

SUMMARIUM

TEACHING PROFESSION, TEACHER TRAINING

“1992 – just a few steps away from unified Europe”; “Europe without borders”; “Counting down – 1992” – high-sounding banner headlines from background materials of the European Community (EC), reports and documents of the European Council. And no matter how burdened a process the European integration is with obstacles and conflicts, the EC undoubtedly presents an essential basis for the orientation and a frame of reference well-worth aligning with, naturally not in the spirit of servile imitation but in that of a critical, well-considered adoption.

In the light of several institutional development and training programs (COMETT, ERASMUS, LINGUA, TEMPUS) and mutually recognised diplomas it has been in evidence lately that the “European dimension” is now more than a well-sounding rhetorical phrase. Though it had already been raised in the councils of the Community that diplomas certifying the pedagogical qualifications are still not equivalent to each other. The sign of the increasing interest toward the teaching profession and teacher training is that projects related to training are being born (ie. Institutional Management in Higher Education) in the framework of representative organizations entering into economic development cooperations (OECD). Approaching our present days the problems of the teaching profession and teacher training get more and more emphasis in the documents expressing economic integration.

The leading part of the manifestations is that the social prestige of this professional stratum and the level of its qualifications must be developed. In this profession which is labeled as “unprofessional” by the public, the requirements of quality must be strengthened. Pragmatically, the quality of the labour force leaving the training is not proportional to the expenses of its social production. It is also the expression of a mixture of interest and discontent that from the beginning of the eighties schools have come under increasing social pressure, in which the institutions set up and maintained mainly from public funds must be transparent and the intercourses and processes within them must get social publicity. In the conference of the Ministry of Education in Helsinki the main points of the tasks and measures to improve the situation are expressed as follows:

- The image of teachers in the society must be improved in order to increase the attractiveness of this profession; women employees must get increased attention in the profession.
- The in-service training must be considered as an integrated whole – a form of permanent training.

- The evaluation of professional achievements must go mainly with the competence and responsibility of the teachers themselves.
- The system of standpoints for evaluating the work of the teachers must be enriched. Beyond the achievements of the pupils/students in different subjects as indicators of the quality of the work of teachers the potential of this work serving the development of the personality as a whole must be taken into consideration.
- The mechanism of recruitment, selection, and employment of teachers, headmasters, school-inspectors, and educational administrators working in the teacher training must be supervised.
- The risk and the proportion of unemployment must be decreased in the profession with appropriate measures (increase of the possibilities of promotion and mobility; retraining; various forms of division of labour; extension of part-time and short-term employments).

A new professional identity has been formed around these ambitions and intentions. The training system must release professionals who are capable of participating in local and institutional level decision making where there is a definite claim that the educator has to cooperate with the institutions and actors of the social environment of the institution, and that it all has to be done with increasing decentralization of the educational policy.

If we want to characterize the most significant EC tendency concerning the teaching profession (and teacher training) with only a few words, then it is the demand of the improvement of the quality. Almost all the key elements of the training and the practice of this profession from admission requirements, institutional set up of the training, and conditions of the qualification and confirmation to the legal status of the pedagogue are seemingly affected by putting it into operation.

The study of *Axel ZIMMERMANN* (*Lehrerberuf in Europa*) introduces us to the experiences of this domain describing the tendencies of the sociological scale characterising the social field of the force surrounding the teaching profession, the attempts of professional policy, and the position of the pedagogues lately in the labour market.

The opening study of *Peter DARVAS* (*Teachers and Politics*) highlights the effects of the educational reforms introduced after the change of regime on the teaching profession in an Eastern-European context. It focuses on the general tendencies of the region as a framework for further debates and analyses.

After the political change of regime the demand for the teacher training reform was obviously raised. Having a system of traditional shackles it became obvious that the training system can develop itself into a new training system required by the new situation only in a long-lasting process. It was easier to eliminate the contents materializing the direct ideological indoctrination of the previous regime. In this respect the study of *Zsolt SZÖVÉNYI* (*Training Models*) forms an opinion about the situation in Hungary that in the answers given to the social challenges of the teacher training, and in the attempts to change the training system, the variants of model value, which today by no means make a coherent system but suggest implicitly the promising future prospects of a new training system, are recognizable.

A significant feature characterizing the present situation of training is the large number of local attempts in the institutions and the innovative initiatives which at the time being tend to take the system toward divergence instead of integration. The purification of these divergent tendencies, their organization into a coherent system, is to be expected in later times. Analyzing the data of a nation-wide empirical survey comprising all the levels of the teacher training (*Endre BALLÉR: Educational Science and Teacher Training*), it is evident that the tendential innovative potential of the training institutions is rather high. The

dynamic increase of the disposition for competitions also denotes the ambitions of the teaching staff to adjust to the changing system – in this case to the multi-channel system of financing.

A characteristic feature of the changing system is the emergence and expansion of organizations (Ltds) which master the market conditions fast and flexibly accommodate themselves to them. These organizations have brought an expansion of supply mainly in teacher training (*István NOVÁK: The In-service Market*). The challenges present a situation where state training institutions have to compete – the departments and institutions of colleges and universities try to turn towards the market of continuing education by extending and refreshing their training system and also by setting up “paying courses”. A characteristic feature of the situation is, however, that the state institutions, as opposed to the formations working on pure market base do not have to work entirely under market conditions because both the central budget (The Ministry of Education) and the Self-Government of Budapest support the work of the training institutions in the field in question with extra-sources of finance. An expanding practice emerging from the system of multi-channel financing is that the expenses are shared by the parties interested (central budget, local maintainers of the institutions, institutional level).

The study of *Mária NAGY* (Professional Organizations and Enforcement of Interest) introduces us to the forms and methods of the enforcement of the interests of pedagogues as professionals and employee which are changing in the process of the political change of regime. As she says: “...they have to find their way back to the earlier, forcibly broken traditions, to work up the Hungarian lessons of the previous four decades, to get integrated into the developed world unified from many aspects after the war, and to answer the main, new unanswered doubts (even in the developing world) of the integration”.

The capability of the renewal and possibilities of the development of teacher training (even if they are not mechanically determined) are influenced to a large extent by sociological factors, such as the features of the scooping base, the demographical-social composition of the teacher society, the possibilities of mobility, and professional promotion in the teaching profession. A study analysing the experiences gained from a nation-wide representative empirical survey (*Ildikó HRUBOS: Professional Carrier*) shows a wide range of differentiation characterizing this professional stratum, which appears in the perception of the public as a homogeneous social group.

In the *Interview* Column leaders of three educational trade unions report on the enforcement of interest, the *Document* Column states parts from the important basic work of the OECD (*The Teacher Today*), and the *Survey* Column reports on the results of a public opinion poll concerning school structure.

(text of László Tamás Szabó – translated by Zsuzsa Mácsok)