

## *Foreword*

This report for the Slovak Republic forms part of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes (see Annex A for further details). The purpose of the Review is to explore how systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. The Review looks at the various components of assessment and evaluation frameworks that countries use with the objective of improving student outcomes. These include student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation.

The Slovak Republic was one of the countries that opted to participate in the country review strand and host a visit by an external review team. The review visit to the Slovak Republic took place on 27 March – 3 April 2012. The itinerary is provided in Annex B. The visit was designed by the OECD in collaboration with Slovak authorities. Members of the OECD review team were Claire Shewbridge (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinator of the Review; Johan van Bruggen (Education Consultant, formerly with the Dutch Inspectorate of Education; Netherlands); Deborah Nusche (OECD Secretariat); and Paul Wright (Independent Education Advisor; formerly with the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency; United Kingdom). The biographies of the members of the OECD Review Team are provided in Annex C.

This publication is the report from the OECD review team. It provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the evaluation and assessment framework in the Slovak Republic, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: *(i)* provide insights and advice to Slovak education authorities; *(ii)* help other OECD countries understand the Slovak approach; and *(iii)* provide input for the final comparative report of the project.

The Slovak Republic's involvement in the OECD Review was initially co-ordinated by Andrej Mentel, formerly with the National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements (NÚCEM) and also by Mr. Martin Pokorný (NÚCEM).

An important part of the Slovak Republic's involvement was the preparation of a Country Background Report (CBR) on evaluation and assessment policy. The OECD Review Team is very grateful to authors of the CBR (Viera Hajdúková, Zuzana Juščáková, Romana Kanovská, Tibor Lukács, Andrej Mentel, Martin Pokorný, Mária Šnidlová and Adriana Vykydalová) for providing a useful information base for the OECD review team and for the wider international community. The CBR is an important output from the OECD project. Unless indicated otherwise, the data for this report are taken from the Slovak Republic's 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 main features of the evaluation and assessment framework and the views of key stakeholders. In this sense, the CBR and this report complement each other and, for a

more comprehensive view of evaluation and assessment in the Slovak Republic, should be read in conjunction.

During the Review visit, the team held discussions with a wide range of stakeholders; education officials; relevant agencies that deal with evaluation and assessment issues; teacher representatives; parents' organisations; representatives of schools; teacher educators; civil society organisations; and researchers with an interest in evaluation and assessment issues. The team also visited a range of schools, interacting with school management, teachers and students in the Bratislava and its surrounds, Prešov and Banská Bystrica. The intention was to provide a broad cross-section of information and opinions on evaluation and assessment policies and how their effectiveness can be improved.

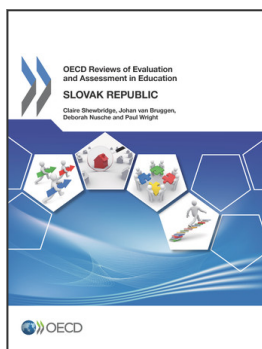
The OECD review team wishes to record its grateful appreciation to the many people who gave time from their busy schedules to inform the OECD review team of their views, experiences and knowledge. The meetings were open and provided a wealth of insights. Special words of appreciation are due to colleagues at the National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements (NÚCEM), in particular to Martin Pokorný for very effectively and ever pleasantly responding to the questions and needs of the OECD Review Team. This gratitude extends to Romana Kanovská for providing support and professional insight to the OECD review team, as well as to Daniel Szadvári for clear and patient translation services throughout the review visit. We are also grateful to Andrej Mentel, initial National Co-ordinator, for the preparatory work in the Slovak Republic's participation in the OECD Review. 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, especially to Heike-Daniela Herzog for administrative support during the review and to Liz Zachary for editorial support.

This report is organised in six chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context, with information on the Slovak Republic's school system, main trends and concerns, and recent developments. Chapter 2 looks at the overall evaluation and assessment framework and analyses how the different components of the framework play together and can be made more coherent to effectively improve student learning. Chapters 3 to 6 present each of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework – student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation – in more depth, presenting 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 we 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.

Of course, this report is the responsibility of the OECD review team. While we benefited greatly from the Slovak Republic CBR and other documents, as well as the many discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, any errors or misinterpretations in this report are our responsibility.



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