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Analysis of Employment in the Education Sector and Public Expenditure on Education in 2000–2013

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Summary

Analysis of employment and public expenditure on education in the 2000–2013 period

In Slovenia, people employed in education account for a larger share of the total number of employed people than on average in the EU. In the 2000–2013 period, the total number of people employed in education grew faster than in the EU. The growth of employment did not even stabilise during the crisis (after 2008), as in other EU countries, but even accelerated. The number of people employed in education decreased slightly only in 2013. From the perspective of budget consumption and public finance consolidation (savings), it is reasonable to analyse these trends more in detail, given that education is financed from public funds.

The second chapter of the working paper shows data on enrolment in education, while in the third chapter we present detailed analysis of employment in education by level of education and according to personnel categories. At some educational levels, the number of employees did not adapt to demographic trends; for example, in tertiary education the number of employees was increasing, while the number of students was decreasing; in basic education the opposite was true in the last few years, although over the long-time perspective (2000–2013), the number of employees increased while the number of pupils decreased.

In basic education, there is a surprising increase in the number of children with special needs, half of them being pupils with deficiencies in individual areas of learning. This has caused a disproportionate increase in the number of employees at this level of education. From this perspective, it may be reasonable to investigate criteria for identifying children with deficiencies in individual areas of learning, and limit the rights deriving from this status.

In the fourth paragraph, we analyse the ratio of the number of students to the number of teaching staff. In Slovenia the ratio is relatively favourable (low) compared with other countries in pre-school education and basic education, while it is unfavourable (high) in upper secondary and tertiary education. Increasing the size of school classes is one of the possible measures for limiting employment growth and the growth of expenditure on pre-school and basic education. The unfavourable ratio of the number of students to the number of teaching staff in upper secondary schools is related to the extremely high participation of youth in education. In tertiary education, the ratio of the number of students to the number of teaching staff is also worse (higher) than, on average, in the 21 EU Member States that are also OECD members. The question is, however, to what extent this is due to fictive enrolments. From this point of view, it is reasonable to take further action to reduce fictive enrolments.

Owing to the high participation of youth in education, which is well above the EU average in upper secondary and tertiary education, and the favourable ratio of the number of pupils to the number of teaching staff in kindergartens and basic education, Slovenia also has relatively high public expenditure on education, which is analysed in the fifth chapter. According to the latest international data available, total public expenditure on education in 2011 was higher than in the EU overall. Expenditure on the first and second triad of basic education exceeds the EU average the most. This is why there appears to be room for decreasing public expenditure on education particularly in basic schools, where the number of employees increased strongly, especially the number of advisory and administrative and technical personnel.

Public expenditure on tertiary education as a share of GDP is also above the EU average, which is clearly due to the extremely high participation rate of young people in tertiary education. While high participation is positive with regard to accessibility, it is questionable from the perspective of the efficiency of study and high expenditure. In view of the low employability of graduates in some study programmes, it is reasonable to reconsider the system of financing and make funding more conditional on study efficiency and graduates' employability. With the expected further decline in the number of higher education students due to demographic factors, the (high) number of study programmes and higher education institutions may also be a problem, particularly in view of fictive enrolments. From the perspective of the efficiency of tertiary education, it is also necessary to rethink the (non)rationality of the network of education institutions.

The whole text is available in Slovenian language on
<http://www.umar.gov.si/publikacije/avtorski-prispevki/delovni-zvezki/>