

**REGIONAL MEETING
OF EDUCATION MINISTERS**
from Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Austria

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EUROPE'S FUTURE

Joint Memorandum of Understanding

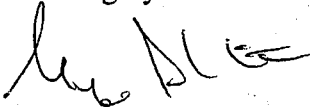
1. In recognition of the many common interests and complementary strengths, which our countries share, we, the Ministers of Education of Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovak Republic and Slovenia, convene to agree on concrete actions to strengthen educational cooperation in the frame of a "Central European Cooperation in Education" (CECE).
2. European integration has brought countries closer together, enabling them to share both information and experiences to their mutual benefit. When countries have significant commonalities, there is all the more reason for collaboration. Such is the case with Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Our cooperation builds upon on long-standing bilateral and multilateral relations and on the foundation laid by a first regional meeting of Directors General in Vienna in 1997 and on the regular meetings ever since.
3. The intention of this Memorandum is to facilitate cooperative work, exchange of views and good practice in order to provide enrichment to the education programs of our countries in particular in fields such as:
 - the implementation of the "Detailed Work Programme on the Follow-up of the Objectives of Education and Training Systems in Europe", including the fields of vocational education and training (Copenhagen Process), of higher education (Bologna Process), and lifelong learning, and with a focus on
 - key competencies
 - languages, with emphasis on languages of neighbouring countries
 - vocational education and training
 - higher education
 - Decentralisation and division of responsibilities of education management and administration, with a focus on quality enhancement and accountability

- Ensuring access to, and effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
 - Development of opportunities for lifelong learning
 - Vocational Education and Training, especially establishing links between education and labour market
 - Development of human and social capital and investment in education
 - Education and culture
4. The Ministers underline the importance of bilateral cooperation to enhance mutual understanding, one basis of European unification such as the “Aktionen” between Austria and Hungary, Austria and the Czech Republic and Austria and Slovakia.
- The CEEPUS II Agreement signed in 2003 will strengthen the regional cooperation even more and contribute to the developing European Higher Education area with the focus on “Joint degrees”.
5. In order to implement the regional cooperation and develop it further, the countries shall hold joint consultations and, where necessary, take coordinated measures.
6. The cooperation consists in common activities, such as research projects, conferences, workshops, school-partnerships, meetings of civil servants and meetings of Ministers. Joint consultations shall be held in particular on matters of common interest which are dealt with by European and other international organisations and conferences.
7. Where appropriate, the activities described herein will be coordinated by the Regional Conference of Directors General.
8. Each of the countries may take the initiative to further cooperation and to initiate action on appropriate matters.

9. Each side will bear its own costs for the involvement in common activities, for example travel and subsistence costs of its visitors or costs for expertise. Costs for common meetings will be discussed and included in the planning process.
10. The present Memorandum does not result in the creation of any new obligations regarding international law nor shall it have any effect on existing legislation. It becomes effective on the day of signing or accordingly to the internal regulations of the signatory countries for a duration of three years and may be renewed.

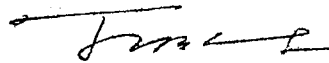
Vienna, 18 February 2004

For the Ministry of
Education
of Hungary



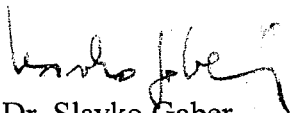
Dr. Bálint Magyar
Minister

For the Ministry of
Education
of the Slovak Republic



Dr. Martin Fronc
Minister

For the Ministry of
Education, Science and Sport
of Slovenia



Dr. Slavko Gaber
Minister

For the Federal Ministry of
Education, Science and Culture
of Austria



Elisabeth Gehrler
Minister