

# **Analytical Report PHARE RAXEN\_CC Minority Education**

## **RAXEN\_CC National Focal Point Hungary**

Institute of Ethnic and National Minority Studies  
of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Report on Minority Schooling in Hungary

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## 1. Executive summary

Although accession to the European Union is making differences in legislation between the member states ever narrower, regional characteristics should not be lost from sight in the analysis of political practice within a given field. The subject of minorities is a case in point. The minority status of the Walloon in France or the Basque in Spain is of a fundamentally different nature than that of the Romanian, Slovak or Roma minorities in Hungary. The greatest difference is in the fact that Hungary's minorities depend on their respective histories far more than they do on local habitation for their self-definition. Consequently, the primary goal of their education is the strengthening of national identity rather than the promotion of language and culture.

Another important peculiarity characterising former members of the defunct Socialist bloc is that the gradual adoption of European standards in minority-related legislation only started in the wake of the political transformations in these countries. That is possibly the reason why the practice of politics and the dispensation of justice often depart from the principles enshrined in the law. While legislation pertaining to the education of ethnic minorities, incomplete as it may be, has come to conform to EU-standards, there are basic rights being violated in everyday situations.

The principle most frequently transgressed in the education of minorities is that of non-discrimination, a constitutional right in Hungary since 1989. The minority most often afflicted in this manner by various actors in Hungary's public system of education are the country's Roma. It also happens on occasion that a law or ministerial decree is in violation of the basic law of the land but at a classroom level the negative discrimination of Roma children is an everyday occurrence. That is related to the fact that a significant percentage of the country's Roma are socially at the very bottom of society. In education (and together with that in several other areas, such as employment, and very often in public perception and sometimes even in research carried out in the social sciences, too) the consequences of poverty and deficient education are perceived as ethnic characteristics. Chances of a child receiving services of an inferior quality on account of his or her ethnicity are rather high, which constitutes a serious discriminatory situation.

The transformation of the political system made it possible for Hungary to support the ethnic Hungarian populations of neighbouring countries in their education, and the legal codification of such subsidies also became feasible. The current system of support reveals the intention of Hungary's government of assisting the primary and secondary education of the populations in question within the country of their domicile, offering opportunities in Hungary's own system of education mainly at college and university levels and in continuing training for teachers. The half-admitted rationale of this policy is that there is no intention on the part of the authorities of attracting the ethnic Hungarian population of neighbouring countries to Hungary or of encouraging long-term migration to Hungary of Hungarians from across the borders. Instead, the preservation of their linguistic and cultural identity is meant to be secured by strengthening the professional and academic communities of ethnic Hungarians living abroad.

A new challenge to the country's educational system is presented by the obligation to provide schooling for the children of non-Hungarian-speaking migrants in Hungary. The radical novelty of the situation goes a long way to explain the helplessness and professional incompetence of Hungarian educators and the evasive and often illegal tactics employed by the municipal authorities maintaining the country's schools. What makes the situation even harder is that Hungary's educational system as a whole is faced with financial difficulties. The combined lack of professional competence and sufficient funds fosters intolerance among teachers and the parents of Hungarian children alike. The schooling of immigrant children is often beset by the same aura of discrimination that the education of the country's Roma children is characterised by.

It is another peculiarity of the former Socialist countries that the rapid and dynamic evolution of civil society was not accompanied by the practice of cooperation with governmental authorities. Organisations working in the field of minority education are frequently kept alive by no more than the civic enthusiasm of the participants, and their well-tried programmes are equally often ignored by the authorities. A whole range of positive examples initiated by non-governmental associations peter out in the absence of continual support or the lack of encouragement and extension to be given to viable programmes.

In the past year and a half, the ruling socialist-liberal government has appeared to be more receptive to ways of dealing with the problems surveyed here, but the government's measures continue to provoke controversy among experts of the issue and those affected by the steps taken. Cooperation with non-governmental organisations has visibly begun in certain areas but, seen as a whole, the system still encourages little NGO-involvement in both the devising and the implementation of new programmes.

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### **3. Introduction**

Three important areas are covered in this study. The first of these is the situation of Hungary's indigenous minorities (the plight of the Gipsy population receiving more detailed treatment than that of the rest), the second being the educational situation of Hungarians from across the country's borders, and the third that of migrants in Hungary whose first language is other than Hungarian. To make its approach easier to follow, the study first looks at the issue of minority politics, calling attention to the peculiarities characterising the problem of minority education in this geographical region. The study then proceeds to examine the legal codification of the problem in a minority- and discrimination-related framework, suggesting the relevant changes that have occurred in the past year and a half.

The section following that is a presentation of various educational programmes related to the schooling of minorities and launched on governmental, EU or NGO initiatives. In that part of the study emphasis is given to the governmental treatment of the educational situation of the Roma minority, with particular attention paid to modifications effected in the past one and a half years.

That is followed by the introduction of a number of NGOs specialising in the education of minority groups, indicating the problems and difficulties as well as the achievements of these efforts. These case studies are meant to highlight the complications involved in running the institutions of minority education called into being on civil initiative, and the lack of proper funding which, while being endemic to the entire non-governmental sphere, can have particularly dire consequences to educational institutions. The scope and nature of the support given by the government to existing NGO-initiatives is also to be examined, together with the extent to which governmental agencies rely, in devising their own programmes, on the experience gained in the civil sphere.

## 4. Legislation and policies in the area of minority schooling

Three important areas of minority education in Hungary deserve particular attention: the educational situation of ethnic minorities indigenous to Hungary, that of ethnic Hungarians from across the country's borders, and the schooling of non-Hungarian nationals residing in Hungary as migrants or refugees.

### 4.1. MINORITIES INDIGENOUS TO HUNGARY

As opposed to the regionally defined conception of ethnicity prevalent in Western Europe, national identity is determined in terms of history in the Central-European region, which Hungary is customarily seen as part of. Whereas the legal status, economic development, and communication of the population within a given geographical area, i.e. issues of regional and linguistic identity, are essential considerations in the western type of regionally conceived self-definition, minorities in Central Europe define themselves on a historical basis. Being of a historicising and symbolic nature, the latter type of self-definition relies on the organising principle of a historical conception of nationhood, on national identity, in other words. The primary goal, therefore, of minority education is the advancement of culture and the promotion of language in the West, while in the Central European region the main objective is the protection and reinforcement of national identity.<sup>1</sup> Under the country's Act on Minorities, the following are regarded as ethnic groups indigenous to Hungary: the Bulgarian, the Roma, the Greek, the Croat, the Polish, the German, the Armenian, the Romanian, the Ruthenian, the Serb, the Slovak, the Slovenian and the Ukrainian.<sup>2</sup> The population size of the above minority groups are presented in Table 1.

**1. Table: Minorities indigenous to Hungary, data based on the**

Minorities*	Identity*	Mother tongue*	Language used besides mother tongue*	Estimated population size**
Roma	142 683	48 072	22 933	400.000 - 600.000
German	30 824	37 511	416 182	200.000 - 220.000
Slovak	10 459	12 745	56 107	100.000 - 110.000
Croat	13 570	17 577	18 297	80.000 - 90.000
Romanian	10 740	8 730	40 625	25.000
Serb	2 905	2 953	13 646	5.000
Slovenian, Vend	1 930	2 627	1 566	5.000
Armenian		37	48	3.500 - 10.000
Greek		1 640	1 260	4.000 - 4.500

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed treatment of the issue see Kozma, T. (2003) *Kisebbségi oktatás Közép-Európában*, Budapest: Oktatóskutató Intézet.

<sup>2</sup> Law No. 77 of 1993, Art. 63 (1) on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities.

Bulgarian		1 370	1 665	5.000
Polish		3 788	5 948	10.000
Ukrainian, Ruthenian***		674	1 192	
Rutheianian				6.000
Ukrainian				2.000
Other	19 640			
Total	232 751	137 724	579 469	

*1990 census and experts' estimates*

\* *Data of the 1990 census*

\*\* *Data based on experts' estimates*

\*\*\* *The two languages were asked in one question in the census questionnaire*

Hungarian laws speak of national and ethnic minorities (*nemzeti kisebbség* vs. *etnikai kisebbség*) without clearly defining these concepts. In legal contexts the two terms tend to crop up in conjunction without any distinction being made between their respective applications. However, in everyday and political parlance there is a difference in the use of the dual nomenclature. The term ethnic group (*etnikum*) is normally reserved for the Roma community as a segment of the population which has no mother country, while the term national minority (*nemzeti kisebbség*) is applied to all other ethnic groups, which do have their respective mother countries.<sup>3</sup>

Another important proposition concerns the fact that the problems of the country's Roma population are interpreted in politics, by the public and in the social sciences in a manner entirely different from the perception of other minorities indigenous to Hungary. The country's political leadership of the period preceding the change of political system sought to deal with the situation of the Roma as no more than a social issue and a problem of adaptation. The Roma population as an ethnic minority with its own culture was not recognised at all, and the most complete assimilation possible was seen as the only solution to the problem presented by the Roma community. The current Act on Minorities does identify the Roma population as an ethnic minority, and it gives recognition to an independent Roma language and culture. At the level of daily political practice, however, social problems and ethnic peculiarities are often seen as overlapping concepts, with poverty and its corollaries being treated as features characterising the population in question. Hungary's largest minority is that of the Roma (it is estimated to be in the 500 to 600 thousand range), a significant proportion of which is indeed badly disadvantaged socially, where schooling and unemployment figures are way below the national average. While raising the issue of poverty is thus justifiable, blurring the differences between social and national/ethnic issues has grave consequences.

#### **4.1.1. The principle of non-discrimination**

In modern societies, the major organising principle of minority policy in general and education in particular is the ban on negative discrimination. The basis of the ban in this

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<sup>3</sup> In the media as in everyday and political parlance, the term "ethnic entity" (*etnikum*) is used as an euphemistic variant of "Gypsy".

country is Article 70/A of the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary which proclaims the following:

(1) The Republic of Hungary shall respect the human rights and civil rights of all persons in the country without discrimination on the basis of race, colour of skin, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origins, financial situation, birth or on any other grounds whatsoever.

(2) The law shall provide for strict punishment of discrimination on the basis of Paragraph (1).

(3) The Republic of Hungary shall endeavour to implement equal rights for everyone through measures that create fair opportunities for all.<sup>4</sup>

The ban on discrimination in the area of education is decreed in the Act on Education of 1993:

Article 4 (7) In public education negative discrimination is forbidden for any reason whatsoever, especially on grounds of the child's colour of skin, sex, faith, national or ethnic identity, his or her political or other views, national, ethnic or social background, financial status, lack or absence of power of disposal, his or her position due to birth or any other circumstance, and on the grounds of whoever maintains the educational institution.<sup>5</sup>

These laws are supplemented by legal instruments penalising discriminatory acts. What this legislation gave expression to is the legislators' intention to guarantee that pupils belonging to any minority group living in Hungary must have equal access to the same standards of education and receive the same manner of treatment.

As the population subjected in Hungary today to discrimination narrowly interpreted is the Roma minority, the following is meant to take stock of legal amendments and government measures taken in the past year and a half concerning the education of the Roma minority and touching upon the issue of negative discrimination and the circumvention of such discrimination.

In the year 2002, the Bureau of the Ministerial Commissioner for the Integration of Underprivileged and Roma Children was set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. Since its establishment, the office has taken various measures concerning the education of underprivileged and Roma children. Behind these measures several important organising principles can be discerned. One of these is that of combating discrimination. Another one, closely related to the former, is the intention of eliminating the educational segregation of Roma and underprivileged children and the encouragement of integrated schooling in public education. The third principle is directed at a discrete approach to underprivileged position and ethnic identity, i. e. the elimination of Roma children receiving discriminatory treatment *sui generis*. The fourth one is targeted at counteracting underprivileged status with every possible means at the disposal of educational politics.

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<sup>4</sup> This article of the Constitution came into force on 23.10.1989.

<sup>5</sup> Article 4 (7) quoted here came into force on 1.09.1996.

It was in that spirit that since November 2002 a number of decrees affecting the situation of disadvantaged and Roma pupils were passed. Instead of the concept “helping those lagging behind to catch up” the new regulation introduces the concepts of integration and of preparatory ability-development programmes; the detailed requirements set by the school-leaving examination include requirements prescribing the presence of material pertaining to the culture, past and present of the Roma population; the Law on Public Education was amended to include anti-discriminatory elements: the provisions for obtaining the status of "private pupil" were revised, to prevent even the most severely underprivileged pupil from dropping, in an uncontrolled manner, out of public education; the new method of "tutorial school" was introduced, which comprises extramural tuition meant to facilitate the improvement of academic standards achieved by underprivileged children; the government has created a real opportunity of the Romany and Baïas languages appearing in formal school teaching; as of 2005, positive discrimination ("affirmative action") is to be introduced in higher education to help the admission of underprivileged applicants to first-degree courses.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4.1.2. The preservation of language and culture**

Another important component of the legal instruments pertaining to the education of Hungary's minorities is the section of the law on the rights of ethnic minorities proclaiming the right of minority communities to initiate the creation of conditions essential for the teaching of or in their mother tongue and their right to create their own nationwide network of educational institutions.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the law also provides that any school is obliged to open and maintain a class or study group when requested by eight parents belonging to a minority community.<sup>8</sup> The detailed guidelines of nationality and minority education are laid down in Decree No. 32 of 1997 (05.11) issued by the Ministry of Culture and Public Education.

The last two paragraphs of Article 48 (1) b) of the law are of particular relevance here as they proclaim that pupils belonging to ethnic minorities are to be instructed in knowledge pertaining to their respective minorities and that they must also be provided with access to learning Hungarian language and culture; conversely, pupils not belonging to any minority must be instructed in the culture of the minorities living in their place of residence.

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*6 Legal provisions referring to the above are as follows: Articles 39/D and 39/E of the Ministerial Decree No. 11 of 1994 (08.06) issued by the Ministry of Culture and Public Education; Decree No. 32 of 1997 (5.11) issued by the Ministry of Culture and Public Education; Decree No. 14 of 2003 (27.05) issued by the Ministry of Education; Articles 4 (7)-(15), 5, and 84 (7)-(15), Article 65, Article 95 (1) m.), Article 121. of the Law on Public Education; Decree No. 32 of 1997 issued by the Ministry of Culture and Public Education; Governmental Decree No. 269 of 2000 (26.12).*

<sup>7</sup> Law No. 77 of 1993, Chapter III, Art. 18 (3) a)-b) on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities.

<sup>8</sup> Law No. 77 of 1993, Chapter VI, Art. 43 (4).

The law therefore enables minorities residing in Hungary to exercise their collective rights and organise ethnic schools, classes, and study groups, and to be taught their mother tongue or in their mother tongue. An obvious prerequisite of the latter is the training of educators qualified to teach content subjects in minority languages.

## **4.2. HUNGARIANS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY'S BORDERS**

In connection with the education of Hungarians coming to Hungary from across the country's borders, it is important to mention the fact that the number of ethnic Hungarians living in neighbouring countries is relatively high. According to the most recent census-figures, Austria has a Hungarian-speaking population of 25.884, Croatia of 15.595, Romania of 1.447.544, Slovakia of 520.528, Slovenia of 6243, Ukraine of 156.600, and Serbia and Montenegro of 295.379.<sup>9</sup>

It was in the wake of political transitions that attending to the migration of ethnic Hungarians and the mother-tongue education and cultural activities of Hungarians of foreign citizenship became feasible. The most important legal instrument dealing with the issue is the much-debated "Law No. 62 of 2001 on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries", the so-called Act of Entitlements (*kedvezménytörvény*) and the regulations attached to the law (governmental decrees Nos. 318-319 of 2001 and 49 of 2001, ministerial decree No. 47 of 2001 jointly issued by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Two ways of teaching Hungarians living in neighbouring countries took shape in the period following the change of political system. One of these is access provided for the Hungarian-speaking students of neighbouring countries to studies pursued in Hungary, the other being support given to Hungarian-language instruction in the educational institutions of countries around Hungary. This study confines itself to the discussion of programmes implemented within Hungary.

The chapter in the Act of Entitlements devoted to education addresses the issues of Hungarian study grants and various allowances available in Hungary to teachers and students, further training for teachers, extramural training provided outside the institutions based in Hungary, the subsidising of higher education in the country of origin, and study grants available in the country of origin (Articles 9-14).<sup>10</sup> Regulation governing the execution of tasks in the area of education include governmental decree No. 319 of 2001 (29.12) on student entitlements and the ministerial decree No. 47 of 2001 (29.12)

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<sup>9</sup> The statistics have been obtained from reports compiled by the Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad on the basis of the latest census taken in each of the neighbouring countries in question. The reports can be found at <http://www.htmh.hu> (12.01.2004).

<sup>10</sup> The synopsis of the act given here is based on Alliquander, T-Ríz, Á (2002) A szomszédos államokban élő magyarokról szóló 2001. évi LXII. törvény oktatási vonatkozásai, in: Magyar Felsőoktatás, Vol. 12, No. 4. pp. 8-9.; <http://magyarfelsooktatas.hu/22.04/08.html> (12.01.2004).

issued by the Ministry of Education regulating the enforcement of the Act of Entitlements.

In relation to the instruction in Hungary of ethnic Hungarians from across the borders, the Act of Entitlements only makes provisions for education at higher levels. The law delineates two types of subsidies. One is available, as an inalienable right, to all persons participating in higher education who come under the jurisdiction of the Act, while the other type of grant can be applied for. Inalienable entitlements include travel grants, trading and cultural subsidies, the subsidised purchase of specialised literature, i.e. entitlements automatically extended to students and teachers of Hungarian citizenship.

Eligibility for grants that can be applied for during studies pursued in Hungary's higher education (Act of Entitlements, Article 9) is extended to students and researchers of foreign nationality who attend expense-account or government-financed courses run by a Hungarian institution of higher education. Quotas of ethnic Hungarians from abroad eligible for training in the various types of government-financed courses are set by the Minister of Education.

Teachers of Hungarian ethnicity from abroad (Act of Entitlement, Art. 11) can attend either of two types of further training. One of these comprises accredited courses listed in the official register of further-training programmes with a charter of foundation, which courses can be applied for on an individual basis. The other type is that of programmes recognised on the basis of a decree issued by the Ministry of Education. This means that the Council of Education, which unites associations of ethnic Hungarian teachers of non-Hungarian citizenship, can request the recognition of new programmes and the organisation on the basis of such recognition of gap-filling programmes attuned to their own respective systems of training.

### **4.3. MIGRANTS IN HUNGARY**

The appearance in this country of foreign nationals not speaking Hungarian was by no means characteristic of Hungary before the change of political system. That is why the country had no experience whatsoever to rely on in dealing with refugees arriving in large numbers after the political transformation. This meant that education, as well as legislation or law enforcement, was faced with new challenges. Redefining the sphere of legal schoolability, financing schools, and professional assistance to be given to teachers are tasks which cannot be evaded in the new situation.

Law No. 39 of 2001 on the Entry and Stay in Hungary of Foreign Nationals, together with the accompanying governmental (No. 170 of 2001 (26.09)) and ministerial (No. 25 of 2001, issued on 21.11 by the Ministry of the Interior) decrees, determines the conditions on which permits of entry and stay can be issued. Itemised in the legislation are the obligations and rights of foreign nationals legally staying in Hungary. The same law prescribes the authorities' responsibilities in providing accommodation, care and sustenance to foreigners of authorised-to-stay status, and regulates the admittance of the latter to community shelters. In 1989 Hungary acceded to the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees and ratified its Protocol of 1967. The Convention prescribes the rights and obligations of refugees on the one hand and sets the norms of how signatories will deal

with refugees on the other. The Geneva document also lays down the principles of employment, education, accommodation, freedom of movement, access to fair trial and nationalisation, guaranteeing that no refugee is returned to a country where they can be subject to persecution. In the first round Hungary signed the Convention with the geographical proviso excluding refugees arriving from non-European countries from its application. The Act of Asylum passed as Law No. 139 of 1997 entered into force in 1998 and extended the state's responsibilities to include providing status determination procedure and care to refugees of non-European origin as well.

Provisions for the education of migrants are made in the law on public education cited above. Under Article 110 (1) of the law, schoolable status is extended to non-Hungarian nationals who hold the legal status of asylum seeker, refugee, temporarily protected person (refugee hereinafter), immigrant, settled immigrant, minor with humanitarian residence permit but unaccompanied by a guardian, or a minor holding a residence permit jointly with his or her parents. Under Article (2), schooling becomes legally mandatory when residence of the child exceeds the period of one year or, in the case of a stay not exceeding one year, if schooling is requested by the parent. The article was enacted as part of the Law on Public Education on 1 January 2002; prior to that date, mandatory schooling was applicable in a far narrower circle, leaving a large proportion of the migrant population uncovered. That is then the date from which the legislation of the issue can be regarded as settled; it is since then that schools are legally obliged to admit every migrant child staying in Hungary.

## **5. Minority schooling in practice**

### **5.1. MINORITIES INDIGENOUS TO HUNGARY**

Minority education is provided at several levels in Hungary today. Of nursery schools there are one Bulgarian, 40 Croat, 214 German (15 000 children), 14 Romanian (640 children), four Serb, 74 Slovak (3000 children), and five Slovene. Education at primary level is available at one Bulgarian, 41 Croat, 254 German, 11 Romanian, one Ruthenian, four Serb, 75 Slovak, and four Slovene schools. At secondary level nationality programmes are run at one school for the Roma, two for the Croat, three for the German, one for the Romanian, one for the Serb, two for the Slovak, and one for the Slovene minority.

Minority education at higher levels is worth breaking down into its various components. Nursery-school teachers are trained in two Croat, three German, one Romanian, and one Slovak programmes. There are 3 Croat, 3 German, 1 Romanian, and 3 Slovak programmes in as many colleges. Secondary-school educators are trained in 1 Croat, 3 German, 2 Romanian, 1 Ruthenian, 2 Serb, 2 Slovak, and 1 Slovene university programmes. Furthermore, there are university-level arts programmes in Bulgarian, Greek, Ukrainian, and Polish languages and literatures. Currently there are some five hundred students participating in the various teacher-training programmes offered in minority languages at eight institutions of higher education in Hungary. None of these, however, offers training to prepare students to teach subjects other than their own languages and cultures in any of Hungary's minority languages.

Although the Act on Minorities makes provisions for the setting up of schools and classes for ethnic minorities, the scarcity of educators poses a serious obstacle to putting theory into practice. Thus the opportunities of minorities exercising their rights granted by the Hungarian state are rather limited. Only the training of German minority educators is of satisfactory standard, but here, too, the number of instructors qualified to teach content subjects in their own, German, language is very limited. And while German-language teachers are trained in sufficient numbers, many of the graduates choose another profession, as proficiency in German is a qualification in great demand in all walks of life. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the National and Ethnic Minorities Rights conducted investigations on several occasions when a municipality had announced its intention to close down an ethnic-minority school, quoting the lack of qualified educators as an explanation. Although in most cases the investigators found financial reasons motivating the authorities' intentions to terminate minority schooling, complaints about the shortage of teachers are not unfounded.

A very serious problem in minority education is that of financing. Although the Act on Education proscribes the use for any other purpose of supplementary per-capita subsidies for minority education, practice is often inconsistent with the letter of the law. Responding to a query made by the minority ombudsman, the educational advisors of most municipalities conceded that although their municipalities had in fact made the governmental subsidies available for minority education, they had curtailed the annual

budget of the educational institution in question elsewhere by relocating other, freely disposable, subsidies.<sup>11</sup>

The minority and the education ombudsmen have highlighted another important type of infringement that the educational institutions and their maintainers are frequently found guilty of. That happens when the right of the minority self-government to be heard on important municipal decisions (Act on Ethnic Minorities, Art. 29 (1)) affecting minority education is violated. The self-governing bodies of minorities often complain that they are not consulted when a new headmaster is appointed or, if they are, their refusal to accept the candidate is simply ignored. In one case when the minority self-government lodged a complaint about an infringement committed by the municipality, the latter put forward as an excuse the fact that the educational programme of the given school did not include an ethnic component. That being the case, the municipality and the school were guilty of having applied for per-capita subsidies for minority education; informed of the infringement, the ministry of education now demanded that the municipality reimburse the accumulated sum it illegally applied for over the years. Afterwards the municipality tried to blame the worsening of the school's financial situation on the minority self-government.

The most serious problem about minority education is discrimination. The principle of non-discrimination is violated on several counts in Hungary as shown by a whole range of professional inquiries and academic studies. The reason is to be found in the enforcement of existing laws rather than any deficiency of legislation. The legal instruments of penalising infringements is not lacking, but practice is often inconsistent with theory. The area where this can most frequently be seen is the education of the Roma minority. Teaching Roma children in segregated schools, classes and study groups, the procedure of diagnosing these children as retarded and relegating them to schools with alternative educational programmes<sup>12</sup>, and of providing them with education of an inferior standard are practices resorted to on a large scale in Hungary. A recently conducted national survey in educational sociology<sup>13</sup> has found that Roma pupils are exposed to multiple forms of discrimination in education. Several types of educational segregation can be observed, such as segregation between schools (Roma school) inside schools (Roma class) and the even more grievous case of relegation to schools with alternative educational programmes.<sup>14</sup> The research was carried out in schools where the

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<sup>11</sup> Kaltenbach, J. (1998) Report on the activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the National and Ethnic Minorities Rights in 1997, Budapest: The Office of Parliamentary Commissioners.

<sup>12</sup> The colloquial alternative to the nomenclature school with an alternative programme (eltérő tantervű iskola) remains "auxiliary school" (kiszegítő iskola), a name that used to designate a type of educational institution created for the mentally handicapped of mild to intermediate seriousness. To this day teachers and parents alike use the terms "auxiliary school" and "auxiliary class".

<sup>13</sup> Havas, G; Kemény, I; Liskó, I. (2002) Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában, Budapest: OKI-Uj mandátum.

<sup>14</sup> Schools with alternative educational programmes can be set up for educationally subnormal children. Children

percentage of Roma children had exceeded 25 per cent as early as 1992 or where their number was 100 or more. Nationwide, 44 per cent of all Roma children but only 6.3 per cent of all non-Roma pupils attend schools meeting these criteria. These figures bespeak a severe case of segregation in themselves, but chronological observation will reveal that the situation had further deteriorated by the year 2000. In the schools surveyed, the percentage of Roma pupils was at 25.1 per cent in 1989 to grow to 29.3 per cent by 1992 and to reach 40.5 per cent by 2000.

The most serious instance of intra-school segregation is when children are relegated to a class with an alternative programme – the "auxiliary", that terminal ward of Hungary's public education. Besides being severely stigmatised, children sent here have no chance whatsoever of being reintegrated into a class with a regular programme, to continue their education or to seek employment on the labour market with any decent chance of success. Children graduating from auxiliary classes do no more than increase the statistics of functional illiterates. Another form of discrimination is exclusion from classes taught at a higher level of specialisation. It is a startling fact that the percentage of Roma children in auxiliary classes is above 80 per cent, in normal classes at 45 per cent and in specialised classes around 15 per cent on average (see table 1).

**1. Table: The representation of Roma children in the various class-types in the percentage of all the children.**

Class-type	Percentage of Roma children
Specialisation in PE	14.1
Specialisation in music	16.1
Specialisation in mathematics	16.2
Specialisation in languages	17.5
Normal	45.2
Remedial (catch-up)	81.8
Auxiliary	84.2
Total	40.5

*Source: Havas, G; Kemény, I; Liskó, I. (2002) Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában, Budapest: OKI-Uj mandátum*

Diagnosing them as mentally retarded has by now become a major way of segregating Roma pupils. While the number of children has been steadily declining in recent decades, the number of children declared handicapped has grown. According to a study by Sándor Loss, 96 per cent of all pupils educated in alternative programmes is made up of Roma children.<sup>15</sup> Every fifth Roma child in Hungary is in the "auxiliary" programme today. Professional inquiries have produced conclusive evidence that the percentage of mental retardation, either of mild or intermediate seriousness, is not at all higher among the Roma population than it is among the population at large. Therefore, the real reason for relegating Roma children to auxiliary schools or classes is none other than complete

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can only be admitted after specialist medical examinations. These schools refrain from teaching subjects indispensable for the continuing of studies finished here.

<sup>15</sup> Loss, S. (2000) Út a kisegítő iskolába, in: Horváth, Á; Landau, E; Szalai, J. (eds) Cigánynak születni, Budapest: Uj Mandátum, pp. 365-401.

disregard for social-cultural factors on the one hand and prejudiced thinking on the other.<sup>16</sup>

Up to 2002, segregation of Roma children was made possible by the so-called "educational programme for the Roma minority" meant to serve as a framework for assisting Roma pupils in catching up and to provide for instruction in Roma ethnic culture. Schools exploited the additional subsidies that went with the programme partly to bolster their budgets and partly to form separate classes for the teaching of their Roma pupils without teaching them the prescribed cultural content. What it meant in practice was, in broad terms, that while their non-Roma school-mates were at an advanced foreign-language lesson, Roma pupils were drilled in mathematics in a remedial class.

The separation of Roma pupils is a deeply problematic practice. Naturally, it is possible to set up a class or study group for the teaching of a minority language and culture if such is the wish of the given ethnic minority. There are arguments then supporting the idea of separate education. However, if separation is not effected on a voluntary basis, if teaching in separate classes or schools involves educational services of a different standard, if, that is, separation means teaching, care and equipment of an inferior quality and thus the exclusion of an ethnically defined group from a particular sphere of services, the exclusion, in essence, of pupils belonging to certain ethnic minorities from occupational training, language teaching or the deeper acquisition of skill-based subjects, that then is indicative of the presence of discrimination in education. To argue for such practices by citing a demand for minority education is a rather hypocritical thing to do.

News of several cases have become public, highlighting instances of Roma children being taught in segregation or being discriminated against. Such is the Tiszavasvár case where graduating Roma pupils participated in a separate school-leaving ceremony. In the suit filed by the Roma Civil Rights Foundation, the non-appealable ruling was finally passed declaring that the municipality had violated the pupils' human rights. A related instance involves the practice followed by the Bogács primary school of serving meals to Roma children separately from their non-Roma schoolmates in specially marked plates and glasses. One of the most widely debated and most disturbing case is that of a place called Jászladány, where the municipality founded a school the ulterior motive of which is reasonably concluded to be the separation of Roma and non-Roma children from each other, keeping the Roma children – their families being not able to afford the foundation school – in the lower-quality municipal school.<sup>17</sup>

The above cases clearly demonstrate the complexity of the problems related to the education of Hungary's Roma: spontaneous segregation attendant on the free choice of

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<sup>16</sup> Kaltenbach, J. (2000) Report on the activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the National and Ethnic Minorities Rights from Jan 1 1999 to 31 Dec 1999, Budapest: The Office of Parliamentary Commissioners.

<sup>17</sup> <sup>17</sup> For more details see Kaltenbach, J. (2002) Report on the activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner on the Rights of Ethnic and National Minorities from Jan 1 2001 to 31 Dec 2001, Budapest: The Office of Parliamentary Commissioners; Kádár, A. (2003): A Magyarországi romák oktatására vonatkozó jogi szabályozás áttekintése, manuscript.

school, the simultaneous and rapid deterioration of academic standards, prejudice and financial interests.

Dropping out of school has serious consequences for the underprivileged. One out of every four Roma children in the twenty-year-old age group had failed to reach grade eight in primary school. A related problem is that Roma children stand a chance eight times greater of being exempted from school attendance than non-Roma pupils. Today ten per cent of Roma children aged 14 to 15 do not attend school regularly. The application of the status of "private pupil"<sup>18</sup> is one recent method of schools getting rid of problem cases. A non-Roma child is normally classified "private pupil" for medical reasons or when this procedure is seen to serve the interests of an exceptionally talented pupil's career in the best way as it does in the case of an athlete or an artist. With Roma children, the most frequent explanation offered is chronic misbehaviour. In reality, children condemned to home study, mostly having to do without the assistance of a teacher and growing up in an underprivileged family, never graduate from primary school.

In recent years several measures have been taken to support children mostly of a Roma background, but putting these into practice still leaves a lot to be desired. Launched in 1999, the János Arany Programme for Talented Children was meant, as specified in the public notice announcing it, to assist talented children of an expressly underprivileged status with continuing their studies at higher levels. The programme was made available for applicants recommended by the local municipalities, and these children were then given grants and admitted to a secondary school programme. A "zeroth", preparatory, year was set up for these children, who were then further supported, as the programme was conceived of at the time, in additional special courses administered in separate classes. Participating schools and pupil hostels admitting children in the programme received double per-capita subsidies. In spite of that, there were hardly any Roma children among the participants in the first round, even though their being overrepresented in the target population cannot be doubted. Pressurised by voluntary organisations, the educational ministry of the time added a Roma auxiliary programme and earmarked some smaller funds for the purpose. Pupil hostels participating in the Roma auxiliary programme were not given doubled subsidies, unlike schools, which did, albeit only for a period of four years (which means no preparatory classes could be set up), and the pupils were not given grants. The introduction of the auxiliary programme triggered further quarrels, as it discriminated Roma pupils offering a service of an inferior standard and options of a narrower range to participants. Although the government made modifications on the programme at the end of 2003,<sup>19</sup> controversy seems slow to die down.

Another serious problem is suggested by the fact that the picture of the country's minorities emerging from Hungarian school-books is rather haphazard, superficial, often stereotyped and sometimes not entirely free of racist overtones. Why that is important is because school-books "do not simply impart knowledge but represent values, convey

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<sup>18</sup> Children with the status of "private student" are not obliged to attend classroom teaching, they only have to show up for occasional afternoon consultations and then sit for term exams.

<sup>19</sup>See more of that below.

norms, and impose patterns," as Tamás Terestyéni points out in a study analysing the Roma-picture of school textbooks.<sup>20</sup> The survey that the study relies on reveals that "with one or two exceptions, texts related to Roma [in history and social science textbooks used in secondary schools] do little, either in terms of quantity or content, to acquaint their users with the history, culture, present social position of the Roma or to dispel negative, prejudiced value judgements". The survey finds that in the majority of textbooks the Roma make no or only cursory, inconsequential, appearance, and their history is not integrated into Hungary's history at large; the introduction of positive aspects is entirely missing, while negative circumstances are frequently mentioned, and through suggesting associations and conclusions of an unpleasant nature these books reinforce prejudices. The reputation of the schoolbook-publishing industry has been tarnished by several scandals recently. Earlier on, a book on Roma cultural studies for younger primary school children that had won a competition invited by the Ministry of Education and subsequently categorised as school textbook, was found by independent analysts to draw a picture of the Roma which is stereotyped, prejudiced and capable of reinforcing anti-Roma prejudice.<sup>21</sup> Shortly after that, a number of NGOs directed the attention of the Ministry of Education to the fact that one teacher-training college had issued a textbook containing several studies presenting the Roma as drunk, immoral, and having criminal tendencies. The volume included a study authored by a school head-teacher arguing for segregation in education.<sup>22</sup> The volume is used in a further training programme for teachers accredited by the Ministry of Education.<sup>23</sup>

It is no surprise then that an inquiry conducted by the minority ombudsman found that a significant proportion of trainee teachers hold prejudices against the Roma.<sup>24</sup> According to the inquiry, 14 per cent of the respondents were expressly racist and 7.4 per cent free of prejudice. "Between the two poles is the wavering majority, which is probably easy to sway, and which can be subdivided into two groups. One is that of the mildly prejudiced (36.5 percent), those who acknowledge European norms, which they try to observe. They cannot, however, always fully and unreservedly comply but recognise a prejudice and are able to make efforts to combat it. Another group of the prejudiced (38.5) comprises those who acknowledge the 'obligation of coexistence' without hostile sentiments, but do not regard members of the Roma community as equal partners," reads the report of the minority commissioner. Teachers' organisations and teacher-training colleges raised an

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<sup>20</sup> Terestyéni, T: A középiskolai történelem és társadalomismeret tankönyvek romákkal kapcsolatos tartalmai (Roma-related contents in history and social science textbooks used in secondary schools), Manuscript.

<sup>21</sup> The Educational Ministry of the current government has withdrawn the classification of the book as an official school textbook and announced an open competition for a new book on Roma culture for lower primary school classes.

<sup>22</sup> The head-teacher directs the above-mentioned Bogács school where Roma children attend separate classes, and are given marked plates, glasses and cutlery.

<sup>23</sup> In the previous year the Ministry of Education withdrew authorization from several programmes for related reasons.

<sup>24</sup> Kaltenbach, J (2002) Report on the activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the National and Ethnic Minorities Rights from Jan 1 2001 to 31 Dec 2001, Budapest: The Office of Parliamentary Commissioners.

outrage against the report as soon as it was made public giving voice to doubts about its methodology. But even if no more than half of the data published are valid, that in itself would indicate a serious problem. Furthermore, the ombudsman's report calls attention to the fact that pupils ethnicise a significant proportion of problems because they lack relevant training in the social sciences, which is why they fail to discern the social ramifications of the problems.

Although the Ministry of Education under the pre-2002 government used significant governmental and EU resources to improve the lot of Roma pupils, the effectiveness of these expenditures became doubtful afterwards. In the framework of the 1999 PHARE Programme of the Ministry of Education, several billion forints were spent on improving the situation, and monitoring reports accounted of successes scored, which projected a favourable picture of the country to the European Union. Accordingly, a 2002 report made by the European Union<sup>25</sup> concluded the following:

“Supporting the Roma minority is a priority since 1999. In order to increase the social integration of the Roma several projects were implemented, concentrating on vocational training and schooling supports, as a consequence of which the ratio of drop-outs decreased. Practical assistance include the construction of two pupil dormitories for exceptionally talented pupils, and the purchasing of 17 school buses. PHARE contribution in these programmes counted seven Million euros.”

By contrast, a SWOT analysis<sup>26</sup> carried out in 2003 to find out what was going on at schools that had just concluded their PHARE programmes of 1999 found that these educational institutions did not differ in any way from schools identified as discriminating Roma pupils in the Havas-Kemény-Liskó survey. The makers of the report conclude that as PHARE programmes of competitions are built upon a flawed system of financing, those applying for support under these programmes are not necessarily committed to improving the education of the Roma and regard the programme as no more than another source of supplementary financing. Most of the money spent in this way made no effect whatsoever. Ethnic segregation, misguided pedagogical principles and parental dissatisfaction can be found among participating institutions. The fact that problems failed to come to the surface was the responsibility of a defective system of monitoring, which was only meant to make sure that the administrative criteria of a professionally questionable programme invitation were met, and that only on the exclusive basis of self-assessment made by the applicants themselves.

As of 2002, the treatment of the problem was laid on entirely new foundations. The Bureau of the Ministerial Commissioner for the Integration of Underprivileged and Roma Children was set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, which intervened in the operation of a legally regulated but dysfunctional system.<sup>27</sup> One of the most important

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<sup>25</sup>The 2002 report of the European Committee on Hungary's progress towards accession. <http://www.kum.hu/euint> (12.01.2004).

<sup>26</sup>The investigation is now concluded but the official report is not yet complete.

<sup>27</sup>The survey here of recent measures was made on the basis of interviews conducted with employees of the Bureau of the Ministerial Commissioner for the Integration of Underprivileged

principles guiding the measures taken has been the separation of problems attendant on the status of being underprivileged from the issue of ethnic minorities. It was in that spirit that the Bureau did away with "per-capita catch-up subsidies for Roma", declaring that ethnicity used as the basis of a means-test to be fundamentally mistaken. On the other hand, the bureau introduced the concepts of preparation for integration and ability development, raising the banner of integrated training. The steps taken in the past year and a half have been inspired by these ideas, even though they sometimes stir up debates among teachers and other interested professionals.

A National Network of Integration in Education has been set up to provide a framework for taking, on a nationwide scale, the measures recommended by sociologists, and to create an opportunity for the implementation of modern pedagogical approaches to the problem of children being underprivileged. The basic institutions of the network are located in the two north-eastern regions of the country with a few others scattered around the southern parts of Transdanubia and in the country's capital.

Sending an underprivileged child to nursery school for a period of three years is a prerequisite of a successful school career. The greatest obstacle of doing that today is the absence of nursery-school capacity precisely in those poverty-stricken towns and villages where, contradicting national demographic tendencies, the child-population is on the rise. Funds for the purpose is to be made available to applicants by Project 5.1 of the National Developmental Plan. Today 11 per cent of Roma children do not attend nursery school even after age five.

Governmental support given to the system of the "tutorial school" is also among the measures taken by the government. Tutorial schools appeared in the past ten years among the methods used by the pedagogical profession in Hungary on the initiative of voluntary organisations and churches. Above all, they provide assistance to Roma children and young people with improving their academic performance, but non-Roma pupils also like to avail themselves of their services. Today 70 per cent of Hungary's entire school-leaving population graduates from secondary school with the appropriate certificate, whereas less than ten per cent of all the country's Roma youngsters of the same age manage to obtain this academic qualification. Putting in place a fully developed system of the tutorial type could make a considerable contribution to dealing with the problem.

Data found by an OKÉV-survey<sup>28</sup> show that there are but three institutions of public education in the entire country where Roma children can study their mother tongue. According to preliminary information obtained by the Ministry of Education, 19 schools are to teach Romany or Baias from September of 2003 under the relevant legislative changes.

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and Roma Children and with independent experts as well as the analysis of the press coverage given to these measures.

<sup>28</sup>OKÉV = Országos Közoktatási Értékelési és Vizsgaközpont, i.e. National Centre for Assessment and Examinations in Public Education:  
<http://www.okev.hu> (12.01.2004).

The new announcements for ministerial-PHARE subsidies have been drawn up, criticised and monitored in a spirit radically different from the way they were in the past. The objective aimed at now is to reach out and provide financial assistance to institutions where considerable grass-roots efforts have been made to advance the development of Roma children and to offset the consequences of the underprivileged status.

The government has drawn up the programme called "Fast Forward", whose overall aim is to reduce unequal opportunities in language learning through the introduction of effective programmes of teaching foreign languages adjusted to the needs of pupils working under a handicap in this area.

A revised version of the János Arany talent-development programme was launched at the end of 2003. Programme components aimed at the underprivileged came to the fore and the principle of integration was built into the programme. Eligible for the pupils' hostel programme are pupils satisfying criteria set forth in points (5)-(6) of Article 39/D of decree 11/1994 (8 June), issued by the Ministry of Education, children receiving state care or having been placed with apartment-homes, institutions or with professional foster-parents.

The government's planned decree on positive discrimination met with serious opposition. Many of those affected and several intellectuals reflecting on the issue raised objections to the idea of admitting applicants to university or college on the basis of reduced scores arguing that the stigmatising, negative effects would outweigh any advantage expected of the measure. What is at the root of the problem is the fact that underprivileged groups begin to fall behind and be separated from the others in primary school already. According to the view of critics, the situation is made even worse by the stigmatisation involved in the situation together with the decline in academic standards attending on the expansion of higher education. The Ministry of Education defended its position by arguing that the 2.000 students expected to be affected is dwarfed in comparison with the total of 60 thousand state-sponsored students in higher education. On the other hand, the decree was modified in such a way that the students sponsored by the new measure would be involved in expense-account programmes except that their tuition fees would be paid for by the government. In that manner underprivileged youngsters would receive the same support that financially secure families can provide to their children wishing to continue their studies in higher education. Nevertheless, the ministry recognises that positive discrimination of this sort cannot continue in the long run and that it is not a solution in itself. That is why decrees have been made and programmes of subsidy created meant to support, from nursery school all the way to college or university, the education of children growing up in poor families or state care.

## **5.2. HUNGARIANS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY'S BORDERS**

Behind supporting ethnic Hungarians coming from or living across the country's borders, whether support is provided in Hungary or the country of original residence, is the intention of strengthening ethnic Hungarian intellectuals and professionals living in neighbouring countries. Comprehensive data on the results achieved in this way are not

yet available, however. We do have some statistics deserving attention on mobility-rates concerning ethnic Hungarians from across the borders attending partial-training programmes in Hungary's higher education.

In the examination on data concerning student mobility, training and partial training should be kept apart as the two types of education have different ramifications here in Hungary (in terms of financing, labour-market, human-resources and other problems entailed) as well as to the minority communities in neighbouring countries.

Despite the fact that 74 per cent of all pupils arriving here to participate in partial training come from Romania, the Ukraine is heading the list in terms of mobility rates, in terms, that is, of the percentage of all ethnic Hungarian students of a given country involved in partial training in Hungary. In the academic year 2001-2002, 4.34 per cent of all ethnic Hungarian students of the Ukraine, as opposed to 1.84 per cent of their counterparts in Romania, were involved in partial training provided by Hungary's system of higher education. The reason for that is the fact that there is a far greater student population in Transylvania, which is why it is also more difficult to reach a higher percentage there; to have a percentage similar to the Ukrainian, there would have to be several thousand students being accepted here each year.

**2. Table: Participation of ethnic Hungarian students in partial training in Hungarian higher education (2001-2002)**

Country	No. of Hungarian students (persons)	No. of students coming to Hungary for partial training (persons)	Rates of mobility (percent)
Romania	25.516	471	1.84
Slovakia	6.330	74	1.16
Yugoslavia	3.220	8	0.24
Ukraine	897	39	4.34

Compared to the countries of the European Union, where mobility rates are at six per cent, the number of students from across the borders – especially from Romania, Slovakia and Yugoslavia – participating in partial training in Hungary is very low. Besides these low rates of mobility, another feature characterising the partial training of ethnic Hungarians from abroad is the brevity of the time spent in such training. Seventy per cent of all students concerned spend two months or less – a fortnight or a month – in the Hungarian institutions hosting them. Compared to that, most students coming from the EU for partial training here spend half a year to a year in Hungary. In the case of ethnic Hungarians from abroad, the brevity of this period is explained by the fact that time spent in Hungary is usually not counted toward the entire period of training in the sending institution.

The partial training of ethnic Hungarians from abroad in Hungary is centred on Budapest with nearly eighty per cent of these students attending an institution of higher education or research in the country's capital. Guest students are accommodated in one hostel in Budapest and another three in the provinces.

### 5.3. MIGRANTS IN HUNGARY

The education of non-Hungarian-speaking migrants in Hungary is quite a recent problem and as such poses a serious challenge to schools. For one thing, teachers have hardly met the problem of instructing speakers of a foreign language as their mother tongue before, a task they were not trained to perform either. For another, educating migrants is an extra duty entailing extra expenses, too. Over and above that, an increasing migratory fluctuation is also involved, due to the fact that Hungary is not a target country, and this fluctuation entails serious complications for the institutions concerned. The majority of the problems related to teaching migrant children can arise from three circumstances. One difficulty is that schools concerned are often not sufficiently familiar with relevant legislation. That is why migrant children are often charged for tuition<sup>29</sup> or are simply denied admittance in the absence of a mutual agreement between Hungary and the sending country (which is no longer a legal prerequisite of schoolability). Another problem is the lack of expertise in teaching children not speaking Hungarian. As mass migration is a new phenomenon in Hungary, teachers are not professionally trained to deal with it. The situation is aggravated by a problem endemic to Hungary's education at large, namely the fact that teachers are overworked, classes are too populous, equipment is insufficient and funds scanty. The third difficulty originates from social-cultural differences. This is particularly true for schools in the vicinity of refugee camps with a larger concentration of migrant children, who often meet with intolerance and rejection. Local parents and teachers express views similar to opinions often heard in connection with Roma in towns and villages where they live in larger numbers: these children are described as being noisy, dirty, and an obstacle in the way of better academic achievement for Hungarian pupils. And the solution is seen by parents in the same thing: segregated instead of integration in education. There have been instances of schools being pressured by parents into turning away refugee children, who then have to go to another school. The issue of educating migrants has appeared on the agenda of the educational government with particular emphasis. Although legal regulation has been attended to, there remains much to be done yet. There are but a handful of NGOs in the country volunteering to find solutions to the problem. These organisations carry out two types of activities. On the one hand they try to exert pressure on the educational government to fill the gaps still existing, and on the other they try to actively intervene in areas not yet covered by legal regulations or attended to by the authorities.<sup>30</sup> The two types of action are of course not independent of each other. Ideally, dialogue and cooperation between educational government and NGOs follow as has often been the case recently. The Ministry of Education, the Pedagogical Department of ELTE University, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Medical, Family, Social Affairs and a number of schools affected have formed, in conjunction with the Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants, a team attending to the affairs of migrant pupils in November of 2003. At the same session the issue of a quota-based programme of supporting migrant education was

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<sup>29</sup> The Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants petitioned the Parliamentary Commissioner for Civil Rights for an official comment on the discriminatory policy implemented by several schools of charging a fee for the tuition of non-Hungarian-speaking pupils, thus violating the Law of Public Education on several counts.

<sup>30</sup>As done by the Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants with its teacher-training programme.

raised, and plans were outlined for a special pedagogical programme for migrant education, and for training-programmes involving adult migrants. Since then the special per-capita quota for educating migrant pupils has been defined by the act on the 2004 state budget, but the text defines the circle of beneficiaries rather narrowly: only those non-Hungarian speaking children are entitled, whose parents reside in the country on the purpose of legal employment.

## 6. Good practices

The following is a description of three voluntary organisations, two of which have been formed for the support of Roma children, and one for dealing with migrants, which includes the maintenance of a programme for the education of migrant children.

### 6.1. COLLEGIUM MARTINEUM

The foundation Collegium Martineum was established by church organisations based in Hungary and abroad, jointly with private individuals, in the summer of 1996, in order to provide a programme and an institutional framework for helping socially underprivileged children continue their education at secondary level. Pupils accommodated in the hostel of the *Collegium* are regarded by those maintaining the institution as individuals capable of making responsible decisions to guide their everyday lives. The employees of the *Collegium* are not supervisors but, above all, helpers of the residents. What they see as one of their major tasks is to gain the confidence and support of the parents and to create a mutual understanding upon which responsive, two-way cooperation can be built.

The founders of the Collegium wished to educate, in a family atmosphere encouraging work and scholarship, citizens with well-stocked minds and skills in the practice of democracy. One important mission of the Collegium is to help pupils become educated people while staying in close connection with their mother tongue and family backgrounds. During the four-year period of residence in the Collegium, pupils are introduced to several Roma and non-Roma intellectuals and professionals. They are encouraged to use as often as possible their mother tongue and foreign languages learnt at school. The Collegium runs courses preparing participants for examinations in Roma as well as foreign languages. The college tries to support regular theatre, cinema and concert going as well as attendance at other cultural and sports events. Residents mainly come from poor families living in the southern counties of the Transdanubian region (Dél-Dunántúl) and go to secondary schools preparing pupils for school-leaving examinations in Pécs, Komló and Sásd. They receive help with their studies, are given welfare benefits. Further, they have somebody to turn to with any psychological problems they may have. Besides free accommodation, the Collegium contributes to the pupils' travelling expenses, the price of meals at the hostel, it gives them stipends, occasional benefits at the beginning and during the academic year, and educational equipment. Beyond that, the Collegium hires teachers who give developmental and remedial classes and teach preparatory courses for university admittance and language exams; the Collegium also helps residents handle their welfare and family affairs, organises summer camps in Hungary and provides free computer and Internet access to the pupils accommodated.

## **6.2. THE JÓZSEFVÁROS TUTORIAL SCHOOL**

The Józsefváros Tutorial School is an afternoon programme for upper-primary-school children (aged 10 to 14) and secondary school pupils (14 to 18) living in the neighbourhood. It can be seen as a school disseminating culture, endeavouring to improve academic achievement with skills-development and value-transmitting courses. The founders assumed that the Roma families living in Józsefváros have no intention of sending their children to separate Roma (minority ethnic) schools. Their primary reason is the fact that they have not had any positive experience with any form of "separation". Besides the rejection of segregation, there is a growing demand for programmes devised to improve academic achievement. The majority of the families concerned express a need of extramural help.

The founders and administrators of the programme believe in the philosophy of heterogeneous education in order that children experience the academic success aimed at in the community of their Roma and non-Roma fellows, which may open up new prospects even in their social lives.

The tutorial school focuses on two age-groups – upper-primary school pupils on the one hand and secondary-school pupils on the other – who would like to study, but could not, in the absence of an encouraging environment and hope to be admitted to secondary school or college respectively. By combining these two tasks, the tutorial school can provide assistance with teaching the Roma children of the neighbourhood both at the entry and the exit stages of secondary school as well as relieving the burden on families in two critical phases in the development of their adolescent children. The programme helps upper-primary-school children who, gifted as they may be, would be prevented from completing their secondary-school studies by the absence of the required means in the broadest sense of the word. Those attending secondary school are assisted with the same supporting services that children of middle-class families can take for granted (such as one-to-one catch-up classes, professional tutorials, library services, PCs, language classes, background knowledge, and experience enhancing background knowledge).

## **6.3. MENEDÉK – HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION FOR MIGRANTS**

Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants was established on non-governmental initiation in January of 1995. Its mission is to help migrants arriving in Hungary. In particular, the organisation undertakes the social representation of individuals participating in international migration (migrants), especially individuals in need of international protection (asylum seekers, temporarily protected persons, persons authorised to stay, guest workers, and immigrants). It aims to provide assistance with legal, social and cultural integration to migrants and refugees indenting to stay in Hungary by means of target-specific programmes and projects.

Since its formation, the Association have been helping the social integration of refugees in Hungary through the organisation and coordination of social, advisory, and mental-health programmes, the compilation and dissemination of information leaflets, the

administering of training programmes in countries awaiting accession to the EU to enhance professional competence in dealing with refugees, the providing of free legal aid to refugees and migrants as well as organising training programmes for experts of migrant affairs.

The purpose of the educational programme maintained by the Menedék – Association for Migrants is to facilitate the work of teachers by means of establishing inter-school connections, organising educators' fora, publishing teachers' handbooks in order to help schools meet the challenge presented by the appearance migrant children in growing numbers.

In the first stage of its school project, the Association proposes to contact schools potentially involved in the education of children from abroad. Afterwards, it intends to take stock of problems and deficiencies through preparing case studies and analyses, and through the assessment of teachers', parents' and pupils' needs. That will be followed by the compilation of a practical handbook. As the programme unfolds, members of the organisation will stay in touch with the schools involved coordinating the exchange of ideas among the educational institutions concerned. They intend to assist the work done by organising seminars and inviting guest lecturers from abroad.

The beneficial influence of the activities carried out by the NGOs is manifold. Their emergence highlights some very real problems, and the solution of these is itself facilitated by the work of these organisations. The government benefits considerably from these organisations' dual roles played as litmus tests on the one hand and solution-seeking experimenters on the other. In Central Europe, and in the former socialist countries in particular, a framework of communication and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organisations has not yet been forged. Also, the government does not normally undertake to continually support even those organisations that have already presented visible achievements in this or that particular area. What the political practice of the past year and a half indicates, however, is that the educational government has taken notice of the NGOs active in the field. The fact that it has happened in this way must be due, to a large extent, to the fact that the Ministerial Commissioner for the Integration of Underprivileged and Roma Children has arrived from the non-governmental sphere, and the expert selected to work for the Bureau have also come from the same professional background. That is possibly the reason why the programmes run by the two organisations described above as caring for the Roma have come to serve as models for a governmental programme each, providing a basis for a national network of similar programmes as well as a reliable framework of long term operation for the two organisations concerned. The tutorial programme and the Collegium programme of the Ministry of Education, now raised to a national level, may considerably increase the proportion of Roma youngsters continuing their education.

Another auspicious sign for migrant education is the fact that the ministry has started negotiations and called into being a team involving several NGOs and independent experts to work out a mutual strategy for the education of migrants in general, and the professional preparation and training of teachers facing problems related to the issue in particular.

One of the most important features characterising the situation of non-governmental organisations in Hungary is that they are constantly struggling against problems of funding. They usually try to secure the financial conditions of their operation through applying to competitive programmes. That gives rise to several difficulties. One of these is the fact that the system of competitive programmes in Hungary tends to issue invitations to a number of very specific projects which do not provide funding for the operation of the given organisation. The other difficulty is related to the uncertainty of continuous operation. In spite of all that, Hungary's NGOs play an important part in solving problems to which government bodies are too slow to respond, if they do respond at all.

## 7. Conclusions, critical remarks

- Several problems can be outlined on the basis of the foregoing survey of policies, legal instruments and practices pertaining to the education of minorities. Some of these arise from the difficulties that Hungary's public education is fraught with regardless of the country's minorities, while others follow from the state of legislation, public opinions and everyday practices specific to the issue.
- Among the problems are serious legal violations, most frequently of the Roma minority's rights but sometimes affecting migrant children studying in Hungary, too. The situation of other minorities living in Hungary is mainly characterised by the excessively narrow sphere where minority rights can be exercised. No doubt, advances have been made in the field of minority education in various aspects recently, but the situation is far from satisfactory. While the separation of underprivileged from ethnic status is a serious step forward, a faithful presentation of the cultures and histories of the various minorities in school curricula is still missing. That is not only true for the Roma but the other minorities living in Hungary as well.
- It has been proved by now that the teacher-centred method of education widespread in this country can reach an ever narrower circle of children with any effectiveness, and that the number of those faced with difficulties in such a system is constantly on the rise. The educational principles covered by the term "alternative pedagogical methods" could produce significant results in the education of underprivileged children or pupils regarded as problem cases in ordinary schools, and these innovative methods have also proved to be highly effective in dealing with children coming from a middle-class background. The Waldorf-method, the educational principles of Montessori, Freinet or Rogers are used in very few places, which tend to be fee-charging private institutions or schools working in the framework of a foundation in any case. Teacher training institutions, schools and sometimes parents themselves resist alternative methods, even though the appearance of these methods would be highly desirable in Hungary's educational system.
- There are several signs suggesting that significant changes have taken place in one aspect of minority education, especially concerning the Roma minority. No doubt, most of the problems are concentrated in this area, but an overall paradigm shift in approach similar to the one that has taken place here is as yet to occur.
- Cooperation with non-governmental organisations that undertake to deal with problems arising from the deficiencies of the official system of education, the utilisation of the experience gathered by these organisations, support given to them and the dissemination of methods employed by these NGOs has slowly taken off the ground in the past year and a half. It is still a question, however, how such initiatives can be kept operational in a way transcending changes of government.
- The involvement of non-governmental organisations in the decision-making process is as yet to be achieved in education as well as elsewhere. Although steps have been taken forward, much criticism and controversy could have been avoided if certain governmental decisions had been preceded by a process of widespread social discussion involving non-governmental and, within that, minority organisations.