

A Legacy of Knowledge Connecting Central Europe Across Three Centuries

ChatGPT 08.08.2026



Empress Maria Theresa Gymnasiums Network

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Empress Maria Theresa initiated one of the most influential educational reforms in European history. Through the establishment of public gymnasiums and specialized secondary schools across the Habsburg Monarchy, she laid the foundations for a modern system of secondary education that would shape generations of scholars, scientists, artists, entrepreneurs, public servants, and community leaders.

Today, graduates of these historic institutions share a remarkable common heritage. Although they live in different countries and speak different languages, they are united by educational traditions that originated in the reforms of Maria Theresa and continue to inspire excellence, responsibility, and service to society.

The institutions include:

- **1746** – Gymnasium Novo mesto, Slovenia
- **1749** – Theresianum Academy, Vienna, Austria
- **1753** – School of Mathematics and Nautical Sciences, Trieste, Italy
- **1766** – Gymnasium Karlovac, Croatia
- **1766** – Gymnasium Vinkovci, Croatia
- **1772** – Saint Norbert of the Premonstratensian Order Gymnasium, Szombathely, Hungary
- **1776** – Gymnasium Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia
- **1777** – Royal College Maria Theresa, Herve, Belgium

- **1780** – Public Franziskanergymnasium, Bolzano, Italy
- **1781** – Stiftsgymnasium Melk, Austria

Together, these schools represent a unique educational heritage that transcends today's national borders. Their alumni have contributed to the scientific, cultural, economic, and civic development of Central Europe for 280 years.

The 280th anniversary of the [founding of Gymnasium Novo mesto](#) in 2026 offers an opportunity to recognize not only the achievements of one historic institution but also the shared legacy of all graduates educated in the schools established during Maria Theresa's era. Their common heritage reminds us that education has long served as a bridge between peoples, cultures, and generations.

This anniversary is an invitation to strengthen cooperation among alumni, educators, researchers, and cultural institutions across Central Europe. By celebrating a shared educational tradition, we also reaffirm the enduring values of learning, openness, mutual respect, and international collaboration.

The graduates of these historic gymnasiums inherit more than distinguished school traditions—they share a common European educational legacy that continues to inspire future generations.



[Maria Theresa Gymnasiums' Graduates Network](#)