

Foreword

This report for the Slovak Republic forms part of the OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (also referred to as the School Resources Review, see Annex A for further details). The purpose of the Review is to explore how school resources can be governed, distributed, utilised and managed to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. School resources are understood in a broad way, including financial resources (e.g. expenditures on education, school budget), physical resources (e.g. school infrastructure, computers), human resources (e.g. teachers, school leaders) and other resources (e.g. learning time).

The Slovak Republic was one of the countries which opted to participate in the country review strand and host a visit by an external review team. Members of the OECD review team were Paulo Santiago (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinator of the Review; Gábor Halász (Professor of Education in the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology at the University Eötvös Loránd in Budapest), Rosalind Levačič (Emeritus Professor of Economics and Finance of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London) and Claire Shewbridge (OECD Secretariat). The biographies of the members of the review team are provided in Annex B. This publication is the report from the review team. It provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the use of school resources in the Slovak Republic, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: i) to provide insights and advice to Slovak education authorities; ii) to help other countries understand the Slovak approach to the use of school resources; and iii) to provide input for the final comparative analysis of the OECD School Resources Review.

The scope for the analysis in this report includes early childhood education and school education. At the request of Slovak authorities, the focus areas of the Review of School Resources in the Slovak Republic are: i) the organisation of the school network; ii) the funding of school education (including distribution, incentives and transparency); and iii) the teaching profession and school leadership (including improving their attractiveness). Also, issues of special needs education and the education of the Roma minority are addressed from the funding perspective, i.e. how the funding system can facilitate the achievement of policy objectives in special education and the education of the Roma minority, including the development of inclusive education. While the review makes some considerations about the funding of vocational education and training (VET), it was decided not to give it specific emphasis in light of the fact that another OECD Review examined the Slovak VET system at the secondary level. The analysis presented in the report refers to the situation faced by the education system in October 2014, when the review team visited the Slovak Republic.

The Slovak Republic's involvement in the OECD Review was co-ordinated by Matej Šiškovič, Director of the Educational Policy Institute at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. An important part of the Slovak Republic's involvement was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative Country Background Report (CBR) on school resource use authored by Matej Šiškovič and Ján Toman from the Educational Policy Institute at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. The OECD review team is very grateful to the main authors of the CBR and to all those who assisted them in providing a

high-quality informative document. The CBR is an important output from the OECD project in its own right as well as an important source for the review team. Unless indicated otherwise, the data for this report are taken from the Slovak Country Background Report. The CBR follows guidelines prepared by the OECD Secretariat and provides extensive information, analysis and discussion in regard to the national context, the organisation of the education system, the use of school resources and the views of key stakeholders. In this sense, the CBR and this report complement each other and, for a more comprehensive view of the effectiveness of school resource use in the Slovak Republic, should be read in conjunction.

The OECD and the European Commission (EC) have established a partnership for the project, whereby participation costs of countries which are part of the European Union's Erasmus+ programme are partly covered. The Review of the Slovak Republic was organised with the support of the EC in the context of this partnership.* The EC was part of the planning process of the Review of the Slovak Republic (providing comments on the Slovak Republic's CBR, participating in the preparatory visit and providing feedback on the planning of the review visit) and offered comments on drafts of this report. This contribution was co-ordinated by Christèle Duvieusart, Country Desk Officer for the Slovak Republic as regards education and training, working within the "Country Analysis" Unit of the Directorate for "Modernisation of Education I: Europe 2020, country analysis, Erasmus+ co-ordination", which is part of the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission. The review team is grateful to Christèle Duvieusart for her contribution to the planning of the review and also for the helpful comments she provided on drafts of this report.

The review visit to the Slovak Republic took place on 7-14 October 2014. The itinerary is provided in Annex C. The visit was designed by the OECD (with input from the EC) in collaboration with Slovak authorities. It also involved a preparatory visit by the OECD Secretariat on 3-4 July 2014, with the participation of Christèle Duvieusart, from the EC. The review team held discussions with a wide range of groups at all levels of government (central, regional and municipal). At the national level, the review team met with Juraj Draxler, then Secretary of State for Education, Science, Research and Sports; other officials of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports; Ministries in charge of public expenditure; funding and quality assurance agencies; other relevant agencies dealing with the use of school resources; teacher associations; representatives of municipalities and self-governing regions; school leader representatives; representatives of the private school sector; organisations representing the interests of students with special needs; organisations representing the interests of Roma children; and researchers with an interest in the effectiveness of school resource use. At the regional and municipal levels, meetings were held with educational and finance authorities of the region of Prešov and the municipalities of Jelenec, Svit and Šuňava. In addition, the visit included meetings with the regional state authority in Prešov. The team also visited a range of schools in different regions, interacting with school management, teachers and students. The intention was to provide the review team with a broad cross-section of information and opinions on school resource use and how its effectiveness can be improved. Overall, the OECD review team held 45 meetings and interviewed about 200 individuals.

The OECD review team wishes to record its gratitude to the many people who gave time from their busy schedules to inform the review team of their views, experiences and knowledge. The meetings were open and provided a wealth of insights. Special words of appreciation are due to the National Co-ordinator, Matej Šiškovič, for going to great lengths to respond to the questions and

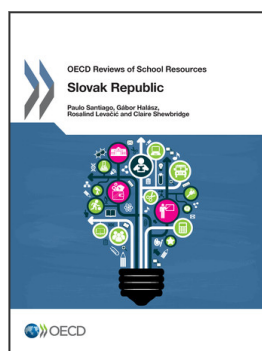
* This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

needs of the review team. The review team was impressed by his efficiency and expertise. Our gratitude extends to his team, in particular Ján Toman and Daniela Zápražná, analysts of the Educational Policy Institute, for providing excellent support to the review team. The courtesy and hospitality extended to us throughout our stay in the Slovak Republic made our task as a review team as pleasant and enjoyable as it was stimulating and challenging.

The OECD review team is also grateful to colleagues at the OECD. Francesc Masdeu provided analytical support and Eleonore Morena provided key administrative, editorial and layout support. Deborah Nusche and Thomas Radinger provided advice while Yuri Belfali provided guidance and support.

This report is organised in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context, with information on the Slovak school system, main trends and concerns as well as recent developments. Chapter 2 analyses the governance of schooling and the organisation of the school network. Chapter 3 reviews approaches to school funding. Chapter 4 looks at the management of the teaching workforce while Chapter 5 examines school leadership policies. Each chapter presents strengths, challenges and policy recommendations.

The policy recommendations attempt to build on and strengthen reforms that are already underway in the Slovak Republic, and the strong commitment to further improvement that was evident among those the OECD review team met. The suggestions should take into account the difficulties that face any visiting group, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the complexity of the Slovak Republic and fully understanding all the issues. This report is of course the responsibility of the OECD review team. While the team benefited greatly from the Slovak CBR and other documents, as well as the many discussions with a wide range of Slovak personnel, any errors or misinterpretations in this report are its responsibility.



From:
OECD Reviews of School Resources: Slovak Republic 2015

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264247567-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

Santiago, Paulo, *et al.* (2016), "Foreword", in *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Slovak Republic 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264247567-1-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.