

# Theoretical Basis of Individual (Home) Education in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland

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**Abstract:** *This paper addresses the issue of individual (home)<sup>1</sup> education in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. It compares the education systems of the countries with a similar tradition of the education system - Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland, from the point of view of the legislative options for providing homeschooling to children. The study describes the theoretical basis of homeschooling and the opinions of professionals on the studied issue. It defines the basic concepts associated with homeschooling and, through a document review and interviews with professionals, compares the homeschooling system in these countries. It is possible to state that the conditions for the provision of individual (home) education in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland are similar. It differs mainly in the age category of learners, the requirements for guarantor with qualification for (primary) teaching, and the recommendation from pedagogical and psychological counseling.*

**Keywords:** *individual education, home education, homeschooling, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland.*

## Introduction

The origins of homeschooling go back to the United States, in the 1970s and 1980s. The stimulus was a growing dissatisfaction with the classical public education system. Significant figures, who have changed the view of homeschooling, include John Holt, Raymond Moore, Mary Griffith, and others. Homeschooling has gradually become rooted in the legislation of European countries, where the concept of *compulsory school attendance* is gradually being replaced by the concept of *compulsory education*, on the grounds that education is acquired not only at school, but also outside of the school. In countries where the concept of a compulsory education is rooted in law, this education does not have to be implemented only within a school. In all European countries, except Germany, individual education in the home (or other conditions) is legal, at least for children of a certain age group.

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<sup>1</sup> In the study the terms individual education, home education and homeschooling are used as synonyms. The term individual education is recognized by law in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The term home education is recognized by law in Poland.

On the other hand, the educational system is traditionally strongly influenced by political system of the country and by its prevailing culture. Therefore, the educational systems of Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland (as well as many other post-communist countries) still have some specific features that distinguish them in a number of ways from the countries of “Old Europe” (Kostecká, 2010). These features also reflect the individual (home) education. The aim of the study is to describe the theoretical basis of homeschooling and describe the legislative anchoring of homeschooling in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland.

### **Research Problem and Research Questions**

The research problem for the authors of this study has become a description of theoretical basis of homeschooling, and comparison of the legislative options for providing individual (home) education in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland.

#### *Research Questions:*

1. What are the origins of homeschooling?
2. What were the opinions of professionals engaged in homeschooling (from both history and presence) on the studied issue?
3. What terms related to homeschooling have been used in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland?
4. What is the legislative anchoring of homeschooling in the individual countries?
5. How is the compliance of the standards set by the curricular documents ensured?

The authors of the research have counted on the fact that, in the course of the research survey in each country, additional issues will arise in relation to the topic.

### **The Theoretical Basis of Homeschooling**

Parents decide on the homeschooling of their children for a number of reasons, whether to achieve better educational results for their children, a negative perception of the traditional school environment, to provide better conditions for the children's moral and ethical development, a disagreement with the curriculum or teaching methodology, a disagreement with the school's value orientation, religious reasons, and so on. Homeschooling is also preferred by the parents of children, who live in remote rural settlements, or who have temporarily relocated abroad.

When putting together this chapter, in particular we studied the work of J. Kotásek, J. J. Rousseau, J. Holt, A. S. Neill, I. Illich, P. Gray and others. These works are similar in many aspects, while we also suggest implicit contradictions.

### **Development Scenarios of the Education System by Jiří Kotásek**

According to the topic elaborated in this study, it is possible to quote from a study by J. Kotásek (1928 - 2006) on the international dimension of the research of present-day Czech schools, which he published in 2002. The study includes a reflection on the likely future development of education in an international context, in other words, an interpretation of the future development scenarios of an education system and of alternative models of schools. In the following text, we present concepts and six basic scenarios of education system development, published by J. Kotásek (2002), based on theoretical and research studies (e.g. Hutmacher, 2001, Johansson, 2000, Kotásek, Svoboda, 2000, Michel, 2001).

Strategic considerations in the field of educational policy for the next 15-20 years have already been published in 2002, so today they can be compared with the current development and direction of the education system. Three concepts about the future of the education system have six scenarios:

- A. **A continuation of the current state (extrapolation).** According to the first concept, existing models will continue to be applied and the current state of the education system will be projected into the future, thus maintaining the traditional model of the school and the school system against the forces that cause its decomposition. From this concept, the following scenarios stem:
  - 1. *The maintaining of bureaucratically managed school systems.*
  - 2. *An extended application of the market model within education.*
- B. **A strengthening of the school functions (re-schooling).** The second concept is to strengthen the function of the school as an irreplaceable social institution. The scenarios are as follows:
  - 3. *Schools as organisations focusing on managed learning.*
  - 4. *Schools as the main centres of social life within communities*
- C. **A weakening of the functions of schools (de-schooling).** The third is the weakening of school functions, even their decline as a consequence of the development of civilization, new communication mechanisms and the overall social and cultural crisis of the global world. With regards to the focus of this study, we further characterise the last two scenarios:
  - 5. *The networks of learners within the context of society's network (learning network model).* If the school does not get

rid of its bureaucratic nature, there may be an increase in the dissatisfaction with its traditional form. *The pressure of social groups requiring a limitation of learning through school is gradually increasing, even up to its total abolition, in favour of individual inclusion into learning networks.* Therefore, learning will not be done at a spatial and time-bound location, by trained teachers, and there will also be a decline in the traditional cuticular structures and an increase in the plurality of values, as a result of a strengthening of the impact of interest and religious groups. Facilities providing childcare, as well as information, counselling and marketing services in the field of education, will be brought to attention. The education software market will develop, and networks of learners, parents and educators will be formed. The distinction between teachers and learners, and the parents and teachers, will gradually disappear. There will be a new type of educational professionals, who will work as out-patient workers, expert advisers and contact persons.<sup>2</sup>

6. *The decline of the education system, as a result of a disinterest in the teaching profession (school crisis model).* In such a development, it would not be possible to strengthen the role of the education system, or to maintain the status quo, there would be a complete crisis in the teaching profession. The lack of teachers would cause a reaction by various organisational measures, e.g. by increasing the number of learners in classes, and returning to traditional methods or to homeschooling. There will also be more intensive use of information and communication technologies. There will be a strong interest in the private initiatives of companies. The likelihood of an international teacher market will increase. The tendency to maintain an older generation of teachers in education will enhance, possibly the demands for preparatory teacher education will decrease, or the need to be educated as a teacher will disappear, and thus further weakening the status of the teacher. There will be attempts to increase teachers' salaries, but on the other hand, their working conditions will deteriorate.

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<sup>2</sup> This scenario is the most common vision of education futurologists. Let us argue that it is quite close to the present reality, when homeschooling begins to grow through parents, and the idea of an individualisation of learning and lifelong learning is being fulfilled.

An interest in unqualified people willing to take care of children will materialise (Kotásek 2002).

Since the publication of this study, the time has already elapsed when one of the scenarios is supposed to have been fulfilled, but we cannot really say unambiguously, which scenario will be fulfilled with certainty and explicitness. All the scenarios can be reflected into the school systems in our country and in the advanced countries of Europe and the world. The school system is still characterised by strong elements of bureaucracy and elements of uniformity; schools have to always deal with new challenges (especially as a result of the family crisis), but the financial and human resources are not improving. There are efforts to prolong school attendance and the prerequisite of entrance into a job, or a certain type and level of school, is through the obtaining of a certificate.

On the other hand, as we have already outlined above, some visions of scenarios 5 and 6 are being fulfilled, especially those regarding an openness to homeschooling.

### **Negative Education by Jean Jacques Rousseau**

The origins of homeschooling stem from a criticism of the classical school movement.<sup>3</sup> Changes in the traditional understanding of the education system and pedagogy have taken place since **J. J. Rousseau** (1712 - 1778), as part of the reform of the pedagogical movement. Rousseau emphasised the education of a free man who, in the context of education as the development of his own personality, is not forced into anything, his individuality is being respected, puts his own experience before the knowledge gained by reading books, thus trying to highlight human nature. In the words of B. Pupala and O. Kaščák (2009) it is literally a non-education, where adults avoid any intentional action on the child, only leave him to develop in a natural environment, while it is assumed that the child is within himself a priori good.

Rousseau wrote his idea of an individual educational concept in his work, *Emil, or On Education*. He recommends to teachers and educators:

*“Never give him any orders, whatever happens, do not give any orders. Do not allow him to think that you want to have some authority over him. Let him just know that he is weak, and you are strong, that in the light of his and your position, he is reliant on your grace and mercy ...”* (Rousseau, 2002, p. 82).

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<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this study is not to expand or deepen these criticisms, nor to put homeschooling into opposition with a classical education system.

He adds that *“the most reliable means is a desire for education”* (Rousseau, 2002, p. 82). Therefore, it is much better to stimulate his curiosity, than force him to learn from books. He also does not recommend setting precisely what a child should learn.

The reactions to Rousseau's work are paradoxical. On the one hand, he is considered to be a representative of modern pedagogical thinking, and many pedagogues acknowledge his work, but many criticise him. We all mention, in particular, P. Gray, whose concept of education will be characterised in the context of this study, later on.

Gray finds fault with Rousseau, in particular, that he is manipulating the environment of his learner, in order to behave exactly how his teacher thinks is appropriate and good. The ratio of the number of students to the teacher is one-on-one, which could bring good educational results, however, he cannot be freely confronted with other children and is isolated from social influences for 15 years. Although Emil gets a sense of freedom, in fact, it is a manipulation by his teacher who, as the only one, determines the environment, people and objects that he comes into contact with (Gray, 2009). The only common idea shared by P. Gray (2009, 2016) with J. J. Rousseau (2002), is that *“Children's play and exploration are key to their education”*.

### **Homeschooling by John Holt**

Another important milestone in the development of homeschooling, was the publication of the books by the American pedagogue, **J. Holt** (1923-1985). For all his works, one can mention, for example, *How Children Fail* (1964), *How Children Learn* (1967), *Teach Your Own* (2003). Holt analyses specific situations from his pedagogical practice, arguing that the teaching organisation is responsible for the apparent failures of learners, rather than the learners themselves. He said about homeschooling:

*“I would like to make it clear that I do not consider homeschooling as a response to bad schools. I think the home is a good base for exploring the world, which we call learning and education. Home would be the best foundation, no matter how good schools are. The correct relationship between home and the school is like the relationship between the library and the home, or the ice-skating rink and the home. It's an additional source”* (Holt, 2003).

Holt believed that children who are surrounded by a diverse and stimulating environment will learn what they are prepared to learn at the time, when they are ready to learn it. He believed that there was no need to force children to learn - they naturally mature to it, if they are given the freedom to lead

themselves by their own interests and if they have a wide range of resources to learn from. He called this philosophy, unschooling.

*Anti-authoritative Education by A. S. Neill*

The Scottish pedagogue, **Alexander Sutherland Neill** (1883 - 1973), perceived education as the “self-regulation of a child”, and it is also referred to as “anti-authoritarian education”. This model does not turn against authority in general, but only against some degraded forms, like seniority of the adult and his insensitive interference into the development of the child; orders, instructions, regulations, prohibitions, sanctions, threats and uncritical subordination to these structures; prescribed teaching content, objectives, methods, place of learning and teaching aids; authoritative performance requirements of society, based on the principle of competition and the mutual competition of children (Štrunclová, 2003). External authority should be totally suppressed, in favour of the self-regulation of children. Children have the right to “live according to their own rules”, they have the right to “live their own lives”. The whole principle of Neill's philosophy is summed up by the quote:

*“We must allow the child to allow for selfishness, freedom, not to share, and adolescence to follow his own childish interests. When the individual and social interests of the child meet, we should allow the personal ones to predominate. The whole Summerhill idea<sup>4</sup> is based on liberation, allowing the child to fully experience his natural needs”* (Neill, 2013, p. 76).

Neill considered the child's emotions to be the most important thing, which he has placed in front of intellectual progress. According to him, by ignoring children's emotions, schools make the children more incoherent to be manipulated through different media.

In accordance with J. J. Rousseau, A. S. Neill claims that “...books are the least important aid in school. The only things children really need to learn are reading, writing and counting; the rest should be just the tools, clay, sports, theatre, colours and freedom” (Neill, 2013, p. 144). Learning should come after play, while teachers should not even try “to wrap” learning into the form of play.

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<sup>4</sup> The principles were applied by A. S. Neill (2013) in his Summerhill School, which he founded in 1921, and works on the same principles, up until today. This is an international boarding school attended by hundreds of learners, of different nationalities, aged between 5 and 18. In particular, free play in age-related heterogeneous groups, the principle of democracy and freedom in education, non-compulsory school hours and children learning only what they are interested in, are all gaining in importance.

## Free Learning by Peter Gray

There are free schools around the world (in the countries where the legislation allows them) that operate on similar principles to Summerhill. As an example, we can name Sudbury Valley School. The first one was founded in 1968 in Framingham, as the first school of this type. This is a democratic type of school, where students aged between 4 and 18 are fully responsible for their own education. Students decide how to use their time, do not have a predefined curriculum or a prescribed curriculum. Children learn exclusively using their own activities and their status is equivalent to adults. The school provides a safe environment where young people can play, explore, take responsibility and communicate freely with other people from different age groups.

**Peter Gray** (1946), in his book *Freedom to Learn* (2016), describes his experience gained during the long-term study of children's self-education, starting with the self-education of hunter-gatherers in primitive tribes, as well as the self-education of children at Sudbury Valley School, in Massachusetts. He claims that children from the culture of hunter-gatherers become successful adults without schooling. Children of hunter-gatherers must learn a lot of knowledge and skills to make themselves successful adults. Children get everything they need without systematically teaching them. Children are given a huge amount of time to play and explore. They watch adult activities and then integrate them into their games. There is a huge amount of child education going on, and this is analogously also happening to children in our culture, even before entering into school.

He gives examples, as in Sudbury Valley in Massachusetts, students become successful<sup>5</sup> even without a traditional education.

P. Gray also described how the natural environment for children's self-education should look. In order for children to educate themselves, they need, in particular, the time and scope for playing and exploring, as well as access to educated and caring adults, and access to equipment (e.g. various devices, aids, didactic material). He also considered the free age mixing of children as key towards self-education. This coincides with the opinions of A. S. Neill, who also promoted free play within age-related heterogeneous groups.

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<sup>5</sup> Here, we have to ask ourselves, what does it mean "to be successful". This concept may be meaningless due to different pedagogical discourses. Taking into account the traditional academic discourse, this is especially the intellectual education of an individual, and "to be successful" could mean studying at a prestigious university. On the other hand, for example, from the point of view of humanistic discourse, the term "to be successful" could mean being happy, satisfied in life.



## De-schooling of Society by Ivan Illich

Following the scenarios of the development of the education system, according to J. Kotásek (2002), we present the ideas of **Ivan Illich** (1926 - 2002), who published works in accordance with the last two of these aforementioned scenarios. As stated by J. Průcha (2009), “... *perhaps the greatest uproar among teachers, concerning the existence of the school, was awoken by the work of the American author, Ivan Illich*”. In 1971, he published the book, *Deschooling Society* (Illich, 1972), where he declared his conviction that the school should be separated from society. According to him, the school fulfils an indoctrination function, the learners cannot decide freely what and how to learn, hinders creativity, from the lowest grades, divides the learners into the successful and the unsuccessful, and is separated from life, etc., with its content (Illich, 1972; Průcha, 2009).

Illich also points out that the school cannot educate learners towards democratic values. He claims that the handling by the teacher of the learner does not contain any of the basic personal freedoms. The teacher unifies three power functions - judge, ideologist and doctor, which in his view contributes to the deformity of the learner, and “... much more than the laws that anchor his legal or economic immaturity or limit his freedom of assembly and residence” (Illich, 1972, p. 36).

Illich argues that instead of schools, there should be free education, i.e. everyone would learn what they want, how they want and when they want, so education would be a natural, spontaneous, totally voluntary activity, which stems from the interest of the child. He considers the school to even be counter-productive, while counter-productiveness, i.e., the “anti-sensual creation of values”, “...that the institution has, from a certain point in time, drawn apart most of its prospects from the target, for which it was established and financed” (Illich, 1972, p. 12). According to him, the school has an “anti-educating” effect on society.

Illich, in his book, *Deschooling Society*, suggests what a good education system should look like. It should primarily serve three purposes:

1. *“It should provide access to existing opportunities to all those, who want to learn at any time in their lives;*
2. *it should allow everyone, who wants to share their knowledge with others, to find those, who want to learn from them;*
3. *and finally, it should give all those, who want to present a problem to the public, the opportunity to present their case”* (Illich, 1972, p. 66).

Also, in a good education system, every citizen should have a constitutionally guaranteed right to such an education, he should not have to undergo a compulsory curriculum and would not be judged on whether he has a certificate

or diploma from some field. Modern technologies would be used to expand the freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and free printing that would fully enter into education services (Illich, 1972, p. 66).

### Definition of Basic Terms

As is evident, we are moving within the limits of *humanistic discourse*<sup>6</sup>. Its typical feature is the orientation towards individuality, on its development, more precisely on “self-development” and the “self-creation” of individuality. Self-development suggests education as a specific process, which should “let grow”. Education is, in particular, the organisation of a stimulating environment, in which individuality is created, which stimulates personal experience and offers an interesting experience (Kaščák, Pupala, 2009).

The most commonly used term in relation to individual education is *homeschooling*. The wider concept is *home education*, which can take various forms, as we will see in the text below. Some adherents of homeschooling are more familiar with the concept of *home learning*, meaning home-based learning. Because for some, the prefix *home-* appears to be restrictive, the term *world learning* is also used.

- *Individual education*. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the concept of individual education is rooted in legislation, where homeschooling is one of its forms. If a child is educated at home, he must be enrolled in a primary school, where he has to fulfil compulsory school attendance.
- *Home education*. The term *home education* (edukacja domowa) is used in Polish legislative documents. Home education is the education of children in domestic conditions, instead of formal education in schools. In developed countries, it is understood as an alternative to formal education, and it is provided either by the parents of the children or by tutors (DiStefano, Rudestam, Silverman, 2004). In the context of home education, the concept of *home school* is often used, but many parents

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<sup>6</sup> Pedagogical thinking (its main stream) is represented by the fact that, we almost simultaneously observe differentiated ideas about upbringing and education, which are sometimes referred to as the theories or concepts of education, or paradigms. Each of the relevant pedagogical discourses head towards other practical recommendations, formulate specific goals, and create a unique technology of educational training, including a variety of methodologies or exercises. In spite of their great auctorial, intellectual and conceptual dispersions, these concepts and ideas can be summed up on the basis of “common denominators” and create basic groups of streams: humanistic, functional, interactional, reconstructionist, consensual, neoliberal (Kaščák, Pupala, 2009).

reject it, as it applies to a school itself. A lesser used term is *family education*.

- *Unschooling*. In connection with the rejection of a formal school education, two streams can be distinguished. In the first case, it is about “homeschooling”, where education is supervised by correspondent or umbrella schools. In the latter case, it is the so-called “unschooling”. The child is educated outside of a traditional school, respecting the philosophy of the child's natural curiosity and his spontaneous learning without forcing. In this case, nobody organises the education of the child. The child himself chooses the subjects that interest him and studies them from different sources. Assistance is provided to him only if he asks for it himself.
- *Flexi-schooling*. As stated by J. Průcha (2009, p. 394), based on the assertion of R. Meighan (1993), “... a more realistic analogy of the ideas of “deschoolers” is the concept of flexi-schooling, a literally flexible schooling, lying between the well-defined poles of an institutional education and an informal (e.g. home) education”. According to him, the implementation of education is not bound to only one place (the school), but a variety of environments (e.g. museum, library, park, various workplaces), it uses a variety of resources available to the learner (TV, computer, etc.). As the learner learns and works extensively in the absence of a teacher, it is important for parents to actively engage in flexi-schooling. Flexi-schooling also includes “... different forms of distance learning, education in geographically remote areas (Scandinavia, Australia), education of the children of parents, who are long-term living abroad, but also attempts to introduce this concept into ordinary schools” (Průcha, 2009, p. 394).
- *Virtual school*. Children do not go to school physically, but they join the so-called virtual blackboard online, at the same time as a teacher, while interpreting the curriculum. All participants in such virtual learning see each other and communicate with each other. This way, for example, Moodle Internet School (i-moodle)<sup>7</sup> in Březová, works.
- *Community education/community school*. Parents of children in homeschooling often have organised study groups, which are not officially recognised by schools. Every community school is unique due to something. Some schools strictly follow state curriculum, some are specifically targeted to develop religious values, environmental attitudes, or there are also communities that seek to apply the principles of unschooling.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://moodle.zsbrezova.eu/>

## **Methodology of Research**

### **General Background of Research**

This research is part of the larger project entitled “*Individual Education in the V4 Countries - A Comparative Research Study*”. In this larger research project, quantitative research methods (a structured interview) and qualitative research methods (an interview, a method of examining documents) were used to find out the conditions for homeschooling in V4 countries.

### **Instrument and Procedures**

During the research, both the method of examining documents and the interview method were used. In our case, documents are understood to be legislative documents - acts on education, and relevant websites dedicated to homeschooling within the individual countries.

The process of document processing had the following phases (Mayring, 1990):

1. We began by defining the research questions.
2. We defined what will be considered as a document. We tried to find all relevant documents.
3. We have implemented a source criticism (an external and internal assessment of the documents). In this case, it was advantageous that they were state-approved legislative documents and websites managed by high-level institutions.
4. This was followed by an interpretation of the documents, focused on finding answers to the questions asked and processing the conclusions of the research.

Another research method used was an unstructured interview. We submitted the information we received to be critiqued and we have verified it in interviews with pedagogical professionals from the individual countries – Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. Their task was to compare an interpretation of the document presented by us and review it with the source document, as well as with answers to the research questions.

### **Sample of Research**

The research sample consisted of three main documents

1. Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Upbringing and Education (The School Act) in Slovakia,

2. Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education (the Education Act), in the Czech Republic,
3. Act on Education System from 19th December 2016 (Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 roku - Prawo oświatowe) in Poland.

In addition, we have also drawn information from websites about individual education within each of the countries:

1. Civic Associations of Homeschooling in Slovakia,<sup>8</sup>
2. Associations of Homeschooling in the Czech Republic,<sup>9</sup>
3. Home Education in Poland.<sup>10</sup>

The organisations that administer these websites and publish through them up-to-date information on homeschooling issues in the individual countries attest to the credibility of the presented websites. The documents analysed are publicly available, so it was not necessary to ensure any agreement with their analysing and interpretation.

The research sample was also composed of university teachers, from faculties operating in the areas of pedagogy and pre-school and elementary education from Slovakia (2), the Czech Republic (2), and Poland (2) engaged in individual (home) education. The respondents were selected from the selections available, as we were looking for respondents, who were willing to engage in the research. We realise that the available choice reduces the possibility of generalising results.

The respondents were instructed about the aim of the research and research questions, they voluntarily participated in the research, and they were promised to remain in anonymity.

## Results of Research

The answers to the research questions related to legislative anchoring of individual (home) education are processed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Legislative anchoring of home (individual) education in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland (Mazur, Rochovská, Dolinská, 2019).**

	Slovakia	The Czech Republic	Poland
<b>What is the legislative</b>	Permitted by law for a certain age	Permitted by law for a certain age	Permitted by law.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.domacaskola.sk/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.domaciskola.cz/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://edukacjadowowa.pl/>

<b>anchoring of homeschooling in the individual countries?</b>	category of learners.	category of learners.	
<b>In which country was the homeschooling of learners first allowed by law, and which was the latest?</b>	In 2008, i.e. the last of the countries examined.	In 2005.	In 1991, i.e. the first of the countries examined.
<b>Is homeschooling for learners in these countries limited to a certain age group of learners?</b>	For learners at the 1 <sup>st</sup> stage of primary school (ISCED 1).	For learners at the 1 <sup>st</sup> stage of primary school (ISCED 1) and, since 2016 also for learners at the 2 <sup>nd</sup> stage of primary school (ISCED 2).	For nursery school children (ISCED 0), learners at the 1 <sup>st</sup> stage (ISCED 1) and 2 <sup>nd</sup> stage (ISCED 2) of primary school, secondary school and grammar school students (ISCED 3).
<b>How is it possible to apply for a learner's homeschooling?</b>	The legal guardian requests the headmaster of the child's school for homeschooling.	The legal guardian requests the headmaster of the child's school for homeschooling.	The legal guardian requests the headmaster of the child's school for homeschooling.
<b>Does a student have to have a guarantor with a pedagogical education?</b>	Yes.	No, secondary education (in learners at the 1 <sup>st</sup> stage of primary school) or higher education (in learners at the 2 <sup>nd</sup> stage of primary school), is enough	The law does not prescribe a guarantor for a learner.
<b>With which methods and</b>	The law does not prescribe it.	The law does not prescribe it.	The law does not prescribe it.

<b>forms is it legally possible to implement homeschooling for learners in the different countries?</b>			
<b>How is the fulfilment of the standards provided by curricular documents ensured?</b>	The learner is examined every half year.	The learner is examined every half year.	The learner is examined once a year.

During the research, additional research questions arose, and the answers are given in Table 2.

**Table 2. Responses to the additional research questions in the individual countries**

	<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>The Czech Republic</b>	<b>Poland</b>
<b>How can the homeschooling be cancelled?</b>	At the request of the parents, or the headmaster cancels it if the learner does not attend the half-year examination, or fails to fulfil it, or at the request of an inspector.	At the request of the parents, or the headmaster cancels it if the learner does not attend the half-year examination, or fails to fulfil it, or if sufficient conditions for the education are not provided.	At the request of the parents or cancelled by the headmaster if the learner does not attend the annual examination or fails to fulfil it.
<b>Is it possible to formally educate a learner with the application of the philosophy of</b>	No.	No.	No.

<b>unschooling?</b>			
<b>What other information about homeschooling is available on the websites<sup>8,9,10</sup>?</b>	Legislation, a list of schools with positive references to homeschooling, articles on homeschooling, information for parents, ideas for activities, information about conferences ...	Legislation, articles and professional studies on homeschooling, information for parents, communication of the homeschooling association with the current Minister of Education, ideas for activities, information about conferences ...	Legislation, articles and professional studies about homeschooling, information for parents, ideas for activities, information about conferences ...

In conclusion, we only briefly state that the respondents - professionals from the pedagogy, and pre-school and elementary education departments, have approved the presented content.

## Discussion

Following the J. Kotásek study (2002), which is presented in the theoretical part of this study, it can be stated that social conditions, not only in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland, require the adoption of a new educational paradigm, and that is the lifelong learning of all members of society throughout their lives. The author argues that this should happen not only at the level of formal education in schools, but also at an informal level (in enterprises, state and public administration, interest and civic associations) and informal education (spontaneously happening in work, public and private life).

Within the theoretical part of the study, in the intentions of humanistic discourse, we have quoted the opinions of experts in favour of homeschooling. We acknowledge that homeschooling also has opponents, for example, in Slovakia B. Pupala, O. Kaščák (2004), in the Czech Republic, S. Štech (2003), but they are experts whose opinions are in the context of other discourses, predominantly rivalling with a humanistic discourse.

Based on the presented theoretical origins of this study, we note that the authors cited, largely preferred free education and the philosophy of



unschooling. In Slovak, Czech and Polish terms, such forms of education are not allowed under the legislation in force. Learners are every half a year (in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic), or once a year (in Poland) undergoing an examination of how they fulfil the compulsory curriculum.

The authors of the study have experiences in the field that many parents are also experimenting with “unschooling”. However, if this way educated learners succeed in the half-year and end-of-year examinations at the school they are enrolled in, it is not a problem for any party involved. These parents and pedagogues admit that it is not possible to formulate any set of “best practices” for learning. Rather, they learn with their children, and they also consider it as a positive if they do not know how to explain something to the children immediately. Methods and ways of teaching are less important to them than the thoughts themselves. Once they find some interesting ideas they want to test, they use an unlimited number of methods for how to implement them.

## Conclusions

As stated by J. Kotásek (2002), the pressure of social groups is likely to increase gradually, requiring a limitation of learning only through the school. For these reasons, the legislative documentation gradually adds to almost all European countries the possibility of homeschooling for children, at least for a certain age category. While in Slovakia it is possible for learners at the 1<sup>st</sup> stage (ISCED 1), in the Czech Republic, which approved homeschooling **three** years earlier than Slovakia, there is already undergoing experimental verification of the domestic education of learners at the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of primary school (ISCED 2). In Poland, out of all three of the countries under examination, the option of the homeschooling of learners was first introduced into legislation, as early as 1991. Compared to Slovakia and the Czech Republic, homeschooling is currently allowed not only for primary school learners (ISCED 1), but also for children in nursery schools (ISCED 0) and learners at the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of primary school (ISCED 2), as well as for secondary schools and grammar school students (ISCED 3).

The Slovak, Czech and Polish laws offer freedom in education, but at the same time they show the state’s desire to control this freedom as much as possible (Kašparová, 2015). In all countries, however, the State checks on the homeschooled learners through the schools where they are enrolled, whether they are fulfilling the obligatory curricula prescribed by the State. While in Slovakia and the Czech Republic it is twice a year, in Poland it is only once a year.

Coming from the theoretical part of this work, we can say that free schools like Sudbury Valley or Summerhill work efficiently around the world. In the

countries studied so far, schools that apply the philosophy of unschooling are not allowed, although many parents educating their children at home would welcome the possibility of enrolling children in such schools.

We propose that an experimental verification should be carried out, whether unschooling can be implemented under the conditions of the school system in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland (as the educational tradition is different from the Western countries, in which unschooling has its own tradition). It is also our intention to enlarge this homeschooling research to other neighbouring European countries (e.g. Hungary, Ukraine, Austria, Romania).

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