

## **BRINGING CHESS INTO 250 SCHOOLS IN SLOVAKIA**

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Slovakia, together with Slovenia, were two pilot countries, where **FIDE Chess in Schools (further CiS) project scheme** was implemented. Project CiS in Slovakia began in the middle of 2011. **Slovak Chess Federation (SCF)** is the initiator and the implementer of the CiS Slovakia project.

The CiS Slovakia scheme support is based on:

- Providing of the basic chess equipment to the chess cells.
- Registration of chess cells, chess teachers, children and keeping the database of members.
- Sending packages to the premium members.
- Organizing seminars for the chess teachers, trainers.
- Regularly every 2 weeks translation of the CiS Magazine to the national language and sending it to all members.
- Regularly calculation of the CiS rating from tournaments and free games.

This support is ensured by SCF, who manages the CiS Slovakia project. Five persons is involved in this work, but three of them are part-time volunteers.

There are some results we achieved up to now:

- 246 schools out of 1800 was contracted
- 496 Premium Members, 819 Basic Members
- About 100 Teachers was trained
- 3 textbooks School of Chess (Škola šachu) are already published
- The last (4th) textbook is being prepared

SCF also participates on organization of children tournaments.

### **Two children chess tournaments series:**

From the past we still have traditional **School Championship scheme**. It consists of three levels of competitions. There are closed district championships, regional championships and the final School championship of the whole country, where only the most successful children are allowed to participate. In the former times this competitions were fully financed and organized by the employees of schools or the Ministry of education. As this backing was diminished year by year, it gradually led to decline of these events. SCF took responsibility to

retain this competition by own forces and from 2012/13 organizes whole serial by themselves. We annually ask Ministry of education for a grant. In school year 2012/13 there were 1100 children participating, in year 2013/14 we had already 1839 children in almost 80 competitions, what made us one of the most popular sports between primary school pupils in previous school year. Details you can find on the government website [www.skolskysport.sk/sutaze/vysledky-sutazi/?Status=archived&SportID=28&CompetitionYear=](http://www.skolskysport.sk/sutaze/vysledky-sutazi/?Status=archived&SportID=28&CompetitionYear=).

Upper mentioned scheme has, apart from positives, also some negative sides, which has led coaches, parents of talented children and SCF to another idea, which we realize already for the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. In 2007 we founded **Serial GPX for children** under 14 years old. The whole serial of one-day rapid tournaments is intended for beginners, so there are boundaries, which protect this group. Namely some of them:

- All tournaments of the basic part of GPX are open. Children from different regions can participate and collect GPX points according to their performance. Six best results of each child are counted to the overall ranking, which is published after every event on the website.
- Only players with rating 1400 or less at the start of the school year are allowed to play.
- Formers winners of whole serial from previous years are not allowed to play next season.
- There are 6 categories, B08, B11, B14, G08, G11, G14, winners of every category are awarded separately, though they play in the same open tournaments. Only semi-finals and finals are robin-round tournaments, where the best players according to overall ranking from each category are invited.
- Tournament fee is very low, max. 2 Eur per player. Organizers should get small award to everyone who participates in the tournament.
- There are three regional semi-finals and the country final at end of the school year.

During seven years there was significant grow of the participants. In the last edition 2013/14 we reached number 1356 children. Motto of the whole GPX serial is *“Everyone gets the chance”*. There were 90 open GPX tournaments in whole country during school year 2013/14, in May 2014 there were 18 semi-final robin-rounds with 10 players and in June 2014 there were 6 final robin-rounds with 10 players. 6 winners, apart from valuable prizes, got the titles Newcomers of the year 2014. All details you can find on the website <http://gpx.jogo.sk/>.

**Summary:**

Project Chess in Schools Slovakia has already brought almost 500 new members of the Slovak Chess Federation, which is about 10% of all their members. Moreover, thanks to FIDE, it gave us the system, not only to attract children, their parents and coaches, but also keep them in the chess community for a longer time.

Some results from the organization of chess event for beginners are already visible by naked eye. In the recent years after long time we succeeded to gain medals from European Union, European and World youth championships. Most notably, Viktor Gažík in Batumi 2010 became the European champion under 10. So far, we are successful mostly in the younger categories.

We need to work hard to reach success in older categories and as well as between adults where concurrence is even stronger. For this aim, SCF launched another project – **foundation of the Chess academies**. Other near future plans includes:

- Publish the last textbook
- Establish Public Private Partnership with a group of people to run the project in a sustainable way
- Accredite the Teach the Teachers course
- Establish the regular accredited trainings of teachers
- Continue organising the school championships and the GPX serial of tournaments for beginners
- Further strategic meetings with the Ministry of Education, regional and local self-governments