

EDITORIAL

The journal Orbis Scholae, which focuses on school education and research on this subject, came into existence last year. It received financial support from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, thanks to the project called "Research Centre on Schooling". We informed our readers about the project, its 7 main goals and focus in issue No. 1, 2006. A brief outline of the project in English may be also found at www.pedf.cuni.cz/reces. On the same web page, the texts of all the issues of this journal will be published in electronic form.

The journal is published twice a year in Czech with summaries in English. One issue is published in English every year. The first issue in English is finding its readers at this very moment. It is dedicated to Professor Jiří Kotásek. We also included a recollection of his life and work in this issue. It was Professor Kotásek himself who initiated, and provided theoretical reasons for the need of, a comparative analysis of educational systems in the four countries of the Visegrád Group. The goal of the international project, in which foreign partners take part, is to describe and critically analyse the development of school education from a comparative perspective and to contribute to the theory of educational reforms from the viewpoint of the transforming countries of Central Europe. In this monothematic issue, we publish the results of the first stage of the project. The contributions of specialists present case studies from Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. They describe the development, current state and problems of school education on the macro-level of national educational systems in the context of transformation processes. The case studies were created by different authors; however, they share a common theoretical framework for their analysis. Its structural components result from a methodological discussion and consensus that was achieved at the International Colloquium in December 2006.

Apart from the introductory study written by the project coordinator and case studies from the four countries, in this issue the readers can find an interesting article written by a Ph.D. student. In this article, the author tried to compare school reforms in the Czech Republic and Poland with reference to similar processes, different solutions and newly emerging problems. Further sections, reviews and news also present contributions from the field of comparative education.

It remains the wish of editors who prepared this issue of a new journal that it intensifies the interest of readers from the foreign educational community in research into school education in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. The editors also hope that it will contribute to discussion among international experts concerning school education and the methodology for comparative research into its nature.

Eliška Walterová, David Greger