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**Strategic priorities in the educational policy of the Visegrad Group countries.
A comparative pedagogical study**

DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY

The Visegrad Group countries – Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary – are an important part of the "Central Europe" in the historical context, currently united by the overall transformation phenomena, including the process of integration with the European Union structures. The EU's priorities in the area of public policies, including education, were formulated already when this structure was established - in the primary legal acts of the European Union (the starting point for EU law) - the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union. On the other hand the V4 countries defined their priorities in the area of education in strategic documents at the national level. The juxtaposition and comparison of the above-mentioned priorities – in order to find similarities between them or mark differences – is an interesting scientific issue. An inquiring matter is as well the operationalization of the above-mentioned priorities in operational programs (at the national level) co-financed under the European Social Fund in the 2014-2020 perspective - the second long-term financial perspective of the UE since the accession of the Visegrad Group countries to the Community.

The dissertation consists of three parts with six chapters.

The Part I outlines the contexts and directions of the European Union's educational policy. The Chapter 1 presents the development of international and European reflection on education after the Second World War. The Chapter 2 moves on from the historical outline of reflection on the development of education to the characterization of the European Union's educational policy coordinates in the analysed period of time. The draft of the international and European reflection on the area of education presented in Chapter 1, supplemented in Chapter 2 with the main assumptions of the Community's educational policy in the adopted for analysis in this dissertation timeframe, allowed for ensuring the contextuality of the comparative study.

The Part II focused on presenting the presumption of the Visegrad Group countries' educational policy. The Chapter 3 provides the interpretative basis for the comparative analysis

regarding the conditions for supporting the education area from EU funds in the 2014-2020 perspective. The Chapter 4 is an overhaul of national strategic documents in order to identify the educational strategic priorities in each of V4 countries. The provisions of the national operational programs 2014-2020 of the above-mentioned countries was examined in this Chapter as well, what allowed to define the operationalization of the above-mentioned educational strategic goals.

The Part III of the dissertation is a recapitulation of the carried out analyses, as a result of which it was possible to demonstrate similarities and differences in the strategic priorities of the educational policy of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary in the indicated perspective. The Chapter 5 presents the results of a comparative study of the strategic priorities identified in the strategic documents in the field of education of the Visegrad countries. Analogously, the Chapter 6 gathers the results of a comparative study in the field of operational priorities identified in V4 national operational programs 2014-2020.

In the Conclusion of dissertation an attempt was made to outline the direction of development the educational policy of the above-mentioned countries in the next financial perspective 2021-2027, determining what priorities lie ahead for this extremely important area of public policies, as well as what challenges for shaping educational policy may appear in the future.

In the dissertation were identified – and then a pedagogical comparison was carried out – for the following strategic educational priorities common to the Visegrad Group: inclusive education, integration in education/desegregation in education, high quality teaching, equalizing educational opportunities, developing students' competences and skills. A unique strategic goal, present only in Hungarian education policy, has been the prevention of NEET phenomenon among students. Moreover, in the V4 countries were noticed such operational priorities as the availability of pre-school education, teachers' education and training, vocational education - cooperation with partners, strengthening strategic management and improving the quality of infrastructure.

The performed pedagogical comparative study may have multiple practical dimensions – it may support shaping educational policy by indicating potentials and limitations (strengths and weaknesses) in the adopted paradigms of its development or using indicators and criteria to make comparisons in parallel public policies.