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Hungarian

The Hungarian Language in Education in Slovakia



* numerically small language communities

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Foreword

background

For several years now, Mercator-Education has made efforts to achieve one of its principal goals: to gather, store and distribute information on minority language education in European regions. Regional or minority languages are languages which differ from the official language of the state where they are spoken and which are traditionally used within a given territory by nationals of that state forming a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population.

The success of the series of regional dossiers has shown a need for documents stating briefly the most essential features of the educational system of regions with an autochthonous lesser used language. With the establishment of regional dossiers we intend to meet this need.

aim

Regional dossiers aim at providing concise descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Union. This kind of information, such as features of the educational system, recent educational policies, division of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures, and also quantitative information on the number of schools, teachers, pupils and financial investments, can serve several purposes.

target group

Policy makers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists may use the information provided to assess developments in European minority language schooling. They can also use a regional dossier as a first orientation towards further research or as a source of ideas for improving educational provision in their own region.

link with Eurydice

In order to link these regional descriptions with those of national educational systems, it was decided to follow the format used by Eurydice, the European education information network in the European Union. Eurydice provides information on the administration and structure of education in member states of the European Union. The information provided in the regional dossiers is focussed on language use at the various levels of education.

contents

The remainder of this dossier consists firstly of an introduction to the region under study, followed by six sections each dealing with a specific level of the educational system. These brief descriptions contain factual information presented in a readily accessible way. Sections eight to ten cover research, prospects and summary statistics. For detailed information and political discussions about language use at the various levels of education, the reader is referred to other sources with a list of publications.

1 Introduction

language

The Hungarian language is a member of the Finno-Ugric language family. About one third of the Hungarian-speaking population lives outside Hungary as a national minority. The Hungarian population living in Slovakia is the second-biggest Hungarian national minority in Central Europe (following the group of Hungarians living in Transylvania, Romania). The Hungarian nation has existed in the Carpathian basin since the 11th century. Its state form was the Hungarian Kingdom, and later, starting in 1867, it was the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Certain phenomena of the Slovak-Hungarian language variety differ from Standard Hungarian since their different social and political situations have led to differences in language use, too. The main reason for these differences emerges from the bilingual environment in which Hungarians in Slovakia live. As a result of this, language contact phenomena can be observed at all linguistic levels. These contact phenomena show up in the form of loanwords, borrowings or interference, and they do not exist in any of the monolingual Hungarian varieties.¹

Colloquial and dialect language elements appear to a greater extent in the standard Slovak-Hungarian variety than in Standard Hungarian. Since the Slovak variety of Hungarian is not employed in all areas of language use, certain registers are missing: especially language varieties for specific purposes. Compared to Standard Hungarian, the variety used in Slovakia may seem to be more archaic to a certain extent, as linguistic neologisms created in the home country find their way into the Slovak variety more slowly, if they get there at all. It should be stressed, though, that in spite of these differences, the majority of language elements and registers employed by Slovak Hungarians are identical to the language varieties used in Hungary, and easily understood by speakers of Hungarian in Hungary and abroad. The colloquial variety of Slovak Hungarian is ranked between the first and second levels on the five-level borrowing scale elaborated by Sarah Thomason and Terence Kaufman², with minimum language borrowing in the written language variety.

Many Slovak Hungarian parents raise their children with Hungarian as the family language. Second language acquisition mostly takes place in schools in instructed form. A great part of the Hungarian minority speaks the Slovak language at high levels of proficiency, and only an insignificant minority claim they do not

speak Slovak. According to the literature, about 90% of Hungarian adults speak the Slovak language. The Slovak language is not spoken by children who live in Hungarian family in Hungarian majority settlements and by old people living in villages with a Hungarian majority. In this respect, expectations held by the majority group towards the minority group regarding the ability to speak the majority language at perfect levels may cause problems. From the side of the Slovak majority, even in ethnically mixed territories, there is only very little interest among the majority population to learn the language of the minorities.

population

After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the independent Czecho-Slovak and Hungarian states were established on 28 October 1918. Then, it was not so much the ethnic but rather the political interests that were taken into consideration on the basis of the Versailles Treaty - when the borders of the new state were drawn. Thus, the borderline was established much further down to the south than the actual Slovak-Hungarian language border. As a result of this, significant territories populated by Hungarian found themselves under Czechoslovakian rule.

The Slovak Republic was established on 1 January 1993 as one of the successors of the Czecho-Slovak Republic. According to the 2001 census, Slovakia has a population of more than 5 million people. The number of people belonging to the Slovak nationality is 4,615,000 (85.8%). 765,000 (14.2%) people belong to different national minorities. With respect to numbers and identity, the most significant are the Hungarians (9.7%), followed by the Roma (1.7%), Czech (0.8%), Ruthenian (0.4%), Ukrainian (0.2%) and German (0.1%) minorities (other and unknown 1.3%). The Hungarian ethnic group is a native group. Compared to the other ethnic groups, its population numbers are large, it is well-organized, and its national identity is strong. The Hungarian minority forms a closed territory. The rate of Hungarians living within the Hungarian linguistic area³ is gradually decreasing (in 1991 61.5%, in 2001 56.8%), but still more than 90% of Hungarians live there, and 76.1% live in Hungarian majority settlements. According to the 2001 census, the number of Hungarians in Slovakia is decreasing as well. In 1991, 567,296 people claimed that they were Hungarians, which would amount to 10.7% of the population of Slovakia. Later, this number was modified to 520,528, which is only 9.7%. This significant decrease was caused by large assimilation changes in the nationality process

in addition to a decrease in the natural birth-rate.⁴ About 22-24,000 Hungarians changed their nationality and adopted the Slovak nationality. People claiming to have Hungarian as their first language (mother tongue) outnumber those identifying themselves as representatives of the Hungarian national minority by 52,000.⁵ For Hungarians in Slovakia, the Hungarian language plays a determining role in their national identity. Empirical data support the fact that a change of language means a change of their national identity.

language status

According to official Slovak views, the use of minority languages is strictly an individual right. People belonging to national minorities must acquire the language of the state, which has an integrating function in order to achieve successful adjustment. The legal status of minorities and that of their languages is determined at the highest level by the constitution and by international documents accepted in Slovakia.

The international documents accepted in Slovakia concerning language use include: the 1990 document of the Copenhagen Talk of European Security and Cooperation Meeting, Recommendation No. 1201 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council (1993), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities signed in 1995 (operative since 1998: www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities), the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, signed in 2001 (operative since 2002: www.coe.int/minlang), and finally the Slovak-Hungarian Basic Treaty (accepted in 1996, operative since 1997: www.htmh.hu). The Slovak language spoken by the majority was codified as the state language by the Constitution and accepted on 1 September 1992. National minorities and ethnic groups have the right to spread and take in information in their first languages, to have their cultural institutions and to use their first language in official relations. Language use in Slovakia is regulated by two laws and several provisions of law: the Law on the State Language⁶, passed in 1995, and the Law on Minority Language Use, in force since 1 September 1999.

The use of personal names is regulated by the Law on Names and Surnames (1993) allowing the registration of minority first names, and by the Registers Act, (1994) allowing women to use their last names according to their first language. According to the Law on Denomination of Communities in the Language of National Minorities (1994), the name of the locality may be written in the minority language in addition to Slovak on road signs which signal

the beginning and the end of the locality at those localities where the proportion of the minority population reaches at least 20%. According to the Law on the Use of Languages on National Minorities, the minority language may be used in contacting the local government and state administration organs if the proportion of the minority population is over 20%.⁷ However, those who established the current territorial-administration division did their best to keep the number of administrative units where this would apply to an absolute minimum, as for example was the case in defining the county borders.

In compliance with international documents and practice, both the Civil Code and the Criminal Code make oral use of minority languages possible. The state offers minorities a possibility to broadcast on public radio and television. The constitution guarantees the right to establish and maintain cultural institutions in the minority language. The use of the state language is required in economy-related areas, in services and in health care. Patients not speaking the state language may use the minority language. In advertisements and other commercial publications, the minority language can also be used following the Slovak-language text. In official documents, only the state language may be used. The language of religious life and rituals is not regulated by any law (for details, see www.gramma.sk, Language Policy, Linguistic Rights and Wrongs).

*status of
language
education*

Bill 42 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic declares the right for culture and for compulsory education, the span of which is regulated by law. Every citizen has a right to have free education at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels.⁸

The Slovak Republic regulates the system of primary and secondary schools (Schools Act) and the system of higher education (Higher Education Law, 2001). In accordance with the 1984 No. 29 School Act, education in kindergartens, at primary and secondary levels is possible in the languages of minorities, too.⁹ In compliance with the 5/1999 law, students attending primary and secondary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction are given bilingual certificates of their education. In these schools, documentation is carried out in both languages, i.e. in Slovak and in Hungarian.

educational system

Slovak Hungarians have a developed educational system at their disposal mainly due to the fact that the Hungarian minority was allowed to maintain some of its previous elementary and higher elementary schools in Czecho-Slovakia after 1918. The minority educational system in Slovakia is an organic part of the Slovak educational system and as such is characterized by the same features as the Slovak majority system, both in terms of its structure and in terms of its function. Education in Slovakia is compulsory until age 16. Elementary school lasts 9 years, followed by secondary education which may be of a different character. There are vocational schools, which prepare for a trade in addition to offering academic training, and there are high schools, which mainly prepare for higher education. Also, there are state schools, private schools, and church schools at basic and secondary level. Having successfully passed the final and entrance exams, students are given the chance of acquiring BA and MA degrees in higher education. In secondary technical schools, technical subjects are taught either partly or totally in Slovak. On the basis of the 2001 census, 21.1% of the Slovak and 30.5% of the Hungarian population had elementary education. 19.7% of the Slovaks and 23.2% of the Hungarians had a vocational school education. The rate of students graduated from secondary school amounted to 25.6% among the Slovaks and 22.1% among the Hungarians. 7.9% of the Slovak population and only 4.5% of the Hungarians studied in higher education.

private and public

In the Slovak education system, apart from public schools, there are church and private schools. From 1990 onwards, church schools in Slovakia have been founded and administered by churches and church communities registered by the State. The churches have the right to administer their affairs and institutions autonomously, except when the legal competence of the Ministry of Education is concerned in the establishment of schools, the definition of the concept and organisation of teaching, the issue of study plans and framework curricula, and finally the provision of compulsory school attendance. Details of the establishment and the activity of church schools are defined and determined by the Ministry of Education by a decree (Decree No. 536/1991 Coll. on the establishment and operation of clerical schools). Church schools receive the same per capita quota as state schools, and they are established by the bishop in their territory of operation. Private schools represent educational establishments of which the founders are legal entities or private people, civic or special

interest associations and special-purpose educational organizations. After being accredited, they form equal units in the educational system providing education to public schools. They are managed and inspected by the Ministry of Education. All Hungarian private schools are privately founded and run.

Despite the fact that church and private schools are equal to state schools, their role in the school system is very small. The proportion of church schools is 3.2% and that of private schools is 1.2%. The proportion of church and private schools within the Hungarian population is similar: 2.9% and 1.1%. One of the reasons is that there were no private or church schools in socialist Czecho-Slovakia before 1990. After 45 years, the legal possibilities of the establishment of non-state schools had to be worked out. Besides, the economic state of the country in general, added to the more disadvantageous financial situation of the Hungarian population, did not make it possible for the establishment of a significant network of private and church schools.

Finally, there are schools for pupils with special needs where Hungarian is the language of instruction. According to the data, there were two Hungarian kindergartens of this type of educational institution in 2004: 15 schools at primary level with Hungarian as the language of instruction and 11 Slovak-Hungarian special schools. Unfortunately, there are no data as to how many children are taught in these schools. 182 children belonging to the Hungarian national minority studied in all-Slovak schools for pupils with special needs at primary level, and 5 in church schools. 294 participated in special vocational training, and 43 attended special schools providing the General Certificate of Education at the end of the studies. There are three Slovak-Hungarian vocational schools for disabled pupils. Normally, mentally challenged children are dealt with in Hungarian special schools. For children suffering from other deficiencies, there is only one primary school with Hungarian as the language of instruction, but this school caters exclusively for children with hearing impairments.

*bilingual
education forms*

The language of instruction in Slovak-Hungarian primary and secondary schools is Hungarian. The state language is taught as a second language in the Slovak language and literature lessons. At each level of the educational system from nursery to secondary education there are schools run by Slovak-Hungarian common management. These schools are normally led by majority management but there are Slovak and Hungarian classes working

parallel. Instruction is held in the minority language in the Hungarian classes. Science subject terms (mathematics, physics, biology and chemistry) are taught within the framework of a special lesson, called 'special conversation', both in the upper classes of primary schools and in secondary schools. In most vocational schools, the special subjects are taught in the state language. The reason for this lies in a lack of course books in Hungarian and a lack of Hungarian-speaking experts. The biggest disadvantage of this kind of education lies in the fact that students acquire the register of their jobs mostly in the majority language: they can hardly speak about their trade in their first language. In majority classes, no minority language is taught. Hungarian is not taught in schools with Slovak as the medium of instruction. In secondary technical schools, technical subjects are taught either partly or totally in Slovak.

administration Certificates and all school documentation are bilingual in schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction. Minority language use is guaranteed by the 5/1999 law. Content and form of the documentation are regulated by the Ministry of Education. Curricula and subject requirements are worked out by the National Institute for Education, and approved by the Ministry of Education. The professional, curriculum and subject requirements are identical to those set for the majority schools. This may lead to tension in certain cases (for example regarding the different views on history concerning the Versailles Treaty and its consequences, and the evacuation of Hungarian nationalities after WWII). The language of contact with educational organs is the state language exclusively, both in oral and written form.

inspection The supervision of schools is carried out by the State School Inspectorate, established on 1 January 2000 as a central state organ, independent of the Ministry of Education, whose task it is to supervise professional training and education in primary and secondary schools. The legal background and powers are laid down in the 596/2003 article about state school management and local governments. The School Inspectorate operates at different levels (county and borough), but it does not have a department supervising minority schools. According to the law, the pedagogical supervisor of Hungarian schools has to know the language of education of the visited schools.¹⁰ However, this law is not followed systematically. The leader of the Inspectorate is the Head Inspector.

*support
structure*

Consultation for schools is provided and organized by the National Institute for Education, which is supported by the Ministry of Education. The Institute's main activities include among other things: theoretical and practical matters of course book writing; the elaboration of subject concepts; experimental pedagogical programs; diagnostic methods, and the organization of post-graduate courses for teachers. The nationality department of the Institute sets up the basic requirements for Hungarian primary and secondary schools and the requirements for the general certificate of education in Hungarian grammar and literature.

Hungarian education in Slovakia may rely on two social organizations from a professional point of view: The Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia (Szlovákiai Magyar Pedagógusok Szövetsége), established in 1990, and the Katedra Society (Katedra Társaság), established in 1995. The function of the association and the society is the organization of post-graduate courses for teachers, the improvement of teaching levels in the first language and the assurance of a trade union.

A vast majority of course books used in the Hungarian schools in Slovakia is published by the Slovak Pedagogical Publishing House. However other publishers may also be invited through tendering procedures. A private publisher 'Terra', which undertook the publication of books mainly for 1-4 graders, also deals with the publication of course books. A common feature of all the books used in the Hungarian schools in Slovakia is that they are all translations, apart from the alphabet and reading books in the junior section and books on Hungarian grammar and literature

2 Pre-school education

target group

Pre-school facilities provide systematic education for 2 to 6-year-old children, complementary to family education. Attendance is not compulsory until age 5, the preparatory year before school is obligatory.

structure

Kindergartens form part of the Slovak educational system. If the number of children allows it, youngsters are divided into three groups according to their age: the youngest are separated from the oldest and the in-between group. For children in the oldest group, there is some sort of school preparatory course. Pre-school education is provided according to the Framework Program of Education and Training in Kindergartens, which in addition to offering traditional components of education includes separate

subjects: pro-social education, integrated environmental education and health education, but it does not include any special features related to minority culture. According to the data of the Ministry of Education, on 1 January 2004, there were 271 Hungarian and 92 Slovak-Hungarian state kindergartens and 4 Hungarian church kindergartens in Slovakia. There were 9,542 children in 540 classes in these kindergartens. 1,959 Hungarian children attended Slovak kindergartens, which is 17% of the Hungarian kindergarten children. The participation of Hungarian nationality children in kindergarten education is 8.2%, which does not fall too much behind the proportion of the Hungarian nationality (9.7%). However, if we take into account the fact that almost 20% of Hungarian nationality children attend kindergartens with the state language and also the tendency that quite a sizeable proportion of children later chooses a school with Slovak as the language of instruction, the above data reflect an unfavorable picture. The role played by non-state kindergartens is marginal: 4 Hungarian church kindergartens are registered with a total number of 112 children.

legislation

In professional-educational questions, the kindergartens are managed and monitored by the Ministry of Education. Education is provided by teachers possessing the required professional and educational competence. Kindergartens are regulated by the 29/1984 Article of Public Education Law. Education in the first language is regulated by the 29/1984 Article of Public Education law, with bilingualism in school documentation guaranteed by the 5/1999 law. Kindergartens are run by the local government.

language in use

The language of instruction in the Hungarian kindergartens is Hungarian, both in the state and non-state institutions. Teaching of the Slovak language, done in a playful way, is compulsory for 30 minutes each day. There are usually 15-minute classes in the state language in the morning and in the afternoon.

teaching material

There is no teaching material for pre-primary level in the Hungarian language. In some kindergartens, a Slovak-Czech bilingual periodical is used as methodological material, if the local government budget allows for it. In many cases, teachers use methodological material they receive from Hungary or which they develop themselves.

*statistics***The number of kindergartens/classes/children**

language	public			church			private		
	kg's	classes	children	kg's	classes	children	kg's	classes	children
Slovak	2,607	6,458	137,341	26	55	1,205	16	34	598
Hungarian	271	535	9,430	4	5	112		0	
Slovak-Hungarian	92				0			0	

Source: Ministry of Education, the statistics yearbook for education for 2004, www.uips.sk; data of 15 September 2004.

* the total of the Hungarian classes, together with the Hungarian classes of Slovak-Hungarian management schools

* the total of the Hungarian children, together with the Hungarian children of Slovak-Hungarian management schools

3**Primary education***target group*

Primary education is compulsory from ages 6-15. If a pupil does not meet the requirements set in the final part of the year, he/she has to retake the year.

structure

The network of primary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction forms the basis of Hungarian minority education. The primary schools in Slovakia represent a special-purpose social-educational institution for the provision of compulsory general basic education. Education is provided by qualified teachers who have the required professional and educational competence. Since 1997, primary schools have consisted of nine grades and two stages: the first (grades 1-4) and the second stage (grades 5-9). Pupils are admitted to Grade 1 if they have reached the age of six by the end of August of that same year. Compulsory school attendance lasts 10 years. After completing primary school, pupils are required to apply for a secondary school.

In 2004, there were 118 schools with both junior and senior sections, 132 schools with only junior sections and 35 Slovak-Hungarian state school offering classes with Hungarian as the language of instruction. Education was available for 35,261 students in 1914 classes. The average number of students in a class is 18, which is smaller than numbers in majority classes. The reasons for this do not lie in the minority existence but rather the unfavourable demographic situation of the Hungarians in Slovakia, added to the fact that their majority lives in smaller settlements. This is reflected in the higher proportion of small schools, too. Junior sections function in villages with a small number of inhabitants: many times different classes are taught in

the same classroom. Students of schools like this normally continue their studies in the nearest town's schools.

Apart from the state schools, 12 church schools have been established with Hungarian as the language of instruction. There were 988 students in 70 classes in church schools in 2004, which is 2.8% of students attending schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction. There are no private primary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction in Slovakia.¹¹ According to the data of the Ministry of Education, 6,470 students belonging to the Hungarian national minority studied in schools with Slovak as the language of instruction, which is 17.8% of all school going children. This proportion is approximately a 10% reduction compared to the 1980s, when more than a quarter of all children belonging to the Hungarian nationality attended schools with the majority language as the language of instruction.

Educational content is regulated by framework curricula and study plans. The subject requirements of the national minorities are identical to those of the majority elaborated by the experts of the National Institute for Education and approved by the Ministry of Education. There is a problem, however, in that the subjects are available only in the state language, with the exception of Hungarian grammar and literature, which is available in the minority language, too. The subjects' curricula are drawn up by the teachers individually. They consider the subject requirements and they must not alter them. Because of this, there is no official way of teaching, for example, regional geography or a different view of history. School documentation and the certificates are bilingual. Compliance with the law and teaching levels are checked by the State Inspectorate: in many cases in the spirit inherited from the socialist system, which means the representation of central power rather than helpfulness.¹²

legislation

Public primary schools are established by the local governments. Primary schools are regulated by the 29/1984 Article of Public Education Law. Education in the first language is regulated by the 29/1984 Article of Public Education Law, with bilingualism of school documentation guaranteed by the 5/1999 law.

language in use

The language of instruction in the Hungarian state and church schools in Slovakia is Hungarian. The majority language is taught and acquired in the Slovak language class: both in junior and senior

sections one hour of instruction a day is organized in small groups. The reader is referred to the sections above for the acquisition of Slovak terms in science subjects.

teaching materials

In primary schools, course books are free. They are approved by the Ministry of Education. Every year, the Ministry distributes the list of approved course books from which schools can order according to the number of students. Course books in primary schools are translated from Slovak, with the exception of Hungarian grammar and literature. Any other kind of supplementary material may also be used: for example course books published in Hungary. However, the state of parental finances and book prices limit the consumption of these materials. Other supplementary materials, such as maps, are in the Slovak language.

statistics

The number of primary schools/classes/children

language	public			church			private		
	schools	classes	children	schools	classes	children	schools	classes	children
Slovak	1,922	22,667	492,864	97	1138	24,359	14	63	1,026
Hungarian	250	1,914*	35,261*	12	70	988	0		
Slovak-Hungarian	35			0			0		

Source: Ministry of Education, the statistics yearbook for education for 2004. www.uips.sk, data of 15 September 2004.

* the total of the Hungarian classes (together with the Hungarian classes of Slovak-Hungarian management schools)

* the total of the Hungarian children (together with the Hungarian children Slovak-Hungarian management schools)

4 Secondary education

target group

Secondary education starts at age 15 and lasts until age 18. Education is compulsory until the age of 16

structure

Secondary education currently takes place in three kinds of schools: academic grammar schools, technical secondary schools and vocational secondary schools. Secondary schools provide the following types of education: 1. general secondary education with school-leaving certificate (academic grammar school), 2. technical secondary education with school-leaving certificate. Academic grammar schools offer general education and prepare students mainly for studies in institutes of higher education. There are two types of secondary academic grammar schools, depending on the length of the program: four-year and eight-year schools. Education is free of charge, but church and private schools may charge tuition

fees. The curricula and subject requirements for secondary schools are designed by the National Institute for Education and approved by the Ministry of Education. The curricula are available only in the majority language for schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction. The syllabus is drawn up by the teacher offering the subject. The teacher may write the syllabus in Hungarian for him/herself, but the copy submitted to the school management should be written in Slovak. There were 19 academic grammar schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction in 2004, with 5,991 students studying in 237 classes. The average number of students in a class was 25.3. 16.3% of the students belonging to the Hungarian national minority study in state academic grammar schools with Slovak as the language of instruction. In the non-state section, there is one private school with 114 students studying in six classes and there are five church schools with 741 students studying in 34 classes. While the proportion of non-state primary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction is insignificant, a quarter of the academic grammar schools is not run by the state.

The mission of technical secondary schools in the light of the education law in force is to provide students with vocational secondary education leading to a school-leaving certificate and secondary vocational education, to prepare them for jobs, occupations, professional activities and the entrance exams to higher education. After finishing primary education, children may study in 10 kinds of secondary vocational schools: those specializing in technical, economic, medical, and agricultural knowledge and skills, and those training specialists for forestry, libraries, kindergarten teachers, conservatories, and girls' schools. There are no schools at secondary level for foresters, librarians or for teacher training in the field of music with Hungarian as the language of instruction.

Students belonging to the Hungarian national minority may study in Hungarian in 18 Slovak-Hungarian and 3 Hungarian state vocational schools. In 2004, there were 3,654 students studying in 145 classes in 21 schools. In the same year, there were four private Hungarian schools (three economic and one technical) with 343 students in 19 classes. There are no church-run vocational schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction. 19.65% of young people belonging to the Hungarian national minority studied in vocational schools with Slovak as the language of instruction.

legislation These schools are established by self-governing regions (on NUTS II level: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics II) after they are approved by the respective central body of the state administration. Secondary schools are regulated by the 29/1984 Article of Public Education Law, with bilingualism of school documentation guaranteed by the 5/1999 law. Professional teaching inspection is carried out by the National Inspectorate.

language use The language of instruction in the Hungarian academic grammar schools is Hungarian. In secondary vocational schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction, the biggest problem is a lack of experts and reference books. Because of this, teaching in Hungarian is only partial: these schools are in fact bilingual. The use of the two languages varies: in certain cases both languages are used within one teaching hour, in other cases only the Slovak language is used. There have been no accurate empirical data on language use in the classroom so far.¹³ Hungarian language and literature are taught once a week in one teaching hour. School documentation is bilingual, with curricula and syllabi written in the state language. Official oral and written communication with maintaining and supervising organs is allowed only in the state language.

teaching material Course books in secondary academic grammar schools are in Hungarian, as they are in primary schools. Apart from the course books on Hungarian grammar and literature, they are all translations of Slovak course books. Books used in vocational schools are either translated from Slovak or are in the Slovak language. No precise data are available on the use of course books in vocational schools.

statistics **The number of academic grammar-schools/classes/students**

language	public			church			private		
	schools	classes	students	schools	classes	students	schools	classes	students
Slovak	122	2,512	76,713	40	449	13,651	17	143	3,196
Hungarian	12	197*	5,136*	5	34	741	1	6	114
Slovak-Hungarian	7			0			0		
Hungarian									

Source: Ministry of Education, the statistics yearbook for education for 2004. www.uips.sk, data of 15 September 2004.

* the number of Hungarian classes together with the Hungarian classes of the Slovak-Hungarian four-year and eight-year grammar-schools

* the number of Hungarian students together with the Hungarian students of the Slovak-Hungarian four-year and eight-year grammar-schools

The number of secondary technical schools/classes/students

language	public			church			private		
	schools	classes	students	schools	classes	students	schools	classes	students
Slovak	191	2,672	77,183	14	102	2,664	31	183	3,611
Hungarian	3	145*	3,654*	0	0	0	3	19*	343*
Slovak-Hungarian	18			0	0	0	1		

Source: Ministry of Education, the statistics yearbook for education for 2004. www.uips.sk, data of 15 September 2004.

* the number of Hungarian classes together with the Hungarian classes and students and the Slovak-Hungarian schools

* the number of Hungarian students together with the Hungarian students of the Slovak-Hungarian schools

5 Vocational education

target group

Vocational education begins at the age of 15 and may continue until the age of 17, 18 or 19, depending on the type of school.

structure

The mission of secondary vocational schools is to prepare students for skilled performance in workers' trades and professional activities. Educational content and training consists of a general and a vocational part. Education and training are provided according to curricula demands as follows:

1. In two-year and three-year training courses, in which graduates receive certificates of apprenticeship after their final year.
2. In follow-up two-year training study courses for graduates from three-year training courses. The courses are finalized with a school-leaving certificate.
3. In four-year study courses and specialisations in which training is completed by school-leaving examination. The graduates receive secondary vocational education and a general certificate of education.

In these schools, students can choose within one institution whether they only want to be trained for a job or whether they also want a general certificate of education. In 2004, there were five state vocational schools and one with Hungarian as the language of instruction where Hungarians could study. According to the data of the Ministry of Education, there are 20 different jobs for Hungarian students to be trained for in their first language (e.g. positions for mechanics, bakers, tailors, confectioners, hair-dressers, bricklayers, etc.). In the 2004/2005 academic year, there were 935

students studying in state vocational schools in Hungarian. There is one private vocational school with Hungarian as the language of instruction with 763 students studying for a trade. Church-run vocational schools all have Slovak as the language of instruction.

The other type of vocational school is the apprentice school. The apprentice school represents a special level of vocational schools, where students leave with a certificate of apprenticeship, without the chance of getting a general certificate of education. This type of school prepares students for trades when they have completed the compulsory schooling period: in a lower grade of primary school or after failing to complete Grade 9 successfully and therefore being unable to advance to any kind of secondary school. At present, there are 17 state and 5 private apprentice schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction in Slovakia with 4,450 students in 213 classes. The data provided by the Ministry of Education do not publish the number of Hungarian nationality students studying in schools with Slovak as the language of instruction.

legislation

These schools are established by self-governing regions after they have been approved by the respective central bodies of the state administration. Secondary schools are regulated by the 29/1984 Article of the School Act, with bilingualism of school documentation guaranteed by the 5/1999 law. Professional teaching inspection is carried out by the National Inspectorate.

language in use

In this type of school, the language of instruction is Hungarian, too, but the linguistic and educational situations are very similar to those discussed above.

teaching materials

Course books are free. The language used is either Hungarian or Slovak, depending on what books have already been translated into Hungarian and which have not. No survey has been accomplished about the use of course books.

statistics

Vocational schools/classes/pupils

language	public			church			private		
	schools	classes	pupils	schools	classes	pupils	schools	classes	pupils
Slovak	98	2,321	60,850	1	25	656	1	25	547
Hungarian	2	90*	1,922*	0			1	34*	763*
Slovak-Hungarian	5			0			1		

Source: Ministry of Education, the statistics yearbook for education for 2004. www.uips.sk, data of 15 September 2004

* the number of Hungarian classes and students together with the Hungarian classes and students of the Slovak-Hungarian vocational schools

Apprentice schools/classes/pupils

language	public			church			private		
	schools	classes	pupils	schools	classes	pupils	schools	classes	pupils
Slovak	185	2,404	59,486	5	49	1,206	21	282	7,115
Hungarian	3	22	444	0	0	0	4	48	887
Hungarian-Slovak	14	191	3,956	0	0	0	1	20	431

Source: Ministry of Education, the statistics yearbook for education for 2004. www.uips.sk, data of 15 September 2004

6**Higher education**

structure

The Act adopted in 1990 by the Federal Assembly of the Czecho-Slovakian Federal Republic (CSFR) became the basis of development of higher education institutions in Slovakia. The Act specified their self-governing status, fundamental academic rights and freedoms. The new Higher Education Act, approved in 2002 and amended in 2003, specifies the mission and position of higher education institutions. There are twenty state and five private universities in Slovakia. The number of university students of Slovak nationality amounts to 101,535, and the number of students of Hungarian nationality is 4,828.

Independent institutes of higher education with Hungarian as the language of instruction were closed in Czecho-Slovakia after World War II. There were no independent Hungarian universities in Slovakia until 2004, but there were four institutes of higher education where students could study the Hungarian language or pursue their studies in Hungarian. These institutes include the Comenius University in Bratislava (the Hungarian name of the city is Pozsony), the Konstantin the Philosopher University in Nitra (i.e. Nyitra), and finally B el M aty as University in Bansk a Bystrica (i.e. Beszterceb anya). On 1 January 2004, the first Hungarian university in Slovakia was established in Kom arno (i.e. Kom arom): the Selye J anos University.

The Konstantin the Philosopher University in Nitra provides two to four-semester courses in the Hungarian language for those teachers who have obtained their teacher qualification and diploma in Hungary, in order to enable national recognition of their diplomas. In the past twelve years, several consultation centres have been created in Slovakian areas with a Hungarian population. Within their framework, from Hungary, Hungarian institutes of higher education organize distance or correspondence courses of training and teaching in Hungarian. At present, there are seven institutions like this in Slovakia. Their work is somewhat problematic because in some cases it is hard to obtain national recognition of their degrees.

language use

Students can obtain BA or MA degrees at the Department of Hungarian language and literature of the Comenius University, Bratislava (40 students altogether). There are no other majors where students can study in Hungarian. Since there is training only for double majors, students carry out their studies in their other major in the majority language. At Bél Mátyás University in Banská Bystrica the situation is the same: students can study in Hungarian only if one of their majors is Hungarian language and literature (16 students altogether). They are obliged to take double majors, too. Students are able to obtain a translator's degree.

Teacher training in Hungarian has always been provided at the Konstantin the Philosopher University in Nitra: this is still the case today. Here, it is also compulsory for students to have two majors. Up to 2004, Hungarian could be studied at the Department of Hungarian language and literature at the Philological Faculty as part of the teacher training programme. Three faculties (the Philological, Science and Pedagogical faculties) of the university had Hungarian sections where Hungarian students could study in their first language insofar as the faculties could provide it. In practice, this meant about 60% of the subjects. The training of Hungarian nationality school teachers for the junior section took place in the Pedagogical Faculty. In the 2004/2005 academic year, a new Faculty was established at the Konstantin the Philosopher University: the Faculty of Central-European Studies. One of its main tasks is to train and provide teachers for nationality schools. This new faculty now hosts the Department of Hungarian language and literature, all the Hungarian teachers of other departments, and all the students who want to carry out their university studies in Hungarian. As from the 2004/2005 academic year, teacher training for junior section Hungarian teachers also takes place at this

faculty. At the time of the present study, training is not in Hungarian in all the majors, but the faculty tries to ensure training in the first language. University management has committed itself to staff development. Examinations are in Hungarian, but all the documentation (students' record books, examination sheets, protocols, etc.) are in the state language. The number of students in 2004/2005 amounted to 609.

Training at the Selye János University in Komárno also started in the academic year of 2004/2005. At present, there are three faculties. The Pedagogical Faculty is responsible for training kindergarten and junior section primary school teachers, and there are four majors within the scope of teacher training. Three majors can be studied at the Faculty of Economics and there is religious instruction and pastor training at the Faculty of Presbyterian Theology. The language of instruction is Hungarian, with the exception of some subjects which are in Slovak or English. The number of students amounted to 386.

statistics

The number of students according to their nationality in higher education

	Slovak	Hungarian
State univ.	100,725	4,816
Private univ.	810	12

Source: Ministry of Education, the statistics yearbook for education for 2004. www.uips.sk, data of 15 September 2004

The number of students who studied in Hungarian was 1051, which is 21,8% of all Hungarian students in higher education.

7

Adult education

Further education for adults takes place in institutions of further education in the form of various short-term and long-term post-graduate courses. Post-graduate education is an organic part of the educational and training system: its legal background is guaranteed by the Act on Further Education. In the past ten years, new and mainly private or civil educational establishments have been set up. In 2004, in addition to secondary schools and institutes of higher education, nearly 300 educational establishments provided further education, offering a variety of topics. In institutions working with

secondary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction, there are possibilities for people interested to take part in post-graduate courses in the language of the minority, too. In addition, at the Faculty of Central European Studies of the Konstantin the Philosopher University in Nitra, there is correspondence training in Hungarian. In other institutions, training takes place in the state language. As all minority adults are considered to be fluent speakers of the Slovak language, no post-graduate system in the language of the minority has been set up. Concerning further education of minority teachers, none of the universities - including the university in Nitra - offers courses for further studies by Hungarian pedagogues in their native language.

8 Educational research

Research in the area of education has been undertaken by the National Institute for Education, belonging to the Ministry of Education. Their research mainly concentrates on restructuring the school system. Attention is focused on the elaboration of the structure, objectives and operating principles of the new educational system; the assessment of the levels of education for new subjects; the analyses of the levels of new course books; the establishment of new evaluation criteria; the outlining of the new general certificate of education, and also the possibilities for efficient education for Roma children.

Research in the field of minority education is undertaken by the university teachers in the departments of Hungarian language and literature and by the staff of the Gramma Language Office.¹⁴ Studies in these fields examined the Hungarian minority from a language use point of view. Attempts were made to map differences and similarities between the language varieties in Slovakia and in Hungary. Possible use of the results regarding education is shown, too. Characteristic features of Hungarian-Slovak bilingualism and possible ways of creating additive bilingualism have been studied, and the framework for further research has been outlined. The study of education has been designated prior importance by the Gramma Language Office in 2005. Its objective is to give a detailed description of linguistic relations and of institutional, educational-political and educational-sociological situations of minority schools.

9 **Prospects**

Minority education has two major tasks under minority circumstances. On the one hand, it has to maintain the language and the culture of the minority; on the other hand, it has to establish a working bilingualism in such a way that the minority does not feel its bilingualism as a burden but rather a kind of treasure. Slovakia's EU accession has influenced the situation of the Hungarian minority in a favourable way. Extremist views seem to have been put aside. However, there are still several problems to be solved. Minority rights sometimes work only in theory, when their enforcement is hindered.

According to the 2001 census, the educational level of the Hungarian population in Slovakia is much lower than the national average. Among Hungarians capable of work, only half the number of people have a university degree. Compared to the national average, there are far fewer Hungarian students in higher education than could be expected on the basis of the proportion of the Hungarian population. If this proportion does not change in due course, this will influence the economic situation of the Hungarian minority in a negative way. Apart from the educational system, a system of institutions is needed aimed at solving the minority's social problems stemming from their minority existence.

10

Summary statistics**Number of schools and pupils of Hungarian minority in Slovakia 1989-2000**

	1989	1989	1994	1994	1999	1999	2000	2000
	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils
Kindergarten	344	15,103	403	12,350	378	9,860	380	9,512
Primary sch.	245	48,756	307	46,323	301	45,092	300	42,980
Gymnasium	18	3,500	21	4,892	23	4,392	24	4,675
Technical sec. sch.	19	4,454	27	5,110	27	3,952	26	3,827
Vocational sch.	25	5,190	36	5,733	32	4,809	31	4,865

Source: Ministry of Education

Number of schools and pupils of Hungarian minority in Slovakia 2001-2003

	2001	2001	2002	2002	2003	2003
	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils
Kindergarten	379	9,313	373	9,484	374	9,566
Primary sch.	297	40,892	296	39,347	295	37,590
Gymnasium	25	5,027	25	5,449	25	6,069
Technical sec. sch.	28	4,036	27	3,979	25	4,121
Voc. sch. with gen. cert. of educ.			2	677	8	2,329
Vocational sch.	34	4,925	31	4,805	25	3,576

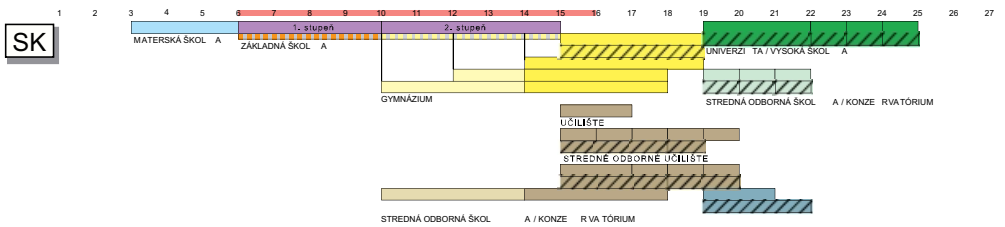
Source: Ministry of Education

Number of students of Hungarian minority in higher education in 2002: 4,480

Number of students of Hungarian minority in higher education in 2003: 4,197

Number of students of Hungarian minority in higher education in 2004: 4, 828

Education system in Slovakia (Eurydice)



Organisation of the education system in Slovakia (2002/2003;
check www.eurydice.org)

Endnotes

- 1 Codification of some elements of the Slovakian variety of the Standard Hungarian is being elaborated now.
- 2 The five-level borrowing scale is a tool for the measurement of cross-linguistic influence. The first level is characterized by just random borrowings whereas the fifth level is a borrowing coming from a strong cultural influence. The second level means - apart from lexical borrowings - some slight phonetic, syntactic and semantic borrowings which do not concern the typological characteristics of the language.
- 3 We regard those settlements as belonging to the Hungarian linguistic area that have at least 10% of Hungarian population.
- 4 Birth-rate among Hungarians decreased by 33% between 1991 and 2001.
- 5 According to the 1991 census, a surplus of 40,925 people claim their first language to be Hungarian compared to the number of people who claim to be of Hungarian identity. According to the 2001 census, this difference is 52,401 (572,929 520,528). This is a highly important fact which carries particularly special significance where the use of the minority language is concerned. When decisions are taken about the official use of the minority language, it may prove disadvantageous for those settlements where the number of minorities does not reach 20% according to their nationality, but where it would reach 20% if their first language (the minority language) were taken into account in the calculations.
- 6 The Laws on the State Language allowed only the exclusive use of the Slovak language in official situations, and it also restricted the use of minority languages in other fields. It also imposes serious fines for any breach of the law. This law generated international protest. Although some of the law's measures were repealed by the Constitutional Court and although the minority language use law was accepted in 1999, most of the measures are still operative.
- 7 Based on the 2001 census, the proportion of the Hungarian population was higher than 20% in 501 settlements.
- 8 Constitution of Slovak Republic, article 42/2: „Citizens shall have the right to free education at elementary and secondary schools and depending on the abilities of the individual and the potential of the society also at universities.“
A parliamentary debate on tuition fees to be introduced in higher education is currently being held.
- 9 School Act, article 3: “Training and education are carried out in the state language. Citizens of Bohemian, Hungarian, German, Polish and Ukrainian (Ruthenian) nationality are ensured the right to education in their own language to an extent proportional to the interests of their national development.”
- 10 Act No. 29/1984 on the Network of Primary and Secondary Schools (the Schools Act) as amended by later regulations § 51a (3): “The school inspector must possess the capacity to use the Slovak language in official communication, and have a command of the pertinent national minority language pursuant to his working

tasks, and to possess the personal qualities and moral qualities (§ 51 subsection 1) and requisites of expert inspection work.”

- 11 Slovak yes, there are 14 private primary schools with Slovak as language of instruction with 1,138 students. (data from 2004).
- 12 At the time the study was held, there was a week-long inspection in one of the biggest primary schools for Hungarians in Slovakia. During this inspection, everything was checked: from the bilingualism of the school stamp to the respectful attitude towards the state language in every respect. Of the eight inspectors working in the school, three did not speak the minority language. It was emphasized that, according to the rules, they were allowed to communicate with the teachers of the school only in the state language.
- 13 The Gramma Language Office has started a survey on the use of course books and languages in vocational schools, but at the time this paper was written, this coincided with the stages of data collection.
- 14 The Gramma Language Office is a non-profit civil research organization: its primary goal is to organize and carry out research work in linguistics and related branches of social sciences.

References and further reading

The most important legislative regulations

A) Constitutional law

1. Constitutional Law no. 23/1991 Coll. introducing the Bill of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (notably Articles 25 and 27);
2. Constitution of the Slovak Republic No. 460/1992 Coll. as amended by Constitutional Law No. 244/1998 Coll., Constitutional Law No. 9/1999 Coll. and Constitutional Law No. 90/2001 Coll. (hereafter referred to as the "Slovak Constitution") Article 6, Article 34 Section 1 and 2 and Article 47 Section 4;
3. Linguistic aspect of the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms - PL. of the Constitutional Court 8/96 (Collection of the Findings and Resolutions of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic No. 14/97).

B) Education

1. Act No. 29/1984 (School Act) Coll. on the system of primary and secondary schools as amended, republished in Act No. 350/1994 Coll. (Section 3 and 3a);
2. Ministry of Education Decree No. 536/1991 Coll. on the establishment and operation of clerical schools;
3. Act No. 542/1990 Coll. on state administration in the education sector and school self-government as amended;
4. Government Ordinance No. 113/1991 Coll. on the provision of subsidies from the state budget to private schools;
5. Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science No. 102/1991 Coll. on the completion of education at secondary schools, secondary vocational schools, and apprentice schools as amended;
6. Act No. 279/1993 Coll. on school facilities as amended (Sections 2 and 2a);
7. Ministry of Education Decree No. 280/1994 Coll. on private schools (Sections 3 and 6);
8. Ministry of Education Decree No. 353/1994 Coll. on pre-school education facilities as amended (Section 3 paragraph 3, Sections 4 and 7);

9. Ministry of Education Decree No. 145/1995 Coll. on enrolment at secondary schools as amended;
10. Ministry of Education Decree No. 217/1999 Coll. on pedagogic documentation;
11. Ministry of Education Decree No. 32/2000 Coll. on school inspection;
12. Act No. 416/2001 Coll. on the delegation of certain powers and responsibilities from state administration to municipalities and regions as amended (Section 3 paragraph 3);
13. Act No. 334/2002 Coll., Article II that amends Act No. 29/1984 Coll. as amended (School Law) (Section 51a).

C) Other selected regulations (with relevant paragraphs for minorities)

Names and Surnames

Act No. 300/1993 Coll. on Names and Surnames (§ 2, § 14);
Registers Act No. 154/1994 Coll. (§16, § 19, § 36).

Human Rights, Judicatur

Courts and Judges Act No. 335/1991 Coll. (§ 7);
Civil Procedure Act No. 99/1963 Coll. (§ 18);
Criminal Court Proceedings Act No. 141/1961 (§ 2, § 28);
Act No. 38/1993 on the organization of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, on the proceedings before the Constitutional Court and the status of its Judges (§ 23);
Act 564/2001 Coll. on the Ombudsman (§ 11).

Mass Media

Law 619/2003 on Slovak Radio (§ 5);
Law 16/2004 on Slovak Television (§ 5);
Act No. 212/1997 Coll. on the compulsory issue of periodical publications, non-periodical publications and copies of audio-visual materials, as amended (§ 2);
Act No. 308/2000 Coll. on Broadcasting and Retransmission (§ 16);
Act 211/2000 on free access to information and on the amendment and supplementing of certain laws (§ 6).

Churches

Act 308/1991 Coll. on freedom of religious faith and the position of churches and religious societies (§ 5).

Treaty on Good-neighbourly Relations and Friendly Co-operation between the Republic of Hungary and the Slovak Republic (§ 15).

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157; (§ 9, § 10, § 11, § 14).

Recommendation No. 1201 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council 1993.

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www.foruminst.sk

Other websites on minority languages

- Mercator* **www.mercator-central.org** - General site of the Mercator-project. It will lead you to the three specialized centres:
- Mercator-Education* **www.mercator-education.org** - Homepage of Mercator-Education: European Network for regional or minority languages and education. The site contains the series of regional dossiers, a database with organisations and bibliography and many rated links to minority languages.
- Mercator-Media* **www.aber.ac.uk/~merwww** - Homepage of Mercator-Media. It provides information on media and minority languages in the EU.
- Mercator-Legislation* **www.ciemen.org/mercator** - Homepage of Mercator-Legislation. It provides information on minority languages and legislation in the EU.
- European Union* **europa.eu.int/comm/education/langmin.html** - At the website of the European Union an explanation is given of its support for regional or minority languages.
- Council of Europe* **conventions.coe.int** - European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) and Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens ETS 148 and 157, Strasbourg.
- Eurydice* **www.eurydice.org** - Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.
- EBLUL* **www.eblul.org** - Homepage of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages. This site provides general information on lesser used languages as well as on projects, publications and events.
- Eurolang* **www.eurolang.net** - Eurolang provides coverage of the concerns felt in the minority language regions in the European Union. Eurolang is EBLUL's news service.

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Irish; the Irish Language in Education in the Republic of Ireland
Irish; the Irish Language in Education in Northern Ireland (2nd)
Kashubian; the Kashubian Language in Education in Poland
Ladin; the Ladin Language in Education in Italy
Meänkieli and Sweden Finnish; the Finnic Languages in Education in Sweden
North Frisian; the North Frisian Language in Education in Germany
Occitan; the Occitan Language in Education in France
Sami; the Sami Language in Education in Sweden
Scots; the Scots Language in Education in Scotland (UK)
Slovak; the Slovak Language in Education in Hungary
Slovene; the Slovene Language in Education in Austria
Slovene; the Slovene Language in Education in Italy (2nd)
Sorbian; the Sorbian Language in Education in Germany
Swedish; the Swedish Language in Education in Finland
Turkish; the Turkish Language in Education in Greece
Welsh; the Welsh Language in Education in the UK