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On the Border of Visible and Invisible

The case study is centered around the founding and development of the higher education institute of the minority Hungarians in Komarno, Slovakia, named Selye Janos University College.

The analysis of the history and present situation of this college is important and involves useful messages about the cross section of the expansion of higher education, civil initiation and minority higher education. The idea of founding the college was established in a strategic plan of higher education development in 1997, which was launched by 25 Hungarian lecturer in Slovakia in order to create an „invisible” college that had no private estate, and that had the aim of educating elite intelligentsia and university lecturers, to enlarge the scope of Hungarian vocational training, and finally to lay down the basement of a research institute that can be the organiser of relations within and outside the borders. The plan involved three phases of development, and the second phase included the accreditation of the program according to the Slovakian and European standards. The college had only the permission of the Slovak state administration in 1997.

The structure of the college follows the tutorial system of the British tradition. This choice had two reasons: among given conditions, this system seemed to be manageable; and besides mass education a structure and method were necessary to fulfill the needs of coaching. There were traditional higher education courses and special courses for information in the fields of personal development, career building, which is not simply foreign languages, but personal skills development, found raising techniques and others. Viewing the financial possibilities of the students, the college has the task of supporting them by a system of scholarships so as to help obtain the necessary means to continue their studies, and this aim is achieved by inviting sponsors and supporters as the college was founded on civil initiation.

The results of the case study will include how the newly founded college managed to adopt to the educational policy of the Slovak government, how it has been able to maintain relationships with the Hungarian educational administration, how the two governments have been able to co-operate in education. Now it is the period of accreditation according to the plan of 1997, and the college has an impact on the Hungarian secondary education of the region and the higher education institutes, where Hungarian students are enrolled. The college wants to create a new chance of reorganising the elite of the Hungarian minority of the region, which was lost during 20th century history. So this institute is not only an example of managing the problems of the expansion, but also an example of founding a new chance of identity to the birthplace and to the culture.

The methods of the case study are concentrated around the qualitative analyses of documents, structured and non-structured interviews, a varied method with which the

personal network inside an institute can be discovered, and the relationships between institutes, and personal influences in the course of events can be followed.