The System of Content Regulation in Hungary

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Foreword

Planning, making and implementing decisions of educational policy-making are set in a differentiated, diverse environment, which is becoming extremely rich in information. The direction of processes within the education system is mainly pinpointed by the motivation of groups with strong professional autonomy. Besides – as much as the education system is becoming more and more open – different groups interested in education's social benefits or efficiency in the job market have an effect on these processes. Considering these circumstances it is impossible to think about educational policy-making in a traditional way; it is becoming more and more obvious that the interpretation of educational policy-making as a process of realizing central political will through regulations and administration has become invalid.

As a result of the changes in the Hungarian education system initiated in the 80s, the opportunities and responsibilities of all the participants of education have been altered. While it is clear to everybody, how much the roles of students, parents, teachers, educational institutions and maintainers have changed, we tend to forget that the function of central educational administration has undergone similar reforms. The place of a political and administrative governance of education operating before the political changes should be taken by a central governance mainly applying indirect tools for directing the processes of the education system, which is aimed at influencing participants' behaviour. The renewal of the instrument system of educational policy-making enables the participants of national educational administration to come up to the responsibility of providing quality in public education. One of the key elements of the educational administration following new standards is the usage of well-informed and open professional political discourse as an instrument of the governance of education.

You are now reading the first public political analysis produced by the National Institute for Public Education, Centre for Educational Policy (OPEK). OPEK was founded in the summer of 2003 to create thematic reports analysing the most important issues on the agenda of educational policy-making and to provide other services that support the activities of different – governmental and non-governmental – participants and the dialogue between them. This mission highlights the function of this (and the other forthcoming) public report. The authors of this analysis were not commissioned to work out detailed reforms or to enrich (investigate) our knowledge about the operation of the system, but they were commissioned to work out recommendations for a better operation for a special system regulation function. We hope that this report will provide a rich source for the professional discourse on the issue and it will also present a basis for making decisions, which are important regarding the operation of the system of content regulation.

Péter Radó

Summary

1. Educational content regulation is a complicated process carried out on different levels, in the course of which different participants implement certain educational targets into their own teaching practices with a great amount of autonomy. The way from curriculum leading to classroom practices is rather a fragmentary chain of different interpretations, which are affected by a complicated set of interests, than a project of implementation. This is particularly true for the Hungarian education system, which is decentralised and which emphasises the participants' autonomy and their sharing of responsibilities. Therefore, the analysis of the system of content regulation requires the application of a model which supports the understanding of the process of setting and interpreting goals and which is capable of finding a direct and indirect system of instruments for the governance of education and educational policy-making. The model applied in the report includes the following levels of the system of content regulation in Hungary: (1) *setting of educational goals,* (2) *definition and operation of different ways of content regulation,* (3) *outlining and accepting local/institutional programs,* (4) *working out and institutional access to content carriers[1]* (5) *making use of materials within the teaching-learning process,* (6) *suitability verification.* The most important systems connected to these levels are the following: (A) system regulation, (B) supervision, and maintenance of liability, (C) professional services.

2. In the course of defining educational goals by content regulations during the last 30 years, those having a share in education were not included in the process, the social control over the proceedings was insufficient and there was no co-operation between different branches of education (public education, vocational education, higher education and adult education). In the waves of different curriculum modernisation (regulating) processes the role of national educational administration and science of education experts' role and curriculum theories' experts was emphasised. As a result, the problems of educational goals, the methods and ways of curriculum regulation were merged, which made it impossible to initiate a public debate about the goals of education. Thus, the setting of targets has remained the issue of a restricted group of administration and experts on the lower level of the education system (for example in the course of creating the institutions' own curriculum).

3. The most important means of content regulation are input (curricular) regulation and output regulation (exams and testing). The novelties of the last centrally issued curriculum (1978) included the differentiation between core and supplementary materials, the division of the curriculum's optimum and minimum and the application of optional subjects. The most important characteristics of the first National Core Curriculum (NCC, 1995) are the following: regulating regardless of school type; the definition of branches of knowledge; the setting of requirements adapted to pedagogical transition periods; the definition of interdisciplinary areas; putting minimum and maximum number of lessons instead of regulating compulsory lesson numbers. Framework curricula (2000) were intended to decrease schools' freedom thought to be too extensive and on the other hand they placed emphasis on the integrity and making the system permeable. The new regulation moved back to the traditional definitions of school subjects and directed the (minimum) numbers of compulsory subjects. The modification of the Public Education Act in 2002 ceased the compulsory existence of framework curricula; in other words, schools' local curricula do not have to comply with the skeletal curriculum. The second National Core Curriculum (NCC, 2003) published in September, 2003, is a classic core curriculum, which defines the public educational targets of public education on a national level, the main fields of knowledge (the so-called branches of knowledge and the contents beyond certain spheres), the content based periods of public education (4+2+2+4) and the areas of skills development that have to be carried out within a certain period.

4. The implementation of the core (base) curriculum serving as a central curriculum within a two-level content regulation system is doubted or at least incidental. In order to make the targets set on a governmental level appear in the local official documents of educational regulation, the application of transmission instruments are essential. One of these instruments, the orientating and supportive function of the framework curricula, do not operate, because no other skeletal curricula appeared besides the one skeletal curriculum for each different schools

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[1] Content carriers are textbooks, traditional and digital teaching materials, etc

types (which curriculum directed the decrease of contents in 2003). Outlining complex programs for different subjects could fulfil a similar transmission function; however, this has not been achieved yet.

5. The proportion of outcome regulation opposed to process regulation should have been increased in the entire period; however, this was not reflected by neither the debates of education policies focusing on curricula and school structures, or by the development of outcome processing instruments. The Public Education Act of 1985 increased the importance of upper-secondary school-leaving exams by making it the condition of secondary qualification. The Public Education Act in 1993 regulated the creation of a content regulation system, which was based on the balance of input and output elements. The new, unified concept of a standard two-level upper-secondary school-leaving exam was published in 1995. The modification of the act in 1999 ceased the direct content regulating function of the exams. Alongside with initiating the two-level secondary school-leaving exam (maturata exam), a detailed supervision of the exam requirements is also being carried out. The clarification of the role and the preparation of initiating a basic examination[2] at the age of 16 have not been completed. The currently existing assessment system has no regulating function.

6. In 1993 the two-level content regulation was legitimated by the act. One of the basic institutional backgrounds of this is the local curriculum[3]. It was compulsory for school maintainers[4] to ask for public education experts' opinions about local curricula and they had discussed the curricula in detail. However, research data show that the quality of local curricula is variable. At the moment the most important aspect of school operators' decision-making is the aspect of financing, however, there is no guarantee for the short-term safety of financing. It is rare to see an experiment for including local educational priorities into the local curriculum. The regular compulsory supervision of local curricula, assigned by central curriculum reforms, decreases the curiosity and quality of the process of supervision and acceptance. On the other hand, there's no practice of adjusting supervision to school development periods.

7. Formation of the real content of Hungarian public education is overwhelmingly dominated by textbooks. After the political changes, the regulatory activities of the national education administration were aimed at the partial regulation and quality management of the already existent and exponentially growing textbook market. However, textbooks and other content carriers are created by teachers, group of teachers and institutions, the sales of these products are profit orientated. The real implementation of this strategic level into system regulation has not been completed yet. There is no local social control over institutional textbook selection. The choice of content instruments has been such an important part of teachers' professional autonomy since the political changes, that all central initiatives aimed at the harmonisation of the content regulation system's instruments on institutional level (local curriculum's and educational content carriers) proved to be far too weak.

8. The most important medium intervening between educational aims established by different instruments and the real content and results of the learning process are the activities of teachers. The content regulation reforms carried out since 1990 forced teachers into the roles of content innovators and content developers. (According to experiences, these tasks can almost entirely give to professionals.) On the contrary, teachers have a non-transferrable applying-adapting role. Thus, the expansion of pedagogical and methodological instruments available for teachers and the improvement of co-operation between teachers within the institution were underestimated during the entire reform period. The experiences of the last decades prove that the improvement of content regulation and the professional development of teachers are interdependent.

9. The measurement of aims set by the content development system and the suitability verification of the instruments, moreover, the feedback on information gained, would theoretically be the key element of the system. This function is almost entirely neglected in the Hungarian education system. The testing system could play a very important role in suitability verification. However, the reform of the upper secondary school-leaving exams have been initiated, the lack of standardisation and its dependency on the curriculum, the currently

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[2] The basic examination is an exam at the end of compulsory education.
[3] School-based curriculum.
[4] The owners of the school.

existing exam cannot be used for suitability verification. Likewise, even if standardised testing in Hungary is rooted in the 1980s, the current testing system of learners' achievement does not provide valuable information for suitability verification. The assessment system, not to mention small modifications, did not change after 2002. (Apart from very rare exceptions, the measurement and analysis of backwash effects are not built in the content development process.)

10. The regulatory instruments used by national educational administration fall short of the possible variety of instruments. The legal documents connected to content regulations are mainly useful for subsequent approval, they are fragmentary and asynchronous, and the role of the important participants is underestimated. The instruments beyond legal regulations, which are used in reality, are overwhelmingly bureaucratic. The financial resources (motivators) that could be connected to system regulation and the mediums capable of influencing important participants (consultations, strategic communication, capacity development and knowledge building etc.) are not employed. Cost-effectiveness is almost entirely neglected in the system of content regulation.

11. Those educational instruments, which are intended to establish professional liability and at the same time are adapted to the division of responsibilities, have not been worked out yet. The most important reason for that is the fact that maintainers' supervision and external assessment systems – the integration of which would be a key factor of the education system – are weak and they are operating within unclassified frameworks without well-defined instruments.

12. The existent professional services, central and local organisations do not create a clear network, their participants and professional competencies are incidental, their roles, obligations and financing are not clarified. The professional service supporting institutional content choice is mainly substituted by certain textbook publishers' marketing activities.

13. Taking all these into consideration, the seven key problems identified by the analysis, the problems that require educational policy-making an intervention aimed at the refinement of the system of content regulation are the following:

- During the last few decades, the medium term strategic target setting of content regulation and development were carried out without including social partners.
- The institutional background of professionals responsible for the instruments of content regulation and development is vulnerable, their tasks and responsibilities are not clarified and their resources are weak. The profession operates on an ad hoc basis grouping around great implementation projects.
- Teachers and institutions of public education were often motivated to innovation (content development) in fields where professionals could have undertaken these responsibilities – without the exclusion of teachers. On the other hand, there's no sufficient support in fields (methodology of teaching and learning) that can only be operated by teachers.
- During the last few decades, there were no initiatives to integrate the content development and testing of public education, vocational education, higher education and adult education.
- As a result of the closeness and weaknesses of the maintainer's and institutional program approval, the legitimacy and real regulating force of programs approved locally by institutions are insufficient.
- The national supervision system of public education institutions (and the connected financing) have not been created, the locally operating maintainer's supervision systems are not integrated. Therefore, the principle of professional liability cannot be used. The public education system's stabilised and multifunctional assessment system has not been worked out since 1990.

14. In harmony with all the above-mentioned facts, the most important recommendations are the following:

- Making the medium term strategic target setting of content regulation and development a public affair, the debate has already started and the new forum should gain a strong legal framework in the near future.
- Stabilisation of the institutional background of professionals operating the instruments of content regulation and development.

- A new policy of creating supplies, which could direct public education institutions from curriculum development to the adaptation of ready-made programs and the development of methodologies (teaching and learning). Connected to this, a new partnership with textbook publishers should be established and the creation of content carriers should be made more professional.
- Working out a strategy based on lifelong learning, which could integrate the content development and measurement of public education, vocational education and adult education. Formation of different communication and Cupertino methods of professional integration.
- The legal regulation of maintainer's and institutional program approval in a way which (a) strengthens the control of local participants who are not teachers, (b) includes financial aspects into the process and (c) ceases the interpretation vagueness caused by the modification of the act in 2003 (framework curriculum, program package, program).
- As opposed to practices between 1985 and 2003, the professional preparation of a strong development in the field of outside supervision and measurement of public education institutions should be initiated.
- Creating a new concept for the national assessment system of the Hungarian education system. The concept should separate the concepts of educational structural policy from the field of evaluation and it should focus on the suitability verification of public education concepts and educational-pedagogical practices.

Introduction

During the last two decades the system of content regulation in Hungary has undergone profound reforms that affected all elements of the system. Even at the very beginning, first alterations of content were deeply rooted in the concept of a multi-level content regulation system.

In other countries of Central East Europe, the democratisation and modernization of the contents of public education have been carried out by freeing one part of the traditional curriculum, by the modification of former curricula and by the publication of new textbook series. During the second half of the 90s, the ideas connected to the formation of a multi-level content regulation system emerged, but the completeness and radicalism of the Hungarian experiment is unique in the region. The profound changes did not only indicate the first steps of a learning process within the Hungarian education system. The changes brought about by the National Core Curriculum (NCC) were accompanied by several conflicts and debates. The initiation of the framework curriculum gave an answer, which was questioned by many people, to uncertainty and "chaos" with the intention of consolidation.

The Ministry of Education's medium term public education development strategy outlined those development targets, which – besides others – should be served by the system of content regulation. The central elements of this target system are the development of competencies supporting lifelong learning, the integrated education of different student groups and the emphasis on information and communication technologies (ICT) in education. The strategy defined those preferable learning results (key competencies), the development of which it intend to support; these key competencies are the following:

- *Learning techniques:* reflected and routinised practice of learning, the realization of different learning needs demanded by different situations;
- *Intelligent learning:* the understanding of inherent connections of the material, the ability of solving problems, recognizing connections between different learning areas.
- *Applicable knowledge:* connecting knowledge to personal experiences and real-life situations, the ability of understanding changes, the connection of different elements of knowledge, the ability of making decisions, planning, behaviour and self-control, the application of gained knowledge in different situations;
- *Instrumental competencies:* the flexible and routinised application of language, communication, mathematics, IT and media user competencies;
- *Social competencies:* the ability of recognizing social hierarchies and issues, social responsibility, the ability of solving conflicts, cooperativeness, reflecting on social experiences;
- *Value orientation:* the norm-orientated samples of taking actions, social, democratic and individual values, autonomous action, reliability, tolerance, a socially accepted behaviour, cultural involvement.

In order to reach the targets outlined in the course of identifying key competencies strategic decisions, affecting the system of content regulation, were made. These include for example the regulation of public education as a unified process. Without doubt, for realizing these targets significant changes of the system of content regulation are essential. Educational governance has been and is carrying out significant alterations, which apply to the content and method of curriculum regulation, the examination and assessment system and the systems connected. Therefore, the modifications of the Public Education Act have reformed the legal basis of content regulation in many aspects.

The changes in regulation and financing initiated by the Ministry of Education, moreover, the target programs highlighted by the ministry's medium term development strategy together with the National Development Plan create such an essential and complicated group that makes the unified analysis of certain regulatory subsystems' changes and their effects inevitable. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education commissioned the National Institute for Public Education, Centre for Educational Policy (OPEK) to make an analysis about public education's content regulation and to make recommendations for the sake of further development.

Today content regulation and modernization seem to be a sphere of politics less important than it used to be. However, the debates connected to new initiatives (NCC 2003) go on, the heat of these debates cannot be compared to the debates of the previous periods. There are good reasons to assume that as a result of the so-called "tiredness from reforms" it is more difficult to involve institutions than it used to be. At the same time the debate on the instruments of content regulation include problems (e.g. school structure) the solution of which reaches beyond the opportunities of the system analysed here. This shows that professional and political public opinion is overwhelmed with illusions about the effects of traditional content regulatory instruments, while – as we will see – the opportunities of employing indirect instruments are being underestimated.

In this situation there is a greater need of understanding the problems connected to content regulation than ever. The most important moral of the debates on the three reforms' (NCC 1995 – framework curricula – NCC 2003) can be – and this was our most important target – the recognition that it is essential to work out a more abstract content regulation model than the specific reform plans connected to governments and ministries. The existence of such a model could help in discussing the ever-existing regulatory concepts. On the other hand, our target is to describe a content regulation system applicable in a modern and democratic society in order to help ceasing illusions connected to rationally directed content changes and their implementation into classrooms. Moreover, we intend to expose such levels and functions of content regulation, which can have a much stronger effect on the educational (today teaching and learning) processes or on the knowledge of students' in public educational institutions than the effect of traditional instruments.

The genre of the report created by CEPA ("public political analysis") shows that its aim is to support educational policy-making. According to our intentions, a "user friendly" document was created that will serve public debates on the issue, the planning, making and implementing decisions of educational policy. The report is divided into five main parts. In the *first part* we draft the levels and functions of content regulation within the framework of the new interpretation of content regulation, then, we investigate the role of the connected systems. In the *second part* we go through the most important changes of content regulation during the last two decades. In the third part, following the logic of the previously drafted model, we look at the most important characteristics of the situation preceding and the changes following the governmental changes in 2002. In the fourth part we will identify the most important problems, the solution of which is inevitable in order to improve the system of content regulation, and we formulate those recommendations, which, according to our opinion, enable the creation of a coherent content regulation system. Finally, in the *fifth part* we investigate and look at the possible effects of our recommendations, their practicability, maintainability, moreover, we will also outline their cost effect.

1. The model of the system of content regulation

1.1. Levels and functions of the content regulation system

In order to create the opportunity of thinking in an analytic way about content regulation disregarding the specific steps of educational policy-making, it seems to be essential to list the levels and ideal functions of the regulation system (*Figure 1*). It is important to note that the content regulation system of a certain state does not always institutionalise every single element of this model, some levels and functions are missing or overlapping. However, this has serious consequences, which have to be acknowledged by educational policymakers. It is useful to put forward the notion that the model described here is an instrument supporting analysis and – even if the linear character of the model suggested it – it does not serve as an "instruction manual" orientating content regulation.

Below we list the levels and functions of content regulation, then, in the course of the analysis we will look at the professional operation and connection of levels and functions. After defining each level and function we are going to formulate basic questions that will partly help interpretation and will also provide a background for further analysis. Assumptions connected to development are only formulated in this section if the interpretation of the logic of certain level makes it inevitable. (All other recommendations will be found in the next chapters.) The basis of the model is the assumption that content regulation (as a relatively divided system of instruments within educational system regulation) does not only serve as the target of implementing central initiatives for reaching educational goals, but it also has to ensure the education system's openness and ability to improve.
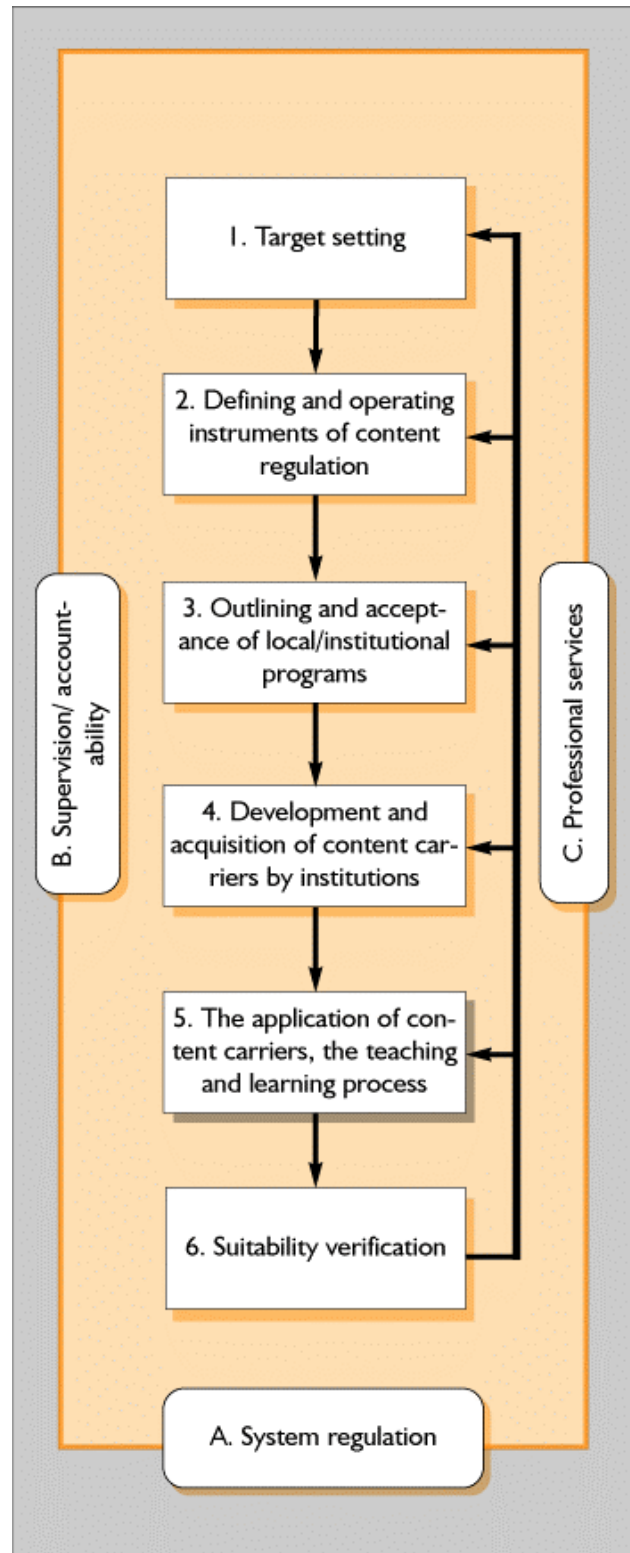

Figure 1 • Model of the system of content regulation

1.1.1. Target setting

Definition: Setting and democratic legitimisation of the goals and main content features of educational work within public education.
Basic problems:

- How is it possible to maintain social inclusion for the strategic goals of educational and teaching work?
- How is it possible to maintain economic and social relevance of educational and teaching work?

This activity of strategic importance, undoubtedly belong to the central level of content regulation. The social partners involved in completing this task reach a consensus about the ideal requirements of students' knowledge and skill development that will have to be represented in the instruments (curriculum, exam requirements, assessment system etc.) of content regulation, in content development (programs) and in content carriers (textbooks and additional materials). It is obvious that the setting of educational goals and teaching objectives is a task, in the completion of which – besides educational administration and scientist of education – employers, representatives of higher education, local municipalities maintaining institutions and the representatives of scientific research should be involved. Reaching a consensus can be broadly interpreted (the main characteristics and inner proportion of valid and required contents) and can be narrowly interpreted (the directions of modifying existing contents reflecting global processes). In case it seems to be impossible to reach a broad consensus, it can be completely narrowed down (e.g. different emphasis on content regulation or the development of natural sciences' contents). By all means, all the decisions have to be made on this level, which orientate the central and local institutional decisions about the division of the available time between spheres of knowledge or school subjects.

The completion of this task of strategic importance has often – especially in English speaking countries – created a separate institutional background. The mission of the curriculum councils (e.g. the Scottish Curriculum Council) is to set targets and to maintain democratic legitimisation. The lack of social control can always create an undesirable situation where the strategic plans connected to content regulation reflect the ideas of one or two groups of people. The diversification of the content regulation of public education can also be put down to the lack of social control. Supranational educational targets generated by global challenges and formed within the framework of international cooperation are playing an increasing role in target setting. This is especially true in the European Union's member countries, where the targets worked out by the EU and the active participation in setting targets has a great effect on national targets.

In conclusion it can be stated that during the period of target setting it seems to be necessary to clearly distinguish the definition of strategic targets and requirements connected to public educational contents from the development of instruments (curriculum) and content (programs). In addition, the legitimate completion of strategic plans connected to content regulation – resulting in the involvement of social partners – seems to be essential.

1.1.2. Definition and operation of content regulation instruments

Definition: Having all those professional regulatory instruments completed and accepted which form the framework of content regulation.
Basic Problems:

- How is target setting connected to the professional development of instruments?
- What kind of regulatory instruments are appropriate for reaching strategic targets?
- How is it possible to maintain the inner harmony of the regulation system?

It would be desirable that the elements that can be fixed in regulations (the number of content elements, its inner proportion, suggested lesson numbers) should be kept under social control even during the period of target setting. Thus, the definition and operation of content regulation could focus on working out professional regulation instruments. These regulation instruments are the following:

- the basic and framework curriculum
- central exam requirements
- the curricular directions regulating special professional
- the assessment of learner achievement (assessment system)
- choice of programs
- the National Training Register
- the professional curriculum used in vocational training.

The process of transforming central regulatory instruments into branches of knowledge (school subjects) by developers seems to be a critical point of this regulatory level. This transformation is not professionally practiced; the people who define central requirements and the experts of branches of knowledge (subjects) form significantly different socio-cultural groups and they communicate in different ways.
Another serious problem is caused by the strong diversification of the profession experienced during working out professional regulatory instruments. Last but not least, as a result of the underdevelopment of the Hungarian assessment system, there's a lack of suitability verification and ongoing development of initiated professional regulatory instruments.
Considering the experiences of different countries, it can be stated that it is essential to establish and operate a stabilized professional background dealing with the professional regulatory instruments of content regulation. Considering stabilized professional background, we can regard the way leading from traditional curriculum development centres to centres focusing on the systematic self-reflection of content regulation (e.g. the Dutch CITO provides a classic example of this development).
Considering professional development within the unified approach of lifelong learning instead of the development and setting of educational regulatory instruments is an approach of great significance.

1.1.3. Outlining and accepting local/institutional programs

Definition: The adaptation of central content regulatory instruments on institutional level through the completion, discussion and acceptance of institutional educational programs.
Basic problems:

- How is local/institutional adaptation connected to central content regulatory instruments?
- How can local/institutional adaptation abilities be developed?
- How is local social participation represented in maintainer's acceptance and local/institutional adaptation?

During the Hungarian content regulation reforms none of those regulations were realised, which would have regarded institutional level as an independent element of adapting contents, therefore, this factor is of great significance in Hungary. In the course of describing this function and regulatory level, presumably this is the most stabilized element of the Hungarian regulatory ideas and practices. Within our model of the content regulation, this level creates the greatest challenge for the traditional top-down regulatory logic.

In the case of this level, the pedagogical element of adaptation logic is broken by an increasing number of interests, which begin to doubt the realization of original regulatory intentions on an institutional level. Institutional adaptation is complicated by the specific decision-making of teaching staffs and by the factors of employment, in many cases without the know-how of content management and without the control of local "users" of the school. It is clear enough that institutional adaptation, which is strongly influenced by the reality of interests (not belonging to pedagogy), turns all those intentions into an illusion that consider bringing down the "valuable" educational contents from the centre to the classrooms. It can be assumed that the transmission and assessment of unified standards and the harmonised application of self-evaluation and the assessment coming from outside can create a sensible connection between goal setting periods and the periods of the development of regulatory instruments and between the institutional educational practices.

1.1.4. Development and acquisition of content carriers by institutions

Definition: The development, marketing and institutional selection of content carriers supporting teaching and learning on an institutional level.
Basic problems:

- How is the production of content carriers connected to central and local content regulation and to institutional adaptation?
- How is it possible to maintain the transparency and pedagogic quality of content carriers' production?
- How is it possible to maintain that content carriers adapt to institutional programs?
- How is it possible to maintain the local social control of content carriers' institutional acquisition?

This level is one of the key elements of content regulation, which is regarded by institutions and teachers as the most significant and practical factor of content regulation. Textbooks and other teaching materials and educational tools traditionally determine the educational work organized into lessons. In the near future, teaching materials created in an electronic format can be added to these. (This is why it is necessary to use the expression of "content carriers".)

Central modernization concepts have not been to interpret this level so far. The development and selling of content carriers – however professional it was – is a profit-orientated development and trading activity. As a result of its inner rationality being different from traditional educational values, it is of key importance to integrate the textbook publisher and teaching material producer companies determining this level into the system of content regulation.

Today the level of integration is low. The National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre (the National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre) and the National Public Education Council (the National Public Education Council) operate a textbook accreditation process; but this is mainly concentrating on the professional development of content regulation and textbook publishing, however, it prescribes that textbooks should be compatible with central curricula. Other regulations do not approach textbook publishing from the aspect of content regulation either. Textbook publishers themselves have used the possibility of professional integration when they started to work out programs and curricula that were adjusted to national content regulation and created a good basis for the development and trading of profitable textbook groups. The low level of integration is clearly shown by the fact that we do not know much about the development work and quality management system of textbook publishers.

The fact that in the course of the reforms of content regulation in Hungary all models relied on the active and professional adaptation work of institutions resulted that the selection of content carriers (traditionally textbooks) happened after the acceptance of institutional programs. In its present form selection operates as a non-organic step following the acceptance of institutional programs, which – ideally – is operated on team (team of teachers teaching the same subjects) level by the institutions of public education. It is expected that the role of those electronic and printed content carriers, which support teachers in the creation of tools helping teaching and learning, will increase and they will partially take the role of textbooks.

1.1.5. The application of content carriers in the teaching and learning process

Definition: The spontaneous or intended generation of real content in public education through the application of specific content carriers in the course of the teaching and learning process.
Basic problems:

- How is it possible to maintain the connection between the content carriers purchased by the institution and the institution's pedagogical program?
- How is it possible to develop teachers' competence and awareness of the application of content carriers?
- What is the ideal connection between content carriers and the real teaching and learning process?

Pedagogical processes on classroom level operate as "black boxes" for all system level approaches. Since there is only a few research data available about the problems of textbook selection and the management of learning connected to it, it seems to be practical to consider the awareness of the application of content carriers during classroom work. The analysis of this level – just like that of level 3 and 4 – makes the analyst careful about transmitting modern educational contents from the centre to classrooms.

One of the most widely used instruments within educational policies in this aspect is teachers' empowerment for individual classroom management, and the identification of teachers competencies and professional development, is. In several countries the training instruments are overestimated at such extent that in practice they almost undertook the role of traditional content regulation.

We can conclude that the more reflected and regulated the staff's selection and usage of textbooks, the stronger connection between central innovation and local practices can be established. Presumably the regulations of classroom management and textbook application,

the institutional quality management requirements and the supporting professional development courses can – in the medium term – improve the efficiency of communication between the central and institutional level of content regulation. The professional operation of this level of content regulation can be primarily reached by the development of teachers' classroom managerial skills and the development of their pedagogical and methodological tools.

1.1.6. Suitability verification

Definition: The systematic analysis of the realization of educational goals and the efficiency of content regulatory instruments through the national assessment and exam system.
Basic problems:

- What kinds of assessment systems are appropriate for the suitability verification of the strategic educational goals?
- How can state exams be connected to the suitability verification of the strategic goals of education?
- How is suitability verification connected to the requirements of central and local content regulatory instruments?
- What kind of publicity and educational administrative consequences should follow the results of suitability verification?

According to the traditional approach, this level does not belong to content regulation. The more reflective approaches do not regard content regulation as a process directed from the top, but they see it as a complicated chain of interpretations. Broadly interpreted, suitability verification can be identified with the national assessment system, but it can have an interpretation considering a narrowed, targeted assessment.
The assessment and exam system can undertake the role of suitability verification, if unified requirements (standards) take the place of the definition of content elements in the course of regulation. Otherwise, the results of the PISA survey can be repeated, when new and well-defined requirements were adjusted to fragmented and "mixed" educational contents.
It is essential that the social publicity (and the benchmarking and development pressure generated by the public) of assessment and exam results should primarily put dynamism into the sphere of content regulation instead of the modernisation of central content elements. The frameworks of this publicity can be connected to the period of goal setting.

1.2. Connecting systems

The operation of the system of content regulation is enabled by the operation of three functions. *System regulation* appoints the framework of content regulation, *supervision* and *assessment* are supposed to maintain the principle of accountability and *professional services* provide the professional capacity for operating the system.

1.2.1. System regulation

Definition: The definition of the levels, participants and their partnership of content regulation.

The shaping of the system of content regulation is influenced by several organisations. Besides the Ministry of Education, the National Public Education Council (the National Public Education Council), the Public Education Policy Council (KT) and the interest reconciliation boards participate in forming the system.
Legal regulation is the most commonly used instrument of content regulation which defines specific contents on one hand, but on the other hand sometimes it follows a procedural regulation and it defines those frameworks within which the participants of education can

autonomously set or interpret educational goals. The application of other regulatory instruments in Hungary is very rare; we can hardly name any examples. The connected legal documentation is also fragmented; it does not always comply with the ongoing important processes.

It is important to mention the intentional application of given financial resources in the field of content regulation. On one hand, legal regulations contain such financial regulators (lesson numbers, group sizes), which have a direct effect on the teaching work on the institutions of public education; besides, there are motivators (in Hungary one of these motivators is the specific financial resources supporting the integration of Roma students or the so-called integration norm, currently under preparation) that may have very strong content regulatory effects. Within indirect instruments student achievement assessment has a great potential, which can strengthen the "messages" transmitted by other instruments.

Another approach to system regulation follows a bottom-up logic, which applies instruments that inspire, or even force cooperation between educational institutions' in order to help horizontal learning. These include the direct and indirect instruments that serve the systematic scaling-up of contents and innovations produced on an institutional level.

1.2.2. Supervision/accountability

Definition: The professional, legal and financial supervision of processes on different levels of content regulation.

The professional, legal and financial supervision of processes on different levels of content regulation cannot be seen maintained in the Hungarian education system. The occasional governmental supervision (National Audit Office) is complemented by the maintainer's supervision. Within the Hungarian public administration system the legal supervision of local municipalities is maintained by public administrative offices. Today the role of the National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre in this field is an open-ended question. The deficiencies shown are even more surprising, since in Europe there are well-operating systems for carrying out supervision and for the maintenance of accountability. Both the French state supervision and the English OFSTED, system of listed experts, proved to be operable.

A system responsible for the maintenance of accountability has three hierarchic, strongly interdependent elements, namely those three elements are: institutional self-evaluation, external (maintainer's or education supervision's) evaluation and departmental supervision. The modification of the Public Education Act in 2003 regulates institutional evaluation as obligatory for all institutions of public education and the external evaluation is expected (most probably) to be built in the quality assurance programs of local municipalities. A unified departmental evaluation system compatible with the decentralized Hungarian education system could be created only if an agency was formed that would sum up the results of institutional and the maintainer's external evaluation and it would create external efficiency benchmarks for the local participants of education. Ideally, this three-level evaluation system would integrate the assessment system of student achievement. Another instrument of accountability – which is hardly used in Hungary – is a greater publicity.

1.2.3. Professional services

Definition: Providing professional support for the processes on different levels of content regulation for the sake of reaching educational goals.

Professional services are very differentiated on the different levels of content regulation in Hungary. National institutions and organizations provide services mainly for educational administration, while regional professional suppliers provide services to local municipalities and to the institutions of public education. In the case of market orientated suppliers there is no such diversification. Behind each institution there is an informal group of suppliers including experts of content development, who are integrated in fulfilling the most diverse periodic tasks.

In Central East Europe – and in Hungary as well – professional services are characteristically organized with the target and logic of implementation. In this region there are only very rare examples of support systems formed with respect to stabilized, long-term development and assessment. The "reorganisation" waves targeting implementation mainly obstruct the formation and running of support capacity that is independent from reforms and strongly dependant on the assessment system. Among the support systems connected to content regulation the ones providing information and know-how in order to help development, planning, adaptation and innovation play a significant role. A weak know-how necessarily breaks and weakens the target setting and interpretation process outlined above. The operation of networks supported by modern information and communication technologies is playing an increasing role in satisfying the need for knowledge and information. The information system of education (educational statistics and administrative systems) and all the mechanisms and agencies providing information are worth mentioning.

As we stated earlier, the professional services offered to different participants of the system (local/regional administration, school management, teachers) are very important. This support system has two basic types: *courses determined by supply*, which is based on the network of institutions maintained and operated by the state, and *courses determined by demand*, which are characterised by the liberalised and sector-neutral professional development market, the quality assurance system operated by the state (accreditation of programs and trainers) and the financial support of people using professional services. (In Hungary the latter was employed.)

Another indirect instrument used in most developed countries is the support of development programs on institutional level and making the developer agencies and non-profit organisations take the duties produced by strategic goals.

2. The characteristics of content regulation during the last two decades

The starting point of our historical retrospect is necessarily pinpointed by the curriculum of 1978 (and its immediate political antecedents), since this is the first content regulatory document in force even today. It seems to be sensible to review the changes of the system of content regulation connected to the period's educational/public educational legislation (regulations and development plans) and large-scale curriculum projects.

2.1. Target Setting

In the course of the large-scale content and curriculum reform in 1978, the setting of the most important goals and priorities had happened on the meeting of the Central Committee of Hungarian Socialist and Labour Party, so it was clearly a political decision. Not primarily with the intention of influencing the ongoing curriculum reform (but finally with that result) the Presidential Public Education Committee of the Hungarian Science Academy completed the long-term prognosis of education in the middle of the 70s, and their intentions were spreading into the content of ongoing subject development. Curriculum theory experts of the National Institute of Pedagogy (OPI) of have successfully strengthened their positions in setting curricular content during the ministerial and party negotiations.

The target setting process of content modernization initiated during the period just preceding the system changes and ending with the initiation of the NCC in 1995, was for long carried out by the initiator experts of science of education, then later during a short period it was undertaken by the high rank officials (and the minister himself) of the Education Ministries department of public education; however, final decisions were made by a the original board expanded with school directors. The preparation of NCC was preceded by a several year long professional and partly social debate, but – during the period until 1994 – partly because of the conflicts between target setting groups representing entirely different values and interests and partly because committees regarded the curriculum as the home affair of the educational sub-system, they did not negotiate with the representatives of employers for example.

In the case of the framework curriculum educational officials – always stressed for time – determined targets and the most important contents with the participation of some curriculum theory experts. The ambition of acquiring democratic legitimacy here is only signalled by the public opinion questionnaire sent to teachers beforehand.

In order to increase the social control on the system of content regulation and target setting, the National Public Education Council received licences (an organisation making proposals, taking stands or accepting proposals) of different strength in the educational legislation of the 90s, but its instruments proved to be weak.

2.2 Defining and operating instruments of content regulation

2.2.1. Curricula

The political order made in 1972, named the future full-scale curriculum reform as the most important instrument of education's content regulation. The innovation of the last centrally issued curriculum in 1978 included the differentiation between core and supplementary materials, the division of the curriculum's optimum and minimum and the application (and also expansion) of optional subjects. The system of instruments supporting curricular implementation, which was included in the plans of the National Institute of Pedagogy, was almost entirely missing: the new teacher training system, the network of reference schools was not formed, and there was a lack of information, professional services and consultant capacity. The inconsistent regulation of the law in 1985 left the central curriculum compulsory for schools[1], but at the same time it gave the general right of choosing the teaching material for

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[1] The only exceptions were the permission given to unique solutions. The Ministry of Education undertook the operation of some of these experimental schools.

every single teacher. The inconsistency was dissolved by ceasing the subject supervision system and the control over educational processes, in other words, the state voluntarily resigned from the supervision of classroom processes.

The ideas forming during the political changes in Hungary were strongly influenced by the ongoing regulation reforms in several countries of Europe. Besides creating a balance be tween input and output regulators, the most important change was – in democratic societies evaluating the role of local communities responsible for education – switching to two-level curriculum regulation. Almost all the parliamentary parties supported the proposals based on similar contents made by expert groups supporting the preparation of the law.

When the Parliament approved the new Public Education Act in 1993, the works on the National Core Curriculum, which formed the central basis of curriculum regulation, had already been started; moreover, four versions of the documents had already been completed. As a result of the changes of the ministerial staff starting in 1992, the level of the framework curriculum, which was created for all school types, was implemented between the levels of the large-scale National Core Curriculum and the local (school based) curriculum. The political struggle in the field of content regulation during the last ten years has reached its culmination in connection with the framework curriculum: social liberal governments have continuously ceased or weakened the regulatory function of framework curricula, while conservative governments have re-established this regulatory instrument.

The NCC initiated in 1995 included significant modifications based on curriculum theory: regulating regardless of school-types, the definition of branches of knowledge replacing subjects, the setting of requirements adapted to pedagogical transition periods, the definition of cross-curricular areas, setting minimum and maximum number of lessons instead of regulating compulsory lesson numbers.

The government put great efforts into implementing NCC: all applicants could participate in a training course, they created a database for curricula, where qualified sample curricula were placed for application, and they published a series of information leaflet under the title of NAT-TAN. Nevertheless, implementation was weakened by the lack of political consensus, the mistaken judgement of teachers' reaction, the irregular quality of supportive instruments and some questionable professional solutions of the curriculum.

The central content regulation system's input was completed by the so-called "guidelines" published between 1997 and 1998, which orientate the specific areas (pedagogy for special needs, for national and ethnic minorities, for bilingual schools and basic artistic education) of the education system.

The framework curricula initiated in 2000 intended to narrow down schools freedom regarded to be too extended, moreover, they highlighted the importance of maintaining the system's integrity and permeability. Thus, new regulation returned to the traditional description of school subjects, it determined the (minimum) number of compulsory lessons, but in other fields it continued the reforms started (modular subjects).

2.2.2. Exam system

In contrast with previous intentions, no comprehensive exam reform was connected to the curriculum modernization in 1978. The document worked out by the Ministry of Education (MKM)[2] mainly included technical innovations, and the most significant modification was the qualifying school-leaving examination, which further expanded the possibilities for getting into universities. However, as a result of studying a profession, the time spent on public education became shorter and the knowledge of students from secondary schools without whole scale academic education has made the results of school-leaving exams for universities operating with narrow student numbers entirely unacceptable.

For the sake of conserving the selection function of school-leaving exams, as a compromise, central written entrance exams were initiated during the school year of 1982 and 1983, which essentially produced a two-level maturata exam.

The public education act of 1985 made secondary school-leaving examination a requirement for secondary certificate, which significantly increased the importance of the examination. In

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[2] The modernization plans of school leaving examinations and university entrance exams. MKM, 1979

the second half of the 80s the experts preparing the act, together with school managers, education theory researchers working on content regulation, and assessment experts worked out several proposals for final exams that could be initiated at the end of the 10th and 12th grades, two finishing points of public education. The ideas about the exam orientated output content regulation prepared by the elite of pedagogy according to foreign examples only got the support of the education policy after the political changes, after almost all the decisions connected to the content of education were delegated to the level of schools and teachers.

The public education act of 1993 – legitimating the proposals of experts – regulated the creation of such a content regulation system, where input and output elements are represented in a balanced way.

The unified education for 10 grades providing general knowledge were outlined by the exam requirements of the basic examination and the National Core Curriculum, but the content of grades 11 and 12 was exclusively determined by the final examination requirements.

In 1995 the concept of a new, unified and standard two-level school-leaving exam was published, but the development of the exam was slow; moreover, after the governmental changes in every four years with the pressure of adapting to new central curricular documents, the work was always started from the very beginning. The modification of the public education act in 1999 ceased the direct content regulatory function of the exams, so during creating their own curricula, schools had to focus on framework curricula determining school requirements until the end of grade 12.

2.3. Outlining and acceptance of local/institutional programs

However, the political party decree in 1972 generally stated that the then existing rigid curricular requirements should be replaced by more flexible ones, and teachers should be given more autonomy for complying with requirements, but without resigning from the total state control.

The possibility for making local/institutional decisions was first provided – only with restrictions – by the act in 1985, created during the dissolution of the system. According to this act, basic and secondary institutions could form their own educational system considering local needs, the results and interest of students and they could work out supplementary materials and choose the optional subjects to be offered.

Starting from 1993, two-level content regulation and its institutional background, the local curriculum became legitimate. Schools were given three years to implement NCC published in 1995 and to work out their pedagogical programs including their own curricula. As a result of the extent of this task and the lack of curriculum writing competencies, only 10% of the schools undertook the creation of their own curriculum and other schools bought the curriculum of other schools or they chose from the central database. Though school maintainers were obliged to ask educational experts' opinion about the local curriculum, and they themselves thoroughly debated it before approval, research data show that the quality of local curricula are very differentiated.

The modification of the act in 1999 ordered that local curricula should be harmonised with the new central curriculum until September 2001. The local curricula not adapted to framework curricula could receive permission for application in the course of an accreditation process.

2.4. Development and acquisition of content carriers by institutions

Among content carriers in our research we are focusing on textbooks, tracing back the changes of this element of the system starting from textbook distribution to the consolidation of the textbook market. The reason for this is the fact that the real formation of Hungarian education's content is almost entirely influenced by textbooks; therefore, the initiatives for modifying the existing processes of textbook selection, trading and publishing rights were followed by fierce conflicts of educational policy during this period.

The political party decree in 1972 can be regarded as the first steps towards softening the "one subject one textbook" system, because it regulated that during the curriculum modernization in 1978 two textbook versions should be produced for subjects important in the course of acquiring general knowledge and teachers should have the right for choosing between the two.

But nothing was realised from this initiative; though starting from 1976 a ministerial decree initiated a tender system for textbook writing, as a result of the detailed OPI requirements[3] and the strict system of receiving permission for publishing, alternative textbooks with different opinions could very rarely be published. The state directed "one textbook" system was first challenged by the first illegally printed materials produced by the workshops of permitted experimental, later the so-called alternative schools (Szentlőrinc, AKG, NYIK, ÉKP)

The education act of 1985 did not have a regulation about textbooks, but with the declaration of the autonomy of schools and teachers and with ceasing professional supervision, it created an opportunity for teachers to use any kind of publications as textbooks without control. The 28/1989 Ministry of Education decree, regulated the licensing process for textbooks and legitimated the use of books originally not produced as textbooks and schools' and teacher's textbook production.

By the end of the 80s, providing textbooks almost entirely for free could not be financed any longer. In 1991 the government[4] ceased the state monopoly of textbook publishing, textbook prices became free and formed the basis of the system of subsidies operating today. According to this, all publications qualified as a textbook receive financial subsidies, which until 1994 was given to publishers, since then users have received it. At the same time the state's, in other words the ministry's responsibility of supplying textbooks for public education[5], has been almost entirely ceased. Market mechanisms were still not represented in the production of textbooks for vocational training belonging to the ministers in charge, because as a result of a strongly divided structure of occupations there was a need for publishing almost 3000 different types of books with a low number of copies, which proved to be very expensive.

After the political changes in 1989 educational administration's regulating function was mainly focusing on the partial regulation[6] of the textbook market and the quality assurance[7] of the increasingly growing supply of this market. The modifications of the public educational legislation bringing about significant changes of other elements of content regulation, have left the regulation of the process of qualifying a book for a textbook the minister's responsibility; moreover they left the *National Public Education Council's* proposing role, which was declared in 1993, in the approval process, which is practised by the Council's Textbook and Teaching Material Committee. Teachers cannot only use textbooks listed on an official textbook list, but they can use books that have not been handed in for an accreditation process, or that were not accredited.

2.5. Suitability verification

The first initiatives for the standardized assessment of students' achievement, in other words their fulfilment of existing requirements, were published in the 80s in Hungary, and these initiatives were brought about by a group of experts who – either living abroad, or joining international investigations (IEA) going on in Hungary – acquired knowledge about modern tools of assessment methodology. Among these, the so-called diagnostic assessment system, which was strongly connected to the curriculum of 1978, developed in Szeged could have been used for suitability verification, but the target of the research was not this, but the evaluation and development of students.

In the course of the so-called Monitor research program initiated by the assessment system of the National Institute for Pedagogy, later by its successors in 1986, they gathered data from a sample of a chosen age group regularly (in every two years starting from 1991) about students' achievement. In the course of the research carried out during the period of permanent changes of public education, researchers did not collect information on the curricula and content carriers

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[3] Besides the representatives of textbook publishers and the representative of OPI, two practicing teachers became the members of the evaluating committees, but the latter were appointed by the former, so the only independent member of the committee was the representative delegated by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

[4] The Government's 2004/1991. decree about publishing and distribution of textbooks and other printed materials.

[5] The only exceptions were the textbooks for pupils with special needs and textbooks used in the education of ethnic minorities.

[6] XXXIV. Act of year 2000 about the textbook market.

[7] 5/1998. (II.18.) Ministry of Education decree.

used in the course of the education of students in the research sample; thus, results could not be connected to content regulation.

The modification of the act in 1996 legitimated that the professional supervision of institutions could be carried out by national assessment tasks; even though, the first central assessment of the entire student population of given grades was carried out in the new millennium by the National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre.

3. The characteristics of content regulations preceding the governmental change in 2002 and the main alterations following it

3.1. The levels and functions of content regulation

3.1.1. Target setting

Enforcing social control and co-operation between the different sectors (public education, vocational education, adult education and higher education) during the target setting of the system of content regulation was not an existing practice in Hungary in 2002 either. Participants are incidental, their nomination or self-nomination depend upon the given political and education policy environment, on power relations and on the fact whether certain groups are interested in changes or not. As a result of this, there can always be an unfavourable situation, where the strategic directions of content regulation outlined during target setting will only represent the ideas of a small, special group (experts, curriculum developers, sector officials). In the Hungarian instruments of content regulation, target setting and content determination seem to be consequently mixed.

During the setting of educational goals, the role of goals recorded within international (mainly the EU's) frameworks is constantly increasing, however, it is still weak. The number of experts joining international discourse is still low and the representatives of the sector are not prepared.

The modification of the LXXIX./1993. act in May, 2002[1] brought about basic changes in public education's content regulation by ceasing the compulsory nature of framework curricula, in other words, the obligatory nature of harmonizing local and framework curricula. In theory, this modification means that the prescriptive character of the central curriculum had been ceased both considering educational content and compulsory lesson numbers, which means that these specific elements of content regulation appear on the level of local curricula. In this situation, all local curricula can be regarded as legitimate that comply with the requirements of the NCC in force; moreover, it also legitimates all local curricula harmonising with framework curricula. As a result, the above-mentioned modification of the act can only be regarded as an action of principles, because it has a very little effect on the local curriculum development practices of schools.

The supervision of NCC in 2003[2] is again expected to create a new situation. The revision of NCC was initiated by the moot point published as a civil initiative by Eötvös József Liberal Society for Education[3], but the document published for social debate was made by professional teams and the process of target setting did not include the public and scientific elites, just like in the previous cases; therefore, the above-mentioned social control was not realised.

3.1.2. Determining and operating the instruments of content regulation

In the case of NCC 1995, target setting and outlining professional content regulators happened at the same time, so professional competencies were mixed. There was and there is a lack of institutional background, the work is done within the frameworks of institutions commissioned for that task and by accidentally selected experts. The Ministry of Education's background institutions' profile has not been clarified and they have not been organised and reorganised according to the continuously appearing tasks. The sector is fragmented during working out the professional regulatory instruments and there's no harmonisation between the work of different fields in the course of creating curricula and exam requirements.

The modification of NCC in 2003 is simply a correction, but it is an important supervision affecting the entire system of regulation. The reason for this is that in contrast with NCC's

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[1] 1993. LXXIX. Act on public education 8A.§ (1) section.
[2] 1993. LXXIX. Act on public education. 93.§ (1) section point b.
[3] Új Pedagógiai Szemle, December, 2002.

version published in 1995[4], the new corrected version of 2003, expected to be published in November, 2003, will be a classical core curriculum that defines public education's targets nationwide, the most important branches of knowledge (the so-called branches of knowledge and the contents spanning over branches), creates content-based periods for public education (4+2+2+4) and the areas of skills development tasks that have to be carried out within a certain period. In contrast, it does not set lesson numbers and specific teaching materials, therefore, compered to framework curricula influencing current practices and NCC published in 1995 it provides more freedom for creating local curricula that are different and that initiate new approaches compared to the currently existing (and used) local curricula. However, the following factors contradict the initiatives for modernisation and innovation represented by the new legal frameworks:

- As a result of the core curriculum nature of NCC it defines very broad frameworks, so it permits the ongoing existence of traditional and conservative ideas. This means that during the supervision in 2004, schools are not obliged to implement significant changes to their local curricula, they rather have to make formal changes.
- Compared to central curricula preceding it, NCC 2003 gives much less directions and support to schools (and teachers) for creating the local document.
- The changes of the curriculum during the last few decades including the fact that within three years (1998–2001) schools had to work out or revise their local curricula three times, created an atmosphere that does not support the realization of the above-mentioned innovation and modernisation initiatives.

Resulting from the reasons mentioned above, it is clear that the implementation of the core curriculum as a central curriculum within a two-level content regulation system is doubtful or at least incidental. In order to make targets set by the government part of local regulatory documents, mediatory instruments are needed. Within the frameworks of the effective legal regulations, this functions are completed by the framework curricula and other, not curriculum type instruments (e.g. educational program groups), thus making the central input content regulation system a three-level system.

From a legal aspect, the elements of the framework curricula, which are not compulsory but optional, cannot be regarded as regulatory documents, since their application is not compulsory and the contents outlined by them are only suggestions.[5] Long-term education – policy has a stake in making schools – with a framework curriculum or a local curriculum developed by themselves – switch to a pedagogical practice coming up to more up-to-date demands and expectations. This is the reason why it is important to support the implementation of NCC 2003 with more and more framework curricula (and connected program packets) offering attractive alternatives.

The modification of the public education act in 2003 regulates that the minister is responsible for having educational programs (pedagogical systems) worked out and published alongside with framework curricula. In this sense, educational programs or program packets are a system of optional documents and professional instruments designed for planning and management of teaching and learning, which can be a set of instruments designed either for an entire school type or for one or more branches of knowledge or school subject.

According to the plans we have knowledge of, besides the *framework curriculum* the program will include the pedagogical concept, which will summarize, or even theoretically found, those pedagogical principles, which the program is based on; moreover, it will include the description of models, which provide detailed information about the process of dealing each topic (activities for students and the suggested instruments etc.). Those *instruments* are the part of the program, which enables the completion of the activities planned: information carriers, task carriers, and professional development programs, supporting services such as consultation. The packets containing all the above listed elements are called a *pedagogical system*.

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[4] 130/1995. (X. 26) Government Decree.

[5] 1993. / LXXIX. Act on Public Education, 8A. § Section (1)

3.1.3. Outlining and acceptance of local/institutional programs

The institutional adaptation level's procedure consists of three sequential elements: the institution (director, work teams, staff) completes (chooses, adapts) its local pedagogical program, and as a part of that its local curriculum, following the central regulatory instruments (NCC 1995 and the framework curricula), an expert creates a report on the program handed in, finally the maintainer accept it and with the acceptance it – principally – undertakes the financing of the program's completion. The first element (the completion of the program) includes the problem of the possible quality of the program's completion /adaptation, considering the lack of professional content management know-how and the lack of school-users control. Therefore, the adaptation of the program puts forward teachers' staff interests and employment aspects (existing and lacking pedagogical competencies) besides/instead of considering the expectations of local school users. The second element, producing expert's reports and suggestions, can only function if the expert's appointment is based on a clarified, transparent, standardised process.

Finally, the third element is the maintainer's decision, its most important determining aspect is currently the enforcement of financial aspects, however, the security of financing is not guaranteed even in the medium term. The systems of educational financing and content regulation are not harmonised. The innovation tenders published by the Ministry of Education provided opportunities for content development on institutional level only whereas there has not been an example for the financing of maintainers' innovation. Also, the institution level quality development program in public education has appeared separated from content regulation. In the integrated local educational administration systems similar to the Hungarian systems, the municipalities' openness to local and regional expectations and their strategic planning capacity are key factors. The lack of strategic planning competencies essential for decision-making in municipalities is especially apparent in the municipalities of small settlements, where it sis impossible to employ experts trained for dealing with the problems of content regulation. Local student achievement testing adapted to the national assessment systems can play an important role in the course of vindicating local educational priorities.

We do not really have any information – one and a half years preceding the initiation of the new two-level school-leaving exam – about including exam requirements, the other element of the central regulatory system, in the outlining process of local programs. Presumably the insecurity of sequential educational administrations considering the target, content and form of the reforms of the maturata exam (upper-secondary school leaving exam), have further increased the, otherwise long, reaction time of institutions and the reconsideration of pedagogical programs from the aspects of the new exam requirements, has not been completed. According to the public education act's effective regulations, the new maturata exam becomes compulsory in 2005, and the basic exam lacking social and professional consensus will become compulsory in 2008.

Until 30 June 2004 institutions will supervise and complement their pedagogical programs including their local curriculum. According to the public education act in effect, "the fulfilment of the requirements included in the National Core Curriculum is supported by the framework curricula published by the education minister."[6] "The school can create its local curriculum following the framework curricula published by the education minister, or it can include the framework curriculum into its local pedagogical program."[7] The framework curriculum includes the targets of the subject, requirements adapted to all topics, the assessment principles suited to grades or to longer periods, moreover, it describes and distributes in time the teaching material.

The orientating and supporting function of the framework curricula can only be established, if besides the currently existing framework curriculum – one for each school type – prescribing the decrease of teaching material in 2003, other alternative framework curricula are published. The framework curricula facing the challenges of modernization and targeting the modification of public educational attitudes can significantly support the local modifications offered as

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[6] 1993./ LXXIX.Act on Public Education, 8 §. Section (9)
[7] 1993./ LXXIX. Act on Public Education, 45. §. Section (1)

opportunities in NCC 2003 and they can help the modification of local curricula in schools where without help coming from outside there's no willingness for modification.

3.1.4. Development and acquisition of content carriers by institutions

This level of content regulation has two well separable periods: 1) the development of content carriers, 2) institutions' choice and acquisition of content carriers. Since the real instruments of content regulations in the institutions are content carriers, the great significance of this level is apparent.

Though content carriers are being produced by teachers, group of teachers and institutions, their development and distribution is a profit-orientated activity. Thus, the inclusion of this level of key importance into the process of system regulation is inevitable. Currently, the production of content carriers has two main forms: teachers, groups of teachers or innovative institutions summarise their existing pedagogical experiences and theories about transmitting teaching-material in any form of content carriers (currently mainly in the form of a textbook) and then they look for a publisher. The other form is the publisher's initiative for the creation of content carriers (mainly to be worked out by textbook writers connected to the publisher). Most of the time these initiatives are motivated by the "taking steps on the market" in the direction of central modernization ideas, and they are often narrowed down to the bigger or smaller modification of existing, marketed, well-known and approved textbooks, in the worse case to the formal transcription according to the regulatory element. The production of institutions' own content carriers adapted to local content regulation is only characteristic of very few institutions, only very few institutions are capable of producing textbook families adapted to their pedagogic programs. Later, in most cases these became distributed throughout the country, but it is not sure that the application of these textbooks happens after a professional selection.

The forms, criteria and factors influencing institutions' decision-making on the selection of content carriers are very different. As a result of this, the connection between selected content carriers and the central, or mainly the local, content regulation documents is highly incidental. The implementation of the final requirements of the maturata exam to be published in 2003 into textbooks, has not been completed, the activity books mainly missed by teachers, apart from the rare examples, have not been completed. The lack of this is more strongly emphasised by teachers, indicating also that the regulatory function of exam requirements are much stronger than the regulatory strength of curricular requirements.

Local social control is not built in the institutional textbook selection process. The selection of content carriers has played such an integral part of teachers' personal professional autonomy since the political changes, that the central initiatives for harmonising institutional level elements of content regulation (local curricula and teaching materials) proved to be weak. Even when according to the modification of the act in 1996, pedagogical programs have to include the principles of the selection of applicable textbooks, supplementary materials and teaching aids; this element of the programs is missing or entirely formal. There are only rare examples of making decisions of applied content carriers on an institutional level, and often the inclusion of parents or the debate in teams of teachers teaching the same subject, which is motivated by the public education act, is often neglected.

The dominant content carrier role of the textbook and several other tools supplementing textbooks (mainly workbooks and compilation of texts or activities) will not be significantly altered by digitalising the teaching material, since digital teaching materials will mainly offer the supply of the currently existing textbook market, however, in a digitalised format. What happens here is not content, but technological modernisation; moreover, a significant part of the knowledge digitalis ed this way is published in the form applied to the former framework curricula and reorganised into the formers subject structure.

3.1.5. The application of content carriers, the teaching and learning process

We stated earlier that the connection between the institutions' selected and acquired content carriers and the institutions' pedagogical program is incidental. It follows, however not by the law, from the above that the application of content carriers does not necessarily support the

realisation of the pedagogical program. The greater the staff's and the teacher's professional experience, the bigger the chance that classroom processes mainly serve the realisation of the consciously chosen/completed pedagogical program, and content carriers are only represented as instruments and not as regulators in this process. The content modifications that have been carried out since 1990 have pictured the teacher as a local content innovator. According to experiences, this role can be given to professionals. In the future, the teacher should be approached in the role of the adaptor and applicator, which cannot be given to any other participant of public education.

One of the important features of this level is the fact that teachers do not only interpret and adapt the target system outlined to them, but in a sense they themselves are the "curriculum". Their preparation, attitudes, their knowledge coming from varied sources (e.g. the media) and last but not least their routines will significantly determine the teaching and learning process. Although a colourful and rich supply of professional development courses has been created in Hungary, as a result of the weaknesses of the mechanisms supporting the choice of the program and the participation, the professional development course system does not serve the professionalism of the teachers to an extent that it could.

Placing school-level project type content development into the focus of serving educational policy targets is an instrument conscientiously and traditionally used in Hungary. Since 1987 there have been funds and public foundations operating in Hungary, which provide financial resources for this in a tender system. There are good examples of strategic cooperation with international development agencies (e.g. with the Soros Foundation's public-educational mega project between 1995 and 1998) or with non-profit organisations (for example the Roma integration network launched in 2003).

3.1.6. Suitability verification

The nation-wide modernisation of the Hungarian assessment system did not take the same route as the other elements of the system of content regulation took during the last decade. For a long time, national surveys mainly meant the participation in international surveys (monitoring surveys form an exception). So far, education policy has not been interested in launching an assessment system, which could serve the *suitability verification of the regulation system*. The central content regulation system's suitability verification could be reached by unified, national, standardised surveys, which could verify the institutional/classroom realisation of central requirements included in content regulation. The surveys based on local (regional, county, municipal) initiatives can serve as a controlling tool of the realisation of local pedagogical programs, especially when they have a connection to national standards.

The publicity of the surveys carried out until now (international, national survey, secondary school-leaving exams and their assessment on a national level – Hungarian and Mathematics) is incidental, they are mainly neglected (the only exception is the publicity of the PISA 2000 survey) and their consequences in educational policies can hardly be seen.

The assessment system has not changed significantly in 2002 compared to the previous years: the central surveys carried out on entire grades or on a sample of an age group do not form a coherent, deliberate, well planned system. The selection of the target population in the case of the survey carried out during the 2003/2004 school year can be originated in strategic educational policy ideas, but the incalculable and short-term decisions can endanger the validity and reliability of central surveys. The feedback channels have not been created, so the regulatory function of surveys acts on an ad hoc basis. Local surveys remain to be isolated initiatives and they mainly serve the needs of local or regional school maintainers and there is no need for their comparison or standardising.

Within the framework of modernising the exam system the reform of the only existing and operating exam type: the maturata exam[8], has been initiated, but in contrast with the curricular modernisation, it did not reach the phase of launching during any governmental period. The requirements of the new maturata exam to be launched seem to harmonise with the requirements of NCC 1995 and the framework curriculum. However, by no means does it have

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[8] At the moment we do not have any information about the basic exam earlier planned to the end of the 10th grade.

the consequence that this harmony can be found between content carriers, and what is more, with the teaching and learning process as the classroom instrument of content regulation. As a result of the lack of standardisation, the currently existing maturata exam cannot be interpreted as suitability verification. The situation is improved slightly by the fact that that the maturata exam requirements[9] and the new forms of the exam, moreover the new process of the exam made the holistic evaluation more regulated in the cases of several subjects which is an important step towards standardising the exam.

From the aspect of regulation, further problems may be caused by the fact that the outlining of the maturata exam requirements and the supervision of NCC were not connected, so the two systems were not even approximated. This does not mean that the new exam requirements are not harmonising with the lose regulatory frameworks of NCC 2003, but in contrast, it means that the requirements in the cases of several subjects include such a detailed description of teaching materials and show such a strong setting of methodologies and approaches, that the maturata exam overwrites not only NCC 2003 (in grades 9–12), but it may also determine and direct the character of the framework curricula.

The preparation of other important elements of the reform of the maturata exam was also completed in a contradictory way. The most important functions of the two-level, standardised maturata exam were the creation of commensurability and the ceasing of the university entrance exams, in the case of the latter, with the high-level central maturata exam taking the place of the entrance exams organised by higher education and not controlled by central administration. However, when it became clear that higher education – except for one or two faculties – *does not require the high-level maturata exam in 1995*, the justification of the two-level system itself was questioned.

3.2. Supporting Systems

3.2.1. System regulation

The following statements can be made about the current operation of system regulation: it is mainly capable of posterior follow-up, the connected legal documentation is asynchronised and fragmented. The significance of the most important participants of content regulations is low, the potentially rich set of regulatory instruments is not used, and the instruments used in reality often appear in a political, administrative framework. The indirect instruments, which do not intend to prescribe, but to influence the operation of the participants of education and which are significantly more effective than the others (motivators, capacity-building, persuasion) are underestimated.

The aspect of cost-effectiveness is not employed during the usage of financing instruments connected to system regulation, since in Hungary, the state financing of local municipalities maintaining schools, place almost all connected decisions to a local level. Within these circumstances, the tools of assuring the professional operation of decision-making and school maintainer municipalities remain a significant issue. The motivators built into the central education financing system (supplementary normative) could have their effect, if content regulatory and financing decisions were more strongly connected to each other. The financial resources from tenders with a developmental target act as motivators for initiating institutional level innovation and content development. On the other hand, as a result of the weakness of the monitoring of these programs, the lack of external assessment and the weakness of institutions' absorption abilities, the financial resources' effects on the content and quality of the teaching and learning process are at least doubtful.

3.2.2. Supervision/Accountability

The supervision of the system of content regulation on a central level is carried out by the sector's ministry(ies) with the help of public committees. These committees, however, do not include the representatives of social groups interpreted in a broad sense, so they are not capable of representing the interests of all social groups.

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[9] 100/1997. (VI. 13 Government Decree)

Educational policy did not claim and the Hungarian assessment system is not prepared for the suitability verification, ongoing development of the central professional regulatory instruments, therefore, suitability verification is not solved.

The local institutional supervision remained the task of maintainers, they can carry out professional supervision on an institutional level with the commission of experts and they can carry out legal and financial supervision directly. Lacking measurable and valuable standards, moreover, the lack of essential expertise in the case of a significant part of maintainers not professional, but most often a financial supervision is carried out, in the course of which maintainers intend to control the legality of financial affairs. The professional and financial supervision of surveys is carried out by commissioners.

On the level of content carriers, professional supervision appears in the textbook accreditation process, with the participation of the Ministry of Education, the National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre and the National Public Education Council. The textbooks produced to the textbook-writing tenders issued by the Ministry of Education form a small proportion of textbooks.

The 1985 act on education ceased the system of professional inspectorship. Public education's deficiency resulting from this was solved by the regulation of the 1993 education act, which included the concept of professional supervision into the new act and commissioned independent experts with it, who are listed in a national register. National professional supervision had not been carried out until 2002. The ministerial decree on the calendar of the 2002/2003 school years[10] regulated the supervision of one type of institution (institutions offering basic education in arts) and of one program (the education of Roma students), the latter on the entire sector, the former on a 10% sample. The Ministry is not planning a professional supervision of that kind for the 2003/2004 school year.

3.2.3. Professional services

On the central level professional services connected to the system of content regulation are mainly provided by national institutions (organisations). The profile clearance of backing institutions has not happened, so the task distribution connected to regulation is incidental, showing the logic of implementation.

The stabilised and system compatible building of professional services could have a significant role in both the development and assessment of central content regulation instruments and also in the local/institutional adaptation process. On the contrary, the existing activities of professional services, the central and regional organizations do not create a system, their participants and professional competencies are incidental, their roles, responsibilities and financing is not clarified. The role of professional services supporting the institutional choice of content carriers is mainly replaced by the marketing activities of textbook publishers.

The professional support system has not been modified since 2002, but it can change significantly in the near future due to the reorganisation of the Ministry of Education's backing institutions and the formation of a regional system of pedagogical and professional services. Within these processes the accreditation of framework curricula, national suitability verification and program development play an important role considering content regulation. Besides central professional training programs, regional professional service providers and the representatives of the private sector play an important role in the preparation for the new type school-leaving exams and in implementing the new educational programs.

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[10] 30/2002. (V. 17.) Ministry of Education decree, 24. § Section (1).

4. Problem identification, suggestions

In this section below we will describe the key problems we have identified following the model of content regulation in the analysis of the Hungarian situation. The identification of the problems will be followed by suggestions for solving the problems. The addressees of these suggestions are mainly the participants of national educational administration: the participants of the public administration (ministries), the agencies playing an important role in content regulation ("backing institutions"), consulting boards, and all the organisations representing interest groups involved in the decision-making process. Suggestions are not restricted to the application of the classical instruments of the educational sector (regulation, financing). The indirect instruments designed for the definition of the latitude of the representatives of the education system and for influencing its "behaviour" (operation and decisions) play a role of similar importance. The goal lying behind the suggestion is not only to provide the fulfilment of targets set by the central content regulation system, but also the creation of the *conditions of a system, where the production of essential knowledge, professional innovation, the ongoing renewal of contents adapted to new needs and the system-level distribution of new contents happen through automatisms supported by the means of educational policy.*

For the better understanding of the problems and the solutions suggested, we have marked three main problem areas and we have attached the detailed problem descriptions and possible solutions to these areas. In the course of the accentuation of the problem areas especially the questions connected to the Ministry of Education's medium term strategic plan for the development of public education were emphasised. In the course of working out suggestions for the problems, it was important not to question the framework conditions outlined in the modification of the education act in 2003 and to provide suggestions that could support the realisation of the content modernisation targets and in the long run they support the creation of a stabilised content regulation system. The seven main problem areas and their connection to the targets of the development of public education are the following:

4.1. *Target setting:* During the last decade the medium term strategic target setting of content regulation and development has happened without the inclusion of social partners. The strategy emphasises the significance of the development of competencies useful for the job market and the society. This target may only be realised, if the mechanisms for target setting become much more open than they are now.

4.2. *Institutional background:* The institutional background of experts catering for the instruments of content regulation and development is not stabilised, their tasks and operationers not clarified, their resources are insufficient. The strategy earmarks the usage of serious resources for the spheres of program development, assessment and quality management. These resources can only be made useful to a desirable extent if the institutional background providing the operation of essential capacities is strengthened.

4.3. *Teachers' role:* Teachers and the institutions of public educations were often motivated for innovation (content development) in fields, where – without excluding them and without constraining their opportunities – experts could complete the tasks. On the contrary, there's a lack of support in fields (the methodology of teaching and learning) that can only be successfully operated by teachers. One of the central targets of the strategy is to support the professional development of teachers. The two important conditions of achieving this is relieving and training teachers.

4.4. *Cooperation in the field of educational content development:* During the last decade there has been a lack of processes that could have integrated the content development and assessment of public education, vocational, higher and adult education. The development targets of the strategy are set within the paradigm of life-long learning. This approach requires that educational targets should not be set according to the inherent logic of subsystems, but they should be harmonised with different learning careers.

4.5. *Outlining and acceptance of local pedagogical programs:* The inclusion of social partners was not sufficiently emphasised in the process of maintainers' and institutional acceptance of programs. Thus, the legitimacy and real regulatory force of locally and institutionally approved programs was slight. The strategy's targets connected to the modernisation of administration, the improvement of cost-effectiveness and quality improvement can only be realised if apparent improvement will be achieved in the quality and openness of local planning and decision-making processes.

4.6. *Supervision and accountability:* Public educational institutions' national level professional (and the connected financial) supervision and accounting system has not been created since 1985. The maintainers' supervision and accounting systems operating in certain institutions are not integrated.

The strategy, in harmony with the European Union's quality development suggestions, intends to create the integrated and hierarchical system of institutional self-assessment, external maintainer's assessment and educational quality assessment.

4.7. *Assessment suitability verification, examination:* The assessment and state exam system of Hungarian public education has not been completed since 1990. The assessment and examination system's employment in reaching developmental aims plays an important role in the strategy's system of instruments.

4.1. Target setting

During the last decade the medium term strategic target setting of content regulation and development has happened without the inclusion of social partners. As a result of this, the thinking about strategic targets were mixed up with the outlining and implementation of the national instruments of content regulation.

4.1.1. Public education's targets determined in content regulatory instruments have been almost entirely realised by the researchers of educational theory or curriculum experts so far. There is a lack of inclusion of social partners' (employers, alliances of municipalities, higher education, scientific research, civil organisations) in the process of setting the main content targets and characteristics of public education.
Suggestions:

- In the medium term the public education act should include a list of those social partners whose involvement in the dialogue about the basic questions and target setting of content regulation is inevitable; moreover, the organisational and procedural frameworks of a national and local consultation forum should be outlined. In the short run – and only ad interim – the organisation most capable of fulfilling this task is the Public Educational Policy Council, which includes most of the social partners.
- The strategic elements of public education's content development should be determined according to international trends and debates. Thus, the national and local consultative forums should be connected to the international debates on these topics (visits, study tours, the using communication channels).
- Based on backing institutions and connected to institutions dealing with content development the creation and operation of a national consultation organisation should be prepared.
- The involvement of these social partners should be started during the supervision process of current content regulatory documents, their opinion about NCC 2003 and the exam requirements should be asked. Educational administration should work out its policy connected to the involvement of social partners and it should enable the active participation of these partners in public forums.

4.1.2. Since target setting happens mainly within pedagogical and professional frameworks, the setting of targets is often mixed with content regulation, or in the lack of clear target setting curriculum designers themselves define targets, many times giving a greater emphasis to their own pedagogical principles.
Suggestions:

- The definition of strategic targets and requirements of public education should be separated from the development of instruments (curriculum) and contents (programs). State regulation is restricted to a core curriculum defining directing principles, proportions and requirements.
- The personification of content regulation: the responsible workshops capable for long-term development will only be visible with the accreditation of professional content development teams.
- Separated financial resources should support the work of professional content development teams. The financing of curricula and textbook publishing should be separated from this. The private authors who do not belong to professional teams should be gradually integrated to development workshops.

- The framework enabling the horizontal learning of content development workshops should be created on the basis of backing institutions.

4.2 Institutional background

The institutional background of experts dealing with the instruments of content regulation and development is not stabilised, their tasks and operation processes are not clarified and their resources are tight. The profession operates on an ad hoc basis organised around large-scale implementation projects.

4.2.1. The institutional background of outlining, development and suitability verification of content regulatory instruments is not stabilised the connections between institutions and experts participating in this work is unsettled.
Suggestions:

- The role of the processes maintaining the assessment of requirements, and thus the verification of reaching targets should be increased. The formation of a national assessment system connected to content regulation is necessary.
- The identification of competencies connected to content development and outlining the content and organisational elements of training and postgraduate training connected to it. The training and postgraduate training of experts.
- It is important that the functional reorganisation of backing institutions should be based on the financial resources of currently existing institutions, and with the inclusion of significant financial resources for development. In the course of this, it is important to create an institutional background dealing with the regulatory instruments of regulation, and it is also important to connect curriculum development to assessment.
- The functional reorganisation of instruments and the creation of new frameworks for their operation make it essential to initiate a dialogue with the employees of these institutions. It is necessary to inform both the professional and public opinion about the planned targets and the expected benefits of actions, in order to provide sufficient professional and social legitimating for the new structure. The information policy connected to the above mentioned and the organisation of the professional debate connected to this is of great significance.

4.2.2. Textbook publishers' activities connected to content regulation and their pedagogical-professional development is not regulated by the state, so they carry out profit-orientated activities different from pedagogical values.
Suggestions:

- It would be reasonable to work out regulations, requirements and support for the sake of making the development of content carriers more professional. It would be reasonable to motivate the development of a chamber like internal quality assurance system for textbook publishers.
- In the future it would be desirable for textbook publishers to develop program packets (curricula, textbooks, teaching materials, assessment instruments, development courses, quality assurance) following the instructions of central regulatory instruments, from which public educational institutions would be able to choose.
- Textbook publishers should be made interested in the production of program packets for entire educational periods.
- It is essential to create and improve the horizontal cooperation between textbook publishers, backing institutions and organisations dealing with program development.
- It is important that all forms of connection (communication, interest reconciliation, professional requirements, financing connected to the satisfaction of users) between textbook publishers and content regulators should be part of state politics connected to content regulation.

4.2.3. The tasks connected to national assessment are completed by an organizational unit that is subordinated to the Ministry of Education or its backing institutions and that is not independent. This organisation operates under ongoing reorganisation processes.

Suggestions:

- The formation of an Assessment Council based on the Assessment Centre of Public Education (the assessment directorate of the planned Public Education Development Public Company), which regulates the contents of the assessment system relatively independently (selection of samples, verification of assessment tools, etc.) and undertakes the tasks of the central administering board.

4.3. The role of the teachers

Teachers and institutions of public education were motivated to innovate (content regulation) in fields where professionals could have undertaken the tasks. On the contrary, there was no central support in fields (the methodology of teaching and learning), that can only be operated successfully by teachers and institutions.

4.3.1. Internal institutional capacity is too weak for the completion of local curricula and their large-scale adaptation, so in many cases, the production of local curricula is carried out with good intentions but with low quality.
Suggestions:

- The outlining, completion acceptance and approval of local pedagogical programs including local curricula, should be regulated on a level of legal regulations.
- The supplies of central content regulation instruments and contents available for creating local curricula should be increased, the procedure connected to the local adaptation of programs should be worked out, and teachers have to be prepared for the application of these.
- The accessibility of modernisation programs preferred by educational policies should be made easier for institutions, or their spreading should possibly be supported by separate professional and financial means.
- By fully supporting teacher training courses, teachers should be prepared for the professional adaptation of programs in order to avoid the compilation of good-willed but low quality local programs resulting incoherence.
- In the course of the completion of institutional programs – without restricting innovative institutions with sufficient capacities – the communicational emphasis should be placed on professional adaptation instead of own compilation.
- Such sources should be made available, that enable the use of experts' support for interpretation, adaptation and cooperation within the staff.
- In the long run it is essential to support the harmonisation of the periods of institutional quality management (self-evaluation) and the supervision of pedagogical programs.

4.3.2. The planning of the teaching and learning process on the level of student groups or individual learners is incidental or formal; there is a loose connection between the local curriculum, the content carrier, planning and the real teaching and learning activities.
Suggestions:

- The regulation of learning management on individual or classroom level could be improved.
- It is essential to develop teachers' competencies connected to the planning of the teaching and learning process and it is also necessary to develop the contents of connecting professional services, especially postgraduate training and consultation.
- It would be useful to look over the content of basic education and to extend this field both regarding theoretical and practical education and it would be important to increase its efficiency.
- The advantages of individual and classroom level process planning should be clarified for teachers in order to raise their efficiency and professional awareness.

4.3.3. In the classrooms, i.e. in the course of the real teaching and learning process, the connection between content carrier, teaching and assessment is ambiguous. Content carriers do not count with

the results of learning outside the classroom and they do not reflect upon the effects of extra-curricular learning.
Suggestions:

- In the course of planning, managing and realising the teaching and learning process such competencies of teachers should be developed, that enable them to consider the content of content carriers, exam requirements and the effects of extra-curricular learning at the same time; moreover, that enable them to integrate their effects.
- The professional operation of this level of content regulation can initially reached by the development of teachers' classroom management practices. The aim is not primarily the development of the content development skills of teachers (curriculum and textbook designing), but rather the development of being informed and capable of selecting according to the institution's needs from a rich market of content carriers.

4.3.4. The educational content is dominated by textbooks, which do not necessarily suit the local curriculum and the institution's assessment.
Suggestions:

- It has become necessary to reorganise the entire system of textbook approval into a textbook group accrediting process – extended to textbooks for several grades.
- The support of the national organisations of textbook and teaching aid developers with, apart from others, organising unified postgraduate courses.
- Instead of supporting individual authors, professional textbook developer teams should be subsidised by the state.
- It would be essential to achieve that the selection of content carriers by institutions should be part of the process of producing and internally accepting the institutional programs instead of following external samples, providing the coherence between targets and content carriers.

4.4 Cooperation of the education sector in the course of content development

During the last decade there has been a lack of processes integrating the content development and assessment of public, vocational, higher and adult education.

4.4.1. The content regulatory instruments applied in public, vocational, higher and adult education are not harmonised, and the level of cooperation between the experts of different sectors is significantly lower than necessary.
Suggestions:

- The accreditation of professional workshops dealing with the content development of public education and vocational education should be carried out, and the workshops following the logic of one sector should be excluded or reorganised into a workshop integrating the intentions of different sectors.
- Instead of the approach of considering one sector the professional development subordinated to LLL should be placed in the foreground. Instead of following the sector's logic it is essential to define competencies and their identification in public and vocational curricula, the development of which is started in public education, but in the lack of which no efficient vocational education can be operated (key competencies). With the definition of indicators connected to these competencies, they should be integrated into the national assessment system.
- The supervision of legal regulations (governmental and ministerial decrees) connected to the initiation and application of each content regulatory instrument, assuring coherence between regulations.
- The application of financial motivators for the improvement of cooperation between the developers of public and vocational curricula and teaching aids.
- The presentation of connections between public and vocational education, the involvement of the teachers' elite working in this field, and the formation of their opinion.

4.5 The creation and approval of local pedagogical programs

> The inclusion of social partners into the process of maintainers' and institutional programs was not sufficiently emphasised. Thus, the legitimacy and real regulatory force of the locally and institutionally approved programs is low.

4.5.1. In the course of creating the institutional pedagogical programs, instead of professional factors, the very often connecting interests of teachers and textbook publishers dominate.
Suggestions:

- The cooperation between textbook publishers, central and local content developers should be maintained; publishers' procedure connected to program development should be defined in a way that maintains the whole-scale consideration of central regulatory instruments.
- It is essential to strengthen social control connected to the production and approval of institutions' pedagogical programs.
- A list of consultants should be created in regional institutions providing professional services, who are competent in supporting the institutional selection of content carriers.
- A document for school managers supporting program adaptation and textbook acquisition based on the institution's self-evaluation.
- The financial background for the preparation and operation of support institutions should be provided. This service should be available and free for all institutions.
- It is essential to provide further support for institutional quality development programs.
- Regional professional support institution's role played in textbook selection should be supported; apart from the textbook exhibition rooms, they should provide more services in the evaluation and critical analysis of content carriers.
- In the course of producing pedagogical programs, the selection of content carriers should happen according to the institutional targets neglecting some partial interests. The role of the staff's decision and the supervising role of school users or parents should be increased in the course of determining content carriers.

4.5.2. Municipalities do not finance institutions according to the tasks approved in the pedagogical programs, so instead of the pedagogical program the municipalities' actual financial situation determines the educational work.
Suggestions:

- With the analysis of the planning and decision-making mechanisms of local financing, the instruments that may strengthen the connection between financing, the content of the programs and the efficiency of education should be identified.
- On the one hand it is essential to strengthen maintainers' obligation to provide 100% of the financial resources required by the program they approved, on the other hand, with the modification of the current practices of financing education, the financing conditions of fulfilling that obligation should be provided.
- At the same time it would be reasonable to decrease the financial plan character of institutional pedagogical programs and their professional and missional character should be strengthened.
- The development of experts' competencies in the field of giving professional opinion about pedagogical programs, with special regards to the inherent coherence and the cost analysis of the realisation of the programs. Organising accredited postgraduate courses essential for (and obligatory) and enabling the fulfilling of this task.
- The formation of a tender and/or subsidy system connected to the organisation of experts' postgraduate courses.
- For the sake of the professional support and the essential consultation for municipalities and using the currently existing (institutional and market-orientated entrepreneurial) forms of professional services those field should be identified where municipalities could receive free consultation and also those field should be identified which are available for municipalities according to the rules of the market. Both fields – using different systems- should be provided with financial resources.

- According to the public education act, the maintainer is obliged to maintain the realisation of the approved pedagogical/educational program; therefore, it is significantly important to show the given programs' cost calculation in the experts' analysis completed before the approval of the program.

4.5.3. The creation of the pedagogical program is regarded by the school as the staff's home affairs, so the consultation with social partners is lacking or incidental, and the promotion of their interests in the course of setting institutional targets or contents can be only partially realised or not at all.
Suggestions:

- It is possible to strengthen the involvement of the institution's social partners in the creation of the educational/pedagogical programs, or parents' organisation can be given stronger licences in the process of program approval process.
- The increase of parent organisations' licences can only be successful if both teachers' staffs and parent organisations prepare for the fulfilment of this task, and on the other hand, if they are convinced about the advantages of participation. In this aspect, the outlining and accomplishment of a program informing and preparing students can have a significant role. The application of the principle of gradation is of great relevance.

4.6. Supervision, accountability

The system of public educational institutions' (and the connected financial) supervision and accountability on a national level has not been created since 1985. The locally operating maintainers' supervision and accounting systems are not integrated.

4.6.1. Maintainers' external and the institutions' internal professional supervision is lacking or incidental, or they are not connected to each other.
Suggestions:

- The (legal) connection between institutional self-evaluation and the maintainers' external evaluation must be created, connecting it to the pedagogical program's suitability verification and the institution's quality development.
- The conditions of getting into the National Expert's Directory should be reviewed and this should be connected to the professional and regional division of the list; moreover, a more "user-friendly" version of the list should be created.
- The financing of the maintainers' evaluation should be done in a way that enables all municipalities (maintainers) to carry out the supervision and evaluation.
- In the currently operating system, independent evaluating experts or companies can be commissioned, in the medium term the initiation of a company accreditation system can be considered in order to justify the capability of the companies.
- For the sake of connecting maintainer's (external) evaluation and institutional (external) self-evaluation, it should be clarified that evaluation is not used or is not to be used (!) to discredit certain institutions or to express negative attitudes towards them or to take revenge on them, but without evaluation it is impossible to verify the program's suitability, the achievement of the institution's targets, so its is the mutual interest of both partners.

4.6.2. There is not any connection between the evaluation and financing of the institution.
Suggestions:

- In order to make evaluation results have a direct effect on the quality of the institution's educational activities, it would be essential to connect institutional evaluation to the institution's financing.
- It would be profitable to work out a process of financing, which would connect the deterioration or improvement of achievement compared to requirements and to its own earlier results with financial consequences.
- For the sake of this, it would be important to transmit a policy, which in the course of evaluating the institutions evaluates according to pedagogical achievements and added

values instead of following the principle of equality, and it would support high-level professional achievement with financial motivators.

4.6.3. There is no connection between national and maintainers' evaluation.
Suggestions:

- With the creation of national standards it should be made possible to create a common basis for national and maintainers' evaluation.
- The creation of regulations connected to the local publication of maintainers' evaluation should be catered for.
- The municipalities' (maintainers') competencies connected to professional evaluation and the interpretation of the results should be developed. It is necessary to motivate the joining of the essential resources, either with creating occasional or task orientated associations.
- Within the framework of regional cooperation, the maintainers' cooperation connected to institutional evaluation should be supported. The resources that enable all maintainers to carry out institutional evaluation regularly and professionally should be made available.
- The pedagogical and professional support institutions should have the essential competencies and capacities for carrying out maintainers' evaluation.
- Municipalities have to be persuaded that besides the financial and legal supervision, the professional evaluation of institutions has a key role in the successful operation of institutions.
- It would be reasonable to create an agency on the basis of the National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre for summing up the results of institutional self-evaluation and the maintainers' external evaluation, which would provide achievement evaluation benchmarking for local partners with publishing annual reports.

4.7. Evaluation, suitability verification, examination

The Hungarian public education's national assessment and exam system has not been created since 1990.

4.7.1. The control of the connection between the content of the curriculum (NCC) and the school's local curriculum is only maintained by the obligatory expert's opinion – instead of approved standards. There is a lack of local, institutional suitability verification and assessment of local pedagogical programs.
Suggestions:

- It is necessary to increase the role of the output regulatory instruments (unified requirements) in content regulation and it is also important to cater for the ongoing national measurement and assessment of these requirements.
- According to the defined requirements, it is possible to oblige institutions to carry out the suitability assessment of institutional programs within certain periods of time. The suitability assessment of institutional programs and the institutional quality management should be connected, and the legal framework of this must be created.
- Content suitability verification should be integrated into the quality management programs on institutional or municipality level.
- For the assessment of institutional programs' suitability such assessment instruments and processes must be worked out, that can be directly applied by institutions in the course of self-evaluation.
- It is important to increase the number of teachers experienced in self-evaluation with the help of professional postgraduate courses. The knowledge connected to self-evaluation should have a greater emphasis on school managers' training.
- Making teachers and institutions interested in participation with the accentuated state sponsorship of training and postgraduate courses intended to develop teachers' competencies connected to pedagogical evaluation.
- It is important to support the municipal sample projects with tenders and publish the results.
- The strong development of the evaluation competencies of professional regional support institutions, and according to this the expansion of professional competencies. The

connection between the national assessment system and the regional pedagogical services should be established.

4.7.2. The setting of the targets of national assessment and instruments, similarly to the setting of the targets of content regulation, is not public; they are determined by a small group of experts and board members.
Suggestions:

- In the medium term, the public education act should determine the social partners, the inclusion of which is basically essential in a social debate for the sake of the assessment of the targets set by content regulations and for the setting of the standards enabling a valid assessment. The organisational framework and the procedures of a consulting forum should be determined.
- The definition of the national assessment is controlled annually by the forum outlining the strategies of content regulation and by the directing board of the assessment system.
- In the long run it seems to be reasonable to found an independent, autonomous and stabilised national assessment centre (agency). It is also reasonable to operate the national consultative forum connected to the centre (agency).

4.7.3. The suitability verification of central content regulatory instruments (curricula, directing principles and exam requirements) is missing.
Suggestions:

- Within the frameworks of the national assessment system the suitability verification of content regulatory instruments and their adjustment to the ongoing development of these regulators. The national assessment system should be connected as an instrument to the obligatory NCC assessment prescribed by the public education act.
- It is necessary to develop the assessment system towards the direction of macro level suitability verification.
- The assessment capacity should be significantly increased with providing both the personal and objective conditions. Both basic and postgraduate courses with similar targets should be supported.
- The number of teachers experienced in pedagogical assessment should be increased on the institutional level, and their further training should be subsidised.
- The persuasion of professional and public opinion about the significance of national and local assessments within content regulation and their persuasion about the fact that without these assessments it is impossible to follow up the central and local targets.

4.7.4. The connection between the educational targets set in the central regulatory instruments and assessment is weak, the feedback effect of the results is incidental.
Suggestions:

- It is worth to create a connection between content regulatory instruments (curricula, exam requirements) and the unified (standard) assessment requirements even on the level of regulation. It is necessary to provide the biggest possible publicity for the results of the assessment.
- The Public Educational Assessment Centre, under the control of a civil presidential board and the forum setting the strategies for content regulation, should create an annual assessment strategy.
- It is necessary to provide the efficient dissemination of assessment results, including the publication of the results intended to be understandable by the non-professional public, in other words, to all members of the society.
- Apart from or attached to reporting on assessment results, it would be important to create the publicly comprehensible interpretation of the government's educational intentions and the relevant policies.

4.7.5. The connection between the content of national assessment and state examinations is missing.
Suggestions:

- On the level of regulation as well, it is important to strengthen the connection between the input and output elements of the content regulatory instruments and the requirements of the national assessment system, as these together should form a coherent system. The same kind of coherence should be provided horizontally between local content regulatory instruments and vertically between central and local content regulatory instruments.
- The place and role of state examinations in content regulation, with special regards to the basic examination, should be unambiguously determined – regardless of structural policy considerations.
- The development of exam requirements should be carried out following Hungarian and international practices, making use of the experiences of Hungarian and international assessments; therefore, the Examination Centre should maintain relationships with international organisations and it should participate in international research programs, the results of which can strengthen the Hungarian development of content regulation.
- It is necessary to develop the professional and financial potentials of the National Exam Centre, so that the exam requirements will be in harmony with central curricula, programs and the national standards to be formed; and also will enable the ongoing development in the field of requirements.

4.7.6. The function and role of the basic examination in content regulation is not clarified.
Suggestions:

- The function of the basic examination is essential to be determined, re-interpreted and laid down in the public education act and it is also essential to cater for the supervision of the basic examination requirements completed earlier and its connections to its new function.

4.8. The problems connected the functions of content regulation.

System regulation

4.8.1. The legal documentation of content regulation is not synchronised and it is fragmented.
Suggestions:

- In the medium term, system regulation is to be synchronised. In order to achieve this aim, it is essential that the public education act should draw back from the detailed regulation of institutions and it should strengthen the legal regulation of system-level strategic processes. It is necessary to work out and discuss the concept of a new type of educational regulation.
- It is necessary to investigate and cease the unreasonably fragmented nature of legal documents connected to system regulation (e.g. NCC and directing principles). It is especially important to create a more transparent and coherent regulation of the content and connection of the input and process regulating instruments set in the public education act.
- The necessity of a unified legal regulation connected to the organisation of state examinations may also be expected. After the legal modification of the system of content regulation, it is urgent to cater for the modification of lower level enacting regulations.
- After the modification of the currently existing act, instead of regulating the application of framework curricula, it seems reasonable to regulate with a legal regulation on the content, design, acceptance, approval, assessment and supervision of local curricula, which includes the tasks and responsibilities connected to the above-mentioned actions.

4.8.2. The participants outside educational administration do not have the possibility to represent their interests in the setting of the instruments and contents of system regulation.
Suggestions:

- Just as well as it is important to cooperate with social partners in the course of the target setting process of content regulation, it is also reasonable to reach the cooperation of all partners interested in the course of setting the instruments of system regulation.
- In the course of determining the contents of regulatory instruments, it is by all means essential to strengthen cooperation with municipalities (maintainers) as local decision-

makers and with institutions as executors. This means that their representatives should be involved in the process of determining the types and main regulatory areas of each instrument and they should not only participate in the discussion of the planned content of prepared regulatory instruments. The idea of shared responsibilities between central and local levels will only operate properly if local decision-makers (who are at the same time the executors of tasks) will have an opportunity to represent their interests connected to certain tasks.

4.8.3. System regulation's potential range of instruments is rich, however, actual regulation is poor; it is mainly focusing on legal regulations and it is often administrative.
Suggestions:

- Central government very rarely uses system regulatory instruments other than legal regulators. Connecting supplementary normatives present in the financing system to certain content elements more courageously would open new ways of modernisation.
- Providing publicity mentioned before can be regarded as such regulatory instrument, primarily in the content regulatory instruments' target setting process and in the case of national and local assessment.
- The public education act includes that it is the educational minister's responsibility to have educational programs (pedagogical systems) worked out and published. Working out and publishing a sufficient number of these kind of programs could significantly support the modernization of educational contents. At the same time, however, it is necessary to provide the opportunity to accredit the programs, which may be developed by institutions, and determination of the accreditation procedure after which these programs could become, already accredited, programs that can be chosen nationwide. In the course of determining the procedure of program accreditation, it is worth mentioning how these programs can be adapted or what other programs – of different subjects or branches of knowledge – can be inserted into them without loosening their inner coherence.
- It would be also important to inform local decision-makers and local offices correctly and to develop their competencies, especially those connected to educational administration. Moreover, it would be important, possibly with the cooperation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to organise officials' and decision-makers' training and postgraduate training system.

4.8.4. Cost effectiveness is not an important factor in the course of determining the system of content regulation.
Suggestions:

- In the course of determining content regulatory instruments on an institutional level and in the case of the tasks determined by the public education act and in the case of setting indicators of obligatory tasks (compulsory and optional lesson numbers, member numbers of classes and groups, compulsory lesson numbers for teachers etc.), the factor of cost-effectiveness should be much more emphasised contrary to the current situation mainly focusing on – the politically understandable practice of – keeping employers.
- It is important to involve the financially sensitive representatives of social control on each levels of the process.

Supervision/accountability

4.8.5. There are no approved indicators for national and local supervision and assessment.
Suggestions:

- The way mentioned earlier in this report, the indicators and standards that can form the basis of national and local assessment have to be determined and these indicators and standards have to be harmonised with the contents and requirements of content regulatory instruments and with the contents of content carriers (primarily the traditional and digital teaching materials and teaching aids).

- Educational administration has to make a decision on the model of national professional supervision and the system of instruments connected to it has to be built up and operated. The Hungarian task distribution and content regulation system based on shared responsibilities is mainly compatible with the English type (OFSTED) listed expert system, and naturally with its Hungarian adaptation.

4.8.6. There is no such an agency or organisation, which would integrate the results of assessment and innovation; therefore, it is impossible to form the national benchmarking of the assessment of achievements.
Suggestions:

- Looking at the existing and reorganised central backing institutions and organisations, the institution capable of integrating the elements of assessment and innovation, organising benchmarking for the national assessment of achievements and following those results should be named. In the currently existing structure, the National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre seems to be the most capable institution.
- Within the frameworks of the regulations on data of public interest, it is reasonable to publish the institutional level information on assessment results of students' achievement and institutions' external achievement.

Professional services

4.8.7. Content regulation is not supported centrally by system-level services connected to the different levels of the system, the services available are incidental and they bear the logic of implementation.
Suggestions:

- A medium term strategy should be published about professional services.
- Just as well as content regulation is characterised by shared responsibilities, this same principle should also be used in the course of organising a support network. It would be important to identify the type and content of professional services for each level of content regulation, and after this it would be necessary to clarify the distribution of tasks between professional support institutions, organisations and enterprises and to provide the financial background for these institutions in the long run. Presumably this might create a necessity for re-interpreting the task types and support responsibilities of the currently operating professional services. Determining the specific support expectations connected to each level and the formation of a network of organisations providing these services would prevent services from offering the stop and go implementation process of specific instruments or regulations. Naturally, this does not mean that the implementation process is not of strategic significance – of course it is, and its process has to be planned and completed carefully –, it only means that a well-organised support background should be connected to content regulation.

5. The suggestions' possibility of realization, their effects, maintainability and cost

5.1. Seven suggestions

In this chapter we intend to support the identification of action plans that have a priority according to the modification suggestions listed in the previous chapter; moreover, we intend to show the possibility of realization, the effects, the maintainability and the costs of each plans. (The analysis of the effects, costs, maintainability and risks of each action plan's specific elements will have to be part of the preparation process of decision-making).

Since in this part of our report we can consider only some directions of the suggested actions, from the list of suggestions in the previous chapter we took seven suggestions with significant, complicated effects that have educational policy risks, the effects of which should be shortly analysed.

These modification suggestions are the following (not in the order of priority, but sequenced according to the logic of the model applied in the analysis):

1. The "socialization" of the medium term target setting of content regulation and development; according to the initiated discourse, the new forum should gain strong legal frameworks in the medium run.
2. Stabilisation of the institutional background of professionals operating the instruments of content regulation and development.
3. A new policy of generating the development of supplies, which could direct public education institutions from curriculum development to the adaptation of ready-made alternative programs and the development of methodologies (teaching and learning). Connected to this, a new partnership with textbook publishers should be established and the development of content carriers should be made more professional.
4. Connected to this a strategy based on the principle of lifelong learning should be worked out and this strategy should integrate the content development and assessment of public, vocational, higher and adult education. Creating different forms of communication and cooperation for professional integration.
5. The legal regulation of maintainer's and institutional program approval in a way that (a) strengthens the control of local participants who are not teachers, (b) includes the financial aspects of the process and (c) ceases the interpretation uncertainty caused by the modification of the act in 2003 (framework curriculum, program package, program).
6. As opposed to practices between 1985 and 2003, the professional development of a strong development in the field of external evaluation and assessment of public education institutions should be initiated.
7. Creating a new concept for the national assessment system of Hungarian education. The concept should detach the discourse on educational structural policy from the field of assessment and it should focus on the suitability verification of public education's regulatory instruments and pedagogical practices.

5.2 The effect analysis of the seven suggestions

1. The "socialization" of the medium term target setting of content regulation and development.

Expected effect: A board merging democratic and professional legitimating, publicity and debate together may result that the medium term strategy of content regulation and development is created, which – with different emphasis – is approved by the participants of educational administration. The experts of educational theories, who had an important role previously, can remain an influential group of content regulation and development, but their monopoly in target setting would be ceased.

Educational policy risks: The modification has the educational administrative risk of slowing down modification processes connected to content regulation due to the inclusion of a larger

number of interests and values. (Considering the "Regulation and new regulation rage" of the previous decade, this risk is very small.) At the same time, the inclusion of social partners can strengthen the support of targets and the system's stability.

The need for the modification of regulations: In the long run, the alteration requires the modification of the public education act. In the short run, this can be substituted by institutionalising the boards of consultants formed on the basis of backing institutions.

Demand for organisations: Since the modification of the public education act has been completed, it would be practical to create the forum as a managing board or a civil (or voluntary) organisation and to launch a trial operation. It is important to emphasise the application of the well-operating international practices (E.g. the Scottish curriculum board) in the course of creating the board.

Financial demand: Since the board's backing work would be done by the backing institution of content regulation and development, extra costs would also appear there.

2. Stabilisation of the institutional background of professionals operating the instruments of content regulation and development.

Expected effects: The professionalism of the educational sector can be highly increased by the new organization of the capacities of experts currently working separately with restricted capacities fulfilling unplanned tasks.

Educational policy risks: None.

The need for the modification of regulations: In the case of founding a new institution the lower level regulations should be modified, otherwise, only the foundation documents of selected professional backing institutions and other educational institutions have to be changed.

Demand for organisations: The consolidation of the professional and institutional background of content regulation and development can happen in two different ways. The first solution is the effective development of the central backing institution. The other solution is the creation of a national network of institutions or organisational units dealing with content regulation. More importantly, the new professional and institutional background would be created for the profession's management (program accreditation, curriculum bank, system level research, international connections) and the practical problems of content development and the implementation type state administrative tasks would be separated.

Financial demand: This can only be calculated after creating a picture of the situation and an analysis of the tasks. It can be assumed that it requires the usage of significant financial resources. Its maintainability and legitimacy is provided by the basic character of the tasks: most EU member countries have such an institution.

3. A new policy of generating the development of supplies, which could direct public education institutions from curriculum development to the adaptation of ready-made alternative programs and the development of methodologies (teaching and learning): Connected to this, a new partnership with textbook publishers should be established and the development of content carriers should be made more professional.

Expected effects: Connecting and professionalism of the – previously spreading – elements of the curriculum, textbook, assessment and methodological aid development based on national regulatory instruments can create a program supply of better quality. It can also reach a serious effect with orientateing the managers of institutions and teachers towards the methodological reformation of teaching and learning with modifying institutional level content development to the much simpler program adaptation.

Educational policy risks: The innovative freedom of public education's alternative institutions or of those institutions capable of autonomous program development would not be harmed. The activation of textbook publishers have a much bigger risk, because the Ministry of Education does not have an experience in launching system level policies together with the business sector. Today it seems to be doubtful whether the Ministry of Education creates such a system of motivators, that can make textbook publishers and the universities or colleges involved the

most important designers of program groups. Further tension may be caused by excluding those authors from content development, who autonomously or in a half professional way undertake the writing of single textbooks, but who refuse to create programs or program groups.

The need for the modification of regulations: The creation of a national supply of program groups makes it necessary to create a program accreditation system on the level of an Ministry of Education decree. It is also essential to supervise the decree on textbook publishing.

Demand for organisations: The development policy launched together with textbook publishers, universities and colleges do not require an autonomous organisational unit, and only a temporary project organisation seems to be necessary. By suggestion No. 2. We indicated that the tasks of program accreditation could be carried out by the professional backing institution of content regulation and development.

Financial demand: The cooperation between the Ministry of Education, larger textbook publishers, universities and colleges involved requires the mobilisation of significant financial resources for tenders. These resources existed – under the control of different tender issuers – between 1993 and 2003, but during this period, only small-scale institutional innovation programs were financed from these resources.

> 4. Connected to this a strategy based on the principle of lifelong learning should be worked out and this strategy should integrate the content development and assessment of public, vocational, higher and adult education. Creating different forms of communication and cooperation for professional integration.

Expected effects: The basic requirements of a strategy based on lifelong learning (key competencies differentiated and measurable according to age groups) can be the integrating force, that motivates the cooperation between the content development capacities – which are deeply fragmented both professionally and organisationally – of public, vocational and adult training. Besides, the formation of the professional contents of a new type of national assessment would be enabled and the Hungarian educational system's transparency would be increased.

Educational policy risks: No such educational policy document integrating different educational sectors have been created and approved yet. The risk is significantly lowered by the fact that all the three sectors belong – currently – to the scope of the Ministry of Education's authority.

The need for the modification of regulations: None.

Demand for organisations: Since the creation of the strategy would be controlled by the social board described in suggestion No. 1. and professional coordination would become the task of content development's backing institution; the project has no demand for creating new organisations.

Financial demand: Restricted, the financial resources required by the project work essential for strategy building and consultation.

> 5. The legal regulation of maintainer's and institutional program approval in a way which (a) strengthens the control of local participants who are not teachers, (b) includes the financial aspects of the process and (c) ceases the interpretation uncertainty caused by the modification of the act in 2003 (framework curriculum, program package, program).

Expected effects: The regulation of the process of maintainer and institutional program approval can increase the external (local community, maintainer) and internal (staff) approval and financial stability of the institutions.

Educational policy risks: None.

The need for the modification of regulations: In the long run the modification of the public education act is needed, in the short run this can be substituted by the modification of lower level regulations, by strategic communication and development. The procedure of pedagogical programs' approval should be newly regulated by a decree. A ministerial decree should

regulate the preparation and approval of quality development programs and the obligatory and minimum consequences of institutional self-assessment and maintainer assessment.
Demand for organisations: None.
Financial demand: None.

6. An intensive development founding the assessment system of public educational institutions.

Expected effects: The professional and social debate – which was artificially, withheld for a decade – about the accountability of public educational institutions and the entire system can be initiated. It can be indicated in advance that the National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre – possessing the required professional capacities – is developing an EU conform supervision and accountability concept.
Educational policy risks: The suggested modification is the taboo of Hungarian educational administration since the ceasing of the school-inspector system in 1985. The extremely high risk can be lowered with the application of "system compatible" instruments and with the intensive development using international experiences and EU suggestions establishing the application of those instruments.
The need for the modification of regulations: None.
Demand for organisations: None, professional development and public debate can be carried out on the basis of the National Public Education Assessment and Examination Centre's current institutional background.
Financial demand: Establishing a supervision system and the strengthening of accountability with the support of system-level policy-making and the essential financial resources. However, the suggestion – acknowledging the expected educational administrative risks – only supports the professional preparation, concept making and social debate. The financial demand of this is not more than the financing of one project.

7. Creating a new concept for the national assessment system of Hungarian education. The concept should detach the discourse on educational structural policy from the field of assessment and it should focus on the suitability verification of public education's regulatory instruments and pedagogical practices.

Expected effects: The "socialization" of the strategic target setting of education, the completion of a strategy based on lifelong learning (LLL) and international requirements (OECD, EU) can create those professional frameworks, within which the professional contents of a modern assessment and state examination system can become interpreted. The debate on the concept of the assessment and state examination system should precede the building of the system between 2006 and 2010.
Educational policy risks: Since it is only about modifying concepts, the educational policy risk can be regarded as very low.
The need for the modification of regulations: None
Demand for organisations: We talk about a mega project of educational development, the launching of which in the period between 2002 and 2006 is merely an illusion.
Financial demand: We talk about a mega project of educational development, the launching of which in the period between 2002 and 2006 is financially merely an illusion.