

Education in Central and Eastern Europe

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Introduction

Education is the most powerful weapon
we can use to change the world.

Nelson Mandela



Education before the transition

- Communist parties were forming education with the aim of modernizing economies
 - providing the economy with trained labour
- Education played a key role in this process, leading to a rapid growth of the industrial working class
- „The entire educational system served the goal of industrialization and reflected its requirements“
- Students studied in specialized institutions



Education before the transition

- In certain fields, such as economics and engineering students specialized in one of thirty to fifty fields
- General education lost ground to overspecialized, strongly practical and strictly vocational training
- Education resulted in a spectral development in quantitative terms
 - Human capital indicators tended to be better in the late 1980s, quality was another question
- Education systems were producing obsolete skills, demanded by their technologically backward industry
 - No ability to produce higher qualifications for a more technologically advanced service or a higher knowledge economy



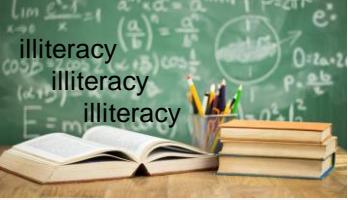
Education after the transition

- 1989 to 1995 was a period of radical educational changes for all countries of CEE
- „Depolitisation“ of Education
 - but policy leader were often attracted by pre-communist solutions
- Adaptations and assimilation of external trends
- World Bank became key actor in supporting educational development for social and economic transformation
- World Bank had no business in countries that are resistant to change in the education sector



Education after the transition

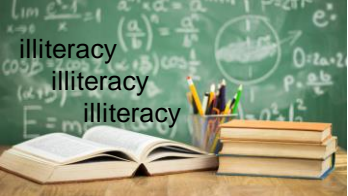
- World Bank played a key role, not only in providing financial resources for education reforms, but also expert knowledge:
 - establishment of labor market-oriented vocational training and retraining centers
 - the modernization of curricula
 - improving the skills of teachers
- Similar interventions were supported by the national governments of some Western countries through bilateral aid programs or by private charities and other development organizations
 - decentralization in the management and administration
- Recognition of the right of the students to choose an educational part according to abilities and interests



Today

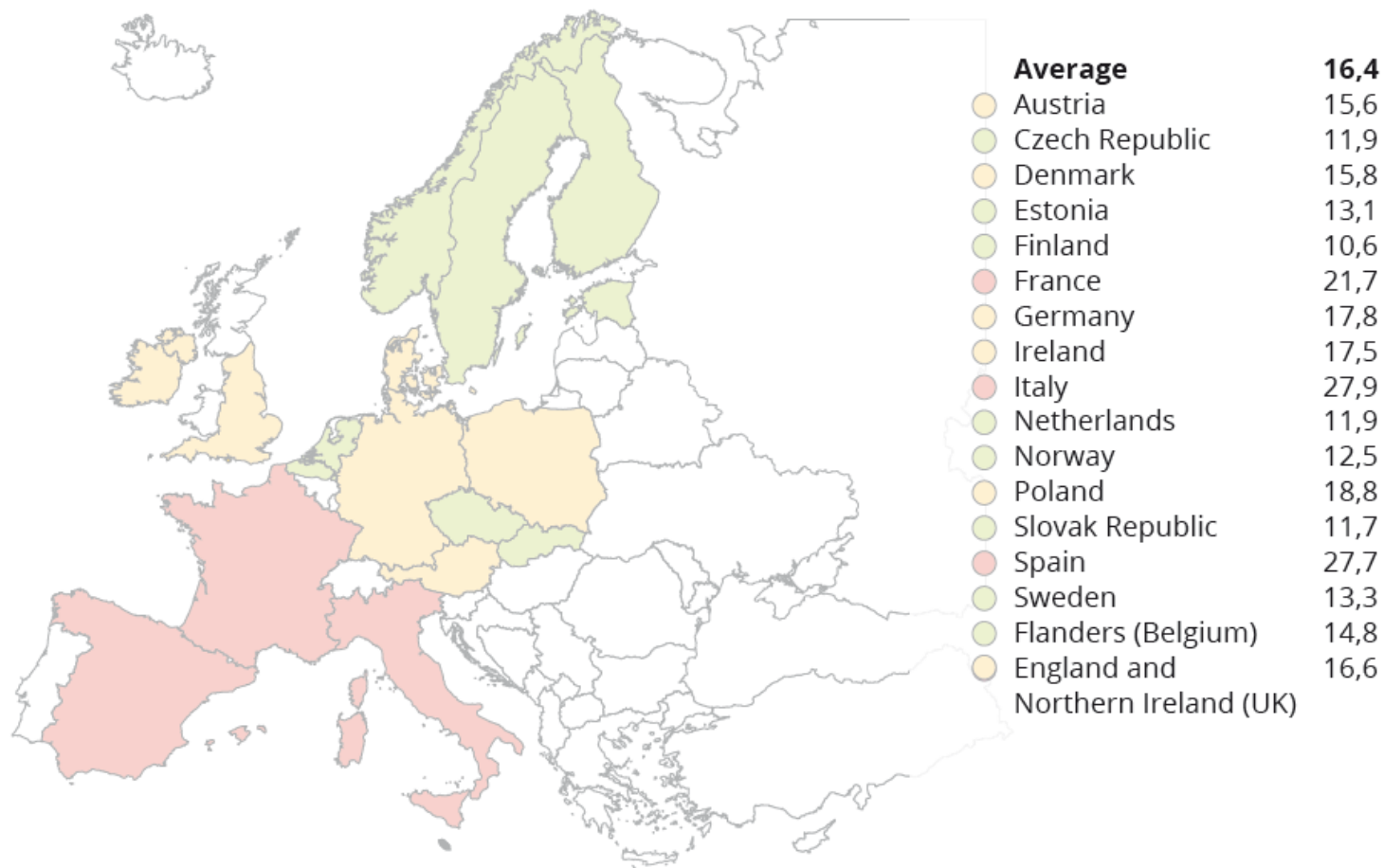
Some actual facts:

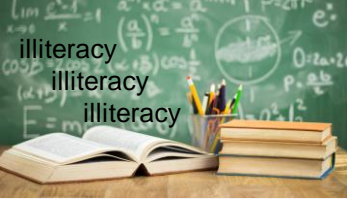
- Illiteracy in CEE (1.0-1.5 %) is similar to Western Europe



Today

Percentage of adults between 16 and 65 years with literacy difficulties.





Today

Some actual facts:

- Illiteracy in CEE (1.0-1.5 %) is similar to Western Europe
- Expenditures on education are in average 5.1 % of GNP in CEE compared to 5.5 % in Western Europe

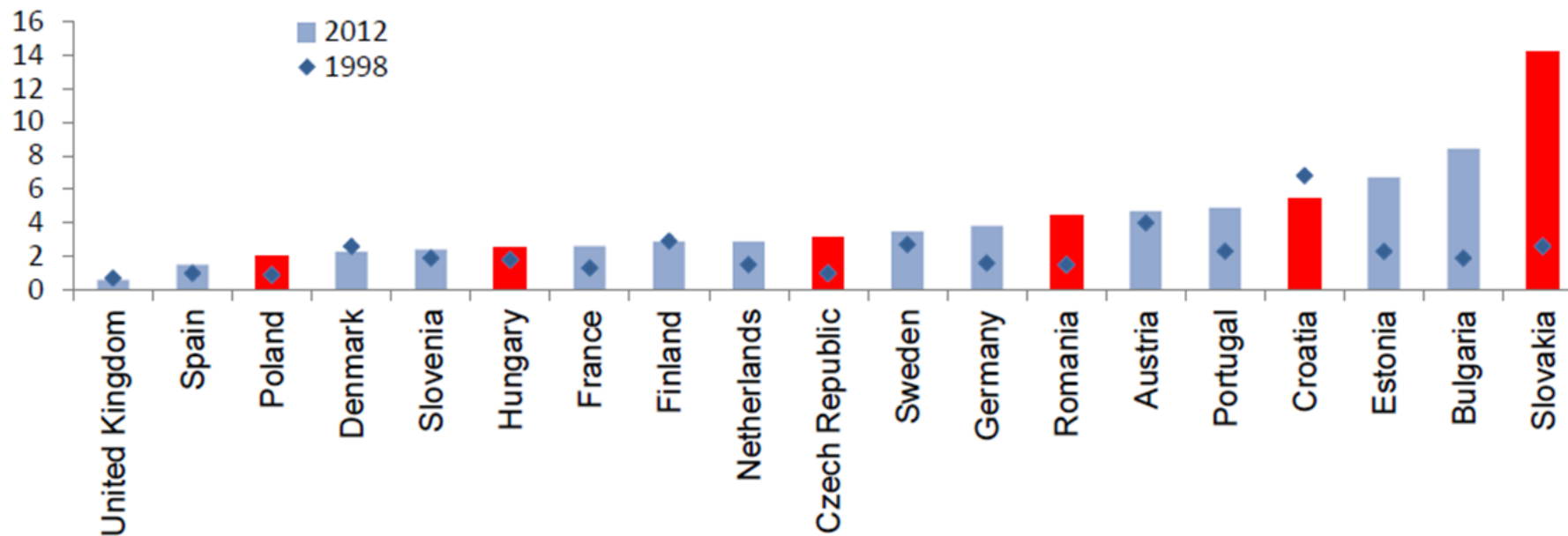
But real expenditures can differ greatly !

- 4.15m tertiary students in CEE countries (21 % of all EU-28 tertiary students). Poland represents the biggest share (1.7m)



Today

Number of CEE students studying in other European country twice as high compared to late 90's, as % of all students (per 1000 people)



Source: Erste Group Research, Eurostat



Today

Differences in education levels:

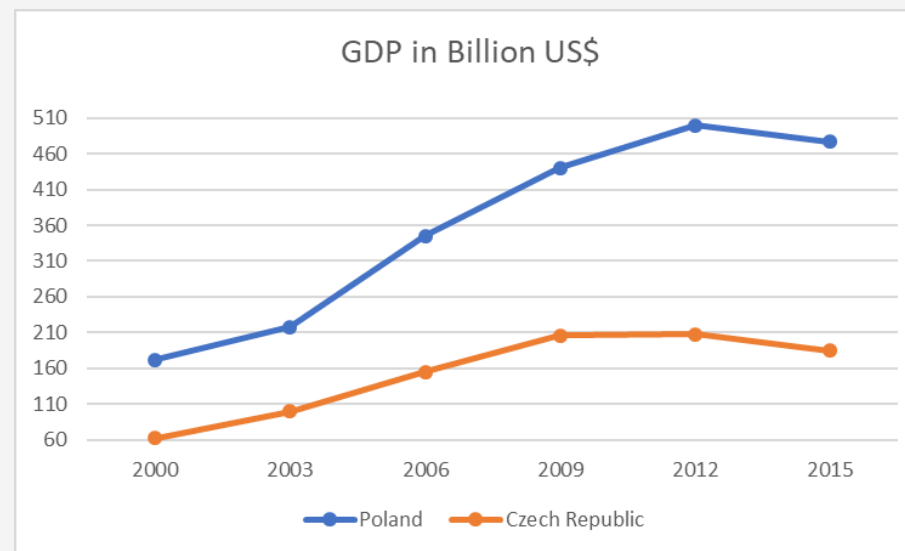
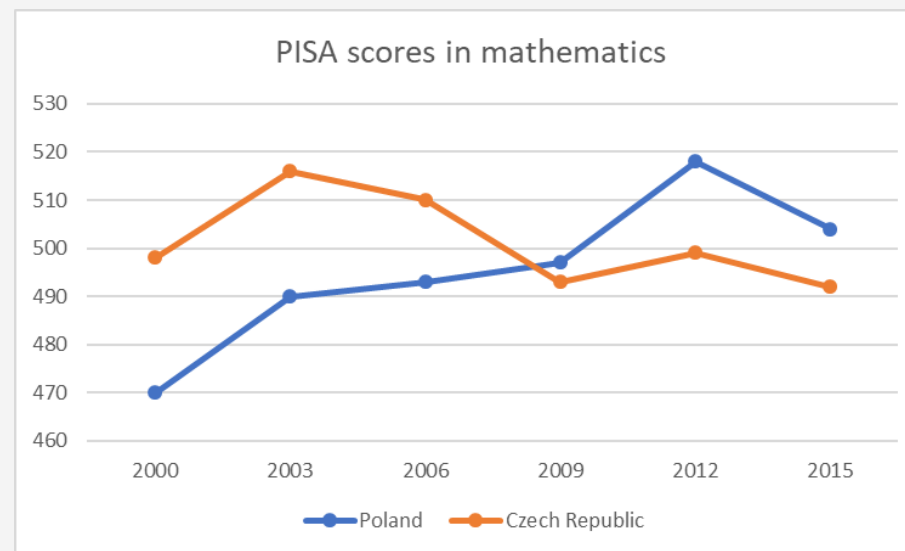
- Employees, who graduated from university, are well educated because of extensive studies and international experiences
- Quality of education for skilled manual workers is still below the international standards. Education does not often comply with the criteria of the labor market:
 - Many manual workers are unemployed
 - High unemployment of young people, who are 15-24 years old (Croatia: 25%)
 - But an improvement can be observed (Poland from 27% to 14% in the last 5 years)



Today

PISA is an international assessment to evaluate and compare knowledge of students. It is conducted by the OECD and takes place every three years. The examined fields are mathematics, reading proficiency and science.

- PISA is also an approach to assess the school system of a certain country
- Evidence that development of GDP and education is connected.
- Expenditures on education are often defined by a fixed percentage of GDP





Discussion

Do you think that the education system of the Soviet Union had advantages compared to today?

What is the best way to prepare young people for their working life?



Thank you!



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