

## Paper 6 - Analysis of Policy Making and the Formulation of Definition of Early School Leaving (ESL)

**by Agnes Kende, Julia Szalai (Central European University, Center for Policy Studies, HU)**

Official state policy of education on ESL has not existed in Hungary; the national ESL strategy is being prepared these days. The term ESL only appears as a pledge of Hungary to suppress the rate of ESL under 10% in different strategic documents. Due to the effort to comply with EU legislation, the official Hungarian approach to ESL has distanced itself from both the domestic traditions of conceptualising and tackling ESL related problems and the actual needs of the population groups at greatest risk. The ESL policies are characterised by a good deal of ambiguity. On the one hand, Hungary subscribed to reduce the ratio of ESL, on the other, the concept of ESL is missing from the domestic policy-making and also from the public discourse on education and training. Instead, there are two clusters of concepts that navigate the evolving policies with direct relationship to ESL. Firstly, dropping out in the last phase of compulsory education (affecting mainly the 14-17-year-old population and vocational training) has been on an increase; secondly, the complexity of factors behind the educational failures of Roma youth manifesting in reproduction of low schooling and lack of qualifications are considered as a prime area for policy.