

UDC 37.09

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## **THE STATUS OF THE PROFESSION OF A SPEECH THERAPIST IN SWEDEN, NORWAY, THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Наукові праці МАУП, 2014, вип. 42(3), с. 229–231

*Information about the status of the profession of an SLT in Sweden, Norway, and Czech Republic is analysed.*

The status of a speech therapist was examined by B. Bublewicz [1], J. Grzelak [2], I. Kurcz [4], M. Skorek [5]. To previous studies [3] in this field the author intends in this work to add a few strokes. Materials from the Bureau of Research were also used in the project.

The profession of a speech therapist is described in Czech, Norwegian and Swedish as logoped. In Sweden a speech therapist is a paramedical regulated profession. There is no division into SLTs employed by the Department of Health Service, and SLTs employed on different conditions by the Department of Health Education, although speech therapists work both in health service institutions, and education and social care institutions.

The tasks and obligations of speech therapists, as well as their work conditions (hours of work, salary, competences) depend on the status of this profession, the type of institution in which they work, and terms specified in a contract between a speech therapist and his/her employer. In Norway and Czech Republic the profession of a speech therapist belongs to

the field of special education, and SLTs are employed mainly in schools and education-related institutions.

Below information about the status of the profession of an SLT in Sweden, Norway, and Czech Republic is briefly reviewed.

### **Sweden.**

The tasks of SLTs include:

- initial assessment of the problem with articulation and expression;
- determination of a speech therapy programme;
- conducting speech therapy;
- keeping the documentation of the patient and securing the confidentiality of medical data<sup>1</sup>.

In Sweden there are about 1 700 SLTs who work mainly in health care institutions and special social care centres, but more and more schools employ speech therapists, and the market of private speech therapy services is grow-

<sup>1</sup> Logoped, [www.dik.se](http://www.dik.se) (portal of the union of Swedish academic and scientific associations).

ing. Both education and health care are the competence of self-government (commune and province) authorities, so the work conditions in both sectors are similar, although, depending on the employer, they can differ a little as far as remuneration is concerned. The remuneration of a speech therapist who begins work was from 24 800 SEK to 28 000 SEK in 2011, the median of earnings ten years after the completion of studies was 30 100 SEK, and twenty years after the completion of studies – 31 600 SEK<sup>2</sup>.

Work in the profession of an SLT requires the completion of 4 years of interdisciplinary study (240 credits) at medical universities<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Norway.**

In Norway speech therapy has been and considered a field of special education. Basically SLTs are employed under the articles of the Department of Education. In each commune and province there are Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centres which look after all children under 19 who have special educational needs. STLs employed in these Centres work directly in schools. Adults with speech and communication disorders can obtain benefits in the health care system, in which few SLTs are employed. The Norwegian Association of Speech and Language Therapists is critical of such organization of speech therapy services, which in practice leaves people over 20 without any proper care<sup>4</sup>. In recent years private speech therapy practice has developed, the services of which are more and more often used also by schools, on the principle of contracting services.

Since 2005 the right to practice the profession of an SLT has been granted only to persons who completed 5-year Master's studies in speech therapy or in special education with specialisation in speech therapy.

In 2012 an average salary of an SLT was 41 000 NOK (5477.60 Euro) a month. The amount of remuneration depends to a great

extent on the level of education and work experience<sup>5</sup>.

#### **Czech republic.**

The profession of an SLT is practised at two levels:

- a speech therapist employed in the educational and health care system;
- a clinical speech therapist employed in health care institutions.

The tasks of SLTs employed in the educational system include:

- Comprehensive diagnosis of speech and communication disorders;
- counselling for parents and teachers concerning the proceedings with children with speech disorders, and conducting therapy;
- Development of tests which monitor progress in therapy;
- Management and supervision of the work of speech therapist assistants-teachers<sup>6</sup>.

The tasks of a clinical speech therapist include:

- participation in research projects in the field of health care;
- participation in trainings in order to obtain specialisation; keeping documentation;
- work related to prevention, diagnosis, therapy, emergencies, rehabilitation, under the supervision of specialist doctors<sup>7</sup>.

SLTs work in the educational system, while speech therapists and clinical speech therapists work in health care. Only health care institutions provide a full range of speech therapy service and benefits. Practising the profession of a school SLT requires the completion of 4-year Master's studies in the field of special education with specialisation in speech therapy. A clinical speech therapist has to obtain a so-called attestation, I. E. 3-year traineeship in health care institution, obtaining a credit for specific trainings in health

<sup>2</sup> Logoped, <http://www.saco.se/Yrken-A-O/Logoped>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> SLT in Norway, [www.cplol.eu](http://www.cplol.eu)

<sup>5</sup> Logoped. Om yrket, jobb, utdanning og lønn, <http://www.studenttorget.no>

<sup>6</sup> Metodické doporučení č.j. 14 712/2009-61 k zabezpečení logopedické péče ve školství, art. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Klinický logoped. Národní Sustava povolání, [www.katalog.nsp.cz](http://www.katalog.nsp.cz)

care institution, obtaining a credit for specific trainings, and passing the final exam<sup>8</sup>.

In public education the remuneration of a speech therapist is between 15 000 KCZ (583 Euro) and 16 670 KCZ (650.13 euro) a month, depending on the level of education and work experience<sup>9</sup>. Job advertisements for SLTs offer work from 07.30 a.m. to 04.00 p.m. In private consultation rooms a speech therapist can be paid up to 25 000 KCZ a month (975 Euro). In available materials there is no data about the remuneration of speech therapists and clinical speech therapists in health care institutions.



## Literature

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*The comparative analysis of the status of the profession of speech therapy in Sweden, Norway and the Czech Republic.*

*Наведено порівняльний аналіз статусів професії логопеда у Швеції, Норвегії та Чеській Республіці.*

*Приведен сравнительный анализ статусов профессии логопеда в Швеции, Норвегии и Чешской Республике.*

Надійшла 20 березня 2014 р.

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<sup>8</sup> AKL: Jak se stát klinickým logopedem , [www.klinick-alogopedie.cz](http://www.klinick-alogopedie.cz)

<sup>9</sup> The data is taken from job advertisements published on the Internet. Cf. e.g. [www.careerjet.cz](http://www.careerjet.cz)