouring countries as well as minority teacher training and other educational programs. Its strategy endeavoured to respond to the new challenges arising after the EU accession of Slovakia and Romania (states where one can find the biggest Hungarian minority communities) and after minority language higher educational expansion was taking place. MoE also supports, in a different way, the Hungarian diaspora living outside the Carpathian Basin (Western Europe, USA, Australia etc.)

István Polónyi: Unchanged changes. István Polónyi first looks over the programs of the government between 2006–2010; and after this he takes a look at the financial changes involved in public education. The argument is that efficiency has improved and many educational co-operatives have been set up in districts. Yet these leaps forward may have been injurious, too.

The tuition fee became a gun in the election war of parties – and this is the reason why the government was unable to introduce it. At this time there were no important financial changes in the higher education. Maintainer agreements were introduced lasting 3 years, but they were a rather specious solution, i.e. and not a real leap forwards.

At the beginning of this term the Research Institute of Higher Education was terminated, and professional teams replaced it; though these are fleeting - and non-independent.

The conclusion here is that there has not been any sensational change in educational politics during this time period, though irredeemable mistakes did not occur, either. They brought too and didn't.